

**CPSA – Vancouver 2008: Local and Urban Politics section**

**Title: Exhaustion and containment: An investigation of the Chinese Canadian National Council—Toronto chapter**

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This paper investigates the manner by which the Chinese Canadian National Council – Toronto Chapter (CCNC-TO) is entangled in practices of ethno-racial representation and political mobilization that limit the possibilities of anti-racist community organizing. A public forum organized by CCNC-TO is used to illustrate two points. First, the manner by which political resistance is organized through ethno-racial community-based practices. Second, the manner by which such practices produce incorporative relations that contribute to organizational exhaustion and ethno-racial containment.

This paper examines how a group discussion of social inequality and injustice, in the form of a CCNC-TO hosted public forum, helps produce a space of discussion and debate but is ultimately unable to mobilize the necessary politicization and community action demanded by the group. Although this paper questions the perpetuation of an ethno-racial status quo, it also proposes to understand CCNC-TO's activity as one that acts outside a conventional and limited notion of identity politics. This paper also discusses concepts of recognition and political demand. The former is investigated through an analysis of Charles Taylor's notion of political recognition and the latter is discussed through an investigation of Richard Day's differentiation of a *politics of the act* from that of a *politics of demand*.

**Ethno-Racial Political Practice**

In its current configuration, CCNC-TO's organizational structure is one that is intricately tied to its relationship to the city of Toronto. This connection exists, in part, because it is a geographically-based chapter of CCNC working on local City of Toronto issues. As the local Toronto chapter of CCNC its organizational and working jurisdiction is that of the City of Toronto. CCNC-National involves itself with national or federal matters pertaining to Chinese-Canadians while its local chapters work on regional issues. Organized in an umbrella-like fashion, each local chapter sends a delegate to yearly national organizational meetings. A paid executive director, working under the guidance of a board of directors, oversees the day-to-day business of both CCNC-National and CCNC-TO.

CCNC-TO grew out of a specific on-the-ground mobilization against the 1981 television broadcast of the news documentary "Campus Giveaway" that focused on the issue of foreign students taxing the university education system. It was broadcast on the CTV network news documentary program: W-5.

In the documentary, Asian students, shown attending a university lecture, were inaccurately represented as foreign students and non-citizens of Canada. It was later found out that all students shown were either Canadian born citizens or landed immigrants. The organizing against W-5 was a reactive one where concerned Chinese-Canadians saw the W-5 broadcast as tacitly imagining and representing Canadians in a distinctly Eurocentric manner. Asian faces were equated with foreignness.

A grassroots movement developed and organized itself to protest W-5's racism and inaccuracy. In this moment of organizing, a Chinese-Canadian anti-racist organizational capacity was created and CCNC's ethno-racial identification came to be institutionally formed. To the outside public, CCNC represented itself as a coherent and logical representation of the

community. Internally, it was a collection of different individuals united under the cause of protest.

At its inception CCNC-TO leveraged an unproblematic racially-based political power to unpack the existence of overt and systemic forms of racism. CCNC-TO currently organizes itself as an entity comprised of and representing Chinese-Canadians, but it does have non-Chinese-Canadian members as well. Although CCNC-TO is officially a membership organization, who are only representative and beholden to its members, it is also publicly seen as representing and speaking-for Chinese-Canadians. Its self-titled name, “Chinese-Canadian” National Council, also helps produce this illusion of ethno-racial representation. In CCNC-TO’s relationship with city and third sector partners the assumption of race is much less a convenience or instrumental illusion than it is a construction become real and natural. This strategy has enabled CCNC-TO to become a *legitimate* representative of the community.

What are some of the practical parameters by which CCNC-TO performs its project of social contestation? It is geographically based in a city. It is membership based and operates in accordance with an officially adopted constitution. It receives direction from its members during its Annual General Meeting. It is staff-run but with a working board—not just decision-making board. It works in cooperation with different levels of civil service, municipal government and in cooperation with foundations. It liaises with other organizations to form networks and working groups. These forms of community practice and interaction with public, private, and third sector bodies bring CCNC-TO closer to both a compliance with institutionalized governance and an active participation in state mechanisms for the making and governing of ethno-racial citizens.

CCNC-TO engages in a form of social advocacy where its relationship to institutionally initiated governance (i.e. public, private and third sector entities) is one intimately based on collaboration and funding. CCNC-TO often participates in the public process of holding the city of Toronto, and its departments, accountable through conventional participation (e.g., making deputations at city council or at board and committee meetings) and also through agitation (e.g., organizing demonstrations and actions, although less so in recent years). In addition, education and outreach activities also tend towards being collaborative or co-operative initiatives (e.g., workshops, training, public forums, symposiums, and youth events). In this manner, such social justice organizing is more similar to the practices of a non-profit social service organization or service delivery agency than it is, for example, to an anti-war group. These acts of contestation are comprised of institutionalized practices that have achieved a high level of professionalization and organizational legitimacy. In the context of CCNC-TO, the term “social justice” is indeed wide in breadth once the parameters of its activities are outlined.

CCNC-TO is consistently asked to participate in consultations, workshops, and working groups established by the City of Toronto, third sector foundations, and various settlement and service agencies. By participating in forms of representation that help foster the existence and practice of naturalized Chinese-Canadian bodies CCNC-TO inadvertently becomes racially self-contained. At times, it is exploited when it is invited to represent and perform a narrowly assumed and defined ethno-racial category. It is a double-bind. On the one hand, CCNC-TO is afforded the power and privilege of representing a minoritized group. On the other hand, this representation precludes it from un-packing or challenging the historical and contingent production of diaspora and racial ontology. CCNC-TO participates in a political and intellectual discourse that naturalizes race in the very moment that it gets deployed in the form of municipal collaboration or “anti-racist” practice (e.g., anti-racist training workshops). In the moment of representation the underlying processes that produce and govern racial subjects are masked and

rendered intellectually abstract. It is in this way that CCNC-TO begins to participate in a practice of ethno-racial governance.

