



# **Celebrity and Credibility in Environmental Communication**

## **A Rhetorical Analysis of a Video Advocating for a Moratorium Regarding Shale Gas Exploitation in Quebec**

Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences  
Department of Urban and Rural Development  
Uppsala

Valérie Brière

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**Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences**

**Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences**

**Department of Urban and Rural Development**

**Unit for Environmental Communication**

**Author:** Valérie Brière

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**Supervisor:** Hanna Bergeå, Unit for Environmental Communication, SLU

**Examiner:** Lotten Westberg, Unit for Environmental Communication, SLU

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## **Abstract**

In summer 2010 Quebec's government undertook the exploration phase of shale gas exploitation in the St-Lawrence valley, leading to a wave of protests coming from the non-consenting and ill-informed population. Thus, this paper presents a rhetorical analysis of a video produced by famous Quebec artists advocating for a moratorium regarding shale gas exploitation in Quebec. It aims to understand the influence of source credibility on the video's reception as well as the power of ethos in the persuasion process that led to the signature of an online petition in favour of the shale gas project's suspension. Therefore, with the help of rhetoric, attitude change and source credibility theories, this analysis focuses on the source, the message and its style, the audience and the delivery to identify the means of persuasion of this video. The result of this research indicates that the video director has indeed succeeded in building a strong case and managing the source credibility to its advantage through the art of rhetoric.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis focuses on the communication surrounding the current issue of shale gas exploitation in the St-Lawrence Valley, Quebec, Canada. More specifically, the focal point of my analysis is a video made by Quebec artists in favour of a moratorium. I chose this topic for personal reasons since I am from Quebec myself. The shale gas issue was in fact starting to become public when I left to study abroad and I followed this case development through Internet. When the video was released in November 2010, it was massively shared by my friends on Facebook. Therefore, I thought that this video was an excellent example of environmental communication and I was curious to know how this video managed to catch people's attention so much.

## 1.1 Context

Canada is a federation since 1867, which means that the governance is shared between the federal state and the provinces (L'Encyclopédie Canadienne, 2011). Thus, the country is governed by the Prime Minister of Canada and each of its 10 provinces<sup>1</sup> has their own Premier. Executive, legislative and judicial powers are therefore shared between those two levels of sovereignty. For example, the federal government manages taxes, the currency and the military defence while each province manages their education and health care systems. It is also the province's responsibility to manage the natural resources present in their region.

Since 2003, the Liberal party is in power in the province of Quebec. Jean Charest, the actual Premier, was re-elected in 2008 for a third time in a row, with a small majority of seats at the National Assembly. Since then, his popularity has however drastically dropped and due to some scandals, the population's confidence in their leader has decreased. In fact, a survey realised in Mars 2011 shows that 79% of Quebec's population are unsatisfied by the actual government (Le Devoir, 2011).

Recently, Jean Charest took the decision to exploit the shale gas resources resting underneath the rural land of the province. Shale gas is a natural gas trapped in sedimentary rock and is produced by the decomposition of organic matters caused by the increase of temperature and pressure. Quebec lies over two shale formations called shale of Utica and shale of Lorraine, formed some 425 million years ago (BAPE, 2011). In order to extract this natural resource, the exploiters would have to drill the ground and use a technique called "Hydraulic Fracturing" which consists of introducing a combination of water, sand and chemicals to break the rock so they can have access to the gas. The list of chemicals used in this process is kept secret but some independent research has identified over 596 different kinds of chemicals more or less toxic (Gasland, 2010). Thus, adding to the fact that this technique is extremely water consuming, the delicate part is to find the proper way to deal with the waste produced by this "fracking" method.

Quebec's government was planning to start this project in 2014, but they prematurely sold exploration licences to corporations, and those corporations have already started to

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<sup>1</sup> Canada also counts three territories.

drill the ground in the St-Lawrence Valley. It seems like the government acted without informing or consulting the population. The inhabitants indeed found out about this project in summer 2010 when trucks came with machines and started digging the fields next to their property. Consequently, the population felt betrayed and strongly reacted to the government's lack of transparency regarding such an important issue and the shale gas subject became highly mediated. Despite the population's protests, it took time before the government mandated the Office of Public Audience on the Environment – *Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement* (BAPE) to do a public inquiry about the human and environmental aspect of the insertion of the shale gas industry in the province. Consequently, the citizens denounced the government lack of concern for the public opinion. Furthermore, people were unsatisfied by the information sessions organised by the Oil and Gas Association of Québec because they perceived the information as biased by the industry's perspective (BAPE, 2011). In fact, an inquiry reported in the news papers indicated that only 13% of Quebecers believe that the government acts in the community's interests, and 74% think that the authorities rather have the gas industry interests in mind (Francoeur, 2010).

While the government wants to exploit shale gas for economical reasons, the local population is concerned for the public health and the environment. No environmental impact assessment has been done in Quebec and such exploitation represents a risk of groundwater contamination, air pollution and greenhouse gas emission (BAPE, 2011). The population also compares this situation to the Americans' who are already exploiting their shale gas resources and is worried by the disastrous examples of water contamination in certain regions (Gasland, 2010). Even if the government tries to reassure the population by telling them that things will be different in Quebec because of environmental laws and regulations, the inhabitants fear that the authorities are rushing a decision that could have negative impacts on the environment and request a moratorium. This state of mind was highly noticeable in the media and it was reported in the BAPE report summarizing the public hearing sessions related to this issue. As a result to the government refusal combined with other arguments, over 245 000 people signed a petition demanding the resignation of the Prime Minister of Quebec (Assemblée Nationale Québec, 2011).

## **1.2 Justification of the Problem**

In the end of November 2010, a video featuring famous Quebec artists appeared on the Internet. This video addressed the population and gave information about the potential impacts of shale gas exploitation. Without strongly opposing themselves to the project, the artists rather emphasised the importance of making sure the government takes its time to investigate all the aspects of the shale gas industry's implementation, to make sure that it would be done properly. Therefore, the artists asked for public mobilization and invited the population to sign an online petition requesting a moratorium. This video was broadcasted on Youtube and many people shared it on Facebook. While I'm writing these words, this video has been seen 505 600 times (Gazdeschiste, 2010) and 118 933 people signed the petition (Assemblée Nationale Québec, 2011).

The advent of the Internet has changed many things in the world of news media. In fact, nowadays you can find pretty much anything on the Internet and people turn more and more to their computer when they are looking for news or any kind of information.

Therefore, many journals now offer an online version of their newspaper and many journalists have their own blog. However, not only does the Internet allow access to a wealth of information, it also offers a new mean of expression to people. For example, anyone can create a website, express his opinion on Facebook, comment a blog or even start his own blog. This liberty of expression raises some concerns: what proof do we have that the author of this blog/website has the qualifications to write about a certain topic? How can we trust the information presented? Those improvised journalists don't need to submit to the journalistic ethic code like career journalists do. It is therefore up to the Internet users to make sure that the source of the information is trustworthy.

In the same perspective, Internet can be used as a tool when trying to mobilize the population. In fact, it allows people to raise their voice in the public sphere and take position regarding important issues. For example, the emergence of interactive media now offers a new platform to NGOs to communicate their persuasive message effectively in the public sphere. Rhetoric, also known as the art of persuasion, can be identified in many aspects of life: political, legal and advertising. New media are no exception to this ancient Greek discipline since less costly than traditional mass media, viral marketing is an effortless way of diffusion and propagation. Using a strategy that works like the word-to-mouth approach, videos and articles are now one click away to be shared to hundreds of people through social network sites like Facebook and Youtube.

From the communication point of view, it would be interesting to look at what made this video successful. In fact, even if a moratorium has not been accepted by the government yet, I believe getting one fifth of the viewers to sign the petition is a form of success because it means that the message of this video has convinced one person out of five. Furthermore, knowing that the source credibility plays a major role in the effectiveness of persuasion, it would be relevant to try to understand what made the population listen and trust their artists instead of the government. Artists representing a brand or becoming the spokesman of a cause is indeed a common thing. Generally, this kind of association works well when a beautiful actress recommends a brand of shampoo, or when signers get together to make a CD in order to raise funds for an earthquake's victims. However, how is it when artists take position for an environmental cause? Can their voice compete with the ones from experts and decision-makers? In other words, I would like to know what makes that source of this video more credible or more trustworthy than the experts and the authorities.

