

# The Politics of Language Roadmaps in Canada: Understanding the Conservative Government's Approach to Official Languages

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On May 2, 2011, the Conservative Party of Canada, under the leadership of Stephen Harper, won a majority government following five years as a minority government. As a member of Parliament and then as president of the National Citizens Coalition, Harper had expressed strong reservations about official languages. “As a religion,” he infamously declared in May 2001, “bilingualism is the god that failed” (Canadian Press, 2011). However, in March 2013, the Conservative government unveiled the *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013–2018* (Canada, 2013), extending funding for another five years for a number of governmental and intergovernmental programs as well as for programs in support of official languages minority communities (OLMCs), that is, Francophone communities outside of Quebec and Anglophone communities in Quebec. What does the adoption of this language roadmap reveal about Harper's views on official languages in Canada? What are the key features and tenets of the

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**Acknowledgments:** This research was made possible by generous financial support from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). We thank our audience at the 2013 Annual Conference of the Canadian Political Science Association and the journal's anonymous reviewers for helpful comments and suggestions on earlier versions of this article.

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*Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique*

Page 1 of 23 doi:10.1017/S0008423915000517

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and/et la Société québécoise de science politique

Conservative government's approach to the maintenance and even promotion of official languages?

Our analysis initially reveals the Janus-faced nature of Harper and the Conservative party on official languages.<sup>1</sup> On the one hand, the Conservative government has tended to undermine official languages through appointments to key federal positions, including officers of Parliament and Supreme Court judges, as well as by eliminating support programs. On the other hand, it released a language roadmap that maintains the overall funding of official languages programs and initiatives. In trying to understand this puzzle, this article delves into and examines the politics of language roadmaps in Canada. On one level, language roadmaps are policy statements that allow governments to identify policy objectives and earmark funding for specific departments and programs. On another level, language roadmaps are means to promote broader and more fundamental political goals. Indeed, we aim to show that language roadmaps are best understood as policy instruments rather than policy statements. Policy instruments are “bearers of values, fueled by one interpretation of the social and by precise notions of the mode of regulation” (Lascoumes and Le Galès, 2007: 4; see also 2004). The language roadmap unveiled by the Conservative majority government in March 2013—as well as those unveiled by the Liberal majority government in 2003 and the Conservative minority government in 2008—conveys and promotes particular representations of Canadian identity and citizenship. More broadly, we also aim to show that language roadmaps constitute the fourth generation of official language policies in Canada; the first three generations found their respective bases in the 1969 *Official Languages Act*, the 1982 *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the 1988 *Official Languages Act* (see Cardinal and Juillet, 2005).

This article contributes to two bodies of scholarship. First, it addresses neglected aspects in the emerging debate on Harper and conservative ideology in Canada. Since forming a minority government in 2006, successive Conservative governments have recast Canada's identity as one rooted in monarchic, militaristic and Arctic symbols (Blake, 2012; Boily, 2013). However, research and debates on Conservative governments' attempts to redefine national identity have rendered official languages invisible. For example, in their edited collection, *Conservatism in Canada*, Farney and Rayside (2013) provide a thorough examination of the new conservative ideology in Canada, but official languages are notably absent.

Second, the article attempts to chart a new area of research on language policies and official languages in Canada, explaining the choice of policy instruments and the political and social impact following from that choice. The existing scholarship tends to focus on the genesis of language policies (Martel and Pâquet, 2012; McRoberts, 1997), the normative dimensions of language rights and protections (Kymlicka, 1998; Réaume, 2003) and conflicts

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**Abstract.** This article critically examines the Conservative government's approach to official languages, through a policy instrument framework. Special attention is paid to the third federal roadmap for official languages—the first having been unveiled by the Liberal government in 2003 and the second by the Conservative minority government in 2008—and how this roadmap conveys a new representation of official languages in relation to Canadian identity and citizenship. The focus on the linguistic integration of new immigrants in the 2013 language roadmap generates interest. The policy instrument framework also shows how language roadmaps represent the fourth generation of official language policies in Canada; the first three generations found their respective bases in the 1969 *Official Languages Act*, the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the 1988 *Official Languages Act*. The article concludes that an analysis of language roadmaps elucidates transformations initiated by the Conservative governments in the area of official languages in Canada. It also promotes further exploration and analysis of language policies through the policy instrument framework.

