

G. Bélanger, *L'économie du Québec, mythes et réalité*, Montréal : Éditions Varia, 2007, 361 p.

The book is somewhat iconoclastic on different aspects of the Quebec economy. Here are some of the main conclusions:

- The Quebec economy remains very open to the outside world, mainly to North America. In that regard, the relative importance of its population and of its economy is in decline.
- The Canadian common market, which is increasingly north-americanized, leads to equalization of long-term average real income between Quebec and Ontario. The adjustment is achieved by changes in their demographic weight, mainly through migratory flows.
- A small growth in productivity is not necessarily an indication of poor economic performance.
- The relative decline in employment in the goods sector leads to pressure for barriers to free trade as well as to the emergence of different forms of protectionism.
- A large portion of the rent of the natural resources is wasted.
- Public policies follow the rules of a political game, which favour redistribution to well-organised pressure groups as opposed to promoting collective well-being.
- The “Quebec model” is similar to corporatism and leads to privileges that are economically costly.
- Montreal, which is losing ground compared to other North American metropolitan regions, is disadvantaged by regional policies.
- Government policies, particularly those related to the labour market, are not conducive to the flexibility demanded by an open economy in a risky and unstable environment.
- In attempts to explain the increasing use of the French language in Quebec in recent decades, the effects of the Charter of the French Language are usually overestimated.
- Quebecers are relatively less prone to giving to charities than elsewhere in North America.
- A policy that is better than stimulating population growth is a policy of economic growth that helps stimulate the demand for workers.
- Federalism is comparable to vertical competition within the public sector, which involves ambiguous responsibilities for the different levels of government.

Throughout the chapters, the author attempts to show the relevance of economics in understanding the evolution of Quebec.