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CANADIAN IDENTITY: ISSUES OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY (1993-2012)

Abstract

This case study of Canadian cultural diplomacy (1993-2012) tests the hypothesis that the public diplomacy of Canadian governments served the objective of fostering the Canadian identity. We claim that Canada has witnessed a gradual eclipse of cultural diplomacy as a means of “soft power” under the Harper administration. While the Liberal governments since the 1960s, and especially since 1993, used cultural diplomacy as a domestic policy strategy promoting the narratives of cultural diversity, the Conservative strategy tried to reframe Canadian identity along traditional, more economic and “hard power” neoconservative terms. This article tries to illustrate how changing identity narratives have shaped the foreign policymaking of Canada in the cultural domain.

Résumé

La présente étude de la diplomatie culturelle du Canada (1993-2012) a pour but de vérifier l'hypothèse suggérant que la diplomatie ouverte des gouvernements canadiens servait indéniablement l'intérêt de promouvoir l'identité canadienne. Nous prétendons que sous le gouvernement de Stephen Harper le Canada a provoqué une éclipse progressive de la diplomatie culturelle en tant que moyen de la « puissance souple » (« soft power »). Depuis les années 1960, notamment depuis 1993, les gouvernements libéraux ont utilisé la diplomatie culturelle comme une stratégie politique nationale ayant pour but de promouvoir le récit de son concept de diversité culturelle. La stratégie du gouvernement conservateur a tenté de resituer l'identité canadienne autour des expressions traditionnelles et néconservatrices, plus économiques et liées à la « puissance forte » (« hard power »). Cet article tente d'illustrer comment ce changement de paradigme identitaire a façonné l'élaboration de la nouvelle politique étrangère du Canada dans le domaine culturel.

According to a multi-country comparative study of Wyszomirski, Burgess and Peila, Canada once ranked as second, only to France, in terms of per capita spending on international cultural relations. For four decades Canada as a middle-power nation endorsed Joseph Nye's theory of the imperative of soft-power resources in a nation's international life; since 1993, the Liberals' use of cultural diplomacy was a significant component of Canada's international relations toolbox. However, since the Conservatives took power in 2006, the government has manifested a gradual decline in interest in cultural diplomacy. The paper will inquire into the government's motivations for this shift.

We will test the hypothesis that public diplomacy of both Liberal and Progressive Conservative governments, since the 1960s and especially since 1993, served the primary objectives of fostering an emerging Canadian identity embedded in cultural diversity. We aim to demonstrate that an important transformation of the Canadian cultural policy took place due to the changing identity accentuation under the Conservative Harper government (since 2006).

The paper focuses on the most important, though relatively narrowly defined, component of public diplomacy – cultural diplomacy. In this paper, due to the limitation of space, we refer mainly to Cummings' compact definition of cultural diplomacy as “the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding” (1). Cultural diplomacy has been used to contribute to nation-building and as a tool of public diplomacy. Our presumption is that those cultural relations put in service of foreign relations have not been apolitical (Mitchell), and that foreign policy has more or less openly used culture to support other political or economic objectives.

While examining the internal motivations of the government for structuring the ways the Canadian cultural diplomacy has been pursued, this study springs from the idea that Canada's cultural diplomacy performance and national identity are intimately bound up. Therefore, we claim that the dynamic of Canadian identity has influenced the projection of Canadian culture abroad.

The first, theoretical section specifies our understanding of links between foreign policy, national interests and national identity from a constructivist perspective. The second part carries out an empirical analysis of Canadian cultural policy through the empirical research framework of the qualitative content analysis of the government and parties' documents, interviews conducted with present or former government officials and cultural and academic stakeholders, and the quantitative data evaluation presented in federal departments' performance reports. The article demonstrates, based on a concrete case study of Canadian cultural diplomacy, how changing identity narratives addressing the domestic interests of the government have shaped the foreign policymaking of Canada.

National identity – national interests – public diplomacy

Our key analytical focus on cultural diplomacy as the most important facet or the linchpin of public diplomacy which articulates the identity of a nation, draws from the nexus between state identity, state interest and state actions. The delineation of this policy area allows us to demonstrate how national policymakers can employ foreign cultural policy as a tool for constructing and reconstructing collective identities to shape a positive national identity by controlling the image of their nation (Aoki-Okabe 216). Established theoretical approaches, realist and constructivist, offer different explanatory strategies to state policy choices and their sources. Unlike realists, who perceive national interests as fixed and permanent, an exogenous variable that can be deduced from certain immutable assumptions about the international anarchical order, constructivists stress the interpretative, i.e. intersubjective creation of interests. National interests are determined through social interaction and social construction, as they change and develop over time; they are constituted in relation to identity. For constructivists there are no *a priori* interests “out there” (Burchill 196). The first step in a constructivist account of foreign policy is therefore the specification of state identity (Lapid and Kratochwil; Banchoff); identity becomes the core building block of interest. Wendt holds that the identity of the state informs its interests and in turn its actions (385). For states, identity has both an internal and an external dimension – it is what binds the group together and what situates it with respect to others (Banchoff 268).

As Rogers Smith observes, identities are “among the most normatively significant and behaviorally consequential aspects of politics” (Smith 302). Canada was no exception to this trend as identity has been in the centre of social research of Canadian foreign policy for many decades. Further to Tilly’s model of major attributes of public identity (5), Buckner concludes that “collective identities are not fixed attributes of groups but are historical constructs liable to evolve and that identities are enunciated for specific reasons at specific times” (51).

