

# Multicultural Citizenship Education: A Study on Experiences and Opinions of Taiwan's Indigenous Elementary School Teachers

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## Abstract

The author reports findings of multicultural citizenship education from a two-year in-depth study of indigenous principals and teachers in local elementary schools. Data were gathered and analyzed using a conceptual framework that consisted of a multicultural citizenship based on the liberal theoretical perspective. The results indicate that indigenous educators face dilemmas in being cultural elites while considered national education policy implementer. Findings illustrate that indigenous elementary school educators are expected to possess differentiated-group privileges in teaching practices; however, they are confronted with both internal restrictions and external protections during establishing of ethnic cultural identity while playing their roles in the national educational apparatus. The paper also gives conclusions and suggestions for future researches.

## Keywords

Multicultural citizenship, identity, indigenous right, education

Most countries today are culturally diverse and the increasingly multicultural fabric of modern societies has given rise to many new conflicts. Multicultural citizenship is critical in establishing common grounds in transformative political and social movements. Different ethnicities inside one nation, as well as international relations, demonstrate mutual understandings and positive solutions that reinforce international human rights.

“Multicultural citizenship” covers many different forms of personal identity with roots in ethnics, races, immigration, land claims, self-government, languages, and customs. Individual rights are not only consistent with personal freedom and autonomy but are also a result of cultural and group membership. Multicultural citizenship assumes that cultural diversity is a result of various patterns of immigration, land claims,

self-government, language, and customs.

In this paper, the author focuses on previous patterns of indigenous Taiwanese who are distinguished by their cultural diversity and represent 4%-5% of the total population of Taiwan. Because of each tribes having its own language, culture, beliefs, rituals, and clothing, indigenous groups demonstrate diverse identities. These tribes and the interactions amongst them represent the origins and forms of multiculturalism in Taiwan. The indigenous minority population is less than 5% of the total demography.

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These tribes of indigenous people are geographically scattered throughout the north and south. With increasing suppression by the majority groups, the indigenous groups have become aware of their disadvantages in political, economic, and social opportunities, such as a high unemployment rates and inadequate education achievements. Since the early 1980s, many aboriginal groups have been actively seeking a higher degree of political autonomy and economic achievement. In addition, efforts are underway in indigenous communities to revive traditional cultural practices and preserve their traditional languages.

As Kymlicka (1998) argued, since the end of the Cold War, ethno-cultural conflicts had become the most common source of political violence in the world, and the violence showed no sign of abating. Multicultural citizenship provides a policy of interaction amongst cultures and enables people from different backgrounds to pursue their distinctive ways of life without oppression.

On the other hand, opponents of minority groups' rights argue that freedom of association is quite similar to freedom of joining associations in personal life so that it is unnecessary to enact particular regulations, frameworks, and policies in order to affirm minorities' prosperity. Unfortunately, majority and minority groups often clash and lack harmony and equilibrium and at times serious violence and even death occur.

Discords between different ethnicities occur broadly internally, such as the language policy imposed by the French government and the Flemish battle in Belgium, and sporadic and chaotic protests in Kyrgyzstan. Internationally, conflicts also arise among multilateral states; for example, Israel, Palestine, Turkey, and the United States are all involved in ceasing the siege on the Gaza strip.

In addition to the statements regarding conflicts among multilateral nations, indigenous groups encounter challenges within borders governed by

majority peoples (Siddle 2003). Although support for indigenous rights is increasing, practical implementation remains limited. In this regard, the General Assembly of the United Nations promulgated the "Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" in 2007, which can be viewed as an echo to the "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights" of 1966 and the "International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights" of 1976. The declaration on the rights of all indigenous peoples is in accordance with developments of the diversity and multiculturalism for various values. In particular, the declaration affirms "indigenous peoples have suffered from historic injustices as a result of, inter alia, their colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests" (United Nations 2008).

While indigenous minorities face enormous challenges for economic independence and maintaining a sustainable culture with rich heritages, they typically wish to be active in education and human resources and to participate in public institutions and policies that enact the equal and fair rights of all (Holder and Cornthassel 2002). A common consensus is that multiculturalism provides an affirmative scheme of cultural diversity to individual and collective prosperity, but we have to examine the facts of the indigenous rights by inquiring about empirical examples of the indigenous experiences and opinions among these groups. As Mercer (2003) pointed out, minorities still remained largely "citizens without rights", and for example, minority voices were overruled in both Australia's Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders who were now without involvement in the historical, political, and constitutional aspects of their motherland.