### **Outreach and Mobilization**

In 2005-2006, CCNC-TO organized and convened various forums on senior's access to services, senior poverty, resettlement issues faced by mainland Chinese immigrants, violence against women, and youth issues. In the area of labour organizing, CCNC-TO continued its collaboration with the Home Worker's Association and the Hotel Worker's Rising Campaign. It also continued its work in building the capacity of the Alternative Planning Group and the Monkey King Collective (CCNC-TO's youth engagement strategy), and helped CCNC-National campaign for Head tax redress. In recognition of CCNC-TO's "outstanding achievement, commitment and contribution toward a positive race relations climate" CCNC-TO was awarded the 2005 William P. Hubbard Award by the City of Toronto (City of Toronto William P. Hubbard Award).

Although the brief description above offers a summary of what CCNC-TO has done in 2005-2006, the multi-layered texture and specific practice of advocacy remains obscured by such a broad description. It is necessary to delve further into the dense fabric of CCNC-TO's activity and un-pack its layers. For the purpose of further investigation, I select the community forum, *Voices of Mainland Chinese Skilled Immigrants in Toronto*, as an illustration of a specific and actual on-the-ground practice of collaborative anti-racist organizing and political work. It is an excellent illustration of how CCNC-TO attempts to constructively leverage an issue for organizing within a multi-faceted Chinese-Canadian community and it demonstrates the complexity and contradiction often inherent in that work.

On the one hand, the public forum serves as an excellent illustration of the chapter's involvement with community outreach and mobilization. On the other hand, it is also an example of how CCNC-TO's racial work comes to be conducted in a way that participates in hegemonic practices of consultation containing a politics of demand. It helps illustrate how opportunities for activism, research, and advocacy are also opportunities for simultaneous containment.

"Voices of Mainland Chinese Skilled Immigrants in Toronto" was held at University Settlement Recreation Centre, Toronto on July 10, 2005, 1-4pm. This public forum, whose attendance was about 50 people from various ethno-racial backgrounds, helped facilitate a discussion around employment and social cohesion issues facing "earlier" mainland Chinese skilled immigrants. It addressed the issue of immigrants who have resided in the city of Toronto for over three years but have still have not fully become acclimated nor resettled immigrants. The forum helped un-pack the racialization and racism that many experience and which usually continue unabated. For example, there was discussion concerning the issue of immigrants who have resided in Canada for more than three years no longer qualifying for immigration and newcomer services since they no longer qualify as newcomers.

CCNC-TO's preparation began with its outreaching and recruitment of stakeholders (e.g., service providers, service users, agencies, and professional associations) to participate in the forum. During the forum, CCNC-TO presented a year-long research project that it conducted in partnership with Professor Izumi Sakamoto, Department of Education, University of Toronto. The research focused on the experiences of "earlier" Mainland Chinese skilled immigrants. The forum also included a panel presentation given by service providers and immigrant participants.

And it concluded with small break-out group discussions involving participants and presenters alike.

Among many issues, CCNC-TO discussed the major barriers facing “earlier” Mainland Chinese Skilled Immigrants in Chinese communities and the larger Canadian society, foreign accreditation challenges and immigrant access to trades and professions, immigrant responses to these challenges, and mental health, family stress and senior’s issues that arise due to the on-going problem of resettlement and economic and social integration.

The practice of seeking out community participation, CCNC-TO’s cooperation—via its research committee—with an academic scholar and the presentation of the findings through a public forum are examples of how a cross-sector project is organized to mobilize a community around the obstacles and barriers that affect newcomer integration. CCNC-TO was engaged in showing resettlement problems as ones that not only “new-comers” experience, but rather, are lasting social, political and racialized ones. During the day long event, various organized panel and small group discussions unfolded. The main panel, which was comprised of a representative from Policy Roundtable Mobilizing Professions and Trades (PROMPT), a member of the Chinese Canadian Association for Professionals (CCAP), and a social worker representative addressed a number of issues challenging Chinese-Canadians that included: barriers facing “earlier” mainland Chinese skilled immigrants, foreign accreditation challenges, immigrant responses to these challenges, and how social service providers and policy makers can creatively address mental health, family stress, and senior’s issues.

### **Achievements and Constraints**

The forum helped illustrate the ways that systemic practices of racism exist on many institutional levels for both newcomers and older more established immigrants. It helped name the various ways in which systemic barriers to immigrant resettlement are at times both overt and hidden and it did so in a located manner that named these effects as real everyday problems. It should be noted that there is no specific name for an immigrant who settled here a long time ago. Would the term “old newcomer” be oxymoronic? Nor is there a term to refer to individuals who are Canadian-born but face immigrant-related issues for which she/he does not qualify for immigrant settlement services. Would the term “Canadian-born immigrant” be cogent? CCNC-TO helped name, describe and illustrate these problems and introduced the forum participants to PROMPT and CCAP.

The forum was useful in both publicly disseminating the research by Professor Sakamoto, and it helped to ground her research project in a public presentation that was both an outreach and mobilization of people. Many Mandarin speaking participants came into dialogue with people of various ethno-racial and economic backgrounds and shared their experiences of resettlement. There was great value in allowing these participants to see how their individual problems were shared by both recent and longer term established immigrants and how Sakamoto’s research related to their direct experiences.