### **1.3 Aim and Research Questions**

This environmental campaign was all about raising people awareness, bringing the public's attention on the shale gas issue and trying to influence the population's attitude towards this problematic. Ultimately, this video aimed to mobilize the population by persuading them to take action by signing the petition. Therefore, this video used different strategies to convince the population that requesting a moratorium was the right thing to do. When a communicator tries to persuade someone, he tries to change the receiver's attitude towards something. According to Sears, Freedman and Peplau (1985, p.168), "Whatever the nature of the person delivering the message, he or she is a crucial ingredient in its persuasive success". Therefore, in order to understand what role the source credibility played in the reception of the video's message, it would be interesting to answer the following questions:



How was the source credibility managed in this campaign regarding shale gas in Québec?  
What factors made that source credible?  
What was the communication strategy behind the video?  
How was rhetorical communication used in this environmental campaign?  
How did this video mobilise the population?

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

The only empirical data used in this research comes from the video named “*Gaz de schiste: Wo!*” (“*Shale Gas: Wo!*”) created and directed by Dominic Champagne, a playwright and stage director well known in Quebec and recognized among other things, for having directed some shows for the Circus of the Sun - *Cirque du Soleil*, a famous circus which presents shows all over the world. The short movie features 28 famous Quebec artists, mostly actors but also singers and a storyteller (see Appendix 2). The video was released on the Youtube on November 28<sup>th</sup> 2010. This analysis focused on its three levels of content: the visual content, the audio content and the transcription of the text. The original version of this video was in French; therefore, I made the transcription and its translation (see Appendix 1).

The method used to analyse the empirical data was a rhetorical analysis which intends to identify the means of persuasion in a communication. According to Craig and Muller (2007), this method is useful to study the power of words, the value of informed judgement and the improvability of practice. Furthermore, based on Aristotle work, Root (1987) as cited in Berger (2000) suggests that rhetorical analysis has five universal elements: ethos, pathos, logos, aim, and mode. The first three elements will be explained in the theory part and they represent an important part of the analysis. As for the aim (purpose of discourse) and the mode (medium used), they will be implicitly discussed throughout the analysis.

## **3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **3.1 Rhetoric**

Rhetoric was a major discipline in ancient Greece and Rome (Weinberg, 2009). At that time, public speaking and persuasion skills were needed to be part of the elite. While Platon defines rhetoric as manipulating the audience and Quintilien refers to rhetoric as the art of speaking well (Meyer, 2009), Aristotle describes this discipline as “the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in each particular case” (Freese, 1926, p. XXXii). This ancient Greek philosopher is one of the most influent figures in the history of rhetorical communication and McCroskey (2006, p.9) claims that “writers since Aristotle have simply refined his original theories, extending them only in rare cases”. I also noticed through my literature review that this author was the most cited in all the rhetorical communication textbooks consulted. Therefore, we will focus our explanation on this author’s theory.

According to Aristotle, rhetoric has three means of persuasion: the source, the audience and the message. First, there is the *ethos* which refers to the speaker’s character and values. By putting the orator’s ethic and moral forward, the source’s nature can be used

as a proof to persuade (Freeser, 1926). Secondly, *pathos* is derived from the audience's emotions and passions. This means of persuasion supposes that we need to focus on the receivers' predispositions to find the way to put them in the right frame of mind to receive our message. Finally, *logos* refers to the message itself and the logic behind it. This means of persuasion emphasizes the demonstration of truth, reason and logical arguments in order to convince. According to Meyer (2009), those three aspects of rhetoric are equally essential and should be considered and treated with the same importance when trying to persuade an audience.

From McCroskey's perspective, over all the rhetoric theory written by Aristotle, three essential elements stand out. First, "all arguments must be based on probabilities" (McCroskey, 2006, p.8) which means absolute truth is rarely communicated and there is no certain way for the audience to know if the message received is true. Therefore, persuasion is based on the receiver's perception of what is true. Secondly, one of the most common problems in rhetorical communication is due to a lack of adaptation to the audience. In fact, people have the tendency to see communication has a linear process of information transmission, like the Shannon-Weaver model. Thus, they think communication is simplified to a sender, who codes a message, transmits it through a channel to the receiver who decodes the information. However, things are rarely that simple. Aristotle believes that we need to know what is likely to persuade the audience if we want to increase our chances to convince it. Finally, Aristotle admits that rhetoric is basically amoral. This theory can indeed be used by anybody, including people with bad intentions. Nevertheless, Aristotle believes that rhetoric is a "self-regulated art" claiming that "good and right, by their very nature, are more powerful persuasive tools than their opposites" (McCroskey, 2006, p.9)

As McCroskey mentioned it, the message content can vary depending of what kind of goal you want to reach. Therefore, he identifies four different rhetorical communication goals based on the potential responses you expect to create within the audience: 1) create understanding; 2) form an attitude; 3) strengthen an attitude; 4) change an attitude (McCroskey, 2006, p.36).

### **3.2 Attitude Change**

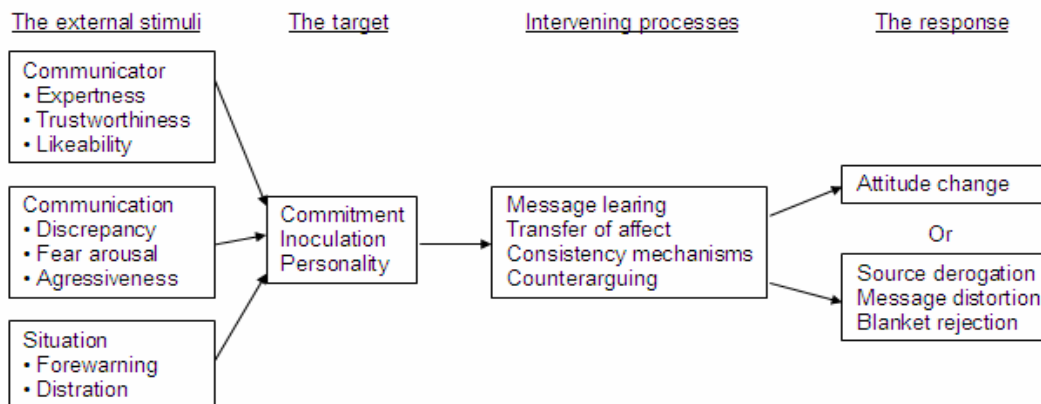
Rhetoric aims to persuade the audience. In fact, as mentioned before, it tries to form, strengthen or change an attitude. Before stressing the different theories explaining how to create attitude change, it would be pertinent to first define the concept of attitude.

According to Sears, Freedman and Peplau (1985), attitude is composed of three different aspects: cognition, affect and behavioural tendency. For example, my attitude towards banana depends on all the facts, beliefs and knowledge I have concerning the banana: where does it come from, what shape and colour does it have, what health benefit does it bring me, etc. The affective component represents the feelings and emotion raised by the banana: do I like the smell, the taste, the texture, etc. At last, the behavioural component of attitude would be the "person's readiness to respond or tendency to act regarding the object" (Sears, Freedman and Peplau, 1985, p. 133). In other words, would I be ready to buy or eat a banana? As our attitude towards an object is composed by a complex mix of cognitions varying in importance, it appears that our affective evaluation of the attitude tends to be relatively simple. In fact, all of those cognitions have an affect, positive or

negative, and the overall attitude is the sum of those affects (Sears, Freedman and Peplau, 1985). Thus, if I like the color of the banana, if it's good for my health and I like all of its other attributes (smell, taste, texture), even though it comes from a developing country with poor work conditions, my attitude towards banana should be favourable, unless the origin of the banana is a cognition that has more importance to me than the others.

McCroskey, on the other hand, distinguishes attitudes and beliefs saying that “attitude relates to the affective component of response, while belief relates to cognitive component” (McCroskey, 2006, p. 67). Thus, while attitude could be explained as whether I like something or not, beliefs are more likely to be the extent to which I believe a fact to be true. The author, however, agrees on the fact that attitudes and beliefs are usually consistent. In addition, McCroskey shares Sears, Freedman and Peplau's perspective about the behavioural component of attitude when he defines attitude as “an individual's predisposition to behave in a particular way in response to something in the external world” (McCroskey, 2006, p.64). Furthermore, McCroskey believes that attitudes have three essential characteristics which are direction, intensity and salience. First, the attitude's *direction* can be favourable, unfavourable or neutral. Secondly, the *intensity* represents the attitude strength. Finally, *salience* is the importance of the attitude in the individual's life. For example, my attitude towards babies may not be as salient as a pregnant woman's.

