

**Workshop: The Harper Era and Regional Dynamics in Canada - Relationship between Federal Legislative Developments and Regional Tensions**

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**The Harper Language Regime and Official Language Minorities in Canada**

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Abstract

*Since 2003, Canada has a new ‘tradition’ of publishing ‘roadmaps’ for its official languages every five years. These roadmaps add to the government’s vision and existing programmes for official languages by proposing priorities, targets and supplementary funding that support official languages and, especially, official language minority communities across Canada. We argue that language roadmaps are not neutral tools used for language planning but rather, are clear carriers of ideas and meaning about the Canadian language regime and political community. Since political communities are also linguistic political communities, language roadmaps are important as they express the ‘national’ understanding of language, defining how the state governs languages through choices informed by normative, institutional and administrative traditions.*

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**Introduction**

Since 2003, Canada has a new ‘tradition’ of publishing ‘roadmaps’ for its official languages every five years. We use the term roadmap to designate the plans for the promotion of official languages released by three successive federal governments: the Liberals’ *The Next Act: New Momentum for Canada’s Linguistic Duality Action Plan for Official Languages* (2003); the Conservatives’ *Roadmap for Canada’s Linguistic Duality: Acting for the Future 2008-2013* (2008); and the Conservatives’ *Education, Immigration, Communities: Roadmap for Canada’s Official Languages 2013-2018* (2013). These roadmaps add to the government’s vision and existing programmes for official languages by proposing priorities, targets and supplementary funding that support official languages and, especially, official language minority communities across Canada.

The aim of this paper is twofold. First, this paper discusses the three roadmaps with a special emphasis on the third one. In the context of a majority Conservative government that has made a certain number of controversial decisions in the area of official languages (appointing a unilingual English speaking General Auditor for a position which required official languages or a unilingual English speaking Supreme Court judge), we wish to better understand what the *Roadmap for Canada’s Official Languages 2013-2018* says about the Harper government’s vision for official languages. Our argument, in this paper, is that while the content of the first two roadmaps demonstrate more continuity than change, the 2013 roadmap shows a break with the trend and even with the concept of a roadmap while aligning with the current Conservative agenda.

Secondly, this paper seeks to further theorize the practice of language roadmaps. Little has been said in the literature on language policy-making and planning on the topic. Recently, the concept of language regime has helped further our understanding of how language policies are informed by state choices for governing languages, namely particular traditions, institutions and state-society relations (Cardinal, 2012; Cardinal and Normand, 2011; Cardinal and Sonntag, forthcoming). Building on this discussion, we propose a theoretical framework which conceives of language roadmaps as politicized instruments which governments use to implement their representation of language and political community. Thus, a roadmap is more than a neutral tool amongst other available tools. We argue that language roadmaps are a clear carrier of ideas and meaning about the Canadian language regime and political community. Thus our study of the government's language roadmaps will also emphasise the importance of looking at instruments of language policy-making and planning and how they are used to promote ideologies about the political community. This conceptualization is important because it provides new insights into the government's understanding of where it wants to take Canada's language regime and political community.

This paper will proceed in three parts: first, the key concepts of roadmap and Canada's language regime will be discussed in further detail; second, the three roadmaps will be reviewed and commented; third, the paper will underscore the way in which the 2013 roadmap undermines the way past roadmaps innovated in Canada's language regime. In conclusion, we will make some suggestions for further theorization of instruments of language policy-making and planning.

### **Conceptualizing Language Roadmaps**

Roadmaps are created and invoked in various situations, namely those related to development or conflict management. For instance, the term of roadmap for peace in the Middle East is often invoked and Sri Lanka's roadmap for peace included language measures. Since the 1990s, governments have published their own roadmaps for the promotion of minority or national languages.<sup>1</sup> In April 2013, the Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD) launched its own roadmap to preserve and promote all European languages almost at the same time as the third Canadian roadmap for Canada's Official Languages was published.

We could argue that the purpose of a language roadmap is the same as in any other roadmap, that it should promote stability, social cohesion and the protection of identities. However, the multiplication of language roadmaps requires special attention, given the concerns of many actors internationally for the survival of minority languages and linguistic diversity. Debates on globalization prompting calls for the promotion of linguistic diversity (Hamel 2011) may help to explain the increasing popularity of roadmaps in the area of language policy.

More specifically, in Canada, the language roadmaps are designed to help implement the government's obligations in the area of official language minority community (OLMC) vitality.

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<sup>1</sup> See for instance: the European Commission's Action plan, "Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity (2004-2006); S. Sonntag (forthcoming), "State Tradition and Language Regime in the United States: Time for Change?"

Roadmaps can also be used to advance language planning without language laws, as was the case in Wales with the 2003 Action plan for the future of the Welsh language.<sup>2</sup> The 2004 European action plan for the learning of languages and promotion of linguistic diversity is another example of a plan which intended to shape behavior in the area of multilingualism, a value of the European Union (see for instance Kraus 2011; Jostes 2007).

