

MAIN SECTION

# The *Terres d'Espérances*: Integration of Domestic and Green Worths into a Civic Polity

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## ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the participatory revision of the Greater Quebec City Area land use planning and development schema which develops into a polemical process of political will formation that is analysed with the tools of the sociology of justification. The challenge is to determine whether the engagement of citizens, representatives of agricultural lobbies, environmental activists and spokespersons for cultural heritage associations into the controversy calls across institutional and social arenas for a requalification of cultural and natural goods threatened with destruction in order to ensure their protection and transmission to future generations.

## KEYWORDS

*land use planning, deliberative, justifications, natural heritage*

## PEER REVIEWED

<https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2612-0496/14431>

ISSN 2612-0496

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## Natural heritage as a social construct

The integration of so-called natural elements into the field of cultural heritage is one of the most striking developments of recent decades.<sup>1</sup> Very schematically, the notion of natural heritage has historically developed from mystifying exaltations of nature; the writings of R.W. Emerson and H.D. Thoreau are indeed part of a transcendental vision of the relationship between humankind and a wild nature witnessing divine activity;<sup>2</sup> it is then a question of making these spaces sacred and of preserving them from the very extension of the civilisation process.<sup>3</sup> The notion of natural heritage is also shaped by aesthetic influences characteristic of the 18<sup>th</sup> century;<sup>4</sup> it is then a matter of protecting these places for resourcing and contemplation that gain momentum with the picturesque journeys of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The notion of natural heritage also results from a significant scientific production, particularly in the field of natural sciences (first inventories, definition of selection criteria, etc.).<sup>5</sup> It is also a matter of competing against actors attempting to get exclusive access to natural spaces and resources; the creation of the first national parks and reserves can indisputably be considered as an outcome of a legal battle against the nascent tourist industry.<sup>6</sup> The notion of natural heritage is also politicised in the construction of national territorialities; it is then "the exceptional that is highlighted, that is shown as a founding element of (national) identity";<sup>7</sup> the creation of the first American national parks is indisputably related to the emerging tourist industry.<sup>8</sup> However, the notion of natural heritage is also politicised in the construction of regional territorialities; it then reproduces and updates on a local scale certain spatial and social values "that individuals, groups and collective in a given context project and fix on it".<sup>9</sup> From this point of view, natural heritage can be considered as a social construct;<sup>10</sup> in this respect, certain elites have initially contributed greatly to the designation of natural heritage and

1 Jean-Claude Lefeuvre, "De la protection de la nature à la gestion du patrimoine naturel", in *Patrimoines en folie*, éd. par Henri Pierre Jeudy (Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1990), 29-75, <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.editionsmsmh.3778>.

2 Lionel Charles and Bernard Kalaora, "Pensée, Sensibilité et Action Dans La Société Française Autour de La Question de La Nature", *Annales de Géographie* n° 663, no. 5 (November 1, 2008): 3-25, <https://doi.org/10.3917/ag.663.0003>.

3 Samuel Depraz, *Géographie des espaces protégés. Genèse, principes et enjeux territoriaux* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2008).

4 Claude Raffestin, "De la nature aux images de la nature", *Espaces et sociétés* n°80A, n° 1 (1 mars 1995): 37-52, <https://doi.org/10.3917/esp.1995.n3.0037>.

5 Jean Viard, "Protestante la nature?", in *Protection de la nature: histoire et idéologie - De la nature à l'environnement*, par Anne Cadoret (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1985), 161-74.

6 Depraz, *Géographie des espaces protégés. Genèse, principes et enjeux territoriaux*.

7 Paul Arnould et Laurent Simon, *Géographie de l'environnement* (Paris: Belin, 2007), 135.

8 Stéphane Héritier et Lionel Laslaz, *Les parcs nationaux dans le monde. Protection, gestion et développement durable* (Paris: Ellipses, 2008).

9 Michel Lussault, "Identité spatiale", in *Dictionnaire de la géographie et de l'espace des sociétés*, éd. par Jacques Lévy et Michel Lussault (Paris: Bélin, 2003), 973.

10 Christine Bouisset et Isabelle Degrémont, "La patrimonialisation de la nature: un processus en renouvellement", *L'Espace géographique* 42, n° 3 (2013): 193-99.

scientists have certainly professionalized and institutionalised this qualification process;<sup>11</sup> however associative movements and actors from civil society have proved to be extremely active in making natural objects recognized as part of heritage.<sup>12</sup> The diversity of beings involved in the qualification process can explain to a certain extent the typological evolution of natural objects included in the heritage field: from the patrimonialization of ecologically remarkable objects with a high degree of naturalness, often already valued and protected before being explicitly patrimonialized, to the apprehension of ordinary objects of nature integrated into agricultural, forestry, rural or urban contexts.<sup>13</sup> These extensions and hybridisations in the categories of natural heritage are reflected in an “increasing interweaving of natural heritage with other types of heritage: landscape heritage, cultural heritage, etc.”<sup>14</sup> As a corollary natural objects are often apprehended with other notions such as the environment, the ecosystem and even the notion of sustainable development and this makes it more complex to understand the scope of natural heritage: “the heritage scale become global and universal (heritage), find its justification in the general interest of humanity and the survival of the planet.”<sup>15</sup>