In order to explain how the attitude change process occurs, Sears, Freedman and Peplau (1985) presented the model of persuasion situation illustrated below. In order to persuade a target to adopt a position similar to his, a communicator with personal attributes (expertness, trustworthiness and likeability) will communicate a message in a certain way (discrepancy, fear arousal, aggressiveness), in a certain context. The target, which is coming with its own background and attitudes, will then process the message which may lead to a change of attitude. If not, the communication receiver may discredit the source, distort the message, or simply reject its content.



Model of the persuasion situation

(Sears, Freedman and Peplau, 1985, p.167)

According to Sears, Freedman and Peplau there are four social-psychological processes that may lead to an attitude change. First, there is the message learning theory which explains that once we learn facts about something, this new knowledge should change our attitude accordingly. However, this theory has been proved wrong many times and it seems like the message is not necessarily the key element of persuasion. For example, a smoker who learns of the bad effects of smoking won't necessarily start disliking

cigarettes. It is the same thing with environmental issues; even if people know that recycling is good for the environment, some keep throwing their plastic and glass bottles in the garbage.

Secondly, the transfer of affect theory is often used in publicity to change the customer's attitude towards a product. For example, they will put a beautiful young woman in a beer commercial and show people partying, hoping that the beer will be associated to the positive affect of fun and success with women. We can notice the same transfer with the source carrying the message: if you like the communicator you'll be more likely to agree with him because you transfer your feelings about him to the message (Sears, Freedman and Peplau, 1985).

Thirdly, according to the counterarguing theory, when we receive a message, we may engage ourselves in a debate, either mentally or verbally, trying to defend our own position. As long as we can refute the message's argument, we'll reduce the pressure for changing our attitude. However, this process does not happen as often as we may think. In fact, due to a lack of motivation, receivers don't always take the time to analyse complex arguments and find counterarguments. Moreover, contrarily to the receivers, the initiator of the communication is highly motivated; therefore, his arguments have been well thought and intended to be difficult to contest. (Sears, Freedman and Peplau, 1985)

Finally, there is the consistency mechanisms theory which states that attitude change is the result of a discomfort created by a discrepancy between attitudes or beliefs. According to McCroskey (2006, p.73), "human mind has a powerful need for consistency in attitudes and beliefs". Therefore, if I have a positive attitude towards someone but he says something that I don't like, there is discrepancy between my attitude towards the source of the message and the content of the message. Consequently, I feel the pressure to restore the equilibrium, and my mind might try to reduce the tension by making me dislike the source or making me reconsider my position towards the message.

### **3.3 Source Credibility and Ethos**

When you open the television, it is not long before you are bombarded by commercials which try to persuade you to buy something. Whether it is a dentist who recommends you a brand of toothpaste, a celebrity taking part in a humoristic commercial or an ordinary guy who looks just like you, eating chips, the communicator is the first thing you notice and it will affect, consciously or not, the way you receive the message. According to Sears, Freedman and Peplau (1985, p.172), "one of the most straightforward and reliable findings in attitude change is that the more favourably people evaluate the communicator, the more they are apt to change their attitudes". Thus, it raises the following question: what makes one source more credible than the other?

Many research have been conducted to try to identify which are the most important components of source credibility. Here is a table summarising their results. The decision to present this information in a table format was made because it gives a general overview and illustrates the fact that some of those dimensions are very similar, even if they are named differently.

Summary of Research Made on the Components of Source Credibility			
Aristotle (330 B.C.)	Halvan, Jans and Kelly (1953)	Berlo and Lemert (1961)	McCroskey (2006)
Intelligence	Expertness	Competence	Expertness
Character	Trustworthiness	Trustworthiness	Trustworthiness
Goodwill	Intention towards the receiver		“Perceive caring”
		Dynamism	

(McCroskey, 2006)

As we can see, expertness/competence/intelligence and trustworthiness/character are unanimously recognised to be important dimensions of source credibility. In fact, an expert source has been demonstrated to be more credible and to produce more attitude change than a non-expert source. However, a source which has a lot of competence and knowledge about a subject does not necessarily transfer its credibility when the communication is about something out of its field of expertise (Sears, Freedman and Peplau, 1985).

Regardless of its expertise, a source perceived to be trustworthy will be more persuasive than one which is seen untrustworthy. Generally, a speaker is perceived more trustworthy when he doesn't have anything to gain from the act of communication or when it seems like he or she doesn't take a position for personal reasons (Sears, Freedman and Peplau, 1985). In other words, the source's perceived trustworthiness depends on what a listener believes to be the communicator's motivations and intentions. As Sears, Freedman and Peplau mention, one way to increase trustworthiness is to represent a position which does not reflect our own interest.

Goodwill has also been identifying as an important aspect of source credibility. Although some may believe goodwill is part of the character dimension of the source rather than credibility, one of McCroskey's (2006) research has proven that the impact of caring is greater than expertness but less than trustworthiness. This dimension can be reached by acting with empathy which means to try to see things through others' eyes, being aware and understanding others' concerns, or recognising other's problems and trying to help them (McCroskey, 2006).

Furthermore, the same author explains that, source credibility is one of ethos' four critical elements, along with *attraction*, *homophily* and *temperament*. Ethos is described as “the attitude towards a source of communication held at a given time by a receiver” (McCroskey, 2006, p.82). This attitude towards the source can change over time and vary from one receiver to another. *Initial ethos* is the prior ethos of a source, before the communication starts. It can be influenced by the communicator's background, personality, physical attributes, etc. During the act of communication, the message, the circumstances of the communication and the delivery of the message form the *derived ethos*. Finally, *terminal ethos* is the result of the sum of the initial ethos and the derived ethos, after the communication.

Besides source credibility, *interpersonal attraction* is an important element of ethos. First, there is physical attraction which depends on the appearance of the speaker. Some of this physical attributes are uncontrollable (height, face features: bone's structure, size of the nose, the eyes, the mouth, etc) while others are more manageable (choice of

clothing, cleanliness, make up, hair style, etc). Before an unknown communicator starts to speak, physical appearance is the first thing that we notice and people have the tendency to listen to better looking source (McCroskey, 2006). Secondly, a source can be socially attractive when he or she seems like a nice person who has a life filled up with social relationships and with whom you would appreciate to spend some time. Thirdly, a task attractive person is someone you would like to work with because you believe it would be a pleasant and gratifying experience (McCroskey, 2006).

According to the consistency theory, people have the tendency to be influenced by the persons they like. “Anything that increase liking ought also to increase attitude change.” (Sears, Freedman and Peplau, 1985, p.175) Therefore, when facing the pressure caused by inconsistency (e.g.: I disagree with the source’s message), a person will be more inclined to change his attitude towards the message than towards the source of the communication if it’s a likable sender. Therefore, all three kinds of attraction may increase liking and thereby attitude change.

*Homophily* is another critical element of ethos. The principle of homophily is described by McCroskey as followed:

“The more two people perceive themselves as similar, the more they are likely to attempt to communicate with each other, the more likely they will be more effective in that communication, and the more likely they will become more similar to each other.” (McCroskey, 2006, p. 99)

Thus, people have tendency to engage themselves in communication acts with people who share a similarity demographic (age, sex, marital status, culture, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, etc), a similarity of background (past experience, education, training and knowledge), or a similar attitude, belief and/or value (McCroskey, 2006).

This homophily principle goes along with the consistency theory: a person is more likely to like someone who’s similar to him (similar social characteristics and/or life experience) and expects to share the same attitudes since they have so much in common (Sears, Freedman and Peplau, 1985). We indeed have the tendency to think that people like us think like us. Hence, when one’s attitude towards an object differs from a similar person, the inconsistency pressures him to change his attitude. The pressure is even stronger when it comes from a group of reference because the individual values and identifies himself to the group. Consequently, the group becomes a highly credible source and its attitude is perceived as being the norm, while different ways of thinking are perceived to be wrong.

Finally, the last critical element of ethos is *temperament*. McCroskey (2006, p.102) says that “we like, respect, trust and believe people with some kinds of temperament more than we do others”. Although this element is not well defined by the author due to a lack of research on the topic, he mentions some dimensions of temperament: 1) extraversion which represent the dynamism of the source; 2) neuroticism which stands for the composure and the emotional control of the communicator; 3) agreeableness which is the equivalent of sociability and friendliness; 4) conscientiousness which means openness to experiences.

In summary, the rhetoric theory stresses three aspects that should be analysed when studying rhetorical communication: ethos, pathos and logos. Therefore, these three elements will be the skeleton on which the analysis will be built on. The attitude change theories, on the other hand, will be helpful to understand how ethos, pathos and logos are used in this video to achieve persuasion. Finally, source credibility being the focal point of this paper, the source analysis will mainly focus on this aspect of ethos. Thus, instead of talking about the initial, derived and terminal ethos, I will address those characteristics regarding only source credibility. In other words, I will analyse the source credibility before, during and after the communication.