**Résumé.** Dans cet article, les auteurs procèdent à une analyse critique de la politique du gouvernement conservateur du Canada dans le domaine des langues officielles en prenant appui sur l'approche des instruments. Ils étudient, de façon particulière, la publication de la troisième feuille de route sur les langues officielles—la première ayant été publiée par le gouvernement libéral en 2003 et la deuxième, par le gouvernement conservateur minoritaire en 2008—et montrent comment la feuille de route du gouvernement conservateur représente le véhicule d'une nouvelle représentation sur les langues officielles au Canada. Entre autres, l'accent sur l'intégration linguistique des immigrants dans la feuille de route de 2013 suscite l'intérêt. Grâce à l'approche des instruments, les auteurs montrent ainsi que les feuilles de route constituent une quatrième génération de politiques dans le domaine des langues officielles au Canada—les trois premières générations étant représentées par la *Loi sur les langues officielles de 1969*, la *Charte canadienne des droits et libertés* ainsi que la *Loi sur les langues officielles de 1988*. L'article conclut que l'analyse de la feuille de route sur les langues officielles du gouvernement conservateur permet de mieux comprendre les mutations initiées par le gouvernement conservateur dans le domaine des langues officielles au Canada depuis 2013. Les auteurs invitent aussi à approfondir l'approche des instruments comme des traceurs de changements pour l'étude des langues officielles au Canada.

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between federal and Quebec language policies (Cardinal, 2010; McMillan, 1998). Others have examined the relationship between ethnocultural diversity and official languages policy (Abu-Laban and Couture, 2010; Farmer, 2008) as well as the hierarchy of languages in Canada, particularly in relation to Aboriginal languages (Haque and Patrick, 2014).

Our analysis proceeds in three parts. In an effort to situate the emergence of language roadmaps, the first part offers a brief overview of official languages policy in Canada. The second part discusses the Janus-faced nature of the Conservative government's approach to official languages. The third and final part analyzes the use of language roadmaps as policy instruments, in particular how these have enabled Harper and the Conservatives to recast official languages as means for the promotion of broader political goals. In essence, the policy instrument framework provides crucial insights into the Conservative governments' representation of official languages in relation to Canadian identity and citizenship.

## 1. Official Languages in Canada and the Emergence of Language Roadmaps

According to the 2011 Census of Canada, of the 1.27 million immigrants who arrived between 2006 and 2011, 77 per cent had a mother tongue other than English or French, notably Chinese languages but also Arabic, Punjabi, Spanish, Tagalog and Urdu (Statistics Canada, 2014). Despite the demographic significance of these languages, English and French remain Canada's two official languages as well as its two languages of convergence and integration, although certain First Nations and Inuit languages have official language status in the territories along with English and French. In 2011, French was the mother tongue of nearly 22 per cent of Canadians (7.2 million people) and English was that of nearly 58 per cent (19.1 million people). While the large proportion of the population that reported French as their mother tongue lived in Quebec (6.1 million people), over one million resided in other provinces and territories.

Prior to the 1960s, official languages were not high on the federal political agenda, and the use of French was strictly regulated in a number of provinces. Section 133 of the 1867 *Constitution Act* established English and French as the official languages of the Parliament of Canada and the Legislature of Quebec; either language could be used during debates and all laws would be published in both. French and English were also declared the official languages of both federal and Quebec courts. However, for the first one hundred years of Confederation, both the Parliament of Canada and the federal public administration operated largely in English (Fraser, 2006). Indeed, simultaneous translation was only introduced in the House of Commons in 1959 (Delisle, 2009), and studies undertaken by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism revealed how English-speakers were overrepresented in the federal public service (Gaspard, 2013).

The situation began to change for the better in the 1960s. Linda Cardinal and Luc Juillet (2005; see also Cardinal, 2007) have helpfully identified three generations of official languages policies founded on policy initiatives from 1969, 1982 and in 1988. The first generation begins with the enactment of the *Official Languages Act* (OLA) in 1969, which laid the groundwork for Canada's experiment in institutional bilingualism. It enshrined the equal status, rights and privileges of English and French in all federal institutions, and it also gave Canadian citizens the right to communicate with and to receive services in either official language from federal institutions in the National Capital Region or where there is a significant demand.

The adoption of the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in 1982 marked the second generation of official languages policies as it constitutionally enshrined institutional bilingualism and education rights for

OLMCs. Section 23 of the charter guarantees that “parents belonging to a linguistic minority have the right to have their children educated in the minority language, in homogeneous schools which they can manage, where numbers warrant” (Canada, 2015). This second period also witnessed the judicialization of language politics, in part due to funding provided through the Court Challenges Program (Cardinal, 2000).

The adoption of a new OLA by Brian Mulroney’s Progressive Conservative government in 1988 marked the third generation of official languages policy. It made two important additions to the 1969 OLA. Part V established the right of federal civil servants to work in the official language of their choice in the National Capital Region as well as in designated regions across the country. Part VII committed the federal government to promoting the recognition and use of official languages in Canadian society but also to enhancing the vitality of OLMCs and supporting their development. Through these two new parts of the 1988 OLA, official languages in Canada would no longer be exclusively tied to debates on the status of Quebec but would rather encompass the status of OLMCs as well as the vitality of the English and French languages across the country. In particular, the new OLA transformed the scope of the federal government’s intervention from institutional to societal bilingualism, that is, from offering public services in both official languages to promoting bilingualism in civil society.