These considerations also question the meaning of natural heritage, from a natural heritage as a symbol of resistance to change that results in Western societies from critics of the consumerist model that have caused the degradation of certain environments since the 19th century,<sup>16</sup> to a natural heritage as a symbol of resilience through the coadaptation and co-evolution of humans and their environment. In this respect, the patrimonialisation of natural objects re-interrogates a certain relationship with time: when the last two centuries were focusing on what societies should retain from the past, the 21<sup>st</sup> century is obsessed with what humanity should bequeath.<sup>17</sup> These considerations which bear witness to an evolution of the perception and representation of nature, so as more or less anthropocentric, biocentric or ecocentric apprehension,<sup>18</sup> have also a major influence on the deployment of strategies of protection, between preservationism, conservationism and other approaches that opt for a prudent and measured management of nature that shall ensure future uses.<sup>19</sup>

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11 Depraz, *Géographie des espaces protégés. Genèse, principes et enjeux territoriaux*.

12 Pierre Alphandéry et Agnès Fortier, “Les associations dans le processus de rationalisation des données naturalistes”, *Natures Sciences Sociétés* 19, n° 1 (2011): 22-30.

13 Christian Barrère et al., *Réinventer le patrimoine. De la culture à l'économie, une nouvelle pensée du patrimoine?* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005).

14 Bouisset et Degrémont, “La patrimonialisation de la nature: un processus en renouvellement”, 195.

15 Ibid.

16 Jean Viard, *Le tiers espace: essai sur la nature* (Paris: Méridiens Klincksieck, 1990).

17 Lionel Fouré et Claude Obadia, “Entretien avec Françoise Héritier”, *Le philosophe*, n° 1 (2009): 9-25.

18 Catherine Larrère, “Les éthiques environnementales”, *Natures sciences sociétés* 18, n° 4 (2010): 405-13.

19 Estienne Rodary, Christian Castellanet, et Georges Rossi, *Conservation de la nature et développement: l'intégration impossible?* (Paris: Karthala Editions, 2003).

## Methodology

On the occasion of the participatory revision of the Greater Quebec City Area land use planning and development schema, this research analyses the arguments as well as the normative references called by actors when they publicly justify the meaning or the scope of their actions and when they evaluate what they wish to attribute a value to. This research uses the sociological tools developed by Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot that help systematising the logics of action, the modes of justification and forms of judgement that make it possible to measure the worth of beings and objects, with regards to six principles of equivalence (civic, domestic, market, fame, industrial, inspired polities) that actors resort to when they dispel doubts, clarify situations and possibly resolve and close controversies. Data collection (200 reports and memos produced during the consultative process, 15 written interpellations addressed to public authorities, 6 semi-structured interviews, 6 recordings of hearings of opinions, 115 newspaper article, 4 TV broadcasts, legislative and regulatory texts, other digital sources) makes it possible to contextualise this research, to establish a chronology of events and to assure a balanced selection of evidence. Following an initial reading of the corpus highlighting the prevalent themes of representations, beliefs and ideological references reflected by the discourses, the concepts identified are refined, progressively categorised by differentiation and then organised according to an axial coding deemed relevant to the objectives of this research.

## The Terres d'Espérance

Located in the second peri-urban ring of Quebec City, on the western edge of the Beauport district and on the Saint-Laurent River north shore, the Terres d'Espérance have a surface area of about 200 hectares. With narrow, elongated lots that are oriented perpendicular to the river, their parcel system still bears the traces of the seigniorial regime. The road network which includes roads laid out from the 17th to the 20th century, in particular Avenue du Bourg-Royal to the west and Boulevard Louis-XIV to the north, also contributes to the specific character of the site. Offering a few vantage points (mainly from Louis-XIV Boulevard, just above Rue du Vignoble), a panorama over the Saint-Laurent River and the Ile d'Orléans, the visual perspectives also contribute to the harmony of the whole.

The architectural qualities of the buildings that stand in the middle of the land parcel also characterise the site. The cultural value of the Terres d'Espérance evokes the social works of the Sisters of Charity who have owned them since the XIX century till the XXI century and who have developed there forage, horticultural and dairy production to improve the living conditions of orphans and patients who they become responsible for at the turn of the 19th century. In that respect the Terres d'Espérance have kept an agricultural function have been integrated into the protected agricultural



FIG. 1 Communauté métropolitaine de Québec (2013). Residential development (1:72 224). <https://www.sig.cmquebec.qc.ca/GeoLyre/index.html?viewer=sig2020>

zone. The Terres d'Espérance represent also an environmental and ecological issue as they form the largest landlocked parcel in the region. The Terres d'Espérance have furthermore a very interesting potential for adaptation to new uses; they are thus the object of land speculations a rezoning can literally make the price per hectare soar. At the end of 2014, the sisters decide so to sell the lands to the real estate investment fund Cominar (launched by the Dallaire Group) which plans to build there 6,500 housing units; this requires the rezoning of the Terres d'Espérance and this is the main stake of the revision of the Greater Quebec City Area land use planning and development schema.