In Canada, the Quebec nationalist movement of the 1960s brought to the fore the bicultural or bi-racial component of Canadian identity, and called for the emphasis of Canada’s dual French and English character. A second component of Canadian identity – the British heritage – was not able to counter the concept of a “Quebec nation” with an ethnic form of Canadian nationalism. Therefore, this duality “as a vector of transnational collective identity has come to have a centrifugal rather than a centripetal impact upon foreign policy” (Haglund 360). The steady structuration of cultural diplomacy can be interpreted from an identity view as an appeasing policy, a means of

fostering national unity, a tool to enhance a new civic aspect of Canadian identity, endorsed in the principle of cultural diversity.

The last important relational aspect of Canadian identity useful for the analysis of Canadian cultural diplomacy can be called, in Haglund's words, geographical, as it refers to the conceptualization of Canada as a regional actor, defining its relationship to the United States (359). The geographical position of Canada next to its powerful neighbour and the world's biggest economy has been the main factor not only for Canadian cultural expression but also for the transmission of its values abroad. The necessity to constitute the "other" vis-a-vis the dominant neighbour emphasizes cultural sovereignty. Cultural diplomacy has been constructed as a strategy of soft balancing measures, which did not directly challenge the U.S. cultural preponderance but searched for policies that would delay and undermine the U.S. cultural dominance in Canada.

Diversity as a defining aspect of Canadian international cultural policy

The Quiet Revolution raised interest in intensive provincial engagement and its role in international relations; the federal government was urged to care not only about foreign relations but also to enhance international cultural links (Stephens 2). Halloran argues that the federal focus on cultural relations was a reaction to activities of the Quebec government (2). Under Lester Pearson's tenure as Prime Minister, in 1966, the Cultural Affairs Division was established as a separate unit within the Department of External Affairs (DEA). The government had accelerated agreements of cultural cooperation with France, Switzerland and Belgium in 1963. As Quebec put more resources into its relations with France, Ottawa also increased its international relations abroad (CCART 24). Halloran documented that the budget for Canadian cultural exchanges with Francophone countries was increased 4 times from 250,000 CAD to 1 million CAD by the end of 1965 (3).

Trudeau's strategy to respond to bicultural cleavages in Canada differed from his predecessor Lester Pearson. The Quebec government adopted an approach to cultural policy that focused on the national identity of Quebecers; the federal government was determined to counter the provincial cultural measures by creating a new Canadian national identity. Trudeau actively brought to the fore a new comprehensive image of Canada at home and abroad – an image embedded in diversity. Under P.E. Trudeau the Quebec cultural assertiveness was to be suppressed also by a new Canadian foreign policy with a strong pan-Canadian cultural component. The federal government, through the DEA, promoted the diversity of Canadian identity, making it the center of

Canadian's self-image. *Foreign Policy for Canadians*, stated Trudeau's foreign policy principles of 1970 and acknowledged that cultural activities were an integral part of foreign policy. The paper stressed the importance of cultural relations abroad as a means of projecting Canada's distinctiveness (Maxwell 24). Trudeau believed that a successful performance on the international scene would have a positive impact on the national unity and domestic policies. *Foreign Policy for Canadians* acknowledged that Canada underwent "a long period of difficult readjustment (...) a period in which Canada is coming to terms with its essential bilingual character" (14). The Cultural Affairs Division of the DEA also expanded cultural agreements with Switzerland, Italy, West Germany and the Netherlands. The opening of the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris in May 1970 was the first effort to present Canada as a multicultural and open country, while also serving as a showcase of Canadian arts and culture. Cultural diplomacy boomed during the Trudeau era and cultural affairs continued to receive thorough attention in the annual foreign policy reviews during the 1970s. The Arts Promotion Program was launched in 1974 and was the flagship of the Department's support to individual artists and companies performing abroad.

It is interesting to note how much the Liberal idea of creating linkage between promotion of diversity and cultural exposure resonated in Canadian society. The Survey of Canadian Heritage of 2012 explicitly states that "92% of Canadians agree that arts experiences are a valuable way of bringing together people from different languages and traditions." The same survey found that "the vast majority (87%) of Canadians agreed that the arts and culture help them express and define what it means to be Canadian" (Petri 36).

A Canadian Studies program, whose main objective was to expand the influential community "informed about and favorably disposed toward Canada" was inaugurated in the mid-1970s. At the time, the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, Allan MacEachen, called the initiative a key part of a government plan "to expand and diversify Canada's cultural relations with other countries" (CCSI). According to his statement, the program was to be part of the cultural diplomacy of Canada. It was launched in Great Britain, and centers of Canadian Studies were soon established in France, Japan and the United States.

The foreign policy reviews of the 1970s repeatedly and continuously highlighted the benefits of cultural activities to achieve foreign policy goals; nevertheless, this ideational ambition was not fully realized in practice. From a planned allocation of 12 million CAD in 1975 for cultural activities for five years, 1975-1980, the government budgeted only 5.35 million CAD to the program (CCART 26). The Trudeau era represented an identity turn, making from the concept of diversity an image of Canada abroad and putting culture into the base of this profile. From then on, the federal government promoted

Canada as a multicultural nation, using this vision to promote nation building, “positioning cultural pluralism at the heart of national unity” (Gattinger 8).