In 1994, the recently elected Liberal government, under pressure to cut costs and increase performance, launched a program review with the declared aim of reducing the size of the public service and reforming service delivery (Laforest, 2011). For instance, while government program spending amounted to 17.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1992–1993, it had dropped to 11.9 per cent by 2003–2004 (Canada, 2003: 4). In the area of official languages, initiatives and programs received \$70 to \$80 million less in a budget totalling \$200 million between 1995 and 1999 (Fontaine and Johnson, 2005). Key actors at the time, including the Commissioner of Official Languages, decried the lack of attention being paid to official languages and expressed serious concerns that official languages obligations were not being met (Canada, 1998; Savoie, 1998). The emphasis on reducing costs and the size of the federal public service caused official languages programs, along with a number of other programs, to lose steam.

After much pressure from the Commissioner of Official Languages as well as OLMCs stakeholders, the federal government renewed its commitment towards official languages in the 2001 Speech from the Throne. More specifically, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien tasked Stéphane Dion, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, to devise a new interdepartmental structure to co-ordinate government action in the area of official languages. Minister Dion embarked on vast consultations of OLMCs, elected officials and

civil servants as well as other actors involved in language planning and policy making (see Léger, 2013). In 2003, in order to better co-ordinate its efforts and energy in the area of official languages, the federal government published its first official languages roadmap, entitled *The Next Act: New Momentum for Canada's Linguistic Duality Action Plan for Official Languages* (Canada, 2003). It allotted \$751.3 million over five years to eight government departments and agencies across a number of initiatives (see Table 1 for a breakdown of funding details), a 50 per cent overall increase from the official languages budget prior to the launch of the program review in 1994.

The unveiling of this language roadmap was a testament to the Liberal government's desire to reaffirm the importance of official languages as an element of Canadian identity and to increase funding for official language initiatives after years of budget cuts. Since at least Lester B. Pearson's years as leader, the Liberal Party of Canada had made official languages a cornerstone of its political program and discourse on national unity. In many ways, it was "normal and natural" for a Liberal government to give official languages a prominent place within its political and policy objectives. As we show in the third section, the Liberal government's language roadmap inaugurated the fourth generation of official language policies in Canada. From 2006 to 2015, Harper and the Conservative Party of Canada have also used language roadmaps to respect government obligations in the area of official languages but also and more importantly to convey and promote their broader and more fundamental political goals. We return to the question of language roadmaps as policy instruments in more detail following our discussion of the Janus-faced nature of Harper and the Conservative governments' approach to official languages.

## 2. Official Languages under the Conservative Government

Following the demise of the Progressive Conservative party under the leadership of Brian Mulroney in the early 1990s, the Reform party became the main conservative party in Ottawa, with an electoral base largely in Western Canada. A change in attitude towards official languages was palpable in this new party. While the Progressive Conservative government under Mulroney's leadership had enacted a new *Official Languages Act*, the Reform party initially aimed to repeal the OLA as well as federal commitments to multiculturalism (Manning, 1992). However, as of 1999, the Reform party had revised some of its positions on official languages. For example, in keeping with section 133 of the 1867 *Constitution Act*, it accepted that English and French could be used in the Parliament of Canada and federal courts. It also accepted that key federal services would be provided in either official language *where numbers warrant*.

TABLE 1  
 2003 *Action Plan for Official Languages*, Funding Commitments over 5 years

Department	Program Details (Millions \$)	Total Funding (Millions \$)
Heritage Canada	Education (381.5)	415.0
	• Targeted funding—minority language (209.0)	
	• Targeted funding—second language (137.0)	
	• Summer Language Bursary Program (24.0)	
	• Official Language Monitor Program (11.5)	
	Support to communities (33.5)	
	• Support to minority communities (19.0)	
	• Intergovernmental cooperation (14.5)	
Treasury Board Secretariat	• Investing in Innovation (14.0)	64.6
	• Centre of Excellence (12.0)	
	• Rebuilding Capacity (Public Service Commission) (38.6)	
Health Canada	Support to communities	119.0
	• Networking (14.0)	
	• Training and Retention (75.0)	
	• Primary Health Care Transition Fund (2000 Agreement on Health) (30.0)	
Human Resources Development Canada	Support to communities (22.0)	29.3
	• Literacy (7.4)	
	• Pilot projects for child care (10.8)	
	• Develop NGO capacity (3.8)	
	Economic development (7.3)	
	• Internships	
Industry Canada	Economic development (33.0)	53.0
	• Outreach and counselling (8.0)	
	• Internships (2.0)	
	• Pilot Projects (tele-training and tele-learning) (10.0)	
	• Francommunautés virtuelles (13.0)	
	Language industry (20.0)	
	• Canadian Network of Languages Industries (co-ordination and governance) (5.0)	
	• Marketing and branding (5.0)	
	• Research Centre for Language Technologies (10.0)	