## Revision of the Greater Quebec City Area land use planning and development schema

According to the provisions of the land use planning and development Act, the regional county municipalities are to adopt a land use planning and development schema. Greater Quebec City Area first land use planning and development schema was adopted in 1985. It is based on a polycentric model; downtown Quebec City and the secondary centres of Sainte-Foy, Lebourgneuf and Côte de Beauport («structuring centres») concentrate the highest residential densities and the main facilities while the intermediate centres (locations for further densification of the territory) are developed along structuring corridors (along the Chemin Sainte-Foy and the Grande Allée Ouest, at the intersection of the Laurentian Autoroute and the Wilfrid-Hamel Boulevard, as well as at the intersection of Sainte-Anne and D'Estimauville Boulevards) which determine the positioning of specialised areas (industrial and commercial zones, as well as technology campuses, research and innovation centres, etc.) and the development of



a multimodal transport network connected to the port and airport zones. The agroforestry ring (50% of the territory) and the drinking water catchment areas located along the Saint-Charles and Montmorency rivers also structure this spatial organisation. The schema shall be revised every five years. The Quebec City Agglomeration Council sets then a draft which is based on the model adopted in 1985; it sets several priorities: improving the competitiveness of industrial and commercial zones, making the agglomeration ever more attractive for skilled workers and entrepreneurs, increasing the size of the technology park, facilitating accessibility to jobs and services, ensuring residential growth (to accommodate more than 57,000 new residents) and the expansion of the urbanisation perimeter (by 712 hectares) to the detriment of the agricultural zone, in particular the lands located on the east side of the territory,<sup>20</sup> notably the *Terres d'Espérance*.

An advisory commission is entrusted on July 7<sup>th</sup> 2015 with the mandate of organizing the related consultative process. In order to fulfil the essential requirements for transparency and democratic publicity, a notice is made available in the Municipal Bulletin press conferences are held on October 5<sup>th</sup> 2015 and on April 27<sup>th</sup> 2016 and public information sessions are held on May 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> 2016 (they are webcast and made available online; the May 12<sup>th</sup> session is viewed 633 times as of November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017).<sup>21</sup> Stressing the influence of new media in the development of a public opinion, communications are also disseminated on digital supports according to different strategies for capturing and framing public attention, a survey is circulated from October 8<sup>th</sup> to November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015 (which 203 people respond to) and a webinar is organised on May 25<sup>th</sup> 2016 (it is attended by 86 people live and 373 citizens offline as of November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017).<sup>22</sup>

## The mobilization of a public

The advisory commission also engages in direct debate and dialogue with the citizens. Opinion hearing sessions are held on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> 2016 (52 live interventions 59 written memos, 30% of which are produced by citizens acting individually and not as members of collective bodies) and this accelerates the mobilization of a public which evaluates through investigation and debate the problem of the rezoning of the *Terres d'Espérance* and try in a collective effort to identify a range of possible

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20 Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Habitation, Direction régionale de la Capitale-Nationale, "Avis Sur Le Projet de Règlement Numéro PC2016-034 Édifiant Le Premier Projet Du Schéma d'aménagement et de Développement.", 2016, [https://www.affmunqc.net/fileadmin/publications/ministere/acces\\_information/Diffusion\\_information/2019/2019-103\\_avis\\_non\\_conformite\\_SAD\\_quebec.pdf](https://www.affmunqc.net/fileadmin/publications/ministere/acces_information/Diffusion_information/2019/2019-103_avis_non_conformite_SAD_quebec.pdf).

21 Ville de Québec, "Schéma d'aménagement et de développement - Séance d'information du 12 mai 2016", 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZSDpMC-Be8>.

22 Ville de Québec, "Schéma d'aménagement et de développement - Séance d'information en ligne du 25 mai 2016", 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0GRDrR-B1aA>.

solutions to prevent it.<sup>23</sup> Attesting to their ability to position themselves and form counter-powers to public policies and actions, they engage in meaningful evidence-based argumentation within these institutionalised arenas “where public problems [...] come to be defined.”<sup>24</sup>