CCNC-TO was also able to involve local members of the New Democratic Party and helped build their knowledge and engagement with immigrant issues. In terms of capacity building and networking, this event helped build and expand a network of friends, associates, and newcomers who were working on this issue, who were interested in participating in a process of designing an action plan, but who were otherwise not presently involved with cross-sectorial community-based group discussions or initiatives. And in this moment of presenting the

panel, research, and group discussion to the public CCNC-TO was able to help create a political mobilization and excitement around the issue of un-equal resettlement in the City of Toronto.

Unfortunately this success did not extend itself beyond the moment of the public forum. There was enthusiasm created, but real working linkages were not built and maintained beyond the first “report back” held at the CCNC-TO office on July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Instead of energizing the CCNC-TO board and its research committee the forum managed to create follow up work that could not be carried out. Although an action plan was produced during the initial report back meeting it was not carried out due in part to a lack of organizational resources and a lack of interest on the part of forum participants. The event inadvertently demonstrated to the research committee and board that CCNC-TO did not have the resources to continue supporting this process.

It could be argued that the event itself was successful because it allowed for a public discussion, debate, and partial mobilization regarding an important issue. Moreover, it was an event organized by a community-based advocacy group. It was not a state-initiated event meant to “engage” and curtail political dissent through an instrumental consultation. Although modest in effect, it produced a moment of empowerment for a group of immigrants and residents—who otherwise are seldom consulted—by affording them a time and place for discussion and analysis. However, after CCNC-TO’s effort to stage the event, the research committee, board, and volunteers were just so relieved that the event was over—given the intense organizing work that it demanded—that CCNC-TO failed to stage the planned press conference to release Professor Sakamoto’s preliminary research data. Nor was CCNC-TO able to execute the Action Plan nor help others of the working group to implement its recommendations.

Further, CCNC-TO was unable to link the work done at this public forum with its participation in the Working Group on Immigration and Refugee issues. CCNC-TO’s very understanding and imagination of the issue of immigrant resettlement was disconnected in this practical sense. Why? Because CCNC-TO was too resource poor and unable to build the capacity and leadership of those present at the forum to continue doing the work. Firstly, in terms of resources, it is perhaps presumptuous or unrealistic to demand that those who are underemployed, suffer income insecurity, or who might face other resettlement challenges have the time and/or the capacity for any serious and long term commitment to advocacy. Second, in terms of leadership, the research committee and the anti-racism committee lacked resources and leadership to frame the issues as intertwined. It was unable to coordinate the full integrated participation of the entire organization to bring about a successful political and organizational leveraging of this work.

The forum also did not help solve the myriad problems that the group identified. CCNC-TO was not able to deliver a sustained action plan because the organization itself lacked resources. Although CCNC-TO helped convene a time and place for discussion, action plan design, and the formation of a working group, without a sustained follow through, the original act of discussion was not translated into the plans and demands envisioned and proposed by its participants. Compounding the problem was the issue of insufficient interest and capacity on the part of the volunteer participants and the organization itself. Capacity building, outreach and the empowerment of a civic body is often an exercise in leading and forming a group, but not in the actual development of necessary skills, leadership and ownership in the members of that group. A community-based working group often needs to be shepherded and stewarded in relationships where lesser bodies defer to more established convening body (e.g. CCNC-TO). Although CCNC-TO helped start a conversation it failed to impress upon the forum attendees that it was

up to them to help maintain the initiative. Through its failure to sustain itself the act of mobilization had a superficial effect both on the level of the issue and on the level of building sustained community capacity for political work. Indeed, the notion of working in collaboration with stakeholders and in attempting to raise the political consciousness of participants involved to the level of being a stakeholder becomes merely an abstract and unrealized mandate. A critical failure of CCNC-TO's outreach and mobilization has been its inability to adequately excite participants beyond event attendance and participation. The majority of attendees did not volunteer to work on the proposed actions. More importantly, since failed mobilizations are not a new phenomenon, this instance of outreach failed to acknowledge the systemic and re-occurring problem of sustainability before it once again came to be the living illustration of another aborted community capacity building exercise.

It is interesting to note that CCNC-TO was trying to build the capacity of the community at large, but internal to CCNC-TO's community of board members and active volunteers it was the organization itself that was unable to sustain a meaningful long-term development and political commitment to the issue. CCNC-TO was able to stage the day's events in a professional manner, but above and beyond facilitating and staffing the venue it did little else in terms of political mobilization. In fact, it can be argued it was an act of political de-mobilization because attendees would go away feeling like something was being done (for them) when in reality the forum acted only as a re-enforcement of their lack of power. As the process itself unfolded it came to represent an isolated discussion of resettlement issues that was neither translated nor mobilized into a larger community action or movement. In fact, no movement was built at all. There was talk of actions, and there was a follow-up meeting to discuss and draft an action plan, but these initiatives devolved to become paper recommendations that were circulated through email. The action plan was never substantively realized by the group making the recommendations.