This paper explores the issue of indigenous rights by interviewing principals and teachers in local Taiwan schools. The education system acts as a

long-term project for cultivating indigenous children and conveying national will toward the prosperity and development of indigenous groups. Educational institutions are significant arenas to make redress for the minorities and encourage the illustration of indigenous cultures and heritages. Multicultural citizenship as a theoretical framework is critical to empower indigenous peoples to recognize their freedom and autonomy of their languages, histories, symbols, religions, rituals, and affections.

Given this perspective, in this paper the author focuses on experiences and narratives of the indigenous principals and teachers of elementary schools who teach indigenous students in the local township. Three multifaceted research questions guided both conceptual analysis and subsequent fieldworks:

(1) This paper interprets the relationship between liberal democracy and indigenous rights that have been examined by Kymlicka's arguments on how to compose individual rights with collective rights based on the principles of democratic politics and affirmative cultures;

(2) Investigating whether multicultural citizenship is a plan used to promote the rights and identities of a culture or, on the contrary, it is a socialization process in which the indigenous groups are educated on how to blend in with the Taiwan' mainstream society;

(3) Schools are one of the fundamental sites of each government used to cultivate and develop citizens of good character, knowledge, and skills. How do indigenous principals and teachers deal with the balance of national education policy and their own ethnicity, and what challenges do they face in personal awareness and collective identity?

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: LIBERAL DEMOCRACY AND MULTICULTURAL CITIZENSHIP**

This study explores the issues of multicultural

citizenship theory via interviews of teachers and principals in order to illustrate the empirical evidence on this topic. As Kymlicka (1995) argued, multiculturalism was a functional requirement of a modern economy, with its need for a mobile, educated, and literate work force, and it further reflects the need for a high level of solidarity within modern democratic states. Because the sort of solidarity essential for a welfare state requires that citizens have a strong sense of common identity and common membership for equal status in a nation-state regime, the provision of standardized public education throughout a society has been seen as essential to ensure equality of opportunity for people from different classes, races, and regions of the society (Kymlicka 1995).

Marglit and Raz (1990) emphasized that cultural identity was the most fundamental level of our own belonging rather than belonging to a specific group. Securing identification at the collective level is particularly important to one's well being. In this sense cultural membership stands as a "high social profile" and affects how others perceive and respond to us, which in turn shapes our self-identity in everyday life.

Similar arguments about the role of respect for national membership in supporting dignity and self-identity were given by Taylor (1992) and Tamir (1993). They mentioned that cultural identity provided an anchor for peoples' self-identification and the safety of effortless secure belonging, bound up with the esteem in which their group was held.

Tamir (1993) further indicated the extent to which cultural membership added an additional meaning to our actions which became both acts of individual accomplishment and part of a continuous creative effort whereby a collective group's right was made and remade. She argued that this dynamic promoted a sense of belonging and relationships of mutual recognition and common responsibility.

Other commentators (Barry 1991; Miller 1993)

made a related analysis that reciprocal intelligibility came from shared national identity and promoted relationships of solidarity and trust. Nickel (1995) reviewed the potential harm to valuable intergenerational bonds when parents were unable to pass on their heritage to their children and grandchildren. Anderson (1983) emphasized that the belief of national identity enabled us to transcend our mortality by linking us to something that seems to extend back into time and forward into the indefinite future of individual belongings.

Although the agreements of cultural significance to both collective and individual rights meet consensus among all countries, the fundamental practice of portraying multiculturalism and contributing it to the relationship of majority and minority rights continues problematic. Since cultural identity includes the needs of groups, scholars debate that liberal democratic theories encounter limitations including the rights of differentiated-groups and collective groups. This in turn is the cause of serious contradictions between individual rights and group rights in political systems. In addition, Dodds (1998) argued that the liberal framework did not provide a space for questioning whether indigenous peoples were treated fairly or not when they were treated as a collective group and there was a tendency to identify the interests of the dominant group with the interests of all citizens.