Experiencing further modes of appropriating contents, producing discourses and getting information circulated, they also engage into other forums of expression and action relatively independent of the institutionalised arenas. Acting in more or less coordinated ways of claiming and defending values and interests, professors of journalism,<sup>25</sup> spokespersons for organisations aiming to increase citizen participation in democratic life (including the New World Institute),<sup>26</sup> agronomists and soil scientists,<sup>27</sup> ethno-historian, agricultural and environmental advisors,<sup>28</sup> develop their arguments in local and regional newspapers. Leveraging on full extent possibilities offered by new information and communication technologies,<sup>29</sup> they also organise on the Web the circulation of discourses whose echo is likely to short-circuit, counter or even discredit certain political discourses in the interactivity of a communicational flow that shapes, transforms and translates certain opinions from personal micro-networks into macro-networks. In 2105, the United Federation of Farmers launches a Web page dedicated to the safeguarding of the Terres d’Espérance; it is used to collect signatures for the petition “Let’s safeguard the Sisters of Charity’s heritage lands.”<sup>30</sup> Backed by the expertise of Copticom, a team of public relations strategists fighting against climate changes, environmental issues and social inequalities, the Environment Council of the Capital Region, David Suzuki Foundation, Vivre en Ville, Équiterre, Nature Québec, Action Patrimoine, Craque-Bitume, Les Urbainculteurs and Les AmiEs de la Terre de Québec also get use of this informal and more or less interactive digital space to broadly disseminate their analysis of the SOM poll (a

23 John Dewey, *Le public et ses problèmes*, trad. par Joëlle Zask, Folio. Essais (Paris: Gallimard, 2010).

24 Daniel Cefai, “Publics, problèmes publics, arènes publiques...: Que nous apprend le pragmatisme?”, *Questions de communication*, n° 30 (31 décembre 2016): 25-64, <https://doi.org/10.4000/questionsdecommunication.10704>.

25 Jean-Claude Leclerc, “Une étonnante ville philanthropique dans la capitale | Le Devoir”, 2014, <https://www.ledevoir.com/opinion/chroniques/426709/la-ferme-des-soeurs-de-la-charite-de-quebec>.

26 Michel Lessard Bernard Vachon, “Sacrifier l’agriculture pour la densification urbaine | Le Devoir”, 2015, <https://www.ledevoir.com/opinion/idees/428062/terres-des-soeurs-de-la-charite-sacrifier-l-agriculture-pour-la-densification-urbaine>.

27 Lauréan Tardif, “Les Soeurs de la Charité causent un mouvement citoyen”, 2015, <https://www.lesoleil.com/2015/02/09/les-soeurs-de-la-charite-causent-un-mouvement-citoyen-49899be4042f53bbfa0c79b2d5221e4c?nor=true>.

28 Vincent Galarneau, “Quel avenir pour les terres agricoles de Québec? | Le Devoir”, 2016, <https://www.ledevoir.com/societe/transports-urbanisme/474404/quel-avenir-pour-les-terres-agricoles-de-quebec>.

29 Fabien Granjon, “Citoyenneté, médias et TIC: Trente années de liaisons covalentes, au sein de la revue Réseaux”, *Réseaux* n° 184-185, n° 2 (8 août 2014): 95-124, <https://doi.org/10.3917/res.184.0095>.

30 Union des producteurs agricoles – Capitale Nationale, “Sauvegardons les terres patrimoniales des Soeurs de la Charité”, [Petitionenligne.fr](https://www.petitionenligne.fr), 2015, [https://www.petitionenligne.fr/sauvegardons\\_les\\_terres\\_patrimoniales\\_des\\_soeurs\\_de\\_la\\_charite](https://www.petitionenligne.fr/sauvegardons_les_terres_patrimoniales_des_soeurs_de_la_charite).

Quebec research firm specialized in data collection, analysis and visualization) conducted on June 3rd and 4th 2016, which highlights a massive public opposition (70%) to the rezoning of agricultural lands.

After this initial round of the consultative process the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing rejects the draft schema on the grounds that it does not comply with the government orientations relating to the protection of the agricultural territory, the conservation of territories of interest and the integrated management of resources. The project is therefore amended, a press conferences is held on April 25th 2017, public information sessions are organized on May 9th and 11th 2017 (webcasted they are viewed 450 times as of November 2nd 2017)<sup>31</sup> and opinion hearings are held on August 29th, 30th and 31st 2017(65 live interventions and 91 memos,70% of which are produced by citizens acting individually and not as members of collective bodies).<sup>32</sup>

As the rezoning of the *Terres d'Espérance* is still on the agenda, several collective bodies chose to channel the energy of their action by directly challenging representatives of government, such as the Order of Agrologists of Quebec which addresses an open letter to the mayor of Quebec City.<sup>33</sup> *Voix Citoyenne* launches on social networks on May 14th 2018 the campaign "The Great Movement to Protect Agricultural Lands in Urban Quebec".<sup>34</sup> Leveraging on more radical modes of political action, 200 citizens and farmers furthermore demonstrate on June 1th 2017 with the support of the Environment Council of the Capital Region, *ProtecTerre*, the David Suzuki Foundation, the Union paysanne and *Stop Oléoduc* in the borough of Beauport as a sign of opposition to the *Terres d'Espérance* rezoning. Investigative journalists report on these actions in specialized magazines<sup>35</sup> while citizens<sup>36</sup> and spokespersons for neighbourhood committees contact the sensationalist press, etc.