Thus far, language experts have commented on the contents of roadmaps, their impact or lack of monitoring (see for instance Williams 2007; Forgues 2013; Cardinal 2007). The fact that a language roadmap may be more than just another tool for language policy-making and planning has not yet been addressed. In this paper, we build on Lascoumes and Le Galès (2004)'s work on instruments in order to discuss roadmaps as specific instruments of public policy and not just as a better or a special tool for language planning. An instrument, according to Lascoumes and Le Galès carries values that transmit a particular interpretation of the societal context it seeks to regulate (p. 13). Therefore, an instrument is not purely technical, it is inherently political. Lascoumes and Le Galès suggest that instruments even operate as an institution as it can shape the behavior of actors, privilege the interests of some actors over others and channel a particular representation of the problems being addressed (Lascoumes and Le Galès 2004, p. 14 and 16). That roadmaps are value-driven might have been implicit for many students of language policy-making and planning.<sup>3</sup> What this paper does is provide a more explicit approach to discussing language roadmaps and any other 'tool' for implementing and promoting language policies as inherently political instruments.

Viewed through such a lens, a language roadmap invoked by the state should reflect and even attempt to influence the direction of its own language policies. Such an approach makes roadmaps of particular interest as they can also reveal different understandings of language in the public sphere. Jenson (1989) as well as Turgeon and Gagnon (2013) suggest that policy-makers are influenced by '(changing) representations of the political community'. Those representations can be reflected in adopted policies. Language is certainly an important area of public policy in Canada, one which has found its way into many debates about the 'real' nature of the country (McRoberts 2001). Thus, language roadmaps represent a particular understanding of language within a particular political community.

Characterizing language roadmaps as an instrument can then contribute to the study of language politics and public policy. Understanding roadmaps as more than a document but as an instrument informed by the perspectives of its developers that shapes language policy matters also helps move beyond language as solely an issue of identity but one of public policy without depoliticizing the issue. In essence, by adopting the instrument of the roadmap and transforming its content, governments are making a statement about the way they view and manage language as a public policy.

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<sup>2</sup> With the 1998 devolution process, the Welsh government brought forward an ambitious revitalisation plan, of which the 2003 Action plan was a component. Until recently, Welsh language matters were decided in Westminster. Since then, the Welsh government has moved forward with its own legislation, but the Action plan remains an important moment in the development of the Welsh language revitalisation programme.

<sup>3</sup> While her intent was not to theorize language roadmaps, Sonntag's chapter on US language roadmaps in Cardinal and Sonntag (forthcoming) is a good example of the way roadmaps can be linked to a particular language regime. See also Forgues, 2013.

Finally, what links the concept of language roadmaps with the idea of political community is that of language regime. Cardinal and Sonntag (forthcoming) suggest that ‘a language regime is an analytical tool which explains that language policy choices are made by the state in order to govern linguistic diversity within a particular normative, institutional and administrative context’. They further explain that it ‘reflects a particular hegemony’ which involves making language policies acceptable to the majority. Finally, a language regime ‘is characterized by particular paths and patterns of change overtime’. Those practices continue to inform language policies today. We could add that they refer to the role of language as a marker of the political community.

Cardinal and Normand (2011) further explain that there are four dimensions to a language regime: legal; symbolic; operational or administrative; and governance. Instruments to implement a language policy fit well in the administrative dimension of a language regime. However, given our politicized approach to instruments, language policies themselves could also be viewed through the same lens. In fact, roadmaps might complement policies or as in the case of Wales mentioned above, they can also be viewed as a way to compensate for a lack of policy.

While Canada’s language regime has been in development prior to Confederation (1867), the country did not have any explicit language policies for the promotion of its official language until 1969, let alone language roadmaps. In fact, prior to 1969, most language policies in Canada, especially in the provinces, were prohibitive to say the least.<sup>4</sup> Both the federal level (1840 Act of Union) and the provincial levels (Manitoba 1890; Ontario 1912) saw attempts to limit or nullify the use of French officially and in public funded schools. There were also some attempts at accommodating linguistic duality in Canada as expressed in article 133 of the Canadian Constitution which recognizes the use of the English and French languages in the institutions of Parliament and documents of the courts.<sup>5</sup> From 1867 to the 1960s it can be said that Canada’s language regime was repressive with some elements of tolerance or political compromise – what politicians referred to as *British fair play*.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The pre-1969 period of language discrimination in Canada has largely been documented, see for instance Auger (2001); Berger (1971).

<sup>5</sup> Article 133 of the Canadian Constitution states: “Either the English or the French Language may be used by any Person in the Debates of the Houses of the Parliament of Canada and the Houses of the Legislature of Quebec; and both those Languages shall be used in the respective Records and Journals of those Houses; and either of those Languages may be used by any Person or in any Pleading or Process in or issuing from any Court of Canada established under this Act, and in or from all or any of the Courts of Quebec” (Justice Canada, 2013 <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-7.html>).