Kymlicka (1995), as a liberal, democratic theorist, argued that groups' rights (which can be divided into three kinds of group-differentiated rights covering self-government rights, multicultural rights, and special representation rights) should be framed within the liberal theory. Minority groups which have these external protections may fully respect the civil and political rights of their own members and, further consistent with the liberty of individual members, promote individual rights.

The history of non-recognition, cultural imperialism, discrimination, and the requirement that

minorities shed their uniqueness, is often portrayed as little more than arrogant insensitivity, or the inability to see virtue in diversity, or otherwise as social Darwinism in action (Cairns 2003). Group-based rights breaths fresh life into the liberal theory and opens the door for extensive debate among liberal theorists about the nature of democratic citizenship, cultural differences and the effective participation of indigenous peoples in the political life of the states in which they live.

Dodds (1998) and Danley (1991) argued that when connections between liberal citizenship and indigenous group-specific rights, it was critical to avoid implying conceptions of citizenship that relied on an untenable understanding of persons and an assumption of the cultural neutrality of the liberal state. Moreover, it must address both the demand for effective and active citizenship and the demand for group-specific rights of greater autonomy and self-government (Grundy and Boudreau 2008).

The relationship between citizenship and indigenous autonomy has formed a matrix with questions of identity, nationality and ethnicity, as well as a growing concern about how citizenship is conceptualized in the context of multicultural societies (Joppke 1999). The struggles for equality by minorities who are excluded from equal inclusion in society and the affirmation of cultural differences through empowering indigenous peoples causes contradictions. The nationalism policy is frustrated when encountering the rights of minority groups, and the minority faces unfair consequences while purchasing their identity (Cairns 2003).

In summary, indigenous peoples have to participate in the national state and simultaneously affirm their rights with particular power and identity. The liberal theory can contribute to the equilibrium between majority and minority peoples.

Next, the author will illustrate the conditions and changes of the Taiwan indigenous peoples' awareness and empowerments processes in local contexts.

## TAIWAN'S INDIGENOUS MOVEMENTS AND LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

In the 1990s, dramatic social and political transformations in Taiwan and the deregulation of the Martial Law provided society an opportunity to reconsider the value of freedom. This turning point was not just significant for the majority to take the next step for political and democratic developments but it also brought autonomy for the minority groups so they could recognize their own differences and identity without colonization and domination from the mainstream society.

As in the United States the term black was used instead of African American to refer to a group of minority peoples before the progress toward multicultural policy evolved (Hooker 2009), Taiwan had a similar term toward indigenous peoples. The majority referred to the indigenous peoples of Taiwan as “barbarian” and the official government documents called this minority group “mountain fellows”. Responding to the macro-political liberation and democratization, indigenous intellectual leaders contributed actively to uncover the fact that such references were detrimental to minority groups and the historic experiences of colonization over indigenous peoples by different regimes (including the Qing Dynasty, Japanese, and the Kuomintang Government). This resulted in making them second-class groups within Taiwan’s political, economic, cultural, and educational systems.

As a turning point in 1997, the historic progress of the promulgation of the “Fourth Revision of the Constitution of the Republic of China (Taiwan)”, states that the government should affirm the rights of indigenous peoples. Two items clarify the state’s responsibility and legislations on the right of the indigenous peoples of Taiwan. One statement is: “The State affirms cultural pluralism and shall actively preserve and foster the development of the aboriginal languages and cultures”. The other statement is about

specific affairs that the government shall take on promotion of the indigenous peoples: “The State shall, in accordance with the will of the ethnic groups, safeguard the status and political participation of the aborigines. The State shall also guarantee and provide assistance and encouragement for aboriginal education, culture, transportation, water preservation, health and medical care, economic activity, land and social welfare”.

One of the vital indigenous peoples’ movements is the “Name Correction Movement”, which was organized in 1984 by indigenous elites, and was a symbol of accomplishment of the constitutional amendment. This movement was successful in both individual and collective aspects. Indigenous people could resume their traditional ways of giving names, which is quite different from the pronunciations and rules of Chinese and closer to the Austronesia language system. The latter protects indigenous groups’ identity by referring to ethnic minorities as indigenous peoples in public and official occasions, rather than terms with racist implications.