After this second round of the revision the draft schema shall again be submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval. It is again rejected (October 19th 2018). Another schema is drafted (heritage

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31 Ville de Québec, "Schéma d'aménagement et de développement - Séance d'information du 11 mai 2017", 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dXEduiq3p8&t=2s>

32 Ville de Québec, "Prise d'acte du Rapport de consultation publique relatif au premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement révisé de l'agglomération de Québec", 2017, [https://www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/docs/pv/rubriques/sommaires/Planification\\_coordination\\_aménagement\\_territoireenvironnement/2017/PC2017-033.pdf](https://www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/docs/pv/rubriques/sommaires/Planification_coordination_aménagement_territoireenvironnement/2017/PC2017-033.pdf)

33 Ordre des agronomes du Québec, "Les terres agricoles des Sœurs de la Charité: une ressource à conserver. Lettre adressée par l'OAQ à Monsieur Régis Labeaume", 2017, [https://oaq.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2017-07-05-Lettre\\_terresagricoles\\_soeurs\\_Charite.pdf](https://oaq.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2017-07-05-Lettre_terresagricoles_soeurs_Charite.pdf)

34 Voix citoyenne, "Grand mouvement pour protéger les terres agricoles en milieu urbain au Québec", 2018 <https://www.facebook.com/events/647236458960625/>

35 Anne-Marie Poulin, "200 personnes marchent contre le dézonage de terres historiques", *La Terre de Chez Nous*, 12 juin 2017, <https://www.laterre.ca/actualites/en-region/200-personnes-marchent-contre-dezonage-de-terres-historiques>.

36 Voix citoyenne, "Terres agricoles: le schéma d'aménagement sous la loupe", *Le Soleil*, 2018, <https://www.lesoleil.com/opinions/point-de-vue/terres-agricoles-le-schema-damenagement-sous-la-loupe-8522ff943253273d295969346150a070>



sites and nature reserves are clearly referenced in the schema, several lots are clearly listed in the agricultural zone, etc.); however, the rezoning of the Terres d’Espérance is still on the agenda.

With the ambition of structuring and expanding coalitions Voix Citoyennes addresses on August 26th 2018 an open letter to all representatives of the Quebec Municipal Commission and invites the director of Nature Québec and the president of the Jean Garon Institute to chair a debate on September 10th 2018 during the regional electoral process. One hundred and four co-signatories, including Voix Citoyenne, Institut Jean-Garon, Protec-Terre, Nature Québec, Union paysanne, Mouvement pour une ville Zéro-Déchet, Craque-Bitume and Transition Capitale-Nationale also send an open letter on September 24th 2018 to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing while one hundred and twenty-five co-signatories also write to the Minister responsible for the Quebec City region on October 16th 2018. The Jean-Garon Institute broadcasts on its digital television channel interviews of spokespersons for the United Federation of Farmers,<sup>37</sup> Voix Citoyenne<sup>38</sup> and Protec Terre,<sup>39</sup> etc. Felling empowered Voix Citoyenne and the Jean Garon Institute try to meet the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; their invitation sent out on November 6th 2018 is however declined.

These multiple democratic engagements are worth the effort as the amended draft schema is again rejected on November 19th 2019 by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing after due consultation with other ministries.<sup>40</sup> The project is updated but the Terres d’Espérance are still at risk. The stubborn obstruction of the Quebec City Agglomeration Council is beyond comprehension. Disciples of degrowth (notably the Group of voluntary simplicity) raise their voice on CKIA-FM<sup>41</sup> and Voix Citoyenne deploys yet other unconventional modes of expression and action in setting up the event “Let’s dream about the Sisters of Charity’s heritage lands” (November 3rd 2019) in association with various artists who perform and with Protec-Terre which share its expertise in agroecological social utility trusts. Far from being mutually exclusive, these diverse evaluative and critical actions are often combined as evidenced by retiree Michel Houle

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37 Un administrateur de l’UPA dénonce le dézonage agricole aux côtés de l’Institut Jean-Garon !, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOQX6wRKTPs>.

38 Institut Jean-Garon, “Terres des Sœurs de la Charité - sauvées pour le moment”, Institut Jean-Garon (blog), 25 octobre 2018, <https://institutjeangaron.ca/2018/10/25/simon-begin-recoit-monique-gagnon-porte-parole-de-voix-citoyenne/>.

39 Les Fiducies d’utilité sociale agricoles: un levier collectif écologique, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HxaXK10RAuQ>.

40 Ville de Québec, “Schéma d’aménagement et de développement révisé, Seconde version de remplacement, Modifications apportées à la version finale du SADR adoptée le 4 juillet 2019, Réponses à l’avis gouvernemental transmis le 4 novembre 2019”, 2019, [https://www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/apropos/planification-orientations/amenagement\\_urbain/sad/docs/SAD-12-2019-tableau-modifications.pdf](https://www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/apropos/planification-orientations/amenagement_urbain/sad/docs/SAD-12-2019-tableau-modifications.pdf)

41 Groupe de simplicité volontaire de Québec, “Le dossier des terres des sœurs de la Charité, En toute simplicité”, 2019, <https://gsvq.org/?download=%2F2019%2F09%2FEn-toute-simplicit-CKIA-FM-2019-09-06-1567778461.mp3&nocache>

who altogether tables at the end of 2020 the petition "Acquiring the Sisters of Charity's heritage lands in order to improve Quebec's food autonomy"<sup>42</sup> while engaging in other political actions alongside La Ville que nous voulons and Les AmiEs de la Terre.