*Continued*

TABLE 1  
Continued

Department	Program Details (Millions \$)	Total Funding (Millions \$)
Justice Canada	Accountability and co-ordination framework (2.5) Support to communities (45.5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal obligations (27.0)</li> <li>• Access to justice (18.5)</li> </ul>	48.0
Citizenship and Immigration Canada	Support to communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment and integration of immigrants</li> </ul>	9.0
Privy Council Office, Intergovernmental Affairs	Implementation of the action plan including the accountability and co-ordination framework	13.5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>751.3</b>

Source: *Action Plan for Official Languages*, 2003.

The short-lived Canadian Alliance, the successor to the Reform party, also affirmed these basic commitments. In 2003, the merger of conservative forces from across the country led to the creation of the Conservative Party of Canada. As with their successors, the Conservative Party of Canada affirmed that “English and French have equality of status, and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the Parliament and Government of Canada.” Going further, it also declared that “Canada’s official languages constitute a unique and significant social and economic advantage that benefits all Canadians.” Finally, the party would “work with the provinces and territories to enhance opportunities for Canadians to learn both official languages” (2011).<sup>2</sup>

Despite assurances that they would respect official languages and OLMCs, in particular in the area of education, the election of a Conservative minority government in January 2006 brought some uncertainty in relation to federal initiatives and programs in the area of official languages. Harper and the Conservative party had campaigned on the theme of “open federalism.”<sup>3</sup> Open federalism did not directly concern official languages or OLMCs (Cardinal, 2014), but rather federal-provincial relations, especially with regard to Quebec, which had formulated specific demands relating to its role in the international arena (Harper, 2006: A15). While nothing explicit concerned official languages or OLMCs, Tom Flanagan, then advisor to Harper, had suggested that the Conservatives ought to cut all “support groups that the Liberals have cultivated so long with grants, subsidies and access to government” (2007: 264).

Once in office, Harper adopted a motion recognizing that the “Québécois form a nation within a united Canada.” In the area of official

languages, and seemingly as per Flanagan's advice, Harper quickly moved to cancel the Court Challenges Program (CCP) in September 2006. Created by the Liberal government in 1978, the CCP provided financial assistance to individuals wishing to use the courts to advance official languages rights. In 1985, the Progressive Conservative government extended the CCP to cover equality rights. The CCP's cancellation in 2006 was decried in the media and challenged in Federal Court by the *Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada* (FCFA) and the Commissioner of Official Languages. In June 2008, the Conservative government agreed to restore funding to the official languages rights component of the former CCP. The newly titled Language Rights Support Program funds impact studies and it emphasizes mediation in an effort to resolve disputes outside the courtroom. Although a weaker version of the former CCP, the creation of this new program was largely viewed as a victory by OLMCs and the Commissioner of Official Languages.<sup>4</sup>

In parallel, the Conservative government was accused of undermining the spirit of official languages through the appointments of six unilingual Anglophones to key cabinet positions. Bev Oda was named Minister of Canadian Heritage, a department with key responsibilities in the area of official languages, including the co-ordination of federal commitments towards official languages and OLMCs as per part VII of the 1988 OLA. Although Josée Verner was named Minister responsible for la Francophonie, Harper appointed another unilingual Anglophone, Ted Menzies, as her parliamentary secretary. The prime minister also appointed Marshall Rothstein as Supreme Court judge, Steve Sullivan as Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crimes and Russell Mills as President of the National Capital Commission, all unilingual Anglophones (Cardinal, 2012). Funding programs were also eliminated, including the Interdepartmental Partnership with the Official Languages Communities, which aimed to “promote access to the programs and services offered by the federal organizations, make them better known, and enable the federal government to determine the needs and realities of OLMCs more effectively” (Canada, 2003).

In October 2008, the Harper Conservative government was re-elected as a minority government, and appointments to cabinet positions critical to official languages and OLMCs reflected the country's linguistic duality. James Moore, bilingual and a product of French immersion programs in Greater Vancouver, was named Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages. Shelly Glover from Saint-Boniface, Manitoba, who is also bilingual, of Métis origin and a strong advocate of French immersion programs across the country, was named parliamentary secretary for Official Languages. Furthermore, the prime minister tasked Bernard Lord, former Premier of New Brunswick—Canada's only officially bilingual province—to undertake public consultations with stakeholders that laid the groundwork

for the *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008–2013: Acting for the Future* (see [Table 2](#)).