## 4 ANALYSIS

The object of this analysis, the video, was the initiative of Dominic Champagne, a famous playwright and stage director. This video features over twenty popular Quebec's artists. Through this communication, the artists share their concerns about shale gas exploitation, explain the potential impacts of such a project, remind the population that this should be their decision and ask them to sign a petition requesting a moratorium to make sure that things will be done properly and according to Quebecers' interests. In order to fully understand the content of this analysis, I highly recommend the reader to have a look at the video transcription presented in the Appendix 1. Many extracts will be analysed and will refer to specific lines of the verbatim. Moreover, you can watch the video online at the following address: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIdKWcKoa0Q>.

The following analysis will thus look at the different discourses present in the public sphere regarding shale gas. Then, I will focus on the three basic elements of rhetoric: ethos, logos and pathos. Finally, I will analyse the style of the message and its delivery. Style has been judged to be pertinent to this analysis since it can influence the message and its reception. As for the delivery, I believe that it is the link between the source, the message and the audience. In fact, it is through the delivery that the audience will build his perception of the source and evaluate the message. Therefore, delivery is the culmination of rhetorical communication and must be analysed to predict its impact on the communication's persuasiveness.

### 4.1 Rhetoric and Environmental Discourses

Two main opposing discourses can be identified in the public sphere, both trying to persuade the rest of the population. On one side, there are the government, the industry and those who are for the exploitation of Quebec's shale gas resources. Those people believe that Quebec would benefit economically from such exploitation, shale gas exploitation would ensure the energetic security of Quebec and they argue that natural gas is less polluting than oil and coal. On the other side, there are those who request a moratorium and those who are totally against the project. Both mostly share the same arguments which are: the lack of knowledge of the impacts of such exploitation, the potential consequences on health and the environment (especially water supply), the lack of transparency of the government and its lack of precautions (BAPE, 2010).

Robert Cox writes in *Environmental Communication and the Public Sphere* (2010) that rhetoric has a constitutive force because we construct our perception of nature through language and symbols. It is therefore through communication that environmental issue

are recognised as a problem in the population's mind. In fact, shale gas exploitation wouldn't be perceived as a problem if no one had raised their voice to ask questions and oppose themselves to this project. Thus, Cox identifies two kinds of discourses in the society: dominant and insurgent. Looking at the shale gas issue, it seems like the discourse from those who are in favour of the shale gas industry development goes along with a dominant discourse called "Dominant Social Paradigm" which is "a discursive tradition that has sustained attitudes of human dominance over nature" (Cox, 2010, p.63). Therefore, those people see shale gas as a source of prosperity, and its exploitation as a promise of economical growth. On the other hand, those who are against this project or in favour of a moratorium hold an insurgent discourse of "natural capitalism" which advocates equilibrium and harmony between society and nature through sustainability. Hence, the video uses what Aristotle called deliberative rhetorical to dissuade the population to do something that can be potentially harmful for health and the environment.

According to an inquiry led by Senergis for Le Devoir newspaper in October, so before the video diffusion, half of Quebec's population was unfavourable to shale gas exploitation while 17% were favourable (Francoeur, 2010). According to the same source, 78% of the population who perceived themselves as informed on this issue were in favour of a moratorium. This proportion represents 57% of Quebec's total population. Consequently, we can say that the major part of the audience shared a similar view with the video's message. According to McCroskey (2006), the receiver tends to perceive the source as more credible when he shares a similar perspective. Moreover, the author suggests that "a source may build credibility by supporting things the audience likes and then draw upon the higher credibility to gain approval for other things" (McCroskey, 2006, pp.90-91). Thus, by being consistent with the public's opinion that the government is rushing a decision and the population should have a voice, the artists may have increased their credibility which facilitated the reception of the demand to sign the online petition.

## **4.2 Source (Ethos)**

When talking about ethos or source credibility, we first need to identify the source of the video. While it may appear simple, this task is more complex than we would expect. The campaign was indeed Dominic Champagne's idea and he is the one who designed the video, wrote the message and directed every step of its creation. Therefore, I believe that Mr Champagne is the initial source of the video. Nevertheless, the artists are those who delivered the message to the public and their ethos greatly influence the overall ethos of this campaign. According to McCroskey (2006), no matter how strong is the message, a good delivery will always have a good impact on the communication's reception because it is then more difficult for the receiver to derogate the source. Since most of the artists present in the video were actors (see Appendix 2), we can suppose that their talent for oral communication had a positive effect on the reception. Other aspects influencing the artists' credibility will be discussed later on in this section.

In addition, there is another source to take into consideration: the Internet users who shared this video with their relations. In fact, whether they sent it to a friend by email, posted it on Facebook or wrote about it and published it on their blog, they are all "second hand" sources of the message. Even though Facebook or Youtube may not be



perceived as a reliable source of information about environmental issue, the ethos of the person who shares the video may have a positive or negative impact on the video's reception. According to Lazarsfeld and Katz's theory of the "Two Step Flow", opinion leaders play an important role in the diffusion and the reception of the message (Breton and Proulx, 2002). An opinion leader is someone who retransmit a communication and who's opinion is recognized to be trustworthy in his entourage. In fact, if you perceive your friend who posted the video as trustworthy, if you like the person or if you think you two are similar, you would probably expect to like the video too due to the consistency theory (Sears, Freedman and Peplau, 1985). Thus, chances are that you will also agree with its content because affects tend to be consistent with cognitions. However, the contrary is also true. If the video post is combined with a negative comment from the transmitter, you may be influenced by his judgement. Moreover, a disliked source could have the opposite impact on the message reception because it would be inconsistent to share the same attitude with an unreliable source.

Since we can't evaluate the credibility of every single Internet user and since the video does not mention the director, I'm not sure the audience is aware of the role Dominic Champagne played in its creation. Therefore, this analysis will focus on the artists' ethos and a few distinctions will be made when believed pertinent.

### **Initial source credibility**

The initial credibility is the credibility of the source before the communication starts. The initial artists' credibility is thus influenced by many factors. First, the background of some of the artist may be favourable. Roy Dupuis is indeed known for being the president of the River Foundation – *Fondation Rivière* an NGO which aims to protect, maintain and restore the natural aspects of rivers and water quality in general. This status probably increases his credibility since it seems like he has the expertise to talk about an issue that implies a risk of water contamination. This experience is reminded when he expresses his concern for water by saying: "If it's true that it [shale gas resources] is a treasure, we must make sure it won't poison us" (Line 34).

Secondly, the reputation of the source can influence its credibility. The artists of this video are famous and popular at the moment. They are consequently well known and liked by the audience. In fact, we presume that some people get used to see them in their living room when they watch television and get the impression that they know them personally. This impression of proximity can have a positive impact on the credibility and attitude change. Furthermore, by having a large variety of celebrities, the designer of this campaign doesn't put all his eggs in the same basket by risking to choose only one artist who may not be appreciated by the majority of the receivers.

The credibility of the source introducing the video also has an impact on the credibility of the video even before the communication starts. For example, Youtube and Facebook may not be credible since anybody can publish anything on those websites. However, watching this video broadcasted in a newspaper website's article could increase the video's credibility, particularly if the article is positive.

Finally, celebrities, especially actors, are usually good looking. Hence, as McCroskey (2006) suggests, a source that has a good appearance, regardless of his or her sex, is usually perceived more credible. This fact can probably be related to the physical

attraction dimension of ethos since people tend to have a more favourable attitude towards attractive people.

### **Derived source credibility**

The lack of expertise, apart from Roy Dupuis discussed above, could have a negative impact on the video reception. Yet, other qualities may reflect through their communication (message content and its presentation) and affect the derived source credibility. For example, their perceived trustworthiness may compensate and have a positive effect on the source credibility. Those artists in fact seem to act for the common good because they don't overtly state their personal motivation. Moreover, the unbiased artists' character is reinforced by the fact that they were unpaid volunteers. However, since this fact is not mentioned in the video, there might be a chance that the receiver isn't aware of this information. Nevertheless, those who read about this campaign in the newspapers learned that the artists didn't gain anything out of this experience besides exposure. Consequently, their free participation could make them appear more sincere, like they really care for this issue, and influence favourably the audience's attitude.

