

ENERGY AND CITIZENSHIP IN QUÉBEC : A PRESENTATION¹

STÉPHANE SAVARD
MARTIN PÂQUET

The main goal of this particular edition of *Globe* is to promote further research on energy seen as a source of conflicts and representations. This subject is explored from the perspective of various disciplines : history, sociology, regional development and economics. Thus, the importance of energy issues in Québec during the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st is the overall theme of this edition, while interdisciplinary dialogue highlights the political and social aspects of the question.

The five scholarly articles presented deal with the macro and micro levels of Québec citizens' empowerment, with the mechanisms for the study and management of energy issues, with electricity rates and profits and, finally, with the relationship between the self and significant others.

In the first article, Stéphane Savard and Martin Pâquet analyze conflicts over choices and representations related to energy issues. These conflicts are characterized by empowerment strategies on both the macro and micro levels. Thus, by interpreting recent historiography, the authors offer a new perspective on energy issues which establishes the foundations for this volume and for further analysis in environmental studies. It can also serve as a useful basis for research in the humanities and social sciences.

The question of the mechanisms for the study and management of energy issues is covered by Marie-José Fortin and Sophie Le Floch, who

✦ ✦ ✦

1. Our grateful thanks to all contributors. Their efficiency and swiftness have allowed us to publish this collective work within a reasonable deadline.

examine the origins of several conflicts and numerous representations concerning these issues. Their article, based on submissions regarding wind energy projects presented to the Bureau des audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE), defines and categorizes four opposing types of landscape that are inherent in four different models of regional development.

The next article discusses the conflicting mental perceptions that arise when discussing or criticizing the rates established for and the profits made by Hydro-Québec. Pierre-Olivier Pineau convincingly demonstrates how six Québec issues – identity, equity, regional development, economic efficiency, public finances and the environment – have mobilized public opinion in such a way that they have affected the drafting of policies concerning electricity rates.

The question of the self and significant others is discussed by Alexandre Lévesque. He claims that the 1973 oil crisis created a more positive way of seeing the Middle East and changed the attitudes of Québec and Canada's political authorities regarding the region and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Last but not least, Jean-Philippe Warren offers a stimulating interpretation which dares to compare the production of oil with that of electricity. On this basis, he contrasts the economic and political path followed by oil-producing states to that of Québec.

(translation : Jeanne Valois)