These advances in terms of cabinet nominations and the elaboration of a new language roadmap were coupled with funding cuts and retreats in other policy areas. In June 2010, the Conservative government announced changes to the collection of demographic and statistical data by Statistics Canada through the Census of Canada. It discontinued the mandatory long-form questionnaire, which was distributed to 80 per cent of the population and included questions on languages spoken at home and language of work, and it also proposed to modify the mandatory short-form questionnaire, which included a question on mother tongue. In the end, while the long-form census was indeed replaced with the voluntary National Household Survey in 2011, the government revised its plan on the short-form questionnaire and included three questions on official languages. The concessions were made in response to uproar from a number of stakeholders, including the FCFA (CBC, 2012).

Upon winning a majority government in May 2011, Prime Minister Harper reappointed bilingual MPs James Moore as Minister for Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, but appointed unilingual MP Paul Calandra as his parliamentary secretary. Outside cabinet, nominations point to a near-absolute disregard for official languages. Michael Moldaver was appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada in October 2011, and Michael Ferguson became Auditor General of Canada in November 2011, a position for which competencies in both official languages was included in the official job description (Gagnon, 2011); neither spoke French at the time of their appointments. In May 2012, Harper appointed Jacques Gourde, a unilingual (French-speaking) MP from Lotbinière, Quebec, as parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, which was decried by the Quebec Community Groups Network (Orfali, 2012).

During the summer months of 2012, the Conservative government embarked on consultations of OLMCs to help identify priorities for a new language roadmap. Over twenty roundtables were organized across every province and territory and concerned citizens were also invited to fill out an online survey. In March 2013, despite criticisms with regards to the haste with which the consultations were organized and the impact of consultation results on the final outcome (Allard, 2012), the Conservative government unveiled Canada's third language roadmap entitled *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013–2018: Education, Immigration, Communities* (Canada, 2013; see [Table 3](#) for funding breakdown details). In July 2013, Shelly Glover replaced James Moore as Minister for Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, and thus was tasked with the implementation of the third language roadmap.

TABLE 2  
 2008 Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality, Funding Commitments  
 over 5 years

Department	Program Details (Millions \$)	Total Funding (Millions \$)
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	Support to francophone immigration in New Brunswick (10.0) Economic development initiative (6.2)	16.2
Canada Public Service Agency	Centre for Excellence (17.0)	17.0
Canada School of Public Service	Extend access of language-learning tools to Canadian universities (2.5)	2.5
Canadian Heritage	Support to education in the language of the minority (280.0) Support to second-language education (190.0) Summer language bursaries (40.0) Support to official-language minority communities (22.5) Intergovernmental co-operation (22.5) Official-language monitors (20.0) Cultural Development Fund (14.0) Youth initiatives (12.5) National translation program for book publishing (5.0) Music Showcase Program for artists from official-language minority Communities (4.5) Official Languages Secretariat (13.5)	624.5
Citizenship and Immigration Canada	Recruitment and integration of immigrants (20.0)	20.0
Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Québec	Economic development initiative (10.2)	10.2
Health Canada	Training, networks and access to health services (174.3)	174.3
Human Resources and Social Development Canada	Enabling fund for official language minority communities (69.0) Childcare pilot project (13.5) Literacy (7.5) Improving NGOs' means for early childhood development (4.0)	94.0
Industry Canada and Federal Economic Development Initiative in Northern Ontario	Economic development initiative (10.9)	10.9
Justice Canada	Contravention Act Fund 49.5 Access to justice in both official languages (41.0) Accountability and co-ordination framework (2.5)	93.0

*Continued*

TABLE 2  
Continued

Department	Program Details (Millions \$)	Total Funding (Millions \$)
National Research Council Canada	Language Technologies Research Centre (10.0)	10.0
Public Works and Government Services Canada	Government of Canada linguistic portal (TERMIUM®) (16.0) Language industry initiative (10.0) University Scholarship Program in Translation (8.0)	34.0
Western Economic Diversification Canada	Economic development initiative (3.2)	3.2
TOTAL		1109.8

Source: *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality*, 2008.

This overview of decisions and initiatives reveals the Janus-faced nature of Harper and the Conservative government on official languages. On the one hand, Conservative governments have tended to undermine official languages through appointments to key federal positions as well as by eliminating or revising core programs. On the other hand, they have unveiled two five-year language roadmaps, which maintained or even increased financial assistance to a number of government programs and initiatives. Why does a government with an apparent disregard for official languages in its nominations to key federal positions and policy initiatives opt to endorse a language roadmap? In trying to explain this puzzle, we turn to language roadmaps and how, as policy instruments, they can be used to politicize languages and promote broader political goals. Our analysis of language roadmaps as policy instruments enables us to explain Harper and the Conservative party's Janus-faced approach to official languages.