Dominic Champagne's trustworthiness could be affected by his ownership of a second house in the potential exploitation area, the St-Lawrence valley; a fact I discovered after some research. The director has indeed admitted in a report he produced for the BAPE that being a resident of the targeted area was one of the reasons why he decided to invest time in this environmental campaign (Champagne, 2010). Therefore, even if this information wasn't advertised in the video and the media, the audience could perceive the director as biased by personal motivations. This is perhaps the reason why Mr Champagne decided to stay behind the camera and rely on the artists' credibility to deliver his message.

Artists' goodwill is also beneficial for their credibility. In fact, the artists seem to understand the population's concerns when they say: "There are a lot of legitimate questions ... but not many answers yet" (Line 54). They thus show their understanding regarding the population worries for potential impacts on health and environment, and recognize that this is a legitimate fear. Furthermore, they are aware that the government didn't consult the population before starting the project (Line 2) and they want to help the inhabitants to raise their voice by providing them means of expression through the online petition.

As mentioned before, expressing views similar to the audience and a good delivery will also have a positive impact on source credibility. Furthermore, to appear open-minded can improve the source credibility, like when the artists say "we aren't against it! All we say is that it is up to us to decide" (Line 55). In addition, in order to convince an audience which doesn't already agree with the message, a statement should be supported with evidences in order to have a better impact on the credibility (McCroskey, 2006). For example, one of the celebrities asserts that "for now it's quiet, but what's coming is big... very big, imposing and risky" (Line 45) and he supports his argument with examples of the potential impacts of shale gas exploitation: "Contaminated groundwater, wastewater basin, dumping of toxic products..." (Line 47). Such justification could have a positive effect on the source credibility, unless the audience doesn't trust this explanation because they don't know where this information comes from and doubt the source's qualification.

Finally, the use of strong fear appeals has been proven to have a positive impact when the source credibility is already high (McCroskey, 2006). This type of appeals focuses on the harmful impacts that could result from the audience's rejection of attitude change or behavioural change. There are two kinds of fear appeals: strong and mild. McCroskey (2006, p.244) distinguishes those two levels when he describes strong fear appeals as being "worded as to elicit intense emotional reactions" and mild fear appeals being "phrased so as to elicit moderate emotional reactions, or in some cases, only so-called rational reactions". When the artists claims that "we must make sure it won't poison us" (Line 34), talk about the exploitation site's extent (Line 37-43) and enumerate the potential impacts on the environment (Line 47-50), I believe they produce mild fear appeals. In fact, explaining explicitly what would be the direct consequences of shale gas exploitation on human health would have probably had a stronger effect because the audience would have felt more directly threatened. However, using too strong fear appeals can be dangerous because the audience becomes too busy trying to control their fear and stops listening to the message (Frenette, 2010). Therefore, I believe that using mild fear appeals in the video didn't affect the source credibility but may have caught the audience attention and raised their concerns.

### **Terminal source credibility**

The overall source credibility of the communication is the sum of the perceived credibility before the communication and the derived source credibility. However, I don't believe that the content of the message was intended to enhance the artists' credibility. In fact, I think that this campaign was *concept-centered* rather than *source credibility-centered*. This means that the purpose of this video was to raise awareness and change people's attitude rather than to increase the source credibility (McCroskey, 2006). Nevertheless, if the artists' credibility has been evaluated positively, their experience may give them the legitimacy to raise their voice again regarding the shale gas issue since "the terminal source of today is the initial source credibility of tomorrow" (McCroskey, 2006, p.95).

### **Other critical elements of ethos**

Furthermore, the other dimensions of ethos (attraction, homophily and temperament) probably influenced the receiver's attitude towards the source. For example, the audience may have perceived the source as socially attractive or felt that they were similar demographically because of their sex, age, culture, ethnicity, etc. All those elements would favour a positive attitude from the audience. However, an inquiry would be required to find out how the receivers perceived the artists and what influenced their perception.

## **4.3 Argumentation (Logos)**

While the main focus of this paper is the source and its credibility, a rhetorical analysis of the video wouldn't be complete without an analysis of the message and its content. Ethos, logos and pathos are indeed interconnected, influence each other, and all affect the effectiveness of persuasion. Therefore, considering one component of rhetoric without analysing the others would provide an incomplete analysis of the communication and its effects.

Based on Stephen Toulmin's logical model of argument and Aristotelian enthymeme, McCroskey (2006) suggests a model of argument composed of three elements: claim, data and warrant. A claim is the argument that the source wants to convince the audience to accept. Data, in turn, are the facts or opinions which support the claim. Finally, the warrant explains the connection (link) between the data and the claim. The following analysis will be based on this model of argument to identify the persuasive assertions used in this video.

This video's message bases its argumentation on two main ideas: democracy and environment. First, the artists implies that there is a lack of democracy (claim) when they say "the Quebec government has undertaken the development of gas resources in the St-Lawrence valley, without Quebecers' consent" (Line 2) (datum) and this claim is justified by a warrant when they add "it seems like some are trying to decide for us" (Line 35).

Secondly, environment is used as an argument when one of the artists claims that "what's coming is big ... very big, imposing and risky" (Line 45). He supported this claim by describing the project's scope (Line 37, 39, 41 and 43) and by enumerating the potential environmental damages caused by the construction phase of the project (Line 38, 40 and 42) and by the exploitation of shale gas resources (Line 47-50) (data). The warrant of this claim is implicit but we can understand that shale gas exploitation has a bad impact on the environment.

Thirdly, the author of this scenario uses a literal analogy which implied that shale gas exploitation in Quebec may cause damages to the environment (claim). When the artists say "cases of contamination, there have been hundreds in the U.S" (Line 25) and list the States where those cases have been identified (Line 26-31) (data), it presupposes that the exploitation methods and regulations in Quebec will be similar to those in the U.S (warrant).

Finally, the artists express an advocative claim when they "demand a moratorium" (Line 63) and ask to "SIGN NOW in favour of the moratorium" (Line 66). This claim can be explained by the facts (data) that "There are too many precautions to be taken to not take the time to make sure... that things will be done properly" (Line 56) and "it is up to us [them] to decide" (Line 16 and 55). Thus, the motivation for requesting such a moratorium is "so that things will be done properly ... and in OUR interest" (Line 63) (warrant). Therefore, this last claim uses both, environment (properly) and democracy (in our interest), as an argument. I believe that this last claim is the strongest since it uses both arguments and is supported by all the other claims expressed in the video.

#### **4.4 Style**

Like Freese (1926, p. XXXIII) mentions in the introduction of his translation of Aristotle's work: "It is not sufficient to know what to say we must know how to say it". McCroskey (2006) seconds this thought by explaining that style can help generate interest and capture attention in order to ease the persuasion process. Thus, the studied video uses the following attention-getting and interesting styles: concreteness, personal touch, conflict, and different kind of tropes.

First of all, messages about abstract concepts are not as attractive as concrete cases. Therefore, this video deals with different abstract ideas like environment and democracy but links them through the real current shale gas issue. Furthermore, people pay attention to this problem because it personally touches them. They in fact feel personally threatened by the risk for human health caused by the potential air, ground and water pollution.

Secondly, “most people love a good fight” (McCroskey, 2006, p.289). Therefore, people are interested by this video because it is part of a conflict occurring between the government/gas industry and a part of the population/environmentalists. This video in fact requests the audience to join the battle by signing the petition.

Finally, tropes are specific rhetorical devices used to make the text livelier and thus more attention-getting. I identified some figures of speech which stylise the text of the video:

**Allegory:** There are two allegories in this video. The first one is visual and is illustrated with the glass of water. Throughout the video, we indeed see a glass getting filled with water (Line 3). Then a dark drop falls in the water which produces a chemical reaction (Line 32 and 44). The glass starts brimming with foam and soon ignites (32, 46, 49, and 51). The glass burns, melts and finally, falls on its side. This metaphor illustrates what could possibly happen if Quebec’s groundwater gets contaminated with shale gas. Thus, the glass of water stands for Quebec’s water resources, the dark drop represents the contamination of water by chemicals and/or gas, and the flaming water illustrates the result of water contamination. I believe that metaphor was inspired by the documentary *Gasland*, produced in 2010, in which we can see Americans, living next to shale gas exploitation site, being able to burn their tap water. Additionally, at the end of this video we can see a clean glass while a voiceover says “demand a moratorium, so that things will be done properly ... and in OUR interest” (Line 63). This image suggests that taking precautions would lead to the protection of Quebec’s water supply.