In 1996, the “Council for Indigenous Peoples”, which is under the Executive Yuan of Taiwan, was established and became the highest administrative government of indigenous peoples’ affairs. Through this administrative transformation, a more fair and just relationship between the government and indigenous people was established and indigenous people began to play a more active role in government organizations. However, without enforcement of the laws and regulations, these achievements can only be viewed as a dream to the indigenous people. Thus, a series of laws and regulations were enacted by the Legislative and Executive Yuan for this end and three of these enactments in the domestic level of Taiwan are critical to the discussion and inquiry in this paper. These major enactments are: the “Education Act for the Indigenous Peoples”, promulgated in 1998, the “Status Act for Indigenous Peoples”, promulgated in 2001 and the “The Indigenous Peoples Basic Law”,

announced in 2005. Moreover, affirmative approaches by the power of law and enforcement build a fundamental base on the legislative level for protecting indigenous peoples' rights.

In the international arena, one notable document opened a new page of indigenous peoples' identities and rights: The United Nations' "Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples". This 2007 document affirms that indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples and recognizes the rights of all peoples to be different and to be respected as such.

Before achieving the goals to have a specific declaration for indigenous peoples, the declaration of "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights" in 1966 was a major step toward recognizing the rights of different groups. Article 27 mentions: "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to progress and practice their own religion, or to use their own language" (United Nations 2008).

Later on the United Nations presented another declaration of "International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights" in 1976, which emphasizes cultural diversity and related rights by improving the relationship between minority groups and the government through educational systems. According to Article 13, "education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace".

From the above aspects of law and principle, rights for indigenous peoples have progressed on both the domestic and global scales, and the governments, have progressed in care of indigenous affairs. These changes may feel satisfactory; however, the practical and empirical experiences of the indigenous peoples need to be investigated in order to discover reactions

to their expectations and goals.

## **DESIGN OF THE STUDY AND CONCERN OF ETHNIC RESEARCH**

This study used an empirical research method aimed at portraying a picture of multicultural citizenship of minority groups' experiences in the education arena by interviewing indigenous principals and teachers and describing their experiences and reflections of teaching in indigenous elementary schools. The principals and teachers were working at Jianshih Township, an aboriginal community of Hsinchu County with a population of approximately 7,400 people, located in the North rural Taiwan. Over 99% of students (of about 700) are indigenous people. Empirical data were collected through in-depth interviews. Data collection lasted two academic years.

The researcher carried out five interviews with each participant focusing on three main themes of the interviewees: personal experiences and opinions on the culture conveyed to indigenous students, comments on governmental indigenous education policies, and perspectives on the opportunities of students within educational systems. All inquiries led to theoretical and practical reflections on the reality and discourses related to multicultural citizenship for indigenous peoples' rights in Taiwan.

In each interview the author paid particular attention to the contradictions and conflicts of the interviewee's perspectives and attitudes toward challenges for indigenous educators who simultaneously portray an identity as elite minorities and as the political-socialization implementer in the education systems. The study explored their struggle for living with multicultural citizenship within the national education system, which entails a series of activities, events, opportunities, decisions, and outcomes of teaching and learning.

Considering that all the participants were principals or teachers at their positions, all the data are

coded into anonymous text. The method to identify the data is coded as “principal or teacher, interviewing sequences, text sequences, and date”. After coding, the researcher started to analyze the meaning and significance of the interviewee’s perspectives, opinions, and comments about their experiences. The data were also checked by the participants to confirm the researcher’s interpretation of their expressions and responses.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

It was obvious that indigenous peoples were influenced by social factors which extended to the collective rights and personal opportunity of the indigenous peoples. While considering the restrictions and barriers indigenous peoples have when achieving rights, it is worthy to inquire how mainstream society imposes various obstacles. Where do these barriers come from and what are the political socialization processes that result in unequal and undesirable consequences for indigenous peoples? The author will explore the research questions and results by discussing indigenous educators’ opinions as well as scholars’ perspectives.

### *Differentiated-Group Rights*

Indigenous peoples’ rights have been officially announced by the United Nations as well as the Taiwan government. But are these announcements a guarantee for indigenous peoples’ rights and prosperity in mainstream society? One of the research participants, a principal, expressed his concerns that, although students go through the national education system just like everyone else, they may become second-class citizens:

I hope that the academic capacity of my students will be able to compete with the majority of students. If they cannot achieve it, they will lose their competence to survive in the society and they will not be able to have a good job. In the end, they will stay as disadvantaged-persons forever.