### 3. Language Roadmaps as Policy Instruments

There is a tradition of studying policy instruments across a number of policy domains in both the United States and Great Britain (Bemelmans-Videc et al., 1998; Hood, 1986). From this perspective, instruments—which include rules, legislation, statistical tools, grids, plans and roadmaps—fall outside the realm of politics. This classic approach to policy instruments takes for granted the separation between policy and politics, where instruments are viewed as neutral means in the policy design process. In contrast, Lascoumes and Le Galès view policy instruments as politically charged tools for social change chosen to advance particular political agendas. For them, policy instruments “partly determine the way in which the actors are going to behave; they

TABLE 3  
2013 Roadmap for Official Languages, funding commitments over 5 years

Department	Program Details (Millions \$)	Total Funding (Millions \$)
Heritage Canada	Support for minority language education (265.02)	573.51
	Support for second-language learning (175.02)	
	Summer language bursaries (36.6)	
	Official language monitors (18.60)	
	Exchanges Canada (11.25)	
	Support for official language minority communities (22.26)	
	Intergovernmental co-operation (22.26)	
	Community Cultural Action Fund (10.0)	
	Music Showcases Program for artists from official language minority communities (5.75)	
	National translation program for book publishing (4.00)	
	Market access strategy for artists from official language minority communities (2.75)	
Health Canada	Training, networks and access to health services (education component) (106.50)	174.30
	Training, networks and access to health services (communities component) (67.80)	
Justice Canada	Networks, training and access to justice services (education component) (19.00)	89.80
	Contraventions Act Fund (49.60)	
	Networks, training and access to justice services (communities component) (21.20)	
Public Works and Government Services Canada	Language Portal of Canada	16.00
National Research Council	Strengthening the language industry and technologies	10.00
Citizenship and Immigration Canada	Language training for economic immigrants (120.00)	149.5
	Immigration to official language minority communities (including support to francophone immigration in New Brunswick) (29.5)	
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada	Enabling fund for official language minority communities (69.0)	80.5
	Official language minority communities literacy and essential skills initiative (7.5)	

*Continued*

TABLE 3  
Continued

Department	Program Details (Millions \$)	Total Funding (Millions \$)
	Social Partnership Initiative in official language minority communities (4.0)	
Industry Canada	Economic Development Initiative for regional operations	1.60
Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario (FedNor)	Economic Development Initiative (FedNor)	4.45
Canada Economic Development Agency for Quebec Regions	Economic Development Initiative (CED)	10.20
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA)	Economic Development Initiative (ACOA)	6.20
Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev)	Economic Development Initiative (FedDev)	4.45
Western Economic Diversification Canada	Economic Development Initiative (WD)	3.20
Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor)	Economic Development Initiative (CanNor)	0.40
TOTAL		1124.11

Source: *Roadmap for Official Languages*, 2013.

create uncertainties about the effects of the balance of power; they will eventually privilege certain actors and interests and exclude others; they constrain the actors while offering them possibilities; they drive forward a certain representation of problems” (2007: 9). Put simply, policy instruments are means through which governments can exert influence and even control over their population. They are also means for political parties, think tanks and NGOs to compete in the policy process and seek to influence or redefine “representations of the political community” (Jenson, 1989).

In examining language roadmaps through the policy instrument framework, we argue that these represent the fourth generation of official language policies in Canada. Language roadmaps have enabled successive governments to incorporate and even absorb official languages within their respective political programs and policy agendas. For the Liberal government in 2003 and Conservative governments in 2008 and 2013, language roadmaps were relied upon to drive forward specific roles for official languages, in particular as a means for the promotion of certain representations of Canadian identity and citizenship. The OLA and its related programs and initiatives have become means to greater ends rather than ends in themselves. More broadly, in contrast to past generations that

largely depoliticized official languages—hence the debates on the judicialization of language politics in Canada (Normand, 2013)—language roadmaps have had the opposite effect.

In the early 2000s, Chrétien and the Liberal government were engaged in an important exercise aimed at reaffirming Canadian identity and Canada's important yet distinctive role in the world. With mega-constitutional debates shelved, Liberals sought to promote a positive image of Canada and Canadian values because of the potentially negative impact of their neoliberal agenda (Nimijean, 2005). More exactly, the calculation was that a positive image of Canadians and the “Canadian Way” on the international front would help alleviate and draw attention away from budget cuts and reductions in public services on the domestic front. This “Canadian Way,” drawing inspiration from Tony Blair’s “Third Way,” was a new approach to governance and public policy informed by a growing role for the private sector in the delivery of public services. It also promoted values such as a sense of community as well as compassion for others and for the collective good (Nimijean, 2005). For example, the Canadian government promoted a new social agenda in areas of childhood education and youth in order to help Canadians become more competitive in the global economy (see Jenson, 2013).