The second allegory is expressed through the last speaker’s monologue (Line 67). He indeed uses a vocabulary referring to cars, employing words like “hazard lights”, “breaks”, “windshield” and “rest area”. This allegory may refer to the danger of driving a car. When you go too fast, you risk to lose control of your vehicle. Hence, the same thing could happen with the shale case issue: by rushing decisions, they increase the risks of causing bad consequences. On the other hand, if they are cautious (hazard lights) and take their time (rest area) to make sure there won’t be any bad consequences, this project may be feasible. Therefore, they do not oppose themselves to stop the project (“hit the breaks hard and crush you inside to windshield”); instead they ask for a moratorium (rest area) “to make sure things will go well after that” (Line 67).

**Comparison:** Two comparisons are used in this video. First, one of the artists says that “shale gas... would be to natural gas what tar sands are to oil” (Line 20 and 21). The exploitation and transformation of oil sands is polluting and extremely energy consuming; therefore, this comparison gives a negative image of shale gas. Secondly, one of the speakers compares the situation with a response song saying: “air pollution, ground pollution, water pollution ... it almost sounds like a response song ... except in a response song, you get answers” (Line 52). Thus, this trope illustrates the fact that the population is “signing along” by asking the same questions regarding the potential risks of shale gas

exploitation on the environment, but unlike a response song, nobody answers (signs back).

**Metaphor:** In the beginning of the video, they use a metaphor to talk about shale when they say “Some people say we’re sitting on a treasure called shale gas” (Line 18). This metaphor compares shale gas as being something as precious and worthy as a treasure. However, this metaphor is countered later on when another artist says “if it’s true that it is a treasure, we must make sure it won’t poison us” (Line 34). This sentence refers to the expression “poisonous gift” which means that something may appear good and profitable but the outcomes happen to be the opposite.

**Antithesis:** An antithesis can be identified when the first part of a sentence opposes the second part. Therefore, when one of the artists says “there are a lot of legitimate questions ... but not many answers yet” (Line 54), “lot” is the opposite of “not many” and “questions” is the opposite of “answers”. Thus, it illustrates the contrast between the actual situation (lot of legitimate questions) and the problem of the situation (not many answers).

**Repetition:** During this video, many words or sentences are repeated: “wo” (Line 4, 5, 7-10), “one moment” (Line 11-13), “it’s up to us to decide” “properly” (Line 56-59, 63), “and in our interest” (Line 60, 61, 63), and “do we really need this” (Line 22, 32, 53). Repeating parts of the message is meant to emphasize their importance so that people pay more attention to them. In this particular case, the repeated parts are the heart of the message. If you were to forget this video but remember only those words and sentences, you would be able to remember the general idea of this communication. In other words, those emphasized parts summarize the general idea of the video. In fact, “wo” and “one moment” state the source desire to stop the shale gas project, “do we really need this” illustrates the source’s concern regarding the necessity of such exploitation, “it’s up to us to decide” stands for the population’s desire to have a voice and be part of the decision-making process, and “properly” and “in our interest” represent the way the source wishes this issue would be handled.

#### 4.5 Cultural Aspect (Pathos)

As McCroskey (2006) mentions many times, persuasive communication requires that the source and the message adapt to their audience. This video director indeed took into consideration the audience by creating a communication which uses the public’s passions and emotions. To do so, this video focuses on the ethnocentrism character of Quebec’s population, which will be exemplified later in this section. Some may perceive ethnocentrism negatively because extreme ethnocentric people tend to consider their nation (culture) as superior to others, which can lead to prejudice and stereotyping. On the positive side, ethnocentrism can create “a sense of collective identity and group pride” and “helps maintain the integrity of the culture or the subculture in the face of external threats” (McCroskey, 2006, p.154).

Quebec ethnocentrism goes back far into history when the French who colonized this region were defeated by the English. From that moment, the English tried to assimilate the French, but they held on to their culture and fought for their right to be different. Since then, Quebec distinguishes itself from the other provinces of Canada mostly

because it is the only one where French is the first speaking language. Even today, surrounded by Americans and English Canadians, Quebec tries to protect its heritage through different kinds of laws. For example, children are forced to attend school in French until they finish High School and this language should also be the business language. In addition, Quebec's mentality greatly differs from the rest of Canada. This difference is noticeable in politics as the number of Canadians voting for the conservative party, currently in power, keeps increasing in the past three years ( 2006: 36.3%, 2008: 37.6%, and 2011: 39.6%) while the percentage of Quebec supporters significantly decreases (2006: 24.6%, 2008: 21.7%, 2011: 16.5%)(Heard, 2011). Because of their differences with the rest of the country, part of Quebec's population feels a stronger sense of belonging to Quebec than to Canada. Quebecers indeed like to see themselves as proud of their origin, proud of who they are, proud of their culture and preservation is inked in their mentality. As a result, Quebec had two referendums regarding its separation from the rest of the country. In fact, the last one in 1995 was rejected by only 50.58% of "No" against 49.42% of "Yes" (L'Encyclopédie Canadienne, 2011).

Hence, this video emphasises Quebec's uniqueness, Quebecers identity and the population's nationalistic feeling. For example, when the artists say "this is our land, our water ..." "it's the air we breathe ..." "it's up to us to decide" (Line 14-16) "It seems like some are trying to decide for us" (Line 35), the communicators reminds the population their desire of independence in order to take their own decision according to their own interests. Moreover, "our", "we" and "us" are inclusive pronouns used to emphasise the fact that the listeners have a role to play in this issue and should be concerned because its outcomes depend on them.

Furthermore, the very last intervention of the video may be a little confusing and was extremely difficult to translate because it's written in Quebecers' slang:

"Hence the story of perhaps morating the thing. Morat from the verb moratorium, which is a sport that involves signing the online petition... hoping someone will listen somewhere so one day we just put some little... hazard lights on it. Not that we hit the breaks hard and crush you inside the windshield... but that we put a little he... one... one rest area in the development of the case. Just to know, to make sure things will go well after that" (Line 67).

Actually, most of the script is written in a familiar language. Even though the language is French, Quebecers' accent is very different than French from France and their common expressions differ as well. Using Quebec's specific pronunciation had probably two main purposes. First, the designer of the video probably wanted the audience to feel closer and similar to the speaker. Secondly, he probably wanted to use Quebecers' distinctiveness feeling and touch their identity with a language proper to their culture.

Line 22 also attempts to distinguish Quebec from the rest of Canada. By saying "Do we really need this here?", the source refers to the fact that there are other regions in North America already exploiting shale gas, including British-Colombia, Canada. However, what about Quebec? Once more, the director underlines the fact that Quebec is different because this province has the chance to be filled with lakes and rivers which explains its high production of hydroelectricity. Adding to this the recent windmills implementations, Quebec has the potential to become a province which produces only green power. This opportunity would certainly increase Quebec's differentiation from the rest of the

country. Thus, this sentence aims to put doubt in the Quebecers' mind regarding the necessity of shale gas exploitation while reminding them of their desire to be unique.

Finally, the most powerful sentence of the video is probably the one which says: "Isn't it us: master at home?" (Line 64). This sentence is full of meaning because of the history behinds it. "Master at home" was indeed the slogan of a campaign led in 1962 by René Lévesque, minister of natural resources of Quebec, in favour of the nationalisation of Quebec electricity (Breton, 2009). Beyond nationalising the electricity, this project intended to give Quebec's population the means to emancipate themselves economically and democratically. Instead of being simple employees of foreign bosses, Quebecers would become leader of their own industries and thereby "Master at home". This campaign was a success and nationalisation of the electricity was established in 1963. Later, René Lévesque founded the Quebecer Party – *Parti Québécois* which advocated in favour of Quebec sovereignty (L'Encyclopédie Canadienne, 2011). Thus, knowing that shale gas exploitation would be managed by the private industry, this catch phrase intends to remind the population of their history. The nationalisation of electricity was a step in the direction of Quebec independency; therefore, allowing shale gas exploitation could be perceived as taking a step back, especially if the population doesn't have a word to say about how things will be done.

#### **4.6 Delivery**

The way a message is delivered can influence its persuasiveness. As mentioned before, the actor's natural talent for oral communication probably helps the sources to execute a good delivery. In addition, according to McCroskey (2006), a good delivery is one that is not conscientiously noticeable by the audience and should look as natural as possible. Therefore, the familiar language and the slang used by the artists give them an appearance of authenticity. Furthermore, variety helps to keep the audience's attention and interest. Thus, the constant change of actors during the video creates a variety of voice volume, rate and pitch, as well as movements, gestures and facial expressions. Moreover, even if using video as a channel is not as much effective as a face to face communication, this video intends to create an impression of immediacy. In fact, by looking the audience in the eyes and by using inclusive pronouns, they try to reduce the psychological distance between the sender and the receiver (McCroskey 2006). Finally, nonverbal communication and music are also important aspects of delivery and need to be discussed further.