<sup>6</sup> *British fair play* refers to cooperation/sacrifice in the interest of the common good. For instance, Senator O. Turgeon references this convention in relation to minority language rights in Canada:

[...] la nation Canadienne possède deux langues [...] Oui, je le dis, le répète, et toujours avec foi : la culture des nombreuses vertus des races anglaise et française, fera bientôt disparaître les quelques nuages qui obscurcissent encore certains points du ciel canadien. Et, alors, nous vivrons dans une atmosphère pure, salubre, vivifiante : heureux mélange de bonhomie canadienne et acadienne, d’affection française, de *British fair play*, qui assurera une généreuse justice aux minorités d’aujourd’hui, et aux minorités de demain. (Debates of the Senate of Canada, 14<sup>th</sup> Legislature, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 1 February, 1923, p. 8)

Various moments in Canada's history have marked the country's language regime. Significant advancement in language policy federally occurred in the late 1960s with the adoption of the Official Languages Act (1969). This first piece of federal legislation made Canada a country with two equally official languages and targeted the institutional use of the official languages. Individuals were vested with language entitlements related to service provision and interaction with the federal government in the official language of choice. The new legislation continued to view language as a political compromise (see for instance Macmillan 1998), recognizing that Canada had been founded by two peoples, English and French.

With the adoption of the Charter in 1982 and the encapsulation of various language rights in sections 16-23 – defining Canada's official languages, education rights for official language minority communities, the availability and access to federal services in both official languages – Canada's language regime evolved from political compromise to a right within a human rights framework. Canada's language regime was thus radically transformed since it could now be challenged in court on constitutional grounds.

Furthermore, in order to bring the OLA in line with the Charter, new legislation was drafted in 1988. The adoption of the OLA (1988) with its preamble, confirmed the quasi-constitutional status of the law and clearly defined language as an individual right in Canada. While the individual rights approach might not be completely foreign to Canada's tradition of rights, the new OLA also proved to be innovative within Canada's language regime because of its collective dimension. Part VII of the new act explicitly mentions that the Canadian government has the obligation of contributing to the vitality of its official language minority communities. This involves adopting positive measures in order to enhance the development of viable official language minority communities, giving rise to a collective right based to the 1988 OLA. Furthermore, the Supreme Court of Canada has confirmed the collective dimension of official language rights, especially in the area of education, asserting the rights of parents of official language minorities to manage their own school boards.<sup>7</sup>

This rudimentary review of some key components of Canada's language regime and history shows how it has evolved from being both founded on repression and compromise to a rights-based regime. It also demonstrates the centrality of the individual as the bearer of language rights, the importance of the federal government's role in defining, valuing and promoting language rights, as well as the role of the courts in interpreting language rights.

Tensions remain between the original understanding of language as a political compromise and the fact that it is now a quasi-human right. The implementation of language rights has been a key battle field because of the lack of tradition in developing instruments for language policy-making and planning. Courts have forced governments on many occasions to find more explicit ways of dealing with language rights. Moreover, in *Beaulac*, the Supreme Court explicitly rejected the idea that language rights were premised on a political compromise. It argued that such compromise had to be discarded with regards to language rights. Language rights had to be interpreted according to their objective that is equality between the English and French

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<sup>7</sup> See *Mahe v. Alberta*, [1990] 1 S.C.R. 342

languages. While the Courts have promoted the individual basis of Canada's language regime, they have also recognized its collective dimension, especially in the area of education.

Thus, in looking at Canada's language regime today, it has been fundamentally changed since its inception but tensions remain with regards to implementation. On paper, Canada's language regime looks very progressive and generous, especially toward its official language minorities. This approach/perspective is reflective of major transformations within the representation of Canada's political community which has evolved from a white settler society into a multicultural and bilingual society. These transformations were the result of debates around nationalism, social cohesion and the role of the state in the development of a specific Canadian identity. Political parties and their ideologies played a crucial role in these developments and should be emphasised.

Furthermore, since the adoption of the OLA 1969 and the new OLA 1988, many instruments have been proposed in order to implement the official languages policy. We do not have the time to review all those instruments in this paper. Suffice it to say that since 1969 and especially since 1988, instruments were designed for the implementation of the OLA in the public service (see Gaspard (forthcoming in Cardinal and Sonntag (Eds.)) as well as in official language minority communities, which have had varying degrees of success. In order to encourage more consistent and positive development, particularly within OLMCs, court rulings have been instrumental in moving toward policies conducive to encouraging positive change. Building on these advancements, the 2003 Action Plan for Official Languages (the first roadmap) can be perceived as a concerted effort to encourage the vitality of OLMCs.

We recognize that the evolving state view of the linguistic political community is not satisfactory to all. There are those who wish to see Canada operate as a multination state; and there are those who perceive official languages as a costly failure that should be abandoned (Calgary Sun, May 2001). Although Prime Minister Harper has been associated with the latter perspective in the past, since assuming power he has not acted to directly dismantle the existing official languages policy but has used language instruments such as the roadmap as means to advance key elements of his political agenda, as will be demonstrated below.