Canada's first language roadmap must be understood within the broader context of the Liberals' neoliberal agenda at home and abroad. In the preface to the 2003 language roadmap, Prime Minister Chrétien emphasized the importance of linguistic duality for Canadian identity and underscored the value of having two international languages as the country's official languages (Canada, 2003: 2). Echoing similar themes, Minister Dion emphasized the social value of languages. For him, “one of the conditions for future success is our linguistic duality in a world where openness to others and knowledge of languages is becoming an ever greater asset” (Canada, 2003: x). Dion also stressed the role of communities in fostering the maintenance and advancement of Canada's linguistic duality. The unveiling of this language roadmap was a testament to the Liberal government's desire to reaffirm the importance of official languages as an element of Canadian identity. In addition, it was also an opportunity for Liberals to increase funding for official languages after almost a decade of budget cuts. It framed official languages as an asset for Canada's international competitiveness as well as an important social value. In general, the Liberal government incorporated official languages within its broader “Canadian Way” agenda, which tied Canadian values to neoliberalism and globalization.

Harper and the Conservative party, following their election as a minority government in January 2006, pursued the language roadmap framework initiated by the Liberals. With the aim to become “Canada's natural governing party” (Kennedy, 2013), Conservatives have relied on language roadmaps to frame official languages as part of their own neoliberal

agenda and to incorporate them into their representation of Canadian identity and citizenship. Harper and Conservatives sought to shift the “governing paradigm” to a new agenda focused on free trade and free enterprise, a commitment to tax breaks and to values rooted in Canadian history, including the military and the monarchy (Patten, 2013: 72). These changes to Canadian identity and citizenship were brought about in an incremental fashion by three consecutive Conservative governments since 2006. Such changes were subtle and built on existing consensus over immigrant integration and citizenship (Banting, 2010; Kymlicka, 2010). Specifically, in trying to secure the “ethnic vote,” the Conservative party has worked hard to frame “immigrant values” as consistent with conservative values shared by a number of Canadians. Marwah and colleagues argue that values such as “same sex-marriage and the importance of free enterprise” (2013) have been highlighted as areas of convergence between newly arrived and settled Canadians.

The Conservative party’s appeal to common values is relevant to our analysis as it reveals its broader strategy in relation to Canadian identity and citizenship but also towards official languages. In specific relation to official languages, Conservatives have emphasized their social and especially their economic benefits. In the preface to the 2008 language roadmap, Harper borrowed from Liberals in casting linguistic duality as “a cornerstone of our national identity” and “a source of immeasurable economic, social, and political benefits for all Canadians” (Canada, 2008: 4). Harper nonetheless emphasized the party’s policy manual position (the Blue Book) that official languages bring about social and especially economic benefits. As we show below, during the ensuing years, Conservative governments have stressed the economic benefits of official languages while drawing less attention to social benefits.

The Conservative party’s position on federalism and Quebec is also reaffirmed in the 2008 language roadmap. In Harper’s view, “This roadmap points the way to an even stronger future and a more unified Canada” (Canada, 2008: 4). The emphasis on co-operation between governments also reflects the Conservatives’ purported commitment to open federalism, whereby co-operation between levels of government and an appreciation for regional variance would be central to Canadian politics (Harper, 2006). In the context of the language roadmap, co-operation and partnership with Quebec (“the ‘cradle’ of Canada’s francophonie”) and New Brunswick (“the country’s only bilingual province”) was especially important (Canada, 2008: 14). More generally, for Harper, the language roadmap 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” (15). In all, the 2008 language roadmap laid the groundwork for the reframing of official languages, but it did not significantly alter existing activities and initiatives and it even increased funding.