The Progressive Conservative government’s foreign policy under Brian Mulroney differed little from the earlier foreign policy review of the Trudeau government (Noble). Mulroney was preoccupied with the English-French dispute and he continued to allow Quebec relatively great political weight. Although the place of the arts and culture in Canadian foreign policy did not hold a central position, due to deficit reduction and fiscal restraint, the Mulroney administration did not revoke the policy and attempted to match cultural objectives of foreign policy to trade objectives. A former official of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAIT) asserts that the Mulroney government was “very supportive” of the promotion of Canadian arts and culture abroad, primarily in the Canada House Cultural Centre in London, which had an approximate annual budget of 350,000 CAD that allowed the organization of big events such as Canada Nouveau (Interview No. 5).

The success of Mulroney’s key initiative, the free trade agreement between Canada and the United States of 1988, required the government to maintain Canadian cultural sovereignty. For Americans, the cultural industry was perceived as entertainment defined by market demand. In other words, it was treated as a product, while Canadians saw culture as an expression of national identity that needed protection (Mulcahy 265). The United States was willing to open its markets for other cultural products, but Canada, facing the massive challenge of American cultural imports, looked for protectionist measures in the agreements. The government was successful at negotiating the normative protection of Canadian autonomous culture in the form of an exemption of the cultural industries from the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), later the North American Free Trade Agreement (i.e. Article 1 (5) of NAFTA); however, several disputes between Canada and the U.S. with regards to cultural industries protection clearly demonstrate the disagreement over the interpretation of this cultural exemption. The unsuccessful protection of the Canadian cultural sector against the dominance of American cultural production under NAFTA, as well as WTO, resulted in the belief that trade agreements would likely be insufficient to retain domestic autonomy in cultural policymaking. Therefore, the following Liberal governments pursued an active international policy preserving the rights of states to formulate appropriate public policy for the protection, promotion and enhancement of cultural diversity. In 2005, the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression was adopted based on the initiative of Canada and France.

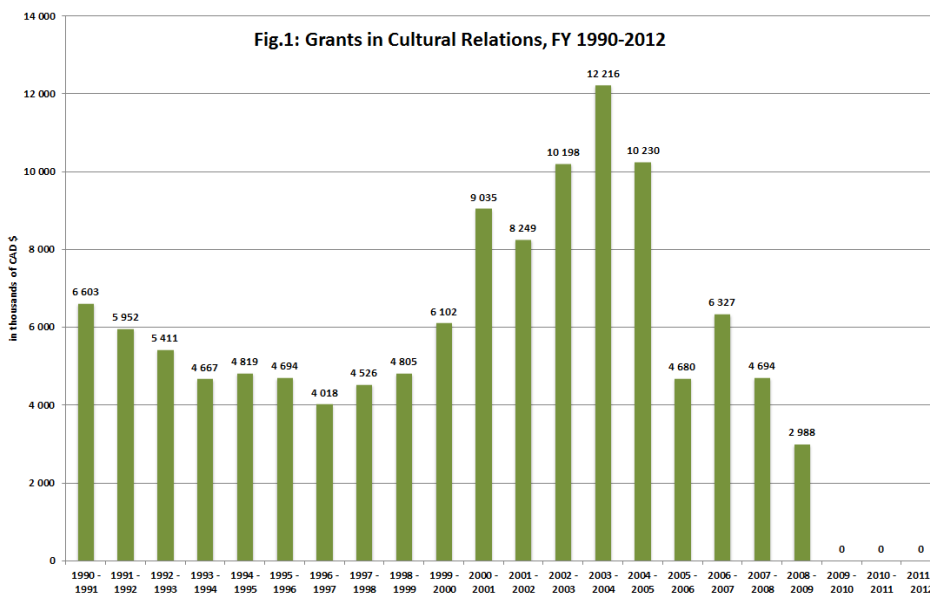
Culture as a pillar of Canadian foreign policy

It is important to understand the features of Trudeau's cultural diplomacy legacy, because the incorporation of Canadian values and culture into the so-called Third Pillar of foreign policy in 1995 followed Trudeau's ideas. A new roadmap for Canadian foreign policy called *Canada in the World* was prepared by the new Liberal government of Jean Chrétien; for the first time, it incorporated culture into official government international policy. When foreign policy was developed during the years 1993-1995, national unity was a central topic. The ethnic dimension of Canadian identity played a very crucial role for foreign policy, as the 1995 Quebec referendum on sovereignty was approaching and the federal government needed to appease the Quebec thrust for independence. The accent on culture as one of three defining features of the Canadian image abroad can be interpreted as a strategic move by the Chrétien government to show to Quebec that the federal government was willing and able to represent a united Canada abroad and speak with one unique voice on the international scene. The idea of a comprehensive image of Canada embedded in diversity was revitalized. *Canada in the World* emphasized that "culture and education are vital to our success" and continued that "only Canadian culture can express the uniqueness of our country, which is bilingual, multicultural, and deeply influenced by its Aboriginal roots, the North, the oceans and its own vastness" (1, 37).