Having defined our key concepts and explained our approach, the paper will proceed with discussion and analysis of the three roadmaps. This paper concludes by offering a theoretical assessment of the instrument and its implications for official languages in Canada.

### **Introducing the Canadian Language Roadmaps**

*Action Plan 2003:* The 2001 Speech from the Throne renewed the Liberal government's commitment to official languages. The death of former Prime Minister Trudeau, the godfather of the OLA and Prime Minister Chrétien's commitment to improving the setback (*recul*) on official languages gave new life to the file and brought forth an eventual *Action Plan for Official Languages*. Following an international trend of valorising regional and historic languages since the early 2000s through new policies and plans, the Action Plan confirmed the Liberals' desire to reaffirm the importance of the official languages as an element of Canadian identity. This

commitment translated into increased funding for official language initiatives and the requirement for departments to consider the needs of official language minority communities in their decision making.

To illustrate the change in state for official languages, and notably the OLMCs, in 1992-1993 Government spending on official languages amounted to 17.5% of GDP. That percentage dropped to 11.9% for 2003-2004 (Action Plan for Official Languages (APOL) 2003, p. 4). Emphasis on taming the deficit in past years caused the official languages programme to lose steam. With sounder fiscal times ahead, the Government felt well positioned to mend the situation.

The Action Plan allotted \$751.4 million by the Government over five years for various departments and initiatives. Education, community development and an exemplary public service were the three main focuses of the plan. The education section of the Action Plan emphasised increased funding and partnerships with provinces. There were ambitious objectives to ensure access to education for both official language minorities and to fund immersion programs. Community development in the Action Plan addressed access to public services in health, justice and early childhood development. These focus areas were intended to equip communities for development in a knowledge economy. The exemplary public service was meant to set an example for the active use of both official languages in service provision and language of work within the public service. This included the development of language industries (such as translation, interpretation and terminology) to bolster these efforts.

The three areas defined for action and the accountability framework that established a method of work within the public service made up the government's plan on official languages. The mainly society-centric focus of the Action Plan and its responsibilities for the federal public service required a coordinated effort among implicated departments to manage and report on their responsibilities. To meet this need, the government introduced a framework to keep government institutions engaged and involved on matters of official languages and to ensure they track their progress in their areas of responsibility. This was of particular concern for the OLMCs as "participants in the consultations and a number of previous studies emphasized implementing an accountability framework that would be an ongoing reminder for ministers and their officials of the priority given to linguistic duality" (APOL 2003, p. 8).

Looking at this first action plan (roadmap) beyond the three defined areas of focus, the themes of linguistic duality as a matter of Canadian identity and prosperity, as well as community development appear to dominate and orient the government's approach. For instance, then Prime Minister Chrétien's message emphasises the importance of linguistic duality in Canadian identity and underscores the value of having two international languages as Canada's official languages—as they are particularly useful for international competitiveness and influence as well as economics and trade, offering a "competitive edge" in the international labour market and when it comes to mobility (APOL 2003, p. 2). Echoing similar themes, then minister responsible for official languages, Stéphane Dion emphasises linguistic dualism and the importance of access to both official languages in education across the country. He emphasizes the social value of official languages in Canada: "It is my conviction that one of the conditions for future success is our

linguistic duality in a world where communications are exploding, where cultures are coming together and where openness to others and knowledge of languages is becoming an ever greater asset.” (APOL 2003, p. x) While the Liberals connected the benefits of two official languages to economics, the starting premise of the plan was the place of official languages as a cornerstone of Canada’s identity. Its national value of language was also underscored as it remained crucial to the Liberal’s understanding of the country. For them, official languages are a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society.

Moreover, they recognized that strong OLMCs were required to have a pan-Canadian language regime. The OLMCs were identified as a key space in which the French language could be promulgated within families through exogamous marriages, education, community associations etc. Integration into these communities was to be facilitated in order to encourage growth. The introduction to the Action Plan stresses the role of the communities in fostering the continuation of Canada’s linguistic duality: “The Government of Canada has historical and political commitments to those communities. Through this Action Plan, it is equipping itself with the means to better meet those commitments. It is doing so for the communities, but also for all Canadians, for while the official languages are rooted in our past, they are also an essential asset for Canada’s future success.” (APOL 2003, p. 1)

Overall, the Liberals wanted to revive the role of official languages as part of Canada’s identity discourse and underscored language as an added value to the Canadian economy:

The renewed commitment by the Government of Canada and the resulting Action Plan are testimony to the political will to support Canadians in this process of fostering our two official languages within a society evolving in an increasingly global world. They are part of the actions and initiatives that will help to make Canada an even more inclusive country, offering all Canadians a better quality of life and a promising future. Above all, they are the expression of the ideal that all Canadians can maximize their human capital. (APOL 2003, p. 4)

This instrument launched renewed attention for official languages at the federal level of government and set a precedent for future action on the file. Developing a first Action Plan on official languages required consultations with OLMCs and engaged the efforts of various ministers and departments. In so doing, the Liberals institutionalized their ideas through the development and use of the action plan instrument to establish their concern for official languages. By affirming a renewed importance for official languages in Canada, the Liberals laid the groundwork for continued efforts in the policy area by emphasizing communities and economic benefit.