## Justifications in a domestic polity

Public justifications get polarized around domestic orders of worth. Concerned by the impact of rezoning on the forms and contours of the *Terres d'Espérance* that bear witness to "the region's history of more than half a millennium",<sup>43</sup> the actors stress the cultural value of "this unique natural and historical heritage site (among) the distinctive landscapes of the Quebec City area",<sup>44</sup> its "territorial identity".<sup>45</sup> In a domestic city that provides the community with a sense of identity and continuity based over time on shared experience and collective memory, they also question the anthropologic dimensions of these lands that have organised space and social life over time and that account for "the existential and social relationships that individuals in groups"<sup>46</sup> weave with a territory. They question the links of filiation and of affiliation resulting from a feeling of belonging to this territory that has become the symbolic extension of the successive generations that have occupied it, transformed it. They pay tribute to past generations, notably the Sisters of Charity that have developed over centuries important health-care facilities and chaplaincy services. Highlighting so the cultural dimensions of this territory, they call for recognition of its cultural heritage value: "the agricultural lands of the Sisters of Charity are part of Quebec heritage!"<sup>47</sup> "lands of the Sisters of Charity are part of our heritage,"<sup>48</sup> they play a significant role in "the life quality of citizens and their sense of belonging to a community."<sup>49</sup> They wish accordingly to pro-

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42 Michel Houle, "Terres des Sœurs de la Charité: nourrir la capitale", 2021, <https://www.lesoleil.com/2021/01/22/terres-des-surs-de-la-charite-nourrir-la-capitale-f343e74c98031bbd2582c3d9b3e5a283?nor=true>.

43 Québec Arbres "Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3", 2017, <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/schema-amenagement-developpement-agglomeration-quebec>

44 Comité pour une densification respectueuse, Association pour la protection de l'environnement du lac Saint-Charles et des Marais du Nord, Protec-Terre "Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2", 2016, <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/schema-amenagement-developpement-agglomeration-quebec>.

45 Comité des citoyens du Vieux-Québec, "Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2", 2016 <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/schema-amenagement-developpement-agglomeration-quebec>

46 Julien Aldhuy, "Au-delà du territoire, la territorialité?", *Géodoc*, n° 55 (2008): 35-42.

47 Union des producteurs agricoles de Québec, "Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2", 2016, <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/schema-amenagement-developpement-agglomeration-quebec>

48 Mémoire individuel 066, "Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3", 2017, <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/schema-amenagement-developpement-agglomeration-quebec>

49 Vivre en Ville, "Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3", 2017, <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/schema-amenagement-developpement-agglomeration-quebec>



FIG. 2 Jakob, F. (2022). Panorama from the car park on the south side of the Generalate of the Sisters of Charity in Quebec City. Bruxelles, Belgique

tect this territory; “the Ministry of Culture and Communication and the City of Quebec could declare these lands as cultural heritage lands (which) would allow the past and present social work of this Congregation to be witnessed,”<sup>50</sup> “the protection of these lands would guarantee the perpetuation of the memory of their charities among the population,”<sup>51</sup> “This would be a unique cultural heritage site to honour the memory of the Sisters of Charity.”<sup>52</sup> They engage so to ensure their transmission to future generations: “These lands are a rarity, an endangered asset, a national treasure [...]. A treasure to be passed on to future generations,” “it is therefore important to preserve them in order to ensure the sustainability of this cultural heritage and its transmission to future generations”, etc.

## A green order of worth

Public justifications also polarized around a green order of worth. For the vast majority of actors, “protecting this agricultural land for local food production is in the best interests of the community;”<sup>53</sup> “farming (...) represents life, nature in all its complexity, beauty, generosity, the work of man in harmony with nature and above all, the survival of humanity;”<sup>54</sup> they

50 Mémoire individuel 077, “Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3”, 2017 <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/schema-amenagement-developpement-agglomeration-quebec>

51 Mémoire individuel 031, “Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3”, 2017 <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/schema-amenagement-developpement-agglomeration-quebec>

52 Mémoire individuel 077 “Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3”, 2017

53 Conseil de quartier des Jésuites, “Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3”, 2017 <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65297>

54 Mémoire individuel 076, “Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3”, 2017, <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65346>

stress its nourishing function that ensures optimum food safety. However, they intend to reorganise agricultural production in a collaborative manner and put forward new ideas and approaches in line with organic farming associated with ecopastoralism, recycling and composting, aromatic and medicinal horticulture,<sup>55</sup> etc.