In the interest of national unity the Third Pillar projected the image of Canada as a country whose image abroad is its culture (Saul 117). Nevertheless, as this idea was born from the urgency of the turbulent years 1993-1995, the lack of a thorough departmental strategy of what was the purpose of cultural diplomacy and its implication on the relationship between DFAIT and the Canadian cultural community resulted in the slow launch of cultural policymaking. The organizational structure of cultural activities suffered from this lack of coherence. In addition to the newly created Arts Promotion and Cultural Division (ACA) within DFAIT, the Department of Canadian Heritage (DCH) established its own Trade and Investment Branch. The creation of a separate branch at the DCH was a sign of increasing and unclear bureaucracy towards the cultural stakeholders. Several years after the announcement of the Third Pillar the evaluation report pinpointed coordination failures: "Previous efforts to collaborate with DCH have been unsuccessful. In spite of senior management direction from both departments to coordinate their responsibilities and share information, progress has not materialized" (DFAIT, *Grants and Contribution Audit*).

Besides the lack of strategy, in the mid-1990s the government was occupied by the economic situation, with large budget-deficits. The

reconstruction of the fiscal policy demanded severe budget cuts. As the DFAIT Operating Budget was reduced between 1995-1997, the budget of the International Cultural Relations Bureau had to be reduced as well. The amount of grants in cultural relations between 1993-1997 (Fig. 1) continued to decrease. Robin Higham, the Director General to the newly created International Cultural Relations Bureau within DFAIT, confessed that despite the strong rhetoric of 1993, culture was rather regarded as the “third pencil” of foreign policy (Interview No. 1).



Source: Data retrieved from the Public Accounts Canada Volumes 1990-2009.

As the Canadian economy recovered towards the end of the 1990s and Canada started to pay off its debt by 1997, the DFAIT budget, including cultural relations grants, began to increase again (Fig. 1). As soon as a new foreign minister, Lloyd Axworthy (1996-2000), a fierce advocate of the power of public diplomacy, was appointed, the cultural diplomacy under the line of public diplomacy blossomed. After 1997, the federal government could finally pursue the Third Pillar in economic terms. As Figure 1 demonstrates, the grants in cultural and academic relations were nearly doubled from 4.5 million CAD in 1997 to 9 million CAD 2001. Until 2001, there were only a few priority posts such as Washington, New York, Paris, London, Tokyo and Berlin that received a separate cultural budget. In 2001, the cultural budgets were expanded to 22 posts around the world with budgets totalling 1.5 million CAD (Interview No. 4). Nevertheless, it is very difficult to fully evaluate the

outcome of the Third Pillar strategy as the funding for many cultural activities, for example the highly successful Think Canada Festival in Japan in 2001, did not come from a specific fund created to advance the Third Pillar, but from other special funds such as the Program for International Business Development, additional *ad-hoc* funds and Post-Initiative Funds.

In 2001, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Canadian Heritage Minister Sheila Copps announced a cross-sectional investment program, *Tomorrow Starts Today*, as an additional three-year investment of 568 million CAD in the arts and cultural industries. It was the largest increase in federal funding for the arts in forty years; the new money was targeted toward underwriting creativity, building audiences, maximizing access and developing private-sector partnerships (Wyman 183). As a part of the initiative, the Department of Canadian Heritage established the Trade Routes program. The program, funded on a 23 million CAD budget over a three-year period, was designed to expand international markets for the Canadian cultural sector (DCH). The program provided 2 million CAD in direct contributions to arts organizations. These contributions enabled organizations to attend fairs and conventions and to be a part of foreign trade missions. A major share of 5 million CAD was spent on service offerings from trade specialists based in Canada and abroad (Parliament of Canada).

Although there was no explicit reference of cultural diplomacy strategy to Canadian unity and its interests, a study of the Arts Promotion Program reveals that Quebec artists were overrepresented, relative to the population of the province within Canada. Between 2001 and 2005, about 39% of the grants went to artist-residents of Quebec and 36% went to Ontario (DFAIT, *Evaluation of the Arts*). The DFAIT evaluation report of the Arts Promotion Program fails to provide reasons for this provincial inequality, although there are a number of reasons to clarify this imbalance. Firstly, artists are not distributed evenly among provinces – Ontario has nearly twice as many artists as other provinces and Quebec has the second largest number. Approximately 22% of Canada's artists reside in Toronto and 14% in Montreal (DFAIT, *Evaluation of the Arts*). Secondly, the G-8 countries were the primary hosts of Canadian culture abroad. Regional distribution of cultural grants, allocated between 2001 and 2005, shows that 83% of grants funding to arts activities were in G-8 countries, with France, Germany, UK and the USA in the top positions (DFAIT, *Evaluation of the Arts*). This can be partly explained by the reactive character of the Arts Promotion Program, as grants provided a maximum of 30% of the total costs of the activity. The program was ineffective in India, China, Mexico and Brazil because there were fewer visits to these countries and the infrastructure to support artists was weaker there. The way the Arts Promotion Program was designed and structured helped the Liberals to cultivate relationships with their important electoral base in central Canada.

When Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin took office in December 2003, the cultural diplomacy programs were in full bloom. The Martin administration continued to support the cultural and public diplomacy activities of the Missions by increasing the number of Missions affected from 22 in 2001 to 39 by 2004, which were funded by 1.9 million CAD in addition to the Arts Promotion Program. Projects ranged from support for the participation of nine Canadian authors in the International Book Festival in Edinburgh through Tal Bachman's tour in South Africa to the Canadian MUTEK Festival in Beijing (DFAIT, *A Role of Pride* 29).