(Principal A1, 210100209)

Although formally stated by government bodies, without proper implementation differentiated-rights cannot provide a suitable environment to indigenous students and to assure the future life chances of minority groups. According to the indigenous principal’s opinion, allowing indigenous students to have good job opportunities is vital for education organizations. However, if we look back to Rawls’ (1971; 1993) arguments, he asserted that the ties to one’s culture were normally too strong to give up, and this will not be ignored. While indigenous educators hope to cultivate their students by the majority groups’ standards so they can compete with the majority of students, a paradox occurs. The possibility of becoming too familiar with the rules of the mainstream society can drive them away from their cultural identity; on the contrary, they may face strong challenges when attempting to embed themselves with the rules set by the majority. On the other hand, liberal democracy provides a flexible space both for people who are too close to and too far from their cultural heritage. While a culture is liberalized—and so allows members to question and reject the traditional ways of life—the cultural identity becomes both “thinner” and less distinctive. Eventually, the existing national social and political mechanisms leave a problematic circumstance for indigenous educators and students to identify with their belongings.

A principal recalled:

Honestly speaking, regarding mastering our mother language, my colleagues and I, as elites among the indigenous peoples, were forced not to use our own language when we were young. We could not even speak my groups’ language. How can we request our next generation to learn and use it when the educational system promotes a multicultural policy? In fact, we have been totally immersed by the national language. (Principal A2, 20100209)

This is not only the experience of one principal but also happens to the young students. Another principal

responded:

The government follows the “Declaration of the Indigenous Peoples Rights” and considers protecting the minority groups’ heritages and languages by learning at young age. The policy is enacted to certify that children who are qualified with the ability to speak their native language may have bonus points when applying to senior high schools or universities. But I feel that learning our mother language has become a helpful tool for entrance to schools, rather than having intrinsic aims in and of itself. (Principal B5, 20090209)

In order to gain the additional-added testing scores, I hired a teacher to teach my son the indigenous language but this language seems like a French language to him. After attending the examination, he forgot all of it. (Principal B6, 20090209)

As we know, multicultural citizenship emphasizes the opportunity for indigenous peoples to maintain their language and heritage; but whether or not the policies and regulations can achieve the goals has become disputable. We can also reflect on these policy-making contradictions from the land rights of indigenous groups. The survival of indigenous cultures is strongly dependent on protection of their land and throughout recent history indigenous peoples have fought to maintain their land. As to ownership of the indigenous land, Kymlicka (1995) argued that history had shown that the most effective way to protect indigenous communities from this external power was to establish reserves where the land was held in common and/or in trust, and cannot be alienated without the consent of the collective group. Once land is divided and alienable, it becomes possible for the wealthier members of the larger society to buy up the land and other resources on which the community depends. Moreover, individualized alienable land is more vulnerable to expropriation by governments. Land rights continue to spotlight how the government does to build a just and fair relationship with indigenous peoples.

A principal mentioned that the land rights of indigenous peoples faced a developmental crisis. He

pointed out that, although there was an increase in national promotion of new tourism plans and policies within local tribes, most of the managers and owners of tourist spots were not the indigenous peoples but rather were composed of mainstream people who had enjoyed national and economic advantages throughout their lives (Principal B2, 20100209). Because of prohibitions against their mother languages, and expropriating their lands for settlement, Taiwan indigenous tribes face a crisis. Yet they have persisted and their status as a self-governing “domestic, dependent nation” is now more firmly recognized. Regarding the enormous economic and political pressure, their determination in maintaining their existence as a distinct culture shows a deep desire to retain their cultural membership. American Indian tribes and Puerto Ricans, like the Aboriginal peoples and *Québécois* in Canada, are not just subgroups within a common culture, but genuinely distinct societal cultures (Kymlicka 1995).