Caring for others, they also intend to maintain this agricultural function to satisfy the supply of charities (Moisson Québec, Maison de Lauberivière, etc.), hospitals or schools with food, "in line with the traditional nourishing, therapeutic, social and community functions of these lands."<sup>56</sup> The focal on agriculture as an activity also aims to restore certain forms of sociability between people through "awareness-raising and educational activities,"<sup>57</sup> possibly co-organised with "Laval University (which) already has a research chair in food diversity and security as well as a chair in nutrition and health."<sup>58</sup>

Others wish to test new practices and ask for the opening of "a place of experimentation [...] a place of training [...] for the creation of businesses in the social economy [...] an incubator for urban agriculture projects."<sup>59</sup> Social or professional reintegration projects could also be deployed there. Testifying to a desire to promote a virtuous way of doing or sharing, their arguments connect with the theses of social ecology which aims to create autonomous and resilient communities by means of concrete, collaborative and supportive local actions, in compliance with socio-environmental standards. This kind of socio-green engagement relates to a form social ecology which aims to set autonomous and resilient communities through concrete, collaborative and supportive local actions in line with socio-environmental standards.<sup>60</sup>

While the arguments initially mainly focus on the preservation of agricultural land, the implementation of more sustainable production practices, the justifications also address the issue of peri-urban green spaces. Several actors emphasise in that respect the importance of the positive externalities associated with these peri-urban green spaces; rainwater harvesting prevention, biodiversity conservation, the fight against heat islands reduction, biodiversity conservation.<sup>61</sup> Many ecological activists and environmental protection associations intend more concretely to

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55 Mémoire collectif, "Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2", 2016 <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65410>

56 Ibid.

57 Mémoire individuel, "Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2", 2016 <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65422>

58 Protec-Terre, "Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3", 2017 <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65322>

59 Mémoire individuel, "Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3", 2017, <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65357>

60 Mitchell Thomashow, *Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist* (London: Mit Press, 1996).

61 Québec Arbres "Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2", 2016, <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65399>

counterbalance the inadequacies of previous strategies of conservation that have isolated green spaces amid built areas. They wish so to develop green corridors between agricultural plots, wooded areas, wetlands (as a natural access to the river) and, more broadly, ecosystems, “a green grid that will make Quebec City an exemplary city.”<sup>62</sup> Some set in that respect relatively precise objectives; “a minimum vegetation cover of 12% of the urbanised territory over the next 25 years and an average canopy of at least 40% over the entire territory;”<sup>63</sup> or even utopian ones: “Why not create a Central Park 2.0! Imagine a 660-acre green oasis in Quebec City!”<sup>64</sup>

In addition to these arguments which deploy a whole battery of realistic, measurable, achievable objectives, other actors similarly pursue the same ideals by mobilising however more poetic registers testify to a form of idealisation of the contact with nature that connects with a desire for distancing from the nuisances caused by industrial civilisation: “Let us not deteriorate the beauty of the world. Let us design a great garden for next generations,”<sup>65</sup> “Let us heal the planet [...] restore life on planet earth [...] Detoxify the population (body and mind),”<sup>66</sup> “Communing with nature, resuming a normal and protected rhythm of life.”<sup>67</sup>

## Compromise in a civic polity

The arguments put forward in the public arena also claim for political changes: direct democracy, self-management and autonomy. The issue at stake in the debates are related to the modalities of access, use and collective management of the Terres d’Espérance; acting as if they consider themselves as their guardians, regardless of the legal regime that may apply to this territory,<sup>68</sup> they sort of take over the Terres d’Espérances claiming control over their management as they target a fair distribution of access, use and ownership of this territory.<sup>69</sup> Some actors suggest to pool assets to acquire the Sisters of Charity’s lands; it would then be a matter of entitling a Council or a college of trustees to manage the Terres d’Espérance in line with certain social and ecological objectives, in the best interest of present and future generations. Getting the issue in the debate the government purchases back the Terres d’Espérance and announces the holding of a public consultation aiming to determine the

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62 Mémoire collectif, “Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3”, 2017 <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65289>

63 Québec Arbres, “Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2”, 2016

64 Mémoire individuel, “Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2”, 2016

65 Mémoire individuel 076, “Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3”, 2017

66 Mémoire individuel, “Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3”, 2017 <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65268>

67 Ibid.

68 Serge Gutwirth, “Quel(s) droit(s) pour quel(s) commun(s) ?”, *Revue interdisciplinaire d’études juridiques* 81, n° 2 (2018): 83, <https://doi.org/10.3917/riej.081.0083>.

69 Ibid.

best possible project for the *Terres d'Espérance*. A collective of citizens get organized and work on a food forest design. While developing the agricultural function in accordance with environmentally friendly practices, they aim simultaneously to achieve other objectives: preservation of landscape qualities, fight against reduction in biodiversity, reduction in the canopy, global warming, soil erosion, etc. Moreover, "The presence of abundant vegetation and mature trees, especially in urban environments, is (moreover) a factor contributing not only to the physical health but also to the psychological health of citizens".<sup>70</sup> Moreover, "the educational mission of the Food Park would be another positive factor [...]".<sup>71</sup> This food forest would be managed collectively.