Paul Martin's government was damaged by the sponsorship scandal that broke out soon after he took office in February 2004. The sponsorship scandal revolved around the federal government's investment in advertising in Quebec. It indirectly affected the Public Diplomacy Program (PDP) from which cultural and academic relations were funded. A former DFAIT Official contends that:

The scandal cut public relations funding of the embassies and we couldn't do much that year at our Embassy and we had to wait for a new budget (...) It also brought more bureaucracy into our daily operations as we had to precisely report how many people showed at the event and what impact did the event have. But cultural events are difficult to evaluate as they primarily give emotional experience to the attendee. (Interview No. 3)

The sponsorship scandal terminated the PDP as a separate business line in the DFAIT budget. The Evaluation of the PDP of 2005 clearly recommended:

With respect to relevance, we find that the creation of the PDP as a pilot initiative was an appropriate response given the context in 1998. Today, the PDP may no longer be the best mechanism for pursuing the declared objectives. For many stakeholders in DFAIT, the PDP mechanism served to fill gaps in funding emerging from budget cuts to do programming that is deemed important for different Posts, Bureaus and Divisions in DFAIT. This "pilot" program has served to confirm the legitimacy of a public diplomacy function within the Department in both the international and domestic arenas. As experience with the PDP suggests, public diplomacy should not be a separate program, but a way of working in the Department. (Office of Inspector General)

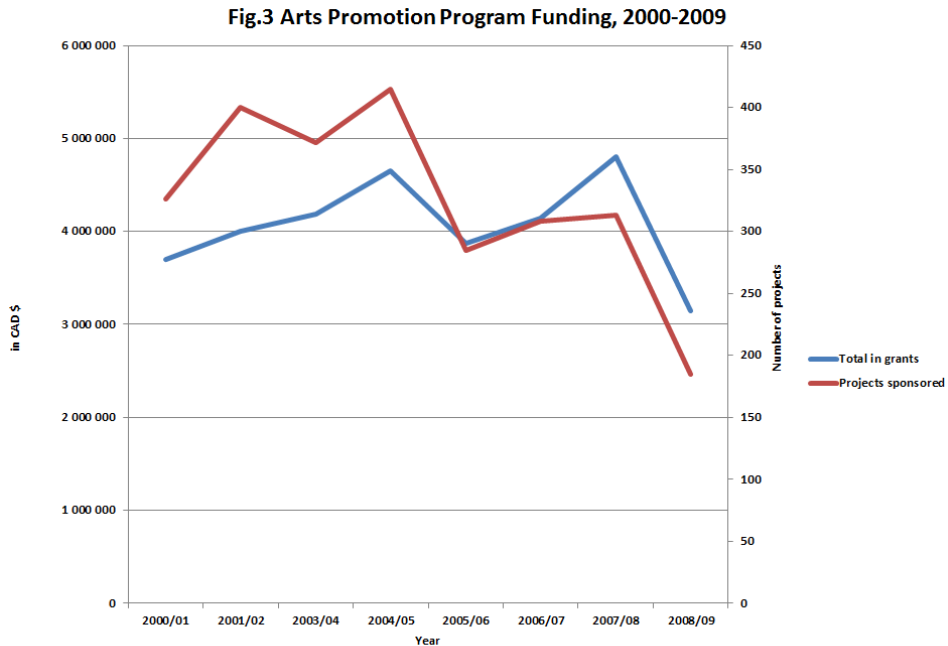
In the 2005 new foreign policy review *A Role of Pride and Influence in the World*, "culture as a pillar of foreign policy was completely absent and cultural relations made few appearances throughout the entirety of the document" (Maxwell 33). Nevertheless, the expansion of the PDP to promote Canadian culture as well as support of the efforts of Canadian Diasporas to forge cultural links remained recognized as a cornerstone of the government's

priorities (DFAIT, *A Role of Pride* 29). The multicultural character of the country was explicitly linked to the potential through which Canada could transmit impressions of itself to the world, as a “precious resource susceptible to spread Canada’s influence through the vehicle of public diplomacy” (DFAIT, *A Role of Pride* 28). The election results in 2006 provided evidence how voters viewed the scandal when the Liberal Party lost the election.

Cultural diplomacy and the new Conservative identity of Canada

After 2006 the Conservative Party led by Stephen Harper replaced the Liberals. The election plan of 2006 *Stand up for Canada* did not contain any foreign policy outline for Canada. Though the promotion of arts and culture was recognized as an “essential contribution to [Canadian] national identity,” the plan did not contain any further strategic commitment except for preserving the existing federal arts and cultural agencies (CP, *Stand up* 39). Harper’s strategy of a renewal of Canadian identity took off slowly with the weakest minority mandate in the parliamentary history of Canada but moved ahead steadily, as his “mission,” as Paul Wells calls it, was to endure, to change Canada and to eradicate the entire left-leaning Liberal Canada of Trudeau.