In the 2013 language roadmap, education and economic development are coupled with a new overarching objective: immigration and integration (see [Table 3](#) for funding details). It allocates approximately \$150 million to official languages as they relate to immigration and integration in comparison to \$9 million in the first roadmap and \$20 million in the second roadmap. In effect, the Conservative government took existing funds for language training programs and included them into the language roadmap.<sup>5</sup> In justifying the new focus on immigration and integration, the Conservative government emphasized the economic benefits of immigration to Canada only if newcomers are fluent in either or both official languages. This “new” financial assistance aims to “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” (Canada, 2013: 10). This framing links official languages, immigration and integration and the Conservative government’s broader political agenda focused on the economy, jobs and prosperity. More specifically, it makes clear that official languages have been incorporated into the broader Conservative political agenda. To be sure, the latest language roadmap contains a subtle yet obvious reframing of official languages with a renewed emphasis on how English and French are languages of convergence for people from a number of cultural and religious backgrounds. This new relationship between official languages and ethnocultural diversity is emphasized by both the prime minister and James Moore, then Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, in the preface to the 2013 Roadmap. According to the prime minister:

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. (Canada, 2013: i)

Echoing these words, Minister Moore noted 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. (Canada, 2013: ii)

These remarks from the prime minister and the minister reveal the importance of ethnocultural diversity in conveying certain representations of

official languages and OLMCs. English and French are means through which newly arrived and long-settled Canadians express their identities and contribute to Canadian society and the economy.

Initial reactions to the language roadmap were generally favourable, with many expressing relief that funding was maintained during fiscally challenging times (FCFA, 2013; Orfali, 2013). Graham Fraser, the Commissioner of Official Languages, responded 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” (Orfali, 2013). It is, however, striking the extent to which the 2013 language roadmap is focused on governmental priorities and thus renders the collective aspirations of OLMCs invisible. For example, Éric Forgues (2013), Director of the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities, expressed concerns with how OLMCs’ priorities identified and discussed during government-led consultations that laid the groundwork for the language roadmap were nowhere to be found. These priorities included investments in youth programs, early childhood education and research. Forgues argued that the language roadmap is reflective of Harper and the Conservative government’s representation of the roles of official languages rather than the needs of OLMCs to ensure their own development. Stéphane Dion (2013), Liberal MP and former Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, echoed these sentiments on how the most recent language roadmap does not respond to the needs of OLMCs.

In all, Conservative governments have relied on language roadmaps to pursue their greater political goals and policy objectives. Language roadmaps as policy instruments have largely transformed official languages spending and initiatives into tools to promote the economy, jobs and prosperity. In general, French and English are increasingly framed as means that can bring about economic benefits to both new and settled Canadians.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This article analyzed the Conservative government’s approach to official languages since coming to power in 2006. Its first objective was to discuss the Janus-faced nature of Harper and the Conservative party’s approach to official languages. How can a government with an apparent disregard for official languages in its nominations to key federal positions and the development of policy initiatives unveil language roadmaps that maintain and even increase funding to official languages programs and initiatives? While resentment towards official languages (and multiculturalism) was evident during the years of the Reform party and even the Canadian Alliance, the new Conservative party has emphasized the social and

especially the economic benefits of official languages for the country as a whole. Conservative governments have leveraged language roadmaps as shields enabling them to respect federal commitments towards official languages and OLMCs while also promoting their broader political agenda.

The second related objective was to show how language roadmaps are best understood as policy instruments and as such constitute the fourth generation of official languages policy in Canada. We showed that language roadmaps could serve to regulate and promote particular understandings of official languages. While language roadmaps represent considerable financial investments in a policy area not typically associated with Canadian conservative forces, they have allowed consecutive Conservative governments to reframe official languages and incorporate them onto their political agenda focused on the economy, jobs and prosperity. Overall, language roadmaps have become the new norm in the governance of official languages in Canada.

In conclusion, more research is required to assess the impact of language roadmaps on official languages and on OLMCs. How are stakeholders faring under these new representations of official languages? Have new stakeholders emerged following the reframing of official languages? More generally, language roadmaps as policy instruments merit additional attention in research on language policy and planning. In our view, understanding language roadmaps as policy instruments could offer new insights into processes of change within language regimes. We hope our contribution moves this agenda forward.

## Notes

- 1 Our analysis relies on governmental documents, newspaper articles, press releases and informal conversations with key stakeholders in OLMCs and in the federal public service.
- 2 These commitments are found in the 2011 policy declaration of the Conservative Party of Canada.
- 3 “Open federalism” was a theme of the Conservative’s election campaign in 2006. The meaning of this term remains debated and contested (see Banting, 2006; Cardinal, 2014; Montpetit, 2007). For Harper himself, open federalism was to mean (verbatim from the prime minister’s website):
  - taking advantage of the experience and expertise that the provinces and territories can contribute to the national dialogue
  - respecting areas of provincial jurisdiction
  - keeping the federal government’s spending power within bounds
  - full co-operation by the Government of Canada with all other levels of government, while clarifying the roles and responsibilities of each.
- 4 For details on the new program, see <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/fund-fina/jsp-sjp/ol-lo/index.html>.
- 5 Confirmed by Graham Fraser, May 6, 2013, in his speech at the Association franco-phonie pour l’avancement du savoir (ACFAS).

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