The 2003 Action Plan was set to expire in 2008. With the election of a minority Conservative government in 2006, there was some uncertainty about what would happen next with the Action Plan. However, given their minority status, instead of ignoring the approach put in place by the Liberals, the Conservatives engaged the instrument and made it their own.

*Roadmap 2008*: In an effort to affirm their commitment to Canada’s official languages and its importance for the country’s national identity, the Conservatives launched consultations with OLMCs across the country. Bernard Lord, the former premier of New-Brunswick, Canada’s only officially bilingual province, was tasked with undertaking the consultations and developing a report which would contribute to the eventual *Roadmap for Canada’s Linguistic Duality 2008-2013: Acting for the Future*.

Prime Minister Harper’s letter preceding the 2008 Roadmap echoes similar themes to those in the Liberal Action Plan, although different terminology is invoked—most notably the change in name from *Action Plan to Roadmap for Canada’s Linguistic Duality 2008-2013: Acting for the Future*. In 2008, PM Harper emphasised that “Linguistic duality is a cornerstone of our national identity, and it is a source of immeasurable economic, social, and political benefits for all Canadians.” (2008 Roadmap, p. 4) The PM underscored the importance of protecting and developing OLMCs through cooperation between the federal, provincial and municipal governments through open federalism. Building on the history of Canada’s linguistic duality, the PM notes that “This Roadmap points the way to an even stronger future and a more unified Canada.” (2008 Roadmap, p. 4) Identity-centric emphasis on official languages that began with the Liberals is pursued here.

Then minister of Canadian Heritage (and now senator) Josée Verner, was at the time responsible for the Roadmap. According to Verner, “The Roadmap proposes new projects and investments that will allow English and French minority-language communities to receive essential services in their own language; and that will encourage dialogue and bring Canadians closer, whatever their official language of choice.” (2008 Roadmap, p. 5) Roadmap invested 1.1 billion over five years (a significant increase in allotted funds from the 2003 Action Plan), its two pillars being the support of OLMCs and the participation of all Canadians in linguistic duality.

In this Roadmap, the Government noted that it sought to build on foundations and progress that began with the 2003 Action Plan, so that more Canadian can benefit from the cultural, social and economic advantages of linguistic duality (p. 9). There is increased emphasis on the regional diversity of language matters and consistent reference to working with and building upon existing networks. Broadly, the minority Conservative government continued on the path established by the Liberals in the Action Plan. However, the additional emphasis on regionalism and network cooperation reflected the government’s purported commitment to ‘open federalism,’ where cooperation between levels of government and an appreciation for regional variance would become part of politics in Canada (see for instance Cardinal, federalism). As stated in the 2008 Roadmap (p. 15):

This unprecedented \$1.1 billion government-wide commitment is based on the Government’s clear leadership and a continuous and sustained dialogue with the provinces and territories, official-language minority communities and all Canadians.

Five areas for action emerged from consultations. First, emphasizing the value of linguistic duality among all Canadians would be encouraged. This was done by making official languages a reality for the public through initiatives such as free access to the Government’s language

portal, a book publishing program to increase literature available in both official languages. A second area of action was investing in youth. This meant a continued investment in education as well as funding for para-scholastic activities, e.g. sports etc. to encourage application and experience in the learned official languages. Improving access to services for OLMCs was the third area for action and included funding for health, justice, immigration, early childhood, family and literacy and arts and culture. The fourth area was capitalizing on economic benefits of language which supported language industry initiatives to support language technology companies as well as community based economic initiatives with economic development support targeted to regional needs. The fifth and final action area was to ensure efficient governance of the official languages program. This meant revised the horizontal results-based management and accountability framework of the 2003 Action Plan as well as improving coordination among key government departments and agencies involved in official languages and ultimately the Roadmap.

The minority government context of the 2008 Roadmap gives rise to broad continuity with the previous Action Plan. Similar areas of education, economic development and community networks are targeted.

There are also some important terminological differences that demonstrate the new government's perspective on language and reinforce its broader agenda. The theme of 'open federalism' coloured the first series of Harper's mandates in government. This perspective is reflected in the Roadmap with a clear and often mentioned concern for regional variance of issues and community needs related to official languages, which demonstrates the government's recognition of provincial differences and ultimately, their different interactions with the federal government. There is also much insistence on the importance of cooperation and partnerships, namely between the federal government and the provinces as well as those within communities. These networks are central to the Government's approach to build on existing progress and develop capacities for OLMCs. In particular, Quebec (as the 'cradle' of Canada's francophonie and New-Brunswick (as the country's only bilingual province) are referenced as key partners (along with civil society) in actualizing this collaboration (2008 Roadmap, p. 14).

The Conservatives' minority government context must be considered when assessing its interpretation of a language regime. There are clear references to the importance of linguistic duality for Canadian identity as to the economic benefits of language—very similar to those expounded in the Liberal's 2003 Action Plan. These perspectives are recognized with increased funding in the areas of arts and culture and a new economic focus for regional community development and language-based technology. What is important to draw from this Roadmap is that the Conservatives chose to continue to use the instrument to define its language plans and support official language minority communities. Further, apart from some additions and terminological changes, the Conservatives maintained and sought to build upon the work and progress of the 2003 Action Plan that defined language first and foremost as a question of identity but with derivable economic benefits. In the end, there is much continuity between the 2003 and the 2008 plans.

*Roadmap 2013*: In March 2013, the third language roadmap was published. It offers some continuity with the 2008 instrument but there are important breaks in content and discourse, indicative of the politicization of the instrument and significant change. The Commissioner for Official Languages, Graham Fraser, reacted with restrained optimism: “La bonne nouvelle, c’est la stabilité du financement de la Feuille de route pour la dualité linguistique. La mauvaise nouvelle, c’est la stabilité...” (Le Droit, March 2013) Emphasis on education and communities is continuous with the 2003 and 2008 instruments, but the central focus on immigration and economic current that runs through the report are indicative of the substantial changes announced. At first glance, investment in Roadmap initiatives is stable with the maintenance of the 1.1 billion dollar investment over five years similarly allotted in 2008 (although with inflation, this can be perceived as a decrease in funding).

The central focuses of the 2013 Roadmap are the social and economic benefits of the two official languages with education (658 million dollars), immigration (149.5 million dollars) and communities (316.6 million dollars) identified as ‘pillars for action’ (which stem from consultations) and define broad categories of funding.

The consultations undertaken are heavily insisted upon in the report as the Roadmap “was developed following extensive cross-Canada consultations—one of the largest consultations ever held on official languages.” (2013 Roadmap, p. 3) By emphasising the consultations, the government links the content of the report to the concerns and demands of those implicated, namely the OLMCs. Initial reaction to the 2013 Roadmap by OLMCs was favourable with many expressing relief that funding was maintained during fiscally challenging times (Le Droit March 28 and 29, 2013; FCFA 2013).

Another group of Canadians that are often referenced in the 2013 Roadmap are immigrants and ethnic groups – not necessarily by name but through references to the value of Canada’s cultural diversity. This focus is deepened relative to the 2008 Roadmap. The importance of this characteristic is referenced in both the Prime Minister’s and the Minister of Heritage’s messages at the beginning of the report. According to Harper: “The peoples who formed our vast country did not all speak the same language. They did not all share the same culture. But our peoples did come together. [...] Over the centuries, our country became enriched with extraordinary diversity. As Canadians, we are very proud of the coexistence of our two national languages. Our cultural diversity is our greatest asset.” The government thus succeeds in reconciling multiculturalism and bilingualism without mentioning either word.

Echoing this stance, Minister of Heritage James Moore notes that: “French and English, Canada’s official languages, are an invaluable asset to all Canadians. They are a part of our history and identity. They allow us to express our culture in all its diversity and highlight Canadian excellence around the world. Here at home, French- and English-speaking communities in every province and territory contribute to our society’s cultural, social and economic vitality.” Thanks to Moore, we are reminded that there are OLMCs in Canada.

However, invoking references to cultural diversity and immigration, the letters also demonstrate a stronger utilitarian focus by aligning the Roadmap with the Conservatives’ agenda on economic

development. For instance, Forgues (2013) notes that immigration receives 149.5 million dollars to fund official languages initiatives. An important portion of this funding is dedicated to language training for immigrants. This tenet of the program emphasises immigration as a source of economic benefit to Canada that can only be fully appreciated if a newcomer is operational in one or both official languages. According to the Roadmap, “the initiative will reaffirm the key role of immigration in enhancing the vitality of French-speaking minority communities to mitigate labour shortages and the economic impact of aging populations.” (2013 p. 10) This approach demonstrates the requirement that economics and language be connected in order to be acceptable.

This marks an important break with previous Roadmaps by explicitly bringing the instrument in line with the party’s ideology. By using the Roadmap to reinforce initiatives in immigration and the importance of economic advancement, the Conservative government makes a statement about its perspective on language and its fit in its vision of Canada’s political community. Moreover, funding for immigrant language training is not new money. All money from the regular immigrant language training programmes for Canada has been transferred to the Roadmap.<sup>8</sup> There is also no special mention of how or if the funding will be used to promote language training for immigrant integration into OLMCs. Given this state of affairs, it can thus be said that the roadmap represents an important decrease in funding when we take into account the fact that all funding for immigrant language training in Canada has been transferred to the language plan. Despite the critique advanced here, it must be noted that some OLMCs will benefit from the envelope, namely through a program by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency meant to attract, recruit, integrate and retain French-speaking immigrants in the Acadian community of New Brunswick, particularly in rural areas (2013 Roadmap, p. 10).

Finally, in contrast to the two past roadmaps, the 2013 plan distinctly insists on measuring the impact of the money spent on the development of OLMCs. It is not clear how it will proceed and which tools will be developed to do so, but the government seems determined to make sure that the money will be well spent (2013 Roadmap, p. 16).

This critique of the 2013 Roadmap’s orientation does not change the fact that certain sectors, for instance health (106.5 million dollars) and justice (19 million dollars), remain particularly well funded for OLMCs. The sustained 1.1 billion dollar investment is continuous with previous plans and will benefit communities. However, this does not mean that the politicization of the roadmap or its possible insights into shifts in the Conservative government’s conceptualization of the Canadian language regime can go unnoticed.

In the end, the 2013 Roadmap does not seem to focus much on OLMCs’ collective aspirations other than the economic priorities determined by the government. This is a significant contrast to the two past roadmaps. It also echoes major changes in the way the Harper government sees the role of OLMCs in Canada. The fact that OLMCs are present in every province calls for tolerance in that the government will respect its constitutional obligations towards those communities, especially in the area of education. However, based on the wording and funding of the 2013 Roadmap, it is not clear that their needs have really been heard.

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<sup>8</sup> Confirmed by Graham Fraser, 6 May 2013 in his speech at ACFAS.

## **Language Roadmaps and the transformation of Canada’s language regime and political community**

Language roadmaps have been used by three successive federal governments in Canada. For the Liberals in 2003, this meant re-appropriating official languages as an integral part of Canadian identity or national project. In 2008, for a minority Conservative government, the instrument was used to reaffirm the party’s commitment to Canada’s ‘linguistic duality.’ Finally, with a majority government in 2013, the Conservatives have used the roadmap instrument to redefine language from a social to a utilitarian perspective. In other words, with the 2013 Roadmap, OLMCs have lost status and so have official languages by being framed mainly through utilitarian/economic terms. The Conservative agenda reduces language to a minimum. Its approach is also reflected in other decisions (such as the appointment of unilingual judges to the Supreme Court of Canada; the appointment of a unilingual Auditor General; the closure of the bilingual search and rescue centre in Québec), which are interesting given the public credence paid to language by ministers and the Prime Minister during public appearances.

As Forgues (2013) also indicates, in an assessment of the 2013 Roadmap, the economic emphasis of the instrument reduces language to an area of government intervention prized for its added value and derivable benefits, instead of being a central marker of Canadian identity. This utilitarian understanding of language represents a new way of interpreting the government’s obligations under the OLA, which requires government support and action to achieve the development and advancement of OLMCs. In order to foster the development of spaces throughout the country where OLMCs can operate in their official language of choice, former language plans had emphasized networking in all sectors of life (education, justice, health, economic development). The 2013 Roadmap moves away from this holistic approach in order to focus on economic issues. Of course, encouraging economic development within these communities is imperative, but there is a difference between economic development and fostering equality for Canada’s two language groups. As Forgues explains:

*le soutien au développement des CLOSM [communautés de langue officielle en situation minoritaire] ne doit pas se mesurer uniquement par la valeur ajoutée économique que peuvent apporter les CLOSM. Si ces dernières peuvent contribuer à la prospérité du pays, il faut certes l’encourager. Cependant, l’intervention de l’État doit également favoriser l’égalité réelle entre les deux communautés linguistiques. Pour y parvenir, des mesures robustes doivent être mises en place pour poursuivre le rattrapage économique, social, politique et culturel des CLOSM par rapport à la majorité anglophone. (Forgues 2013, p. 2)*

Thus, the emphasis on language training, productivity and mobility in the 2013 roadmap represents a shift away from the identity- and collectivist-based approach which informed past roadmaps. In essence, this most recent roadmap respects the government’s basic constitutional obligations in the areas of education and justice but appears to do little to innovate and encourage the vitality and development of OLMCs. The demarcation between regular government programming initiatives and those of the roadmaps are not always clear—even less so in the case

of the 2013 plan. As the 2013 Roadmap blurs the line between government agenda and official languages, the roadmap as a politicized instrument markedly emerges.