Cultural diplomacy as a pillar of Trudeau’s liberal legacy became no exception to this strategy. Despite the Liberal legacy of a healthy federal budget (a 13.8 billion CAD budget surplus in 2006), the Conservative government announced the first series of cuts in cultural activities the very same year. The Arts Promotion Program was to be cut by 11.8 million CAD over next two years, the grants to cultural relations were decreased by 1.6 million from 6.3 to 4.7 million CAD (CCART). Two years later, in August 2008, arts funding was cut by 60.5 million CAD. This included domestic as well as foreign programs. In practice, the second round of cuts meant the cancellation of the Arts Promotion Program and the Trade Routes Program as the key components of cultural diplomacy. The declining trend in spending on the Arts Promotion Program after the FY 2005-2006 is clearly visible. A similar drift is reflected in the sharp contrast in the number of projects funded – in 2004 there were 415 projects funded, while in 2008 there were only 185 projects (Fig. 1 and 3). The cuts were a surprise since Canada was hosting the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. The programs, especially the Trade Routes Program, were expected to benefit from Canadian exposure in the pre-event and post-Olympics period as a part of public diplomacy strategy.



Source: DFAIT Departmental Performance Reports (2001-2003) and ProMart funded project lists (2004-2009).

The cancellation of the Arts Promotion Program after nearly 40 years of existence was a factual diminishment of cultural diplomacy within the structure of DFAIT. Embassies were not allocated separate cultural and public diplomacy budgets and relied solely on the Public Initiative Fund (PIF), which was approximately 1.5 million CAD in the FY 2007-2008 and diminished to 1.08 million CAD in the FY 2001-2012, for all missions except priority missions such as Washington, London, Paris and Berlin (DFAIT, *Report on activities*). In the FY 2008-2009 the PIF represented the major advocacy fund and almost 28% of the PIF funded activities were reported in the arts and culture category; in FY 2011-2012 only 12% of advocacy activities fell under the category of cultural activities (DFAIT, *Report on activities*). The relative weight of the PIF in the soft-power portfolio policies also diminished; after 2008 DFAIT developed several new advocacy tools that supported departmental priorities, especially the Canada-US relationship and the global commercial strategy.

The government transferred its former responsibilities for promoting and sending Canadian art abroad to the portfolio of the Canada Council for the Arts (CCA), a Crown Corporation, acting independently at arm's length from the government, namely the Department of Canadian Heritage (DCH). The Canada Council achieved a permanent increase of 20% in its parliamentary appropriation (from 150 to 180 million CAD in 2007) and became used as the

“poster child” of the government’s cultural policy (Sirman). It was the only Crown Corporation on the federal level dealing with culture that remained intact from budget cuts. Although the Canada Council for the Arts has an international component in its mandate and covers most arts disciplines, its primary focus is on domestic policies and advancing Canadian artists’ lives at home. The focus on projecting the Canadian image abroad is marginal (CCA Annual Reports).

The Trade Routes Program shared the same destiny as the Arts Promotion Program. Since its establishment in 2001, the DCH had taken responsibility for sending its officers abroad to seek new markets for Canadian cultural products. The officers were present in the Commercial Sections at the Missions. The activities of Trade Routes Officers were definitely suspended in March 2010. Two problems then arose:

- 1) Trade Routes Officers did not have a diplomatic mandate, nor did they go through any diplomatic training, because their primary mission was seeking new trade opportunities; henceforth, their activities were positioned in a vacuum within the structure of the Post.
- 2) The destination selection for Trade Routes Officers was ineffective because the Posts already produced a vital file on cultural activities and market opportunities within the structures of DFAIT and its subdivision of Arts and Cultural Industries Promotion. DFAIT had officers within the Post already having development of the cultural industry in their files. The posting of Trade Routes Officers seemed to DFAIT “another bureaucratic measure” (Interview No. 2).

The collision of responsibilities was fatal to Trade Routes, as the Final Report on the Trade Routes Program pointed to “a need for program management to reassess the program rationale in order to enable the program to be improved” (DCH 74). Canadian Heritage ordered an evaluation to be done by Capra International Inc. The Final Report, provided by the DCH to the authors via an Access to Information Act Request, indicated that the DCH had many reservations regarding the execution of the Report, as many factual mistakes were pointed out by the DCH officials themselves. The main flaw of the report was its poor qualitative research framework, i.e. recommendations were made on the basis of research on only two responses. This shows that in the strategic moment when the program executives wanted to advocate the effectiveness and existence of the program, the delivery of a credible audit failed.

In both cases of Canadian cultural diplomacy, the government did not make any public detailed analysis of why the programs were considered to be performing less effectively than other programs. As a former Director of CCA notes, “the government found itself drawn into more and more questionable justification for its actions” (Sirman). Many national media reported on PM

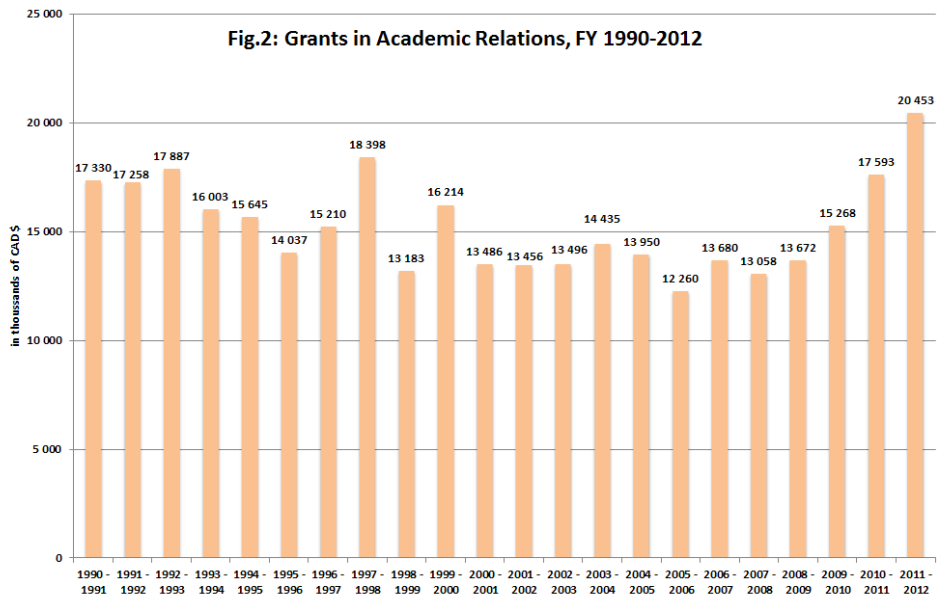
Harper's electoral speech in Saskatoon in 2008 where he compared artists receiving cultural grants to "a bunch of people, you know, at a rich gala all subsidized by taxpayers, claiming their subsidies aren't high enough (...). I'm not sure that's something that resonates with ordinary people." (Benzie) The arts issue played very badly in Quebec, and very probably contributed to a drop in the Conservative share of votes in Quebec in the elections of 2008, which cost the Conservatives their chance for a majority government (Flanagan 307). In the Conservative strategy culture became a tool of positive polarization, picturing artists as a left-leaning elitist group, unworthy of the Conservative government support. It can be presumed that the reasons for the cancellation of both programs were motivated by the necessity to contest and counter the former Liberal focus on culture as a means of structuring the Canadian identity and pursuing the goals strengthening Canadian unity.

Unlike Liberals, the Conservative government tackled the issue of national unity from a new angle. "The intense executive federalism that had become characteristic since the 1960s, has been replaced with mutual federal-provincial indifference," claims Paul Wells ("Maybe Harper"). In recent cultural diplomacy, the federal government lessened its insistence on being Canada's only diplomatic voice and in 2006 Quebec was granted a representative in the Canadian delegation to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This approach was originally motivated by the Conservative's openness to Quebec ideas, though since the collapse of the vote for the Conservatives in Quebec in 2008 and 2011, the government decided to weaken the ethnic component of Canadian national identity and replaced it with something that Michael Ignatieff described again as "a kind of contract of mutual indifference" (CBC, "Michael Ignatieff warns"). The government focused on other themes more relevant in other provinces to get the majority without Quebec electorate.

In 2011 the Conservative Party election plan, called *Here for Canada*, mentioned the word culture only twice – once in relation to hate-motivated crime and the second in relation to arts funding (a list of what institutions the federal governments supported in the past), while failing to present any kind of continuous plan for Canada's arts sector. The Conservatives succeeded in winning a majority mandate after two terms ruling as a minority government. Further funding cuts in the cultural budget were introduced in 2012 and the DFAIT abandoned the last piece of cultural diplomacy. The International Expositions division was removed from the structure of DFAIT and reorganized within the structure of the DCH. The engagement in the World Exhibitions serves as a good example of Canada's retreat from the international cultural stage. In 2006, the City of Toronto was denied the opportunity to bid for the chance to hold a world exhibition due to the lack of support of the provincial and federal governments. Later, in 2010, Edmonton wanted to mark the 150th

anniversary of Confederation by hosting EXPO in 2017. Although supported by the government of Alberta, access to the bidding contest was denied by the federal government, which found its contribution of 706 million CAD out of 2.3 billion too expensive (CBC, “Toronto’s 2015”). The International Expositions division at the DCH was suspended in March 2012 followed by official Canadian withdrawal from paying the membership fees to the Bureau of International Expositions in the fall of 2012. The contributions cost 25,000 CAD per year. Therefore, Canadian cities will not be allowed to bid to host international events, even if they find supplementary funding apart from federal resources, since Canada is no longer on the membership list.

Academic relations have also undergone a major change under the Harper government. The budget was increased by more than one-half from 12.2 million CAD to 20 million CAD in comparison with the mid-2000s, when the budget was around 13 million CAD (Fig. 2). The major change was in the portfolio of scholarships and grants for international scholars. New scholarship programs such as the Banting and Vanier Scholarships, primarily focusing on science and technology disciplines, were established. While the Understanding Canada program was focused on opening Canada to the world with the aim to spread the information about its values, the new scholarships were more inward oriented with the aim to attract highly qualified scientists to do research in Canada and ideally to remain there.



Source: Data retrieved from the Public Accounts Canada Volumes 1990-2009.

The Canada Studies Program, renamed in 2008 the Understanding Canada Program, was terminated after more than 35 years of existence in 2012. The Canada Studies network comprised 6,000 professors in Canadian Studies, 290 centers and programs, 15,000 courses with Canadian content, over 4,500 scholarly articles and 750 books published annually with 34% published in languages other than French or English, all touching upon priority themes. Publishing in another language became very important in countries such as Brazil, China, India, Korea, Mexico and Russia, which are all priority countries for the diversification of Canadian exports. The very sudden announcement of the abolition of the entire Understanding Canada grant program of 5 million CAD did not refer to any internal review process regarding the efficiency of the program nor provided any reason for cancelling, an issue which resonated loudly in the cultural and academic community. Margaret Atwood and many prominent persons in Canadian cultural life addressed an open letter to the federal government urging them “to create a system that will replace ‘Understanding Canada’ and give a new impetus throughout the world in the blossoming field of Canadian studies” (Atwood). However, the program was not replaced.