CCNC-TO failed to note that anti-racism mobilization best achieves its goals when it is leveraged through a tactical connection of both city mechanisms of governance (e.g. municipal programs, social service agency services, and third sector initiatives) and its own internal practices and committees (e.g. anti-racism committee, equity reference group Toronto District School Board, Chinese Interagency Network, Monkey King Collective (youth involvement), Alternative Planning Group, and others). CCNC-TO was unaware of the need for adequate synchronization between its own on-going commitments and organizational practices with that of the public forum's working group. CCNC-TO essentially failed to think outside of the narrow parameters of the public forum. Even though it took a leadership role in helping design and stage the event it did not have the leadership nor resources to adequately create necessary political leverage and exposure. These failures can partially be attributed to the lack of resources and funding that would seed and sustain such connections, but it is not the sole factor. Increased funding alone does not guarantee success as it is contingent on a combination of resources, clarity of political purpose, organizational consensus, and theoretical insight.

If CCNC-TO is to re-think how it can be organized through another model of analysis and/or praxis, then it needs to begin to think anew about how to understand what is meant by demanding justice and rights. What does it mean to "demand" certain rights? On the one hand, it means that you must appeal to a governing body who acknowledges you and in following can grant you rights and privileges. On the other hand, it means that you must surrender your agency and sovereignty to that governing body from which freedoms and rights will be dispensed. Although such surrender does not preclude acting in ways that may contest a governing authority

(e.g. civil disobedience) it is an acknowledgement that legitimacy is dispensed from compliance with the institution being contested. It is a contradiction and restriction that reflect the current limits of CCNC-TO's work. The partial success and failure of the forum is an illustration of this very problem. It demonstrates that if CCNC-TO was seeking to improve this situation, then it would need new language to describe and discuss the kind of politics and processes with which it is involved. The practice of community mobilization, as illustrated by the example of the public forum, demonstrates how community discussion and planning is easily restrained by the existing difficulties and reality of immigrant resettlement and the inadequate manner by which those ethno-racial groups are represented and served by under-resourced community organizations. The on-going lack of new language and the inadequate or incomplete building of community capacity are both factors in how anti-racist organizing come to participate in the obstruction and deferral of its own goals.

What follows is an analysis and clarification of CCNC-TO's representation through two different descriptions of political action and activity. This paper specifically refers to two key texts: Charles Taylor's "Politics of Recognition" and Richard Day's "From Hegemony to Affinity: the notion of demanding rights and the political logic of the 'newest social movements'." In these works, both authors describe and intellectually frame what they understand to be political acts. Recognition and demand are understood, respectively, as platforms for political activity. As terms of reference, the framing of a practice of politics born from the need for recognition and the notion of political demand as one that resist and counter hegemony are useful heuristics. But this translation of political acts into an intellectual framework also flattens out the individual actor as an abstraction—especially in the case of Taylor.

In "The Politics of Recognition," Charles Taylor frames the problem of multiculturalism as one that arises for a liberal society where there exists conflicting demands between two groups. One group or cultural community is understood as demanding to be recognized by the dominant group. These "difference" groups seek not only to be recognized as particular members of a cultural community within the larger society, but also simultaneously to demand more than just recognition. That is, they demand rights and privileges that are currently denied. This paper contends that what is practiced at CCNC-TO is very different to that of Taylor's notion of a "politics of recognition." CCNC-TO's activities do not entirely fit into Taylor's thoughts on recognition. In Taylor's view, the minority voice is an individual or group that is being harmed or suffers from mis-recognition. This subject's true identity is being damaged and deformed through in-attention from the larger more powerful societal group. Taylor writes:

A number of strands in contemporary politics turn on the need, sometimes the demand, for *recognition* (original emphasis). The need, it can be argued, is one of the driving forces behind nationalist movements in politics. And the demand comes to the fore in a number of ways in today's politics, on behalf of minority or "subaltern" groups, in some forms of feminism, and in what is today called the politics of "multiculturalism."

The demand for recognition in these latter cases is given urgency by the supposed links between recognition and identity, where this latter term designates something like a person's understanding of who they are, of their fundamental defining characteristics as a human being. The thesis is that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or

misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being (Taylor 1992: 25).

The question that arises from this study of CCNC-TO speaks to the issue of how these “fundamental” characteristics, as described by Charles Taylor, become the tools by which ethno-racial identification is used as a container or silo for the incorporation of others and otherness into institutional ideas and practices of social inclusion. Taylor’s discussion of the need to recognize minority voices is actually a practice made real by CCNC-TO’s work. In this sense, Taylor’s idea of recognition is a useful heuristic helping posit CCNC-TO’s activities as something existing outside of a conventional notion of struggle for recognition. The example of CCNC-TO’s activity, which could be categorized as activities of recognition, is double edged. CCNC-TO’s activities (e.g. collaboration with municipal mandates) helps reify categories of minoritization because it helps reproduce a rhetorical and restrictive practice of multiculturalism, but its critical activity (e.g. community politicization or municipal deputations de-crying the failure of municipal mandates) also produce momentary glimpses of anti-racial and anti-racist practice that push back the force of institutional ethno-racialization. It may not explode such discourse, but it does momentarily open them.

If we take this idea of a needed recognition and apply it to the kind of anti-racist politics with which CCNC-TO engages, then we can see that CCNC-TO’s work has definite characteristics aligning it with Taylor’s politics of recognition. However, what is different than Taylor’s characterization of recognition—but present in CCNC-TO—is the internal aliveness, contentiousness, diachronic and conjunctural development and growth of a politics of recognition. The everyday practices of CCNC-TO exceeds and challenges the limited manner by which Taylor expresses his abstract conceptualization of recognition. The micro-physics of CCNC-TO’s actual political activity and practice demonstrates that it cannot be easily summarized as a recognition practice working to mitigate the damage caused by social distortions.

The strategy and tactic employed by CCNC-TO are not those merely of demand and recognition. As a small group acting locally, its efforts have included a deep investment in anti-racist practice, which is the opposite of recognition. As it actively works to reveal systemic and institutional forms of racial practice it is not demanding recognition but politically and socially enacting a self-made and self-sustained mandate of anti-racism. If anti-racism involves itself in a deconstruction of a post-colonial situation of power, social dominance, and historical unfolding, then it is not that anti-racism seeks non-demeaning recognition, but rather, it seeks to reveal current social organization as one where notions of difference and otherness are contingent on that historical and ongoing context. If relations of otherness and difference are on-going social practices, then those relations must first be dispensed and dispatched before non-demeaning recognition can occur. It is entirely possible that non-demeaning recognition can occur; however, it is unclear *who is to recognize who* in the context of recognition.

CCNC-TO’s mandate and practice of anti-racism reveals race as a complex socio-political, historical, institutional and systemic practice. Instead of simply demanding and then awaiting recognition CCNC-TO’s practice is an active and challenging practice that frames its own ethno-raciality through a myriad of political contestations. For example, land claim, minimum wage, and/or national daycare campaigns are good illustrations of political demand that involve a certain degree of patient waiting following political demands for recognition. In the case of CCNC-TO, many activities are not conducted specifically for recognition purposes but for capacity and community building (e.g. story telling festival, seniors income project,



women ambassadors project, union solidarity, etc). However, these practices can also become contradictory, self-limiting, or co-opted.

Regardless of how anti-racism can become subsumed into a system of management, the actual activity of CCNC-TO's anti-racist and community-based social justice organizing is still one that distinctly does not fit into Taylor's theoretical framing of recognition practices. CCNC-TO is involved in practices of recognition where state practices and its parapublic branches and partners have readied themselves to deflect and absorb these conjunctural practices and site-specific demands for recognition. Although Taylor's notion of a politics of recognition is useful in characterizing CCNC-TO as an organization representing a cultural community—who demands to be recognized by a dominant group—CCNC-TO's incorporation, institutional production, support and sometime resistance is altogether another matter. The very mechanisms for rights and privileges (e.g. The City of Toronto's Plan of Action for the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination) can be understood as an organization and collectivization of stakeholders to participate in an activity organized to frustrate and deflect the activity of anti-racism. By the creation of a municipal mandate to “eliminate racism” the City of Toronto has helped refine mechanisms to manage racial difference. That is, difference recognizing mechanisms and institutions, such as those employed by the City of Toronto, do less to grant rights and privileges to subaltern groups than it does to manage them. Such management is very different from Taylor's philosophical characterization of recognizing difference as a process mitigating the damage and distortion he speaks of and granting previously unattainable rights and privileges. In warning against putting trust in policies of multiculturalism Himani Bannerji argues,

What multiculturalism (as with social welfare) gives us was not “given” voluntarily but “taken” by our continual demands and struggles. We must remember that it is our own socio-cultural and economic resources which are thus minimally publicly redistributed, creating in the process a major legitimization gesture for the state. Multiculturalism as a form of bounty or state patronage is a managed version of our antiracist politics. We must then bite the hand that feeds us, because what it feeds us is neither enough nor for our good” (Bannerji 2000: 118).

Bannerji's suggestion to bite the hand of managed multiculturalism can be extended to the managed practices of anti-racism. Institutionalized mandates of anti-racism are the political corollary of multiculturalism's soft gloved hand that allows for a plurality of cultural practices. Given Bannerji's criticism, it could be inferred that Taylor's careful framing of recognition entirely skirts the dynamic of recognition practices as forms of institutional management and cooption. Taylor's position allows for an intellectual and theoretical development of recognition as a relationship where a subaltern group merely demands and waits for recognition. It does not take into consideration the dynamic properties of community mobilization nor the incorporative aspects of demand-based political action. But before further discussing CCNC-TO in relation to Taylor's politics of recognition let us first examine Richard Day's notion of a politics of demand.

In “From Hegemony to Affinity” Day argues that newer social movements avoid participating in anti-hegemonic forms of resistance where they would be trapped in a reformist relation with the state (Day 2004). Day states that “both revolution and reform have been exhausted” in the sense that the anarchistically fueled politics of the act are merely preparing the ground for the time when revolution can be possible; it simply is not possible right now and thus only a pre-revolutionary politics of the act is currently possible and legitimate (Day 2004: 740). Any other forms are either outdated or are exhausted (i.e. revolution or a politics of demand). This is a self-referential logic that, for Day, envelops the entire project of resistance or

alternatives. The framing or convention of “exhaustion” becomes a tool to posit the conjunctural and relative lack of alternatives that allows Day to present what he considers as the legitimate anarchic responses to the exhaustion of everyday anti-hegemonic politics.

Day suggests that we can learn from anarchistic inspired groups who operate with a logic of affinity and the tactics of direct action (Day 2004: 730). Day’s privileging of direct action over what he considers reformism may tend towards a romanticism of direct struggle, but in privileging various kinds of non-statist acts, or forms of direct action, Day sets up an interesting and useful comparison between a politics of the act (anarchist) and a politics of demand (anti-hegemonic). Day writes,

As a shorthand description of this complex and nascent set of transformations in the logic of radical struggle, I would like to introduce a distinction between what I will call a *politics of the act* and a *politics of demand*. By the latter I mean to refer to actions oriented to ameliorating the practices of states, corporations and everyday life, through either influencing or using state power to achieve irradiation effects. As ‘pragmatic’ as it may be, and despite its successes during the heyday of the welfare state in a few countries, the politics of demand is by necessity limited in scope: it can change the content of structures of domination and exploitation, but it cannot change their form. (Day 2004: 733)

Although the distinction between acts and demand can be an abstract delineation it is a useful equation for unpacking CCNC-TO’s activity. When examining Day’s conceptual splitting of political activity into acts and demand, it is revealed that a politics of demand is actually part of a politics of the act. Day may want the framing of a politics of demand to signify appeals or demands against a hegemonic state or institution, but it exceeds this desired use. Although the practices and activity of CCNC-TO may fit into Day’s definition—it is not an easy fit. In the *act* of demanding rights or recognition, groups like CCNC-TO engage in an *alive* politics exceeding the limits of a politics of recognition. This aliveness can also be expressed through the Lefebvrian notion of the everyday. For Lefebvre, the “everyday” is only possible because it exceeds systemic representations of everyday practice. Existing social relations of production may produce specific subjects and forms of life but it can only do so in an incomplete form. Everyday life proves that such systems are not complete since any comprehensive completeness would contain all practice (Lefebvre 1971: 27). This remainder or aliveness of ethno-racial political practice can be seen in two forms.

First, it can be seen as a sustained practice of anti-racism where the practicing organization is neither merely asking for reformation nor just waiting for an answer to its pleas. Rather, organizations like CCNC-TO are actively organizing community events (e.g. work place and re-settlement forums), pushing against the conventional limits of its own ethno-racial composition (e.g. questioning who and what constitutes ethno-racial difference in anti-racism leadership training), or engaging in active mobilizations (e.g. enabling youth and senior activity). In no way can such activities be seen merely as the futile practices of an anti-hegemonic politics of demand because they are active anti-racist and active anti-oppression activities. They are group activities that are organized to actively and collectively push back racism, racialization, and the reification of raced-based oppression in the moment of its practice. The achievements of CCNC-TO’s organizational successes in mobilization alone (e.g. its collaboration with the Home Worker’s Association/Network) would put them on equal footing with the kinds of different subjectivities that Day understands to be engaged in anarchistic logics of affinity creating alternative forms of social organization through a politics of the act (Day 2004: 740). Day could

perhaps argue that CCNC-TO's activities only serve demand-style anti-hegemonic politics in the final instance but this would miss the entire conjunctural and in-the-moment practice of anti-racism occurring within the practice of CCNC-TO activity. In this sense, competing and different understandings of "direct action" are what separate Day's politics of the act from what this paper understands to be active social and political acts conducted by CCNC-TO.

Second, as a practice that engages in a reformist or negotiated relationship with state organizations, CCNC-TO's participation is not one where its activity can simply be framed as infinitely limited nor as one operating within the strict parameters of a Gramscian struggle for domination. Rather, the element that Day finds admirable in existing *radical* social activist circles is also being practiced within the *conventional* boundaries of ethno-racial anti-racist community organization. CCNC-TO simply does not claim its activities to be anarchistic nor ones that are intentionally creating alternatives to state forms of organizing. However, CCNC-TO is in fact continually producing new subjectivities, for example, in its board meeting discussions, in its youth collective, and in its negotiation with the nexus of public, private and third sector practices. The aliveness, or the everyday, of the activity of organizing an anti-racist community organization does produce new subjectivity and it invents new forms of community. If most engagements with institutional power are ones conducted within a realm of restriction and frustration, then the opposite strategy to forego such interactions could also be accused of being an equally restrictive strategy. Day's opposition to resisting power through acts that he understands to be anti-hegemonic could be posited as a silent endorsement of hegemonic domination.

Within CCNC-TO's practices there is a contentiousness that runs counter to Taylor's philosophical model of recognition politics and Day's conceptualization of anti-hegemonic forms of organizing. CCNC-TO's acts of ethno-racial organizing shows that recognition does not neatly occur between subaltern and dominant parties, and it shows that resistance can come in the form of participation. As shown by the example of the Public Forum, various kinds of community organizing conducted by CCNC-TO demonstrate that the everyday practice of anti-hegemonic resistance can occur in many multi-faceted ways not easily fitting with Taylor nor Day's models. Day's idea of a politics of the act (e.g., Independent Media Centres) cannot simply be the sole property of newer social movements who he casts as intuitively comprehending conventional political participation as flawed and antiquated practices that cannot exist in today's political climate (Day 2004: 732). Until reformation or revolution can once more become legitimate options it is a politics of the act, according to Day, that will sustain us through the current lack of political options (Day 2004: 733-34).

Authors such as Homi Bhabba have taken on the position that re-spatialized notions like "interstitial frameworks of culture" are frameworks of analysis that have eclipsed or replaced earlier analytic frameworks such as class or nation (Bhabba 1994). Are Taylor and Day's frameworks of analysis eclipsed by the realities of current community political practice? Perhaps the idea of "political demand for recognition" does not fully fit with the way political organizing, action, and demand actually happen on the ground level of activist organizing. In terms of the representation of CCNC-TO's "fundamental defining characteristics," it tends towards being heterogeneously composed of a very young board, which is unusual in the context of volunteer boards, who represent an older and inactive general membership. In part, the current leadership of this ethno-racial community is comprised of a dozen or so Chinese-Canadian board members, many of whom are uneasy with being "representative" or accountable to their assumed ethno-racial group or to stereotypical values of Chinese-ness that may be assumed to be present. That

is, some members are involved because they believe in anti-racist organizing, and can put their reservations concerning stereotype aside, but this does not mean their conflict is resolved. The reality of how meetings at CCNC-TO unfold and how it gets things done helter skelter is an example of a heterogeneous or uneven and contingent political practice that do not easily fit with the frameworks offered by Taylor or Day. The notion of a coherent and homogeneous politics of recognition, under which a minority group organizes, does not apply to the manner by which CCNC-TO operates and/or is constituted. Taylor's remarks concerning an identity that is shaped by the general population's mis-recognition does not fit with the composition and internal processes by which CCNC-TO understands itself or practices its politics. Taylor's thesis of mis-recognition is correct to focus on the issue of distortion and the damage it creates, but the example of CCNC-TO and its working relationship with institutional forms of recognition (i.e. municipal mechanisms for collaboration and consultation) show that recognition can also act as a form of active identity containment or misrecognition.

Commenting on the development of a politics of nationalist movements Taylor assumes that the recognition pursued on behalf of subaltern groups must necessarily mean that the organizing is itself already coherent or undisputed. But what if these "fundamental defining characteristics" are themselves contested by the anti-racism practiced by recognition-demanding organizations like CCNC-TO? What if the internal contestation and fight over "fundamental defining characteristics" were actually an important component of what drives subaltern self-representation and/or participation in the larger sphere of ethno-racial representation? If the re-settlement process is itself a distorting and distorted process (because distortion arises "from physical and mental displacement arising from, say, immigration) , then this deformation cannot be rectified through the simple recognition of the other made by a dominant group—leveraged on behalf of the other by a subaltern political group (CCNC-TO). As well, if the subaltern group is not coherent, or inherently incoherent, then what are the chances for a coherent recognition? The 2006 census informs us that half of all Torontonians were born outside of Canada, of which over a million were born in Asia. This simple immigration data helps remind us of how difficult it is to demographically or politically identify the ethno-racial dominant group to which theories of domination and resistance refer. And it speaks to the complexity of community in which CCNC-TO operate on a daily basis.

Taylor and Day's descriptions of the political actor or their activism do not entirely fit with the example of CCNC-TO. The conceptualizations are narrower than what is occurring in the day to day practice of organizations like CCNC-TO. In generalizing and speculating on the constitution of this political subject, their descriptions demonstrate that the real everyday practices of the political actor or community activist do not always fit within the logic of the model. Taylor's modeling of a politics of recognition as a valid response to being wounded and distorted by mis-recognition is based on the tacit assumption that identification is a rigid and constant self-identity and understanding. As a theory it helps solidify the conception that minority members have a natural and universal voice by virtue of their minoritization. In the case of CCNC-TO, the precarity and struggle for organizational survival and legitimacy and the complicated internal/external relations between board members , members-at-large, and public illustrate that ethno-racial identification and group politicization is much more varied and complex than this macro model of recognition would allow.

The argument in this paper has pursued two goals. First, it has sought to describe the activities that CCNC-TO has conducted this past year to give the framework of ethno-racial organizing a very localized definition of what is conducted in its name. It illustrates how a

specific local community ethno-racial political identification and its activities are leveraged in the effort to build community capacity for political demand. Second, by looking at a specific activity from this past year, it unpacks and analyzes the way anti-racist advocacy can be limited in its overall success. As a consequence, anti-racism is often constrained and contained. The public forum has been used as an illustration of CCNC-TO's practices of outreach and mobilization and shows that its outreach is contained by the way in which CCNC-TO is funded, by the way its resources are deployed, and by the limits of community political participation.

Some would assume that the subject who acts is not a "free subject" who acts, but that they are temporary manifestations of power articulated through a social subjection. Although this paper has sought to show the complex manner by which participation can be understood and experienced as co-option, it would be wrong to propose that anti-racist organizations merely service existing systems of state power and control. By acting through the local level of community building and outreach activities, CCNC-TO's practice of anti-racism does have a considerable effect. CCNC-TO's activity is useful in building up community capacity or civil society and in demonstrating—in however a marginal manner—local community concern and oversight. However, on the level of interacting with government structure (i.e. the participation in official consultations and collaborations) this participation has less direct effect on policy or practice of government than it has in ensuring that these relations endure and are reproduced into the future.

Since this paper conceives of state government as being a partner in the larger and dispersed enterprise of governance it does not simply propose that the state dominates community-based organizations. The key issue of how to represent the institutional or hegemonic is critical because the activity and presence of hegemony and reification are wholly present and actively practicing themselves within grassroots community-based organization. It cannot be simply imagined or portrayed as an external structure circumspecting community practice. Although the practices of the City of Toronto are clearly state practices, it is unclear where and when those "state" practices end. A state exists, but the extra-state and internally subjected practices of governance also exist in the reproduction of community and organized resistance. It is the interaction that needs to be analyzed and unpacked. Furthermore, Taylor and Day's work helps illustrate that CCNC-TO's social justice activity does not easily fit within either a discourse of recognition or a politics of demand.