#### **Nonverbal communication**

Nonverbal communication is as much important as verbal communication because meaning can also be generated by nonverbal communication. In fact, according to McCroskey (2006), nonverbal messages are perceived as more trustworthy than verbal since they seem harder to falsify. Thus, meanings can be generated through facial expression, gesture, posture and even by the tone, pitch and loudness of the voice. An in depth analysis of all the nonverbal messages produced by the sources would be a tedious task and I don't have the space for that. Nevertheless, I identified two kinds of what I perceive to be conscious nonverbal communication. I believe this communication was planned and intended to emphasize the verbal message in order to persuade the audience.



First, the artists use what McCroskey (2006) calls *kinesics* communication which refers to body movement. They indeed raise their hands up to signal a halt when they say “wo” and “one moment”. This emphasizes the request for a moratorium to stop or at least slow down the project in order to take their time to evaluate the risks of shale gas exploitation. It also expresses the fact that they want the government to stop and take the time to listen to the population’s concerns.

Secondly, McCroskey (2006, p.142) calls *objectics* “the use and choice of objects in nonverbal communication”. This video is free of any object or decoration and presents the artist in front of a uniform background. The purpose of such presentation could be to eliminate any sources of distraction so the receiver can focus all his attention on the speaker and his message.

### **Music**

The music of the video can also have an impact on the delivery and support the message. Therefore, it is probably no coincidence if the designer of this video chose a popular song’s soundtrack from famous Quebec band called *Mes Aïeux*. Not only does the band take part in the video, but the theme of the song can be related to the topic of the video. In fact, the title of this song is “Degeneration” and it relates the history of five different generations (great great grandfather to son) and explains the differences between them. The message of this song is that with time, we have forgotten the values cherished by our ancestors and lost the sense in our life. We can link this critique of our current mode of development to the message of the video: it reminds the receiver to focus on what should be the priority of the society. Is it family, money, the environment, etc? In addition, since this song talks about generations, it may remind the receiver that the decisions we take today will affect our future generations. Of course, only someone who knows the song and its lyrics can do such an analogy. Otherwise, it is only a soundtrack which sets the mood for the communication.

## **5 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION**

The aim of this paper was to understand the influence of the source credibility on the video’s reception and the power of ethos in the persuasion process that led to the signature of the online petition in favour of a moratorium regarding shale gas exploitation in Quebec, Canada.

From a rhetorical perspective, the source’s ethos plays an important role in persuasive communication (McCroskey, 2006). However, this ethos is difficult to isolate and analyse without taking other factors into consideration like the message and the audience. In fact, the three components of rhetoric (ethos, logos and pathos) are interconnected. For example, the derived ethos is influenced by the message (logos) and a message will be more powerful if it takes into consideration the audience and its passions (pathos). Therefore, we will look at those aspects to answer the two first research questions: How was the source credibility managed in this campaign and what factors made that source credible? The other research questions will be address in the last part of this section (5.3).

First of all, the expertness of one artist, the reputation and the popularity of the celebrities, as well as their appearance and their physical attractiveness have been identified as aspects of the initial source credibility that may have a positive influence on

the receiver's attitude towards the artists. On the other hand, we have noticed that most of the artists didn't have expertness regarding the shale gas issue. Moreover, the credibility of the source hosting the video can be a double edge sword since a low credibility or a bad comment from a highly credible friend or website can affect negatively the artist's reliability. As for the derived source credibility, the fact that the artists may be perceived as trustworthy, seemed to have good intentions towards the audience, looked open-minded, and performed a good delivery increased their initial credibility.

Secondly, claims supported by valuable arguments also increased the source credibility. In fact, the three claims of the argumentation were consistent with the prior beliefs and attitude of the audience. Therefore, by claiming that Quebec government's actions were not democratic, that shale gas exploitation is big, imposing and risky, and that shale gas exploitation in Quebec may cause damage to the environment, the source appears more credible due to the consistency theory (Sears, Freedman and Peplau, 1985). Moreover, the concreteness of the message, the fact that the issue is about a conflict, that the outcomes will directly affect the audience, and the rhetorical figures used all contribute to generate interest and attention towards the message.

Finally, using Quebecers' ethnocentric character to arouse the audience's passion and emotions can also be attention-getting and influence the target's attitude. By employing slang and a familiar language, using inclusive pronouns, and by making references to Quebecer's history, the speaker increases the immediacy between them and emphasizes their unique identity. The nationalistic feeling might even facilitate the mobilisation of the population by encouraging them to sign the petition in their interest. However, the danger of using ethnocentrism is to create the opposite effect on people who don't share this ideology.

To summarize, many elements present in the video could have a positive impact on source credibility. It is nevertheless important to underline that the findings presented here are my suppositions of how the source might have been evaluated by the audience. No real certitudes can be express without an inquiry reporting the audience's perspective of the source before and during the communication.

## **5.1 Limitations**

The most important limitation of this research lay in the fact that it deals with perspectives. Ethos is indeed the attitude of the receivers towards the source and depends on the perception of every receiver (McCroskey, 2006). For example, a person may perceive the artists as credible because he believes they are trustworthy, while another can believe the source isn't trustworthy because he knows that the source is acting for personal reasons. The evaluation of the source is a process that can be different from one person to another. While we may identify some tendencies and imagine what may have influenced the receiver's perception, we cannot know with certainty how the source was perceived without conducting an investigation with the targeted audience.

Thus, this research is reduced to speculations based on my own assessment of the source. Of course those suppositions are based on other research which have identified the most common components and factors influencing source credibility. It is therefore probable that the characteristics identified have influenced the audience's judgment, but it doesn't

allow the establishment of a ranking to discover which source credibility criteria had the most impact on the communication's persuasiveness. For example, maybe the audience didn't perceive the source as an expert. This could have a negative impact on the source credibility, unless another factor like trustworthiness or goodwill compensates the lack of expertness. Once again, this evaluation depends on each individual's perspective: perhaps the receiver believed the source's sincerity but shale gas expertise had more importance for the receiver. The source credibility would hence be evaluated negatively. Moreover, knowing the initial source credibility would have allowed us to assess more easily to what extent derived factors (e.g. fear appeal) can influence the overall credibility of the source.

Finally, the three different levels of the source was another obstacle to the evaluation of the source credibility. In fact, as mentioned in the analysis, three sources' credibility needed to be taken into consideration: the video director, the artists and Internet users who shared, commented or broadcasted the video. One could for example perceive the artists credible but his friend's negative comment influenced the attitude of the receiver negatively; another could believe Dominic Champagne is not credible but the artists overcome this bad opinion. Thus, many combinations are possible and this complexity makes it difficult to predict the receiver's attitude towards the source.

## **5.2 The Missing Interview**

From the beginning, this research was supposed to include an interview with the video director, Dominic Champagne. Through this interview, I planned to collect information about the communication strategy behind this environmental campaign. Information such as the goal of the campaign, the targeted audience, the choice of the channel and the means of campaign's evaluation could have been useful to understand how they intended to persuade the public with the video. Therefore, not only would I have had my personal interpretation of the video, I could have evaluated if there was a gap between my rhetorical analysis and the director's communication strategy. In other words, I would have justified my arguments with the director's perspective.

Unfortunately, I have never been able to reach Dominic Champagne. I did try to contact the artist agency representing him, as well as the famous circus production company, *Cirque du soleil*, for which Mr Champagne is directing shows, but both attempts were unfruitful. I also got in touch with one former university teacher and asked for a favour after I found out that he was "friend" with Mr Champagne on Facebook. Two weeks later, this teacher replied back telling me that the video director was willing to cooperate and he gave me Mr Champagne's personal email address. Nevertheless, the director never answered back my emails.

The reason why I relate all the steps of my approach is that I wonder if we can draw any conclusion from this experience. What I mean by that is, when someone decide to start an environmental campaign, it is usually because this cause is important to him/her and s/he decide to become the spokesman of this cause. S/he indeed states overtly his/her point of view and is ready to defend his/her opinion in the public sphere. However, if that person can't be reached, what does this reveal of his/her implication? Was it only a one time event? Then I believe that the director may have reached the objective of the video (to make people sign the petition) but may have failed to change people's attitude definitely.