The generative dimension of this mobilization, the kind of action they wish to carry to get access and use of this territory threatened to be privatised, irreparably transformed or even destroyed seems indeed related to the notion of environmental commons;<sup>72</sup> which evokes the idea of natural resources managed by a community in line with collectively-defined rules for the benefice of the general interest.<sup>73</sup> Several actors explicitly refer to this notion: "The Sisters of Charity's land, with its cultural dimension and its location has a public good value,"<sup>74</sup> "The presence of this agricultural land in the heart of the urban centre is a unique common good that the entire population of the Agglomeration of Quebec should be able to access and enjoy,"<sup>75</sup> "It is a matter of complying with principles of social justice, feminism, ecology and democracy,"<sup>76</sup> "They shall be considered as a common good with great environmental, social and heritage value,"<sup>77</sup> "This agricultural territory is part of a collective heritage contributing to the quality of our environment and our landscapes,"<sup>78</sup> etc. In this case, the notion of common goods does not refer to non-exclusive and rival goods but altogether to a collective action, to natural resources managed by a community according to collectively defined rules, and to the well-being that a community can get from these actions.<sup>79</sup>

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70 Québec Arbres, "Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2", 2016

71 Mémoire individuel 009, Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2, 2016 <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65374>

72 Marie Cornu, Fabienne Orsi, et Judith Rochfeld, *Dictionnaire des biens communs* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2021).

73 Alberto Magnaghi, *La biorégion urbaine: petit traité sur le territoire bien commun*, trad. par Emmanuelle Bonneau, vol. 1 (Paris: Eterotopia France Paris, 2014).

74 Protec-Terre, "Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2", 2016 <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65383>

75 Mémoire individuel, "Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3", 2017 <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65291>

76 Québec Solidaire Capitale-Nationale, "Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3", 2017 <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65423>

77 Nathalie Côté, "Terres des Sœurs de la Charité: un bien collectif", 2017, <http://www.droitdeparole.org/2017/06/terres-soeurs-de-charite-bien-collectif/>.

78 Union des producteurs agricoles de Québec, "Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2", 2016 <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65404>

79 Magnaghi, *La biorégion urbaine: petit traité sur le territoire bien commun*.



## Concluding remarks

Mobilising various forms of knowledge and judgements, experiences and practices that stress the multi-dimensionality and irreducibility of the issues (way of seeing the extent of the territory, of envisaging its current and future management, etc.) related to the agri-urban territory, the revision of the Greater Quebec City Area land use planning and development schema concomitantly confronts market expectations (liberalisation of trade, profitability of invested capital, etc.), industrial requirements (optimal use of available resources, rational management of the territory, productivity of agriculture, etc.), social concerns (support for the next generation of farmers, preservation of sociability, etc.), cultural heritage objectives (protection of buildings, historical and cultural frameworks, etc.) and environmental priorities (development of green zones in the city, protection of agricultural and forest land, preservation of ecosystems, etc.) that cannot be understood in terms of consensus, congruence of motivations or aggregation of commitments. In the presence of a disagreement multiple actors forming a community of conviction engage in discursive experiences, confront their observations, expose their argumentation to judgement and criticism. Worrying about the impact (the trivialisation and degradation of the environment) of the rezoning on the organisation of the forms and contours of the Terres d'Espérance which are privileged witnesses of the history of the region, they test opportunities for new forms of coordination and cooperation that aim to curb urban expansion, to prevent standardisation of landscapes while moving towards more sustainable production methods and consumption patterns, releasing pressure on agricultural lands and natural resources, counteracting the fragmentation of local ecosystems in order to enhance collective wellness.

By committing themselves to accelerate a change of paradigm towards a more socially and ecologically responsible society, they call shared preferences, civic senses of the just and the good with the intention to set rules of access, use, management and collective control over these historical, cultural, aesthetic and ecological tangible and intangible resources. By promoting these new approaches, the actors seem to develop certain forms of territoriality relying on values such as conviviality and solidarity that bring back to date the question of the commons. Beyond legal (property regimes), economic (non-exclusive reified resource) or naturalizing visions, the commons considered in their double material (land, forests, rivers, fields, etc.) and immaterial (values, codes and social representations, knowledge and know-how, etc.) dimensions, can indeed be conceived as the outcome of an experimental and instituting activity, profoundly democratic, capable of generating social, political and economic dynamics of self-government based on a collective setting of rules (experiencing in common and acting together) of communing.<sup>80</sup>

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80 Christian Laval et Pierre Dardot, *Commun. Essai sur la révolution au XXIe siècle* (La

With fortitude and determination, these actors carry out numerous actions that succeed in influencing the outcome of the revision; when passing on February 2020 the final version of the Greater Quebec City Area land use planning and development schema, the Quebec City Agglomeration Council concludes indeed with the non-rezoning of the Terres d'Espérance and announces the setting up of a public concertation around a project that could meet the expectations of a public, of a local community.

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