The program was cut although the expenditures in academic relations had increased in the previous years (Fig. 2). The priority themes of Understanding Canada were: Peace and Security; North American Partnerships; Democracy, Human Rights; Rule of Law; Economic Prosperity; Managing Diversity; and Environment/Strategy. Some of these topics, such as Economic Prosperity, were covered by other scholarships such as the Vanier Scholarship, but topics typically linked to the Liberal image of Canada abroad, such as Managing Diversity or Human Rights, fell out of the portfolio of the Academic Relations Division at DFAIT.

The symbols promoted abroad via Understanding Canada – peacekeeping, the Charter, multiculturalism – represented historical narratives of Liberal achievement. If Harper’s Conservatives wanted to endure, argues Paul Wells, they needed to offer brand new alternatives to these historical narratives (2013). Instead of perceiving Canada as a multicultural federation with respect for the differences and even conflicts among its communities, the Harper government’s strategy promoted Canada rather “as a vibrant diverse community sharing common values goals and institutions” (Sears). These common values became symbols of the Arctic, the military, the RCMP and the monarchy. In financial terms this translated into increased federal military spending by 2.4 billion CAD between 2007-2009, while reducing the Foreign Affairs budget by 639 million CAD (Martin). Inspired by the arguments of Canadian historian Jack Granatstein in his polemical book *Who Killed Canadian History?* criticizing the fact that Canadian historical narratives of military and political themes had been banished from Canadian school

curriculum in favor of more Liberal and trendy themes such as regional and ethnic diversity, which led to the fragmentation of Canadian identity, the Harper government moved ethnic diversity narratives to the back seat, and themes of economic prosperity and the military were promoted. Contrary to the Liberals, the Conservative identity narratives lined up on the side of the hard line of Canadian foreign policy, rather than of soft power.

Conclusion

Examination of the Canadian cultural diplomacy tools indicates that cultural diplomacy was a part of the foreign policy portfolio from the 1960s to 2006. Until 1995, when the Third Pillar was adopted, culture was not anchored and considered to be within the DFAIT bureaucratic apparatus as a tool equal to traditional diplomacy, and was perceived as an *ad-hoc* activity of the government's foreign policy. In the 1970s, despite the lack of systematic management of the cultural diplomacy, DFAIT launched two crucial cultural programs – the Arts Promotion Program and the Canadian Studies program that became the cornerstones of the later Third Pillar. The analysis claimed that through a positive cultural narrative, presenting cultural diversity as a linchpin to Canadian unity, the government buttressed the description of Canada as embedded within an image of an open, liberal and culturally diverse society. This orientation was perceived as a viable federal alternative to Quebec nationalism focusing on the promotion of French speaking culture and helped federal Liberals to address the electorate in Quebec. Quebec artists were the major beneficiaries of the federal cultural diplomacy programs. The adoption of the Third Pillar mirrored the apex of the Quebec separatist movement and the Quebec referendum on independence of 1995. Cultural diplomacy served as a channel for the federal government to assure especially Quebecers that Canada had a competent and unique voice on the international scene, which was supposed to help foster Canadian unity.

As the budget and discourse analysis showed, since 2006 under the leadership of the Conservative Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, the federal government has steadily abandoned all major components of Canadian cultural diplomacy and transferred its responsibilities over the promotion of Canadian culture abroad onto the shoulders of the Department of Canadian Heritage and Canada Council for the Arts, which primarily focus on strengthening Canadian culture within Canada. From the constructivist view the case study of cultural diplomacy proved that Canadian identity determining Canadian national interests has motivated the Conservative government to redefine its approach toward foreign policy. We argue that the Canadian identity articulated by the Harper government, proved incongruent with the Liberal narratives cherishing

cultural diversity. The new Conservative alternative to the dominant Liberal perspective has grounded its view of Canadian identity instead on the military, the monarchy and other symbols, lining up with a hard line of foreign policy rather than with a soft power component of cultural diplomacy. Harper's model of decentralized federalism made cultural diplomacy an issue of provincial interests, free from federal interference, which liberated Conservative hands from this component of foreign policy. Without the need to seriously counter Quebec's claims to sovereignty, cultural diplomacy stepped out of the federal government's spotlight as an efficient tool to advance domestic objectives. As the Liberal administrations attributed a different weight to cultural diplomacy within foreign policy, cultural diplomacy had never faded from the Canadian international discourse since the 1960s. The Conservative government has gradually eclipsed such ideas from its foreign discourse because it has attempted to effect major shift in Canadian identity. How much will this attempt succeed in shaping the national identity remains an interesting question for further research.

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List of abbreviations:

- CCA – Canada Council for the Arts
 CP – Conservative Party
 CCART – Canadian Conference of the Arts
 DEA – Department of External Affairs
 DFAIT – Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
 DCH – Department of Canadian Heritage
 FTA – Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement
 NAFTA – North American Free Trade Agreement
 PDP – Public Diplomacy Program
 PIF – Public Initiative Fund
 WTO – World Trade Organization

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