Not only the natural resources of indigenous land rights but also social welfare face struggles in accepting the state-appointed arrangement of their society. As the Australian historian Neil (2002) pointed out, “Australia has the dubious distinction of being the only first world country with a dispossessed indigenous minority whose men, on average, will not live long enough to claim a retirement pension”. Welfare dependency of the disadvantaged groups has become a form of welfare colonialism and disempowerment of indigenous peoples (Behrendt 2002). This unequal life expectancy has also happened with indigenous peoples in Taiwan. Nationwide pensions from social welfare begin at 65 years of age, but, in order to compensate the lifespan of indigenous peoples, indigenous communities begin receiving this annuity at 55 years of age. Actually, this is a paradox as one teacher pointed out:

Indigenous peoples don’t understand the reasons why they obtain their annuity at a younger age than the majority,



and, on the contrary, they think it is a benefit from the public sector. They feel happy to have the annuity as early as possible because they are poor and need money. (Teacher E4, 20100517)

Another teacher states:

The government intends to empower disadvantaged groups with social welfare; however, if the reasons of a policy are not clarified, it will cause the disadvantaged groups to become more dependent on external resources and lose future opportunities in the long-term. (Teacher E4, 20100517)

Some say that government policies of protection and segregation were used to justify “helping” indigenous peoples to achieve citizenship within a country, but the minority groups are still significantly disadvantaged and remain “citizens without rights”. Regarding the application of the differentiated-group rights into political practices in the Australian experience, Mercer (2003) insisted that basic considerations should be given to: (1) the formulation of a new preamble based on significant indigenous input; (2) the declaration of a formal apology for past injustices such as those involving the Stolen Generations; (3) moving towards the adoption of a constitutional Bill of Rights similar to the Human Rights Act enacted in the UK in 1998; and (4) laying the groundwork for a formal treaty or similar agreement which entirely acknowledges indigenous rights and interests.

Considering to the case of Japanese treatment towards the Ainu, Siddle (2003) analyzed that racial ethnicity with a mono-ethnic citizenship, along with the popular postwar notion of a “unique” Japan with a mono-ethnic citizenry, had combined to marginalize and ignore the indigenous people of Ainu. The modern Japanese state only changes the Ainu groups “from second-class subjects to second-class citizens”. Siddle (2003) encouraged special rights for the Ainu such as providing additional resources and supported to enable them to fully enjoy the human and

democratic rights they should possess as citizens. Nevertheless, these projects have not been recognized, and the concept of “indigenous rights” has been explicitly rejected by the Japanese state. The official protection of the Ainu culture, albeit state-defined, is limited toward cultural rights. The national policy doesn’t grant the Ainu full benefits. As a disadvantaged group, any meaningful political and economic mechanism enacted to overcome the legacies of their material and ideological marginalization is essential and critical (Siddle 2003).

When Hocking and Hocking (1998) compared the Scandinavian and Australian positions on human rights of indigenous citizens, they gave an assertion that a full concept of indigenous citizenship should acknowledge the legal system which can be evaluated on the basis of the justice it serves to the powerless and dispossessed. The question is how to achieve this goal via public policies. One of the interviewed principals in this study pointed out that the government only offers money or extra staff members, but it is not clear what the indigenous peoples actually need. When the government offers indigenous funds for sculpture courses, tribal citizens join the program. However, the policy doesn’t place any effort on relating these events to their life (Principal A4, 20100209). The policies and strategies tend to provide short-term activities while disregarding the grassroots power of indigenous peoples to revive their tribes’ prosperity with familial education (Principal A3, 20100209). Both Hocking and Hocking (1998) and the interviewed principal hold negative perspectives on the governments attempt to provide small-scale events aimed at empowering indigenous peoples, because, based on international promotion of human rights, this political power is used to change the social reality and structure of their lives.

Marshall (1964) argued that the civil, legal, political, and social rights are all aspects of citizenship, and all these rights relate to a basic standard of citizens’ welfare and income. Marshall’s assertion

requires equal civil rights and equality before law and the extension of political rights to all members of the society to allow for the effective exercise of citizenship. Indigenous people's demanding effective rights to these social resources do not amount to a demand for any rights to which the majority is not entitled, rather it is a demand for equality for full rights of participation in the mainstream society (Dodson 1995; West 1990; Young 1989). While all scholars take pessimistic positions on the indigenous peoples' rights in the majority political system, how are these barriers caused? The next section moves on to look at restrictions that come from external protections and internal limits of indigenous communities and further explains the consequences of these limits.

### *Internal Restrictions and External Protections*

Kymlicka (1995) described that there were two restricting factors of indigenous people's rights that imply different types of interruptions and oppressions on the minority. The first one is called "internal restriction" which involves the claim of one group against its own members and intends to protect the group from destabilizing impacts of internal dissents. The second one can be entitled as "external protection" which entails the claim of one group against the larger society and intends to protect the group from the impacts of external decisions. Liberals can and should endorse certain external protections, where they promote fairness between groups, but should reject internal restrictions that limit the right of group members to question and revise traditional authorities and practices. The forms of the external restriction are obvious for youth indigenous students, according to the perspectives and experiences of the teacher and principal participants.

