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## **Collective action towards a greener order of worth: protecting a common cultural and natural heritage**

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**Abstract.** Built on Boltanski and Thévenot's theory of justification, this study analyses a controversy that emerges during the revision of Greater Quebec City region land use planning schema that sparks public debate on the legitimacy of rezoning periurban agricultural lands. It highlights the capacities of stakeholders to develop robust justifications that aim to raise awareness of a natural and cultural heritage in all its manifestations in order to have it protected. It also demonstrates the role of meta-level 'orders of worth' as multiple modalities for agreement in accounting for the ways in which different stakeholder groups try to resolve socio-cultural and ecological problems in developing green justifications out of a plurality of forms of agreement.

**Keywords.** land use planning, participatory, justifications, heritage, ecology

### **Introduction**

Taking into consideration the reasons, motives and motivations that engage people in action during the revision of the Greater Quebec City region land use planning and development schema, this study analyses the modes of justification, the logics of action and the forms of judgement that stakeholders mobilize when they confront competing discourses and test alternative logics. Without ever assuming 'any consensus of representations (the harmony of ideological convictions), any congruence of motivations (the compatibility between psychological motives) nor any aggregation of commitments (the synchrony of strategic intentions)' (Cefaï, 2009, p. 253), it tracks down a certain type of normativity. This study is based on the sociology of justification by Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot whose approach provides tools for assessing public arguments according to given orders of worth. This study puts forward several hypotheses. The engagement of actors during the revision process not only determine the implementation of more ecological, reasonable or responsible territorial management practices that aim to protect common cultural and natural heritage but also express collective preferences, ecological justifications out of a plurality of forms of agreement that question the relevance of a green polity (Lafaye & Thévenot, 1993).

### **Methodology**

Data collection brings together primary documentary sources consisting of legislative and regulatory texts, political and action plans, governmental opinions and written

interpellations addressed to public authorities. It also includes an important review of national, regional and local press releases. Several semi-structured interviews aim to test the hypotheses. The analysis tracks, organises and systematises the themes of representations, beliefs, ideological references and then the principles of justice that stakeholders mobilize in their argumentation. It is based on Luc Boltanski's and Laurent Thévenot's sociological approach which provides tools for assessing public arguments according to given orders of worth on which individuals rely on when making collectively sense of controversies. Boltanski and Thévenot's central thesis acknowledges the existence of six orders of worth, namely the civic, the market, the industrial, the domestic, the inspired and the fame polities. Later extensions of the original theory have identified the green (Lafaye & Thévenot, 1993) and the network polities (Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999). Each polity is characterized by various parameters: the relevant mode of evaluation, the kind of test needed to assess different situations, the worth of objects and beings involved in the world.

### **The emergence of the green movement in Quebec**

Distancing themselves from romantic aspirations for preservation the wilderness of landscapes for the sake of their beauty and from conservationist approaches aiming to manage threatened natural resources through the creation of national and provincial parks, several social movements emerge from the 1960s onwards in the wake of the Quiet Revolution (Jurdant, 1984) ; beyond the efforts of small elitist groups and technocrats working for the government apparatus, social and political forces emerge with various actors speaking out, forming new values, new 'representations of nature and of human-environment interaction' (Gendron & Vaillancourt, 2003, p. 9). Student assemblies, pacifists rally in favour of social justice and anti-globalisation, ecological and feminist activists and regionalists shape the rising of the modern green movement (Vaillancourt, 2015). The generative and mobilizing dimensions of this activism inspires the societalization of ecological concerns, that is a collective awareness of the consequences of the expansion of the oecumene (Mélard, 2008: 14) aspiring to 'a more or less strong environmental inflection of the (legal or implicit) norms and social practices in force' (Ginelli, 2015, p. 53). It also gives more generally rise to moderate environmentalist tendencies that motivate the action of ruralists and urban reformers who no longer focus on the preservation of a pristine and sanctuarised nature (sublime, picturesque natural sites) but work on the protection of the environment jointly considered with territorial and social dynamics (Lepart & Marty, 2006).

While awareness of the impact of certain human activities on ecosystems gains momentum, the actions and commitments of socio-political ecologists (AmiEs de la Terre de Québec, ENvironnement JEUnesse, Nature Québec, Réseau québécois des groupes écologistes, Association québécoise de lutte contre la pollution atmosphérique, etc.) denouncing 'the unbridled consumption of goods and resources' (Poirier & Savard, 2015, p. 23) promoted by the life model of the Trente Glorieuses become more radical in the mid-1970s. The ecologist manifesto of the Regroupement écologique québécois (1978) