

Struggling for Legal Status: Mainland Chinese Mobilization in Canada¹

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Abstract

Between the end of 1993 and the spring of 1994, about 5000 Mainland Chinese rejected refugee (MCR) claimants mobilized themselves in Canada to lobby the Canadian government to make a special policy for them so that they could be considered for landed immigration status. The mobilization, launched by the Mainland Chinese Refugee Organization (MCRO), won wide sympathy and support from the Chinese community and mainstream society in Canada. The MCRs stated their goals and demands through Chinese ethnic media and mainstream media, started a dialogue with the Canadian government and even staged a protest in front of the Parliament Buildings in

Ottawa. On July 7, 1994, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada issued a policy, known as the Deferred Removal Orders Class (DROC) program, designed for claimants in similar situations.

In this paper, we examine the process of the movement, analyze its features, and discuss its effects on the Chinese diaspora community in Canada. The movement emerged out of the "fear" of a group of Chinese claimants, caused by the threat of being deported from Canada. The success of the movement was based on the mobilization of ethnic and social resources by the MCRO.

Introduction

We live in a rapidly changing and globalized world within which the transnational mass movements of population have become more popular than ever before. As a specific phenomenon that developed with the growth of state hegemony in the 15th century, refugee experience is hardly new (Donnelly and Hopkins 1993, 2). In the contemporary world complex population movement, refugees are a growing element associated with the new world order that followed the end of Cold War (Richmond 1994, xi). It has been an international problem that is increasingly challenging concerned scholars all over the world since World War II.

Mainland Chinese Refugee (MCR) claimants are by no means a new phenomenon in the refugee world; the numbers of MCR claimants entering North America, particularly Canada, substantially increased after the Tiananmen Tragedy of June 4, 1989, but this is just the latest of a number of refugee groups who have entered North America historically (Tian et al.,

1994). Due to Canada's prosperity in comparison with China and the perceived opportunity for a better life, more and more MCRs chose Metro Toronto as their destination. According to the statistics released by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB), from January, 1984 to June, 1993, 8,992 Mainland Chinese had made refugee claims in Canada. Based on the reports in local Chinese newspapers, it is estimated that about 2,500 MCRs live in Metro Toronto.

Larger numbers of MCRs coming to Canada did not occur until recent years, as will be described. The reforms and the "open door" policy in China in the last two decades has made the Chinese more exposed to the West than ever before. The desire to emigrate far exceeds the available resources, resulting in large numbers of illegal emigrants and refugees. Once they have left China, these illegal emigrants and refugees become members of the diaspora Chinese community or overseas Chinese community, which has now reached a total world population of 50 million (Fu 1994). In Canada, although some of them subsequently qualify as *bona fide* refugees according to Canadian refugee policies and are permitted to stay permanently, most of them fail to meet the Geneva convention criteria. Some were subse-

quently allowed to stay in Canada temporarily under the special order by the Minister of Employment and Immigration Canada in the Summer of 1989 (Gilad 1990, 314). Up to 1994, there were about 4,500 such rejected MCR claimants cross Canada (Winnipeg Free Press, April 19, 1994, A4). Due to the uncertainty of their legal status in Canada, they were facing the danger to be deported back to China. This fact made them realize that they must mobilize themselves and struggle for their legal status collectively.

Collective Behaviour theory defines "fear," "crisis," or "panic" as one of the important determinants of collective behaviour. According to Strauss:

The conditions of panic can be roughly classified into three categories: physiological, psychological, and sociological ... A student seeking a genuinely effective statement of panic causation would attempt to find what is essential to these diverse conditions and tie these essential conditions into a dynamic statement of the development and outbreak of the panic occurrence. (Strauss 1944, 324)

In the case of the MCR movement, the notion of "fear" is a psychological one and it has had significant impact on the emergence of the movement. It is "fear" that brought all the Chinese re-

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jected refugees together. The movement started when this group of people shared the same fear or felt threatened by the "inevitable expectancy of danger." As a Chinese saying goes: "*tong bing xiang lian* (fellow sufferers commiserate with each other)." The threat made these people gather together and start certain actions in order to fight for their common interests or safety (not to be deported). Here, their shared identity of being "in the same boat" was reflected in their collective goals:

We assume that people can and do care about collective goals and act on them as if they were personal benefits. We take the goals as subjectively determined and often linked to important elements of people's self-identities. This assumption is in line with virtually all available empirical evidence about collective action participants. (Morris and Mueller 1992, 252)

Having the same "fear" and "collective goals" in mind, Chinese rejected refugee claimants started their actions. They mobilized support from society and organized mass meetings to make their situations understood and their voices heard, resulting in a protest movement led by these rejected MCR claimants.

Mobilization is an important process in any movement. It has a direct impact on the outcome of a movement. How did they assess the situation, what strategies did they make accordingly, what disadvantages did they have and how did they manage to overcome them? These are issues facing the MCRO's leadership of the movement:

... Social networks providing group coherence and strong horizontal links are key facilitators of collective action. These links promote the development of group identity and group solidarity. They also foster communication and encourage the development of organizational skills and leadership experience. (Carroll 1992, 40)

The establishment of the Mainland Chinese Refugees Organization

(MCRO) played a crucial role in this movement. It not only provided to the Chinese rejected refugees a sense of belonging in a foreign society but also made the Canadian government and society understand this group.

Resource Mobilization Theory also stresses the importance of leadership in the social movement. "Leaders identify and define grievances, develop a sense of groupness, devise strategies, and aid mobilization by reducing its costs and taking advantages of opportunities for collective action" (Carroll 1992, 40). According to Oliver, there are two kinds of technologies; production technologies and mobilization technologies (Oliver 1992, 255). Production technologies are sets of knowledge about ways of achieving goals, such as lobbying, demonstrations, strikes, or attending a public hearing. Mobilization technologies are sets of

Mobilizing money can take any forms, as long as it is raised. Mobilizing time involves more strategies, depending on who does the mobilization and who is mobilized. It requires being willing to ask people to do things and knowing something about the people one is trying to mobilize. The personal link is very important. It also requires asking people who are known to be interested and can make a contribution to the movement.

Background

The June 4th Tiananmen Incident in China caused strong responses from around the world. Canada was one of the countries which fiercely protested against the incident. The Canadian government under Mulroney immediately issued an administrative moratorium on removals of the rejected MCRs claimants in Canada.

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knowledge about ways of accumulating the resources (such as time and money) necessary for production technologies. Organization leaders' understanding and analysis of the situation directly affect their mobilization strategies, thus influencing the outcome of the movement. They balanced the two technologies in a society foreign to them. They focused their "production technologies" exclusively on the Canadian government so that more energies could be spent on "mobilization technologies."

Time and money as resources are the two major components in the "mobilization technologies." As Oliver states:

Money is perfectly fungible; it doesn't matter from whom it comes or in what amounts ... Time is very different ... It always matters who is participating, and a time contribution can never be physically removed from the giver. (Oliver 1992, 257)

Two implications followed: first, these Chinese would be granted landed immigrant status in Canada, as long as they held a valid visa; second, Chinese, who did not hold a valid visa in Canada or had illegally entered Canada, would not be deported back to China. Instead, they would be allowed to apply for Convention refugee status. This policy had a great impact on the Chinese in Canada at that time. For those who held valid visas, no matter whether they were student visas, visitor's visas or even a transit visas, were all eligible to apply for landed immigrant status and often it was granted (cf. Liu 1995). All the others who did not hold valid visas, applied for conventional refugee status (cf. Tian et al. 1994).

By the end of 1992, there were about 8000 Chinese conventional refugee claimants in Canada, mainly in large cities such as Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. The panel of the Immigra-

tion and Refugee Board (IRB) made its decision on the basis of its knowledge of China and its views on the claimants' claims, in accordance with the Convention on the Status of Refugees. Among all the claimants, about 30 percent of applications were approved; while the majority were refused. In total, about 5000 Chinese claimants were rejected. Rejected claimants subsequently either appealed to the federal court, or applied to stay on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

While the application for refugee status was being assessed by IRB, the claimant would get a wide range of government assistance such as legal aid, living allowance, temporary medical assistance, employment service, free ESL education, occupational training, interest-free transportation loans and other social assistance. It was estimated that the Federal government would spend up to \$50 000 per refugee claimant in order to complete the full process.

The Canadian refugee policy was seen as the most generous in the world. The perceived "pull" factor might be overwhelming. An accepted MCR claimant told one of the authors:

When I managed to escape from China after June 4, I went to Austria to apply for refugee status. You know what, I was put into prison for months to wait for a hearing. I basically lived with prisoners and was badly treated. I couldn't get good food and was beaten twice by the policemen. My personal belongings were stolen ... Finally, I got help and came to Canada. There is no comparison in terms of how the two governments treat me as a refugee. I am glad that I can live here. I am a Christian now. (interview, Dec. 28, 1994)

A rejected MCR said:

When our group got to Bolivia, we really intended to settle there and find chances to do some business. After a while, we found out that the economy was bad in the country and there was no money. In the meantime, we were told that it would be very easy to get status in Canada. We then thought there might be good

chances there, since Canada is a developed country. Therefore, we came here and applied for refugee status. (interview, Jan. 15, 1995)

As the economy in Canada was experiencing a severe recession in the early 1990s, Canadians had mixed feelings about the numbers of refugee claimants who were "flocking" to the country. While many people were proud and happy to be able to welcome people fleeing persecution from other parts of the world, there were also strong voices against existing Canadian refugee policy. Complaints were that current refugee policy was taken advantage of by people who were not genuine refugees; government had spent too much of taxpayers' money on refugees, and claimants created instability in society owing to the increase of the crimes related to refugee claimants; there was a clearly negative sentiment toward refugee claimants in Canada.

It was in this social climate that a group of Chinese refugee claimants decided to setup their own organization, which was aimed at uniting all Chinese refugee claimants in Canada to better express their interests. Their intention was to help Chinese refugees better adapt to the society, use the organization as a means to take care of Chinese refugees, solve their common problems and, most important of all, to create a good image in the society. The initial idea of this organization was also to create a sense of belonging among Chinese refugees. In January 1992, the Mainland Chinese Refugee Organization (MCRO) was established, as a non-profit, and nongovernmental association.

The MCRO strongly advocated four principles: self-respect, self-love, self-strengthen (translated from Chinese, meaning: to build up confidence) and self-establish (translated from Chinese, it means self-reliance). They educated refugee claimants that they did have the right to get government welfare. However, they also taught that welfare was a burden on the government and Canadians did not like it. Therefore, refugees were advised that

they should get off welfare as soon as they could and try to make contributions to the society as taxpayers. The organization also strongly discouraged any involvement in crime. It was made clear to MCRs that the MCRO agreed that deportation was necessary for those who committed crimes or created any instability in Canada (Organization Charter 1992).

The MCRO organization was widely welcomed by Chinese refugee claimants. Letters came from many quarters of the country to support the organization. For example, a letter from Montreal reads:

In the situation of being discriminated against and attacked by the local media and "noted persons," it is absolutely necessary and significant for Chinese refugee claimants to have an organization of their own. Please receive my sincere respect to the organizers and leaders of the organization. We hope the organization will help us gain understanding from Canadian people. (letter, Dec., 1992, translated from Chinese)

The Movement

Toward the end of 1993 and early 1994, the issue of Chinese rejected refugee claimants became critical. Most of the Chinese refugee applications were turned down and the new government (Liberal) started to reconsider the administrative moratorium on removals of rejected Chinese claimants. Both Chinese and English media were reporting the relevant information and implied that deportation of Mainland Chinese rejected refugee claimants was possible.

The Toronto Star reported that:

Immigration Minister Sergio Marchi says that he has ruled out the idea of an amnesty for 4500 rejected Chinese refugee claimants who have been allowed to stay in Canada since the 1989 Tiananmen massacre. The ban on deportation to China is now being reviewed by the immigration department. (*The Toronto Star*, March 25, 1994)

The Toronto Sun read:

Marchi refused to say what the government intends to do, but noted that

other countries have returned Chinese who claimed refugee status after Tiananmen Square. "People have been sending the Chinese failed refugee applications from around the world back to China," he told reporters. (*The Toronto Sun*, March 23, 1994)

The Shin Tao Daily read:

Critics say that (Canadian) government has sacrificed the interests of this group of Chinese (rejected refugee claimants) for the benefit of politics. Prime minister Jean Chrétien has planned to visit China in the coming fall.

A special group from the Immigration ministry is contacting the Chinese embassy in Ottawa, discussing the issue of sending Chinese rejected refugee claimants back to China ... Marchi said that (human rights) situation in China has improved. "My colleague, (director of Asia and Pacific department, Foreign Affairs) Chen Zhuoyu, a major promoter for democracy in China, admitted that the situation in China had improved." (*Shin Tao Daily*, March 23, 1994, translated from Chinese)

Ming Pao Daily read:

Mr. Roger White, the spokesperson of immigration minister, Marchi, said that according to the immigration and refugee board, the 4500 Chinese are not refugees. "There is not enough evidence that they will be persecuted." (*Ming Pao Daily*, March 14, 1994, translated from Chinese)

Reports from the media had tremendous impact on Mainland Chinese rejected refugee claimants. The fear of being deported back to China soon spread widely among them, particularly by April of 1994, when they received the "removal order" from Ministry of Immigration and Employment.

This fear served as the basic motivation for the later protest movement. As noted above, the commonly shared "fear" drew them closer to the MCRO organization, thus making the mobilization possible.

The MCRO committees carefully examined the situation of these rejected MCR claimants. On the one hand, it was found that most of them

had already stayed in Canada for 3-4 years. Some got married, remarried or had babies born here. However, they were in "limbo," hoping one day their immigration status would be granted. On the other hand, they did fear being deported. They knew that the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) would not react favourably to the Chinese who have been recognized by foreign countries as refugees or who have applied to be recognized as such. The claim of refugee status by any citizen of the PRC outside the country might be treated as traitorous behaviour. Once a person is so labelled, he or she might be subjected to a series of visible or invisible persecution, and it would be difficult for him or her to return to conventional life. Moreover, his or her relatives might be negatively affected (Tian 1995). The MCRO leaders analyzed the situation from the following aspects:

The Economic Conditions: Canada has been experiencing economic recession for four years continuously. The unemployment rate had reached a historical height. The Liberal Party in power could hardly change the situation in a short time, owing to the impact of the recession in the whole western world.

The Social Climate: Because of the economic recession, there was a strong anti-immigrant voice in the society. Many thought that new immigrants had taken Canadian people's jobs. Refugees created social instability. They committed crimes, robberies, shooting police officers, etc. The sentiment against immigrants in the society was obvious, let alone against rejected refugee claimants

The Political Climate: The Reform Party was strongly criticizing the existing refugee policy. It complained that the government had been too generous to refugee claimants. Too much of taxpayer's money had been wasted on refugees, in terms of welfare, medical care, free language/job training, etc.

The Situation in China: The economy in China was booming. The western world was strongly attracted by the huge market in China in the hope that

through the Chinese market, recession could be brought to an end. Moreover, as China became more open, the Chinese government started to release some of the political prisoners in order to better its image. It also loosened the regulations to let people get out of China.

These factors might have led to some misconceptions among Canadians that there would be no dangers for the rejected refugee claimants to return to China. Besides, it is possible that the Canadian government would try to please the Chinese government by sacrificing the interest of this group of rejected refugee claimants in order to gain a strong foothold in the expanding Chinese market (interviewed on Feb. 10, 1995).

Hence, the MCRO decided to make the following responses:

First, they wrote a long report to the government, comprehensively analysing the actual situation of the 4,500 Chinese rejected refugee claimants. By giving the government a full picture of these people, they wanted the government as well as the society to understand that the Chinese rejected refugee claimants were not a burden to Canadian society. MCRO found that most of them had been off welfare a long time and had made contributions to the society. It recommended that the government consider a special policy to grant the group of Chinese landed immigrant status on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

Secondly, they mobilized support to win sympathy from all parts of the society: Chinese community, mainstream society, media, churches, and politicians. The MCRO also strongly advocated to its members to abide by Canadian constitutions and laws, to respect different cultures and to establish themselves. It reasserted the four principles so as to create and project a positive/desirable image of themselves in the society.

Taking into consideration the nuances as presented, the MCRO decided to choose the Canadian government as the sole object for their "production technologies," and based their mobili-

zation on presenting their case. In the meantime, they spent more energies on "mobilization technologies," covering communities, media, influential persons.

As the MCRO implemented its plan, a financial shortage appeared. Although the organization charged a five dollar membership fee (most of them voluntarily paid much more), it was unlikely that MCRO could carry out a research report on the characteristics of the MCRs with its limited funds. They applied to various funding agencies such as the United Way, Metro Toronto government, Provincial government and even the Federal government. None of their applications were successful. The committee decided to raise funds among its own members. The MCRO charged \$500 per person (compared to an average fee of \$1,200 that was being charged by inexpensive lawyers) from two hundred of its members and promised in turn to sort out their documentation, prepare them in prescribed form and then present them to the immigration department. They hoped that the 200 typical cases would be treated collectively, and landed immigration status could be granted to them first. The committee hired lawyers, immigration consultants and translators to prepare the 200 cases.

In the meantime, it started the research and circulated questionnaires for rejected refugee claimants to answer. However, MCRO confronted one of the most difficult problems relating to the prevailing "biases" against MCRs from within the Chinese Community. As one of the MCRO's leaders said:

Strong discrimination first came from within the Chinese community. According to Mainland Chinese immigrants, the very fact that Chinese refugee claimants applying for refugee status had made Chinese people lose face in foreign countries. They thought that these people took advantage of the Canadian refugee policy and got too much benefit from it. They also worried that the refugee problem could make the Canadian government tighten its rules to let

immigrants' relatives come to Canada, especially at the time when there was a strong social sentiment against immigrants and there was the stereotype that refugee claimants had cost too much of taxpayers' money and they committed lots of crimes.

Some Chinese who came from Hong Kong and Taiwan were opposed to assisting refugee claimants. They were proud of themselves for coming from capitalist or semi-capitalist systems. They thought any one coming from Mainland China had been brainwashed. In their eyes, Mainland Chinese were potential radicals and, therefore, they were not suitable to the capitalist system. As to the Chinese rejected refugee claimants, they were horrible. Their various illegal ways of entering Canada reminded them of "Red Guards", of Cultural Revolution in China. Certainly, the stereotype in media also reinforced their impression.

Canadian people usually didn't distinguish Chinese refugee claimants from other refugee claimants. They looked upon them as a whole. Therefore, any of their complaints about refugee claimants would have a negative impact on this Chinese group. (interview, Feb. 20, 1955)

In the Chinese community, MCRO was discriminated against in many ways. They were not allowed to participate in any activities with other organizations, even if they offered funds. MCRO members could only attain the most menial work in Chinatown. Employers gave them cash-payment, which was usually lower than the legal minimum pay. Chinese refugee claimants were in a "take it or leave it" situation. They knew they could not find jobs in mainstream society because of their limited command of English; on the other hand, if they complained about the employers in China Town, they would not get jobs. Therefore, they had to endure all the hardships.

In order to change people's impression toward Chinese refugee claimants, the MCRO adopted the following strategies:

1. They went to churches and talked to the pastors where church people offered them sympathy, food and even places where the MCRO could hold meetings. The committee often arranged lectures and workshops for its members. Lawyers and legal advisors were invited to introduce immigration and refugee affairs and legal issues. The "four principles" were emphasized repeatedly in order to improve the public image of Mainland Chinese refugee claimants. News reporters and journalists were also invited to attend meetings and lectures.
2. They contacted influential overseas Chinese leaders to solicit help. Among them, Mr. Hong Shi-zhong, vice chair of Metro-Toronto's National Day Committee and chair of Refugee Information Centre, commented as follows:

Chinese refugee claimants accounted for only 5% of the whole refugee population in Canada. It is very wrong to think that Chinese refugees have disgraced Chinese people. When my grandfather went to Philippine, his situation was much worse than the refugees today. However, the local Chinese there welcomed people like him. Two generations later, we are all very successful. My father was successful too. We are all Chinese and we should help each other. In my eyes, refugees are just like immigrants, only of different kind. They should be respected and receiving help. I have noticed that people scold and discriminate against Chinese refugees. This is not acceptable. It is against the policy and the interest of Canada. Our country always welcomes refugees coming here to start their new lives. We have this reputation in the world ... Chinese people are most hard-working and understanding. Every one can see that most of the Chinese refugee claimants have got off welfare and established themselves. Lots of refugees are doing the most menial work, overtime and getting low pay ... The leaders of MCRO are all very respectable ... I am very impressed by the four-self principles (sic) the MCRO advocates. I think this is a big contribution the MCRO

has made to the Canadian society. I noticed that since the four-self principles (sic) were advocated, the number of refugee claimants on welfare has decreased by 5-6 percent. (interview, Feb. 15, 1995)

In addition to mobilizing support in the Chinese community, the MCRO also organized its members to do voluntary work for the members of parliament. They made phone calls for the Members of parliament to Chinese-speaking people and helped the MP's in elections in the Chinese community. As to the government, the MCRO sent letters to express their concerns and met with Immigration Department officials. After one year's effort, the MCRO's mobilization work altered the once negative public impression of Chinese rejected refugee claimants, and the major research project regarding MCRs was completed. In January,

bate over this issue. The Parliamentary Secretary promised that the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration would comprehensively consider the whole issue in its deliberations. The protest was also widely supported and won sympathy and letters of support both from the Chinese community and from prominent figures in mainstream society.

Achievement

The Canadian Immigration Minister issued a new policy that affected this group of rejected refugee (Chinese) claimants, as well as those from other countries who were in similar situation, on July 7, 1994. According to the new policy known as the Deferred Removal Orders Class (DROC) the rejected refugee claimants would get a second chance to apply as long as they had stayed in Canada for three years,

Some Chinese who came from Hong Kong and Taiwan were opposed to assisting refugee claimants. They were proud of themselves for coming from capitalist or semi-capitalist systems. In their eyes, Mainland Chinese were potential radicals and, therefore, they were not suitable to the capitalist system.

1994, the MCRO leaders visited Ottawa and sent copies of their report with over one hundred supporting letters from organizations to the Immigration Minister and the Prime Minister.

The Protest

By April 1994, no response had been received. In the meantime, fear of being deported back to China among MCRs became stronger. The MCRO organized a protest at the Ottawa Parliament Buildings on April 18, 1994, the day Chinese Vice-Premier Zhou Jiahua visited Ottawa. During the protest, many representatives from different organizations participated and aired their support in addition to Mainland Chinese refugee claimants from Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal. After the protest, seven representatives of the protesters were invited to Parliament to hear the de-

had been paying tax for over half a year and had not committed any crimes in Canada.

Despite some other specific problems, the policy was widely welcomed by the 4,500 rejected Chinese claimants as well as the Chinese community. The MCRO decided that the policy basically met their original goal and expressed satisfaction over the government's response to their work.

The policy served to end the limbo status of rejected refugee claimants on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. Community leaders applauded MCRO's efforts. The Immigration Ministry recognized MCRO's work, especially the research report. With this new policy, the fear of being deported for many of these rejected MCR claimants no longer existed. The mainland Chinese rejected refugee claimants' movement gradually came to an end.

Conclusion

MCRs' mobilization of social acceptance and legal status in Canada is a very successful ethno-political mobilization. Ethnic political mobilization constructed by Adam (1984), Nagata (1981), Olzak (1983), and Zenner (1988), explains clearly how MCRO could take common interests as the keynote around which to organize MCRs, and took ethnicity as the base through which to persuade the Chinese communities to support them in pursuit of collective benefits. Ethnicity played a role as "a potential for action and mobility" (Nagata 1981, 89). However, it must be pointed out that in this case, because of sub-ethnic conflicts (Tian 1995, 1993), mobilization engineered by MCRO had to extend resources beyond ethnicity to acquire political strength.

According to Gladney (1991), a group's identity and loyalty only become valued "in dialogical interaction with sociopolitical context. Just as the Self is often defined in terms of the other, so ethnic groups coalesce in the context of relation and opposition" (ibid. 76-77). He stresses that social relations of power is the focus of attention in a dialogical approach to ethnicity (ibid.). Following Gladney, the MCR dialogue with Chinese communities and with government played a crucial role in their mobilization. Dialogue appeared an effective strategy in their adaptation to the Canadian society at the collective level (Tian 1995).

A wide variety of factors influences the success of an ethnic political mobilization. Two major factors should be stressed; the fear among MCRs and the role of the MCRO. The former was important as a determinant to initiate the movement; the latter brought the movement to a success. Leaders of MCRO showed their ability to organize and mobilize. They made a strategic decision to closely contact the government and keep it informed of MCRs' situations. As well, they were successful in mobilizing supports from social groups and important social persons (Oliver's theory of "mobilizing

time"). As to "mobilizing money," MCRO leaders realized the difficulties for them in a foreign society. Fortunately, they were able to solve the problem within the organization. The MCRO successfully made the voice of rejected Chinese refugee claimants heard in the larger society and successfully influenced the Canadian government to make a policy favourable to them.

Finally, it is important to point out that the success of the mainland Chinese rejected refugee claimants in persuading the Canadian Government to allow them to apply for landing is related to the MCRO's mobilization strategy, which was politically sensitive. In the context of Canada's attempts to secure "economic interest" in China, MCRO did not raise the issue of "human rights" in China. It suggested to the Canadian government that accepting these rejected refugee claimants would merely a humanitarian act rather than a statement on China's human rights. It argued that China's "face" with respect to her human rights was not challenged by accepting these rejected refugee claimants, nor it would have any impact on Canada's pursuit of its "economic interest in China" (see Tian 1995 for a detailed discussion). This rationalization fitted well with China's claim that "human rights" issues and "economic interests" should not be linked between trading nations ■

Notes

1. Initial work on this paper was presented by the authors at the Fourth Canadian Symposium on China at University of Toronto, Sept. 22-25, 1995. Authors gratefully acknowledge the critical review of this paper by Professor Lawrence Lam, Department of Sociology, York University.

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PATHS TO EQUITY

Cultural, Linguistic, and Racial Diversity in Canadian Early Childhood Education

by Judith K. Bernhard, Marie Louise Lefebvre, Gyda Chud and Rika Lange

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Paths to Equity is based on an extensive nationwide study of 77 childcare centres in Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver on the cultural, linguistic, and racial diversity in Canadian Early Childhood Education (ECE). The report presents the results this study on how the ECE system is responding to the increasing diversity of contemporary Canadian society.

A fully one third of teachers interviewed in this study responded, at the time of graduation from ECE programs, did not feel that they were well prepared to work effectively with children and parents from diverse backgrounds. In this ground-breaking study, the authors have addressed teachers' views on diversity in the education programs; parents difficulties in collaborating within the current education system; teachers' difficulties in understanding many "ethnic" parents; desire of many parents for better communication with staff, preferably in their own languages, and for more information about their individual children, and chances for effective input; and the evidence of some continuing problems with racism, irrespective of the good intentions of centre staff.

Paths to Equity will be of interest to ECE faculty, policy makers, centre supervisors and staff and others interested in the inclusion of diversity content in professional education programs.

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