One principal said:

I worry that my students learn a series of Han or majority cultures from the national curricula, and, as a result, this

makes a larger gap between what they learn in schools and familial life. (Principal E1, 20100517)

Moreover, one teacher agreed with the above opinion and she explained that, because young indigenous students are strongly influenced by the media of mainstream society, the contradiction of values and lifestyles in media is vastly different from their familial and tribal lifestyle.

As one teacher stated:

I feel that indigenous students face challenges about what to follow and choose in their life opportunities and life route. They lose the ability to live on the lands for agriculture, but they are also aware, from the bottom of their heart, that they won't be able to be on the same level with their peers who live in urban areas. Consequently, they become confused about who they are and where to live. Most of all they don't have an effective supporting system to make them free from these uncertain situations. (Teacher E3, 20100517)

Given that providing an affirmative framework for indigenous peoples is a key approach to implicate multicultural citizenship in modern states, the Taiwan government implements specific policies in the educational system for reserving the indigenous peoples' language. For encouraging indigenous youths learning their ethnic language, a governmental education policy states if students study their tribal language and pass the indigenous language examination, indigenous students can add an extra 35 percentage points to their testing scores when they access the standardized testing for senior high schools and college admission. Yet some basic problems arise in this differentiated policy. During the long history of colonization by the Qing dynasty, Japanese government, KMT party and the Han peoples, the indigenous peoples and even elites have lost the ability to use their language. One teacher responded:

In my family, my parents only speak Mandarin, so I cannot speak the indigenous language. Although I cannot speak the indigenous language, my father taught me that I

am indigenous. (Teacher E1, 20100403)

We can see that the political circumstances appeared to lead indigenous people to maintain their identities, but because of oppressive experiences, these groups have lost the ability to use their parents' languages. However, the mother language is a critical value in protecting, according to the United Nations' (2008) "Declaration on the Indigenous Peoples Rights".

Regarding approaches to developing practical solutions for sustaining cultural identity, one principal provided a basic governing rule on indigenous affairs. He insisted that:

The leadership of the tribes' schools should be conducted by indigenous peoples. Only teachers who can identify with their tribe can offer an accurate and significant contribution and make progress in the local district. (Principal B3, 20100209)

He further explained that the regulation to assign indigenous teachers to indigenous schools has some contradictory points. For example, some indigenous teachers are allocated to schools by the local governmental administration, yet they only recognize the identity of indigenous peoples and fail to distinguish between various indigenous groups. He said:

In my school the teacher who belongs to the Tsou tribe was assigned to my school; therefore, she teaches my students her tribe's cultures and heritages, instead of ours. As a matter of fact, this assignment will hurt my tribe's long-term cultural prosperity after all. (Principal B3, 20100209)

That is why a teacher mentioned that she felt the indigenous students are disadvantaged in society, and in order not to hurt the students' self-esteem, she won't candidly admit that they are disadvantaged within mainstream society:

But I explain to my students that the indigenous social

status is unfair, and remind them that we can achieve better by studying or working hard. (Teacher D3, 20100403)

Can we expect educational systems to provide indigenous students an external protection of their identity?

We don't have enough flexible time to practice indigenous education because common education has occupied all courses. (Teacher F3, 20100517)

In addition, another teacher agreed with the difficulty to encourage teachers in teaching indigenous education:

Indigenous cultural academics should be integrated into the prescribed curriculum but teachers will be required to prepare more than they used to. In fact, some of the Han teachers don't want to learn more about indigenous culture. They'd rather follow the textbooks or national curriculum. They think it is extra teaching to do this. (Teacher D4, 20100403)

Moreover, educators are not the only barrier. Pressure also comes from parents. A principal explained:

It is impossible to put indigenous education into practice. The balance between common education and indigenous education for indigenous students is difficult. I doubt that any indigenous parent would agree to let their children spend more time on indigenous ethnic education. Parents will state that, "We need to survive". (Principal A5, 20100209)