The undermining of the original roadmaps' emphasis on the development and vitality of OLMCs is further reflected in the majority report from the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages. The Majority Report, "*Linguistic Duality During the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations of Canadian Confederation in 2017*," was critiqued by opposition politicians, community stakeholders and academics (see Forgues 2013; Liberal Party of Canada's Dissenting Report March 2013), particularly in relation to its recommendations. The recommendation "*That Canadian Heritage encourage all departments and groups involved in the next version of the Roadmap for Linguistic Duality to refocus their projects and planning toward preparations for celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Canadian Confederation in 2017*" is problematic because it uses the Roadmap's budget to fund linguistic duality for the anniversary celebrations. This means that the Government can use the funds allotted in the Roadmap for initiatives unrelated to OLMCs and their development. The president of the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadiennes du Canada (FCFA), Marie-France Kenny, shared similar concerns. She noted that the Roadmap should not be treated as a "fourre-tout" where everyone can take a piece of the pie (Presse canadienne, 28 mars, 2013). Further, despite objections from the opposition members of the Official Languages Committee, the Conservatives insisted that the Committee deal with matters related to the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. The opposition members felt the Committee had more pressing issues to deal with and since the Canadian Heritage Committee had already undertaken consultations on the matter, they felt it redundant and useless (Liberal Party of Canada's Dissenting Report March 2013).

Finally, through the 2013 Roadmap, the Conservative government offers insight into its understanding of Canada's language regime. Returning to the definition of linguistic regime as the series of choices, state institutions and traditions that influence a state's action in the area of language, the plan returns to a limited understanding of official languages. A human-right based logic of language is less prominently represented within the Canadian political community. The OLMCs seem to have disappeared from the government's radar. The latest roadmap insists on the economic value of language in order to bring Canadians together as speakers of two national languages. OLMCs might be included in the 'two national languages theory,' but the preceding roadmaps were explicitly designed for them, while the 2013 plan is more concerned with unity, mobility and productivity.

How does the 2013 Roadmap fit with the government's reintroduction of monarchist symbols and Canada's military heritage, altering the discourse of Canadian identity typically centred on official languages and multiculturalism? First, the 2013 Roadmap shows that these changes have not been able to usurp the persistent and path dependent presence of bilingualism and multiculturalism as markers of Canadian identity, demonstrated in the continued publishing of roadmaps. The government's public display of bilingualism as well as its emphasis on the benefits of cultural diversity is a sign of continuity with the past. This government has worked within the constraints of the existing tendencies but has used the roadmap as a politicized tool to define their conception of language in Canada.

Secondly, politically, the tactic is astute. The Conservatives can maintain that they are supporters of language rights and have actively engaged with OLMCs to develop plans while using the same instrument to put forth their vision of language in Canada, intimately linked with their agenda. This approach further demonstrates the importance of analysing instruments such as the roadmap, as institutions carrying ideas in their own right.

To conclude this section, in a majority government situation, it can be argued that the Conservatives have used the Roadmap to further their transformation of Canada's recent language regime by shifting focus from its human rights base to an understanding of language in utilitarian terms. This is demonstrated by the integration of issues centric to their agenda (i.e. economics and immigration) into the Roadmap. With these areas of emphasis, the Government has flipped the Roadmap's focus from one primarily on identity to one primarily on economics. Analysis of the three roadmaps indicates a reversal in the emphasis of the plans over time. Originally, the plans focused on identity first (and the groups that bear them across the country) and then secondly, the economic added value of language. Come 2013, however, we witness a reversal of this trend with economic emphasis taking first place leaving a reduced concern for the OLMCs and their identities.

## **Conclusions**

We have argued in this paper that language roadmaps are not neutral tools used for language planning. Roadmaps are politicized instruments which reveal evolving representations of the political community. Since political communities are also linguistic political communities, language roadmaps are important as they express the 'national' understanding of language. It defines how the state governs languages representing choices informed by normative, institutional and administrative traditions.

Canada's language regime has evolved from repressive to tolerant, recognizing the equality of the English and French languages as part of the country's founding compromise. This compromise however, only compelled governments to officially act in favour of equality and vitality of OLMCs when the country's language regime was defined in a human rights framework. Defining language as a right led to active engagement with language as a marker of identity and source of national concern, which also entailed collectivist oriented action, especially for OLMCs. Implementing programmes and policies for OLMCs was not always easy or politically appealing (namely with the budget cuts of the 1990s). It for these reasons that the roadmaps became necessary to move Canada's language regime forward.

The 2013 Roadmap seems to be confirming the Harper government's new approach to official languages in Canada. Beyond the appointment of unilinguals to key posts, the insistence of some ministers not to have their official cards in both official languages (Baird and Fantino) and the fact that there has been no consideration for the political representation of official language minorities in the proposed Senate reform bill (C-7, now before the SCC), is indicative of a shift in Canada's language regime from one that emphasises a human rights based framework to a more discrete approach defined in economic terms. Contrarily, a compromise based approach to

language is reaffirmed namely as the Prime Minister promotes Canada to domestic and international audiences as a country born in French (Coyne 2010).

More research will need to be done on instruments of language policy-making and planning such as roadmaps, to show their connections to state traditions and offer insights into language regimes. Our discussion is a direct attempt to move forward this agenda by going beyond descriptive approaches and engaging in state-centric mezzo-level analysis.

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