In the case of a social and political practice of race and anti-racism, political activism itself produces complicated and nuanced ways by which racialization is encouraged to grow and foment. It is not just the practice of racism that produces a discourse of race. Both sides become more developed as the discourse grows. CCNC-TO's work in the form of outreach and mobilization (e.g., community forums) is already conceptualized within existing parameters of an ethno-racial practice of advocacy. It is a conceptualization acting as an institutional limit within an established discursive practice. Foucault's dictum that a discourse seeks only to generate and expand more discourse matches the manner in which the practice of organizing for political change becomes translated into an institutionalized discourse of community activism (Foucault 20). And yet, regardless of the expansiveness of discourse, the local production of racial discourse is strengthened by its linkages to many other institutions and institutionalizations. In this sense of scale or magnitude, Foucault's notion of discursive expansion becomes less useful because the neutral representation of discourse cannot comment on the unequal expansion of discourse. It is not equal because the expansion privileges a governance that is based on an instrumentalization of civic activity and anti-oppression

discourse. An expansion that helps contain anti-racist activities in the moment of its articulation. Although such discursive activity is productive and expansive of new techniques of self and governance, discursive growth is not a neutral growth. The discursive activity is dominated by the power of local and institutional practices. These practices both erode and incorporate the power produced by “grassroots” organizations who participate through a discourse of governance institutionalized as community participation. The produced subjects of third sector discourse are taken into account and “inserted into a system of utility” rather than having an opportunity to act in a disruptive manner to the discourse of advocacy or as one that challenges the internal regulation and rendering of resistance into forms of institutional and consultative community social justice activism (Foucault 24). But it is an incomplete insertion that allows for the possibility of resistance and the everyday.

This paper proposes that advocacy’s power can never catch up to the power of the public, private and third sector’s expansion and dispersal of governmentality because the power relationship is not indexed or adjusted as a discourse of governance grows. It is forever an unequal development. As social justice and anti-racism mandates are filtered through a discourse of municipal social and community planning it is not merely a neutral expansion. Rather, the filtering alters the textual and lived discourse of the community organization and the members of which it is comprised. Similarly, public and third sector governance entities and their civil, private and non-profit servants are also colonized by new terms of reference and initiatives that arrive from outside civil bureaucracy. It is a simultaneous dilution and excitation of local and institutional practices. Although it may be at times a two-way street, it is much more frequently a joint co-production of ethno-racial and state-friendly practices.

CCNC-TO’s work is more than just a practice of demand or recognition. The political practice and engagement of CCNC-TO is a mobilization and outreach, community building, social planning, and institution and capacity building practice all wrapped in one. These practices of institutional building and community building are only partially reflected in the wording of a “politics of demand” and a “politics of recognition.” CCNC-TO indeed practices the kinds of politics described by Taylor and Day, hence their inclusion and use, but simultaneously they are practices that exceed their models. As practices that are situated within the everyday political parameters of municipal politics and the civil service structures of the City of Toronto these practices simultaneously excite and contain the political mobilization of race and racialization.

Day’s work is interesting in that he tries to map out a theory of political action by conceptually separating a politics of demand from a politics of the act. But CCNC-TO’s activity does not neatly fit into this characterization of action and demand. Day’s situation of political activities within the intellectual context of Gramsci and Laclau and Mouffe is also useful and productive, but the activity of CCNC-TO’s public forum also exceeds its characterization as simply an anti-hegemonic practice (Day 719). The example of the public forum, as an institutional and practical limit, demonstrates that CCNC-TO’s activity exceeds Day’s characterization of a politics of demand as a mere symptom of anti-hegemonic containment. And the forum also shows us that CCNC-TO’s anti-racism community forum is simultaneously a resistance *and* a dispersed tactic of governance. This simultaneity also acts as a critique of Taylor’s framing of recognition as a necessary social good.

Day’s proposal that a politics of demand can never be more than just counter-hegemonic infers that capitalist neo-liberal governance in its totality cannot be resisted by the conventional resistance as conceptualized by Day. But CCNC-TO’s practices and commitments (as demonstrated by the public forum) exceeds those parameters. In this manner, the limits of the

terminology of a “politics of demand” cannot be successfully applied to the activity of CCNC-TO. CCNC-TO is involved in a nexus of mobilization, outreach, skills building, leadership training, counter institutional building, resettlement advocacy and local empowerment. These are specific and peculiar politics of demand that fall outside of Day’s characterization. Perhaps CCNC-TO illustrates that there is a third practice whose government/governance is subtly and paradoxically resisted in the moment of CCNC-TO’s subjection and participation in governance. Although it could be true that newer social movements engaging in anarchic forms of organizing and action are more relevant or successful than the older models of anti-hegemonic advocacy, it is also true that CCNC-TO’s activity illustrates that there are other forms of action and demand that fall outside of this categorization.

The example of the public forum and its relationship to academic research is an intimate and very real illustration of how social science participates in governance practices as it directly reaches into a community and transforms subjects into research objects. Research and representation connects the local and specific to a larger nexus of institutional and hegemonic knowledge production and practical urban management. For example, population discourse, statistics, demography, and urban planning (i.e. bio-power) concern themselves with the population of “otherness” through commonly established terms of reference (e.g. immigrant, newcomer, Chinese-Canadian, Asian). As race is produced into studies, reports and educational frameworks it is being transformed into a normative discourse (e.g. Ornstein Report). This practice is also involved in self-patrol because participation in the existing discourse also means that the participation is invested in a legitimation and naturalization of those terms of reference.

By acting to mobilize a community around the issue of anti-racism and resettlement issues CCNC-TO organized a public forum that both activated and de-mobilized its participants. The forum itself serves as a reminder of how the political and social mobilization around a community issue may become a de-mobilizing force. Taylor’s notion of recognition and Day’s notion of a politics of demand/act help illustrate some of the ways by which political theory conceptualizes community activity. But they also help illustrate how CCNC-TO’s activity pushes against and confronts the conceptual boundaries of such description. CCNC-TO’s forum demonstrates that the institutional and practical unfolding of racialization and the way political resistance is deliberately mounted through ethno-racial community-based practices are activities that challenge notions of political recognition and demand. However, simultaneously, such practices also produce incorporative relations that contribute to organizational exhaustion and ethno-racial containment.

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