Although the education regulation provides enrollment benefits for indigenous students to enter universities, the population of indigenous students enrolling at the best of Taiwan's universities is declining. Because the previous regulation was based on students' scores to open more opportunities, if students were all qualified to attain the necessary scores to enter a university, then the total amount of the indigenous students in one department would not be an issue. However, in the recent regulation, it is only when the number of students in a department is

over 50, then the department can offer one or two seats for indigenous students. That means if a department never reaches over 50 students, indigenous students will never have a chance to enter. Therefore, one participant clarified:

If you check the indigenous student populations at National Taiwan University, which is the best comprehensive university in Taiwan, or at National Taiwan Normal University, which focuses on teacher education, you will discover that the populations of indigenous students decline over time. (Principal A6, Principal B4, 20100209)

If individual and collective interests are ignored or trivialized by the state, then people will feel harmed. So far there is a growing awareness of the importance of certain interests that had typically been ignored by liberal theories of justice, such as interests in recognition, identity, language, and cultural membership (Kymlicka and Norman 2000). In a word, if the government fails to recognize and respect people's culture and identity, the result can be serious harm to people's self-respect and sense of belonging to the larger society.

While citizenship is considered one of the privileged subject matters of political and democratic theory, linked with explorations of nations and states, human rights are the focus of legal theory, one of the principal normative vocabularies expounded by lawyers and critical legal theorists (Tambakaki 2010). The relationship between group-differentiated citizenship and individual rights is quite complex (Kymlicka 1995). Why do the members of a national minority need access to their own cultures? The majority creates a range of burdens, barriers, stigmatizations, and exclusions for members of minority groups. Minority cultures disintegrate because of lacking of resources and accesses to national apparatus. The adoption of certain minority rights helps to remedy the disadvantages that minorities suffer within difference-blinded institutions and in doing so promotes fairness. Minority rights do

not constitute unfair privileges or invidious forms of discrimination. Rather they compensate for unfair disadvantages, and so are consistent with, and may indeed be required by, justice. While government policy-making often ignores the needs and conditions of indigenous people, the indigenous educators' opinions and experiences illustrate that the challenges and struggles of multicultural citizenship of minority groups have to cope with both internal restrictions and external protections for their cultural identity and prosperity.

## CONCLUSIONS

The collective rights of indigenous peoples around the world are of continuing political and legal importance. Much of the achievements of human rights on indigenous peoples have been underpinned by the increasing impetus of international and national law. This paper illustrated indigenous rights for full participation in political, social, and educational domains by presenting the voice of key elites of indigenous groups. The author also pointed out that even though the nation-state has built up various policies and benefits for disadvantaged indigenous students, the reality carries on uncertain about whether this is empowering for the minority or just another form of external restriction for indigenous sustainability and prosperity.

Moreover, the use of any type of social welfare or affirmative policies which aim to promote indigenous peoples' social and political status quo in mainstream society are critical to return toward the leadership of the indigenous peoples who have a clear identification with their tribes. Otherwise, simply an accumulation of budgets and human resources cannot become a movement of indigenous multicultural citizenship in a society. Based on their personal experiences and opinions, the Taiwanese indigenous principals and teachers, who are teaching in elementary schools, encounter different challenges

which come from both the struggles for maintaining their “ethnic” identities and the obligations for being “national” educators.

In essence, as more and more pressure mounts for teachers to take responsibility for students’ educational achievements and economic competitive abilities, the principals and teachers make concession of their cultural identities and transfer their roles to assisting indigenous students to pursue their success in mainstream society, which has been defined by the regulations and standardizations of what qualifies for a better life in the modern era. The thorny path of the indigenous students’ attainments and competitiveness with the majority still remains a violated alternative to the extent of forceful admission and other oppressions.

More than a decade ago in the book *Multicultural Citizenship*, Kymlicka (1995) asserted that the minorities and majorities increasingly clash over such issues as language rights, regional autonomy, political representation, curriculum, land claims, and even national symbols. All of these choices show basic concepts and principles of how minority groups search for identity and autonomy in a society which views minority groups as realization for fertilizing a multicultural nation or state. This assertion clearly gives us a fundamental philosophy to respect the cultural identity and historic heritage of indigenous peoples; therefore, it is necessary to continue to build a profound environment of multicultural citizenship that establishes not only personal freedom but also collective rights for educators and younger generations in the local as well as the international level.

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