In fact, if after having poked people's curiosity and brought their attention to the shale gas issue, the initiator of the campaign is not there to pursue people's education, give information, and continue to defend and promote his perspective, it feels like an unfinished job. All those efforts seem less important if the instigator does not make sure to loop the loop. Nevertheless, I understand that someone as important as Mr Champagne is probably busy and doesn't necessarily have time to answer every single question regarding a five months old video. Still, it's a shame that I did not manage to get those precious information. Perhaps creating a website with more information about the issue and the creation of the video could have been a solution to the lack of follow up.

### **5.3 Rhetoric and Engagement**

Even if knowing the audience's perceptions and the video director's intentions could have been a good complement to this paper, it is important to remember that this thesis never intended to find out what were the impacts of the video on the receiver and his attitude. I rather wanted to find out what were the factors that have influenced the source credibility and how were they used in the video to mobilise the population. Therefore, knowing how much ethos, and thereby source credibility, is a fundamental element of rhetoric, combined to the fact that this video aimed to persuade its audience, a rhetorical analysis seemed like a good method to find answers to my questions. As a result, I think that the director has succeeded to build a strong case and manage the source credibility to its advantage through rhetoric. Even if it may have been done unconsciously, the analysis part has indeed shown that the video used a strategy consistent with the rhetoric theory.

However, the relation between the video and the receiver's level of engagement has been unexplored in this paper, and might be interesting to examine further. In fact, this communication's effects could be perceived as "limited" since it didn't require a big commitment from the receiver and didn't have a big impact in the shale gas issue in Quebec. The audience had indeed until January 5<sup>th</sup> 2011 to sign the online petition, but the government hasn't changed his mind yet. My personal interpretation is that the objective of the video was to get people to sign the petition but the goal of the overall campaign was to get the government to accept the moratorium. The video could then have been used as the first step of a bigger campaign. Also, this video was designed accordingly with the learning theory of attitude change (Sears, Freedman and Peplau, 1955) suggesting that people receive new information, develop an attitude based on this new knowledge and this attitude will lead to certain behaviours. Knowing that 74% of Quebec population had heard about the shale gas issue in October 2010 (before the video diffusion) but only one third of them considered themselves as well-informed (Francoeur, 2010), the purpose of this video could have been to inform the population about the impacts of shale gas exploitation in order to influence the formation of negative attitudes towards shale gas. Then, this negative attitude could have been the motivator for the population's mobilisation in favour of a moratorium and any other kinds of similar requests. If really this video was the first step of something bigger (e.g.: a street manifestation), the audience would have already developed the proper attitude necessary to encourage their engagement.

In the same way of thinking, this environmental campaign design may have been based on Freedman and Fraser's (1966 cited in, Guéguen, 2002, p. 12) technique called the "Foot-in-the-Door Technique". In fact, this technique suggest that requesting something

that requires a little engagement can predispose the receiver to agree to a future demand that requires a bigger commitment. Thus, asking to sign the online petition represents a small investment of time and effort since Internet facilitates the process. The receiver can indeed proceed by taking only five minutes of his time without leaving the comfort of his living room. Then since the receiver has already engaged himself in the shale gas issue, it may increase his willingness to participate in an action requiring a more important investment such as participating in a street manifestation. Internet could definitely play an important role in the Foot-in-the-Door Technique due to his easy utilisation. Investigating further the importance of this channel in environmental communication and its relation to the audience's engagement would be extremely pertinent in this society where the use of Internet is increasingly valued and normalized.

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## APPENDIX I

### Shale Gas: Wo! (Video transcription translated in English)

1	Psssst! Hey tut tut tut look here, I'm talking to you. Yes yes you!
2	The Quebec government has undertaken the development of gas resources in the St-Lawrence valley, without Quebecers' consent.
3	<i>(Glass getting filed in with water)</i>
4	Hey wo!
5	Wo! <i>(Hands up)</i>
6	Hey! <i>(Hands up)</i>
7	Wo! <i>(Hands up)</i>
8	Wo! <i>(Hands up)</i>
9	Wo! <i>(Hands up)</i>
10	Wo!
11	One moment! <i>(Hands up)</i>
12	One moment! <i>(Hands up)</i>
13	One moment! <i>(Hands up)</i>
14	This is our land, our water ...
15	... it's the air we breathe ...
16	...it's up to us to decide.
17	Ok?
18	Some people say we're sitting on a treasure called shale gas. <i>(Sceptic look)</i>
19	"Psasle" Gas. <i>(Looks confuse)</i>
20	The gossips say that shale gas...
21	... would be to natural gas what tar sands are to oil.

22	Do we really need this here?
23	Right now?
24	"Pshale" Gas ( <i>Look confuse</i> )
25	Cases of contamination, there have been hundreds in the U.S.:
26	... in Pennsylvania...
27	... in Texas ...
28	... in Wyoming ...
29	... in Ohio ...
30	... in New Mexico ...
31	... And in Co-lo-ra-do. ( <i>Pronounce it like if it was a rap song</i> )
32	Do we really need this?
33	( <i>Drums</i> ) ( <i>Drop of dark liquid in the water</i> )
34	If it's true that it is a treasure, we must make sure it won't poison us.
35	It seems like some are trying to decide for us.
36	( <i>Drums</i> )( <i>Glass of water with dark liquid in it</i> )
37	We're talking about <u>20 000</u> wells ... ( <i>looks angry</i> )
38	... 100 meters from houses! ... ( <i>Humoristic illustration with his hands</i> )
39	... between Montreal and Quebec City... ( <i>Illustrates de delimitation with here hands</i> )
40	... with the noise, dust ... ( <i>Humoristic illustration with his hands</i> )
41	... and between the river and the Twenty <sup>2</sup> ... ( <i>Illustrates de delimitation with here hands</i> )
42	... trucks, landscape destruction... ( <i>Humoristic illustration with his hands</i> )
43	... all the way through the St. Lawrence valley. ( <i>Illustrates de delimitation with here hands</i> )

<sup>2</sup> Main East-West highway



44	<i>(Drum) (Chemical reaction in the glass brimming with foam)</i>
45	For now it's quiet, but what's coming is big ... very big, imposing and risky.
46	<i>(Glass burning)</i>
47	Contaminated groundwater, wastewater basin, dumping of toxic products ... <i>(looks worry)</i>
48	... explosion in the fields, fires ... <i>(looks angry)</i>
49	<i>(Drum) (glass burning)</i>
50	... not to mention the air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and the smog.
51	<i>(Drum)(glass on fire falls on its side)</i>
52	Air pollution, ground pollution, water pollution ... it almost sounds like a response song ... except in a response song, you get answers. <i>(Pronounce the first part like if he was signing)</i>
53	Do we really need this?
54	There are a lot of legitimate questions ... but not many answers yet.
55	We aren't against it! All we say is that it is up to us to decide.
56	There are too many precautions to be taken to not take the time to make sure... that things will be done properly.
57	Properly!
58	Properly!
59	Properly.
60	And in our interest.
61	And in our interest.
62	<i>(Picture of a clean glass)</i>
63	Demand a moratorium, so that things will be done properly ... and in OUR interest.
64	Isn't it us: Master at home?
65	<i>(Drums) (shows the artists)</i>
66	Written message: "SIGN NOW in favour of the moratorium"

67	Hence the story of perhaps morating the thing. Morat from the verb moratorium, which is a sport that involves signing the online petition... hoping someone will listen somewhere so one day we just put some little ... hazard lights on it. Not that we hit the breaks hard and crush you inside the windshield... but that we put a little he ... one... one rest area in the development of the case. Just to know, to make sure things will go well after that.
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## APPENDIX 2

### List of the Video's Artists

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Occupation</u><sup>3</sup></b>
Mes Aïeux	Band
Christian Bégin	Actor
Marc Béland	Actor
Éric Bernier	Actor
Emmanuel Bilodeau	Actor
Valérie Blais	Actress
Benoit Brière	Actor
Isabelle Brouillette	Actress
Julie Castonguay	Actress
Anne Dorval	Actress
Roy Dupuis	Actor
Élyse Guilbeault	Actress
Lynda Johnson	Actress
Laurence Leboeuf	Actress
Alexis Martin	Actor
Joëlle Morin	Actress
François Papineau	Actor
Fred Pellerin	Storyteller
Julie Perreault	Actress
Luc Picard	Actor
Isabel Richer	Actress
Catherine Trudeau	Actress
Christian Vanasse	Comedian
Sébastien Fréchette (Biz)	Signer

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<sup>3</sup> This list represents the artist's principal career and is therefore not representative of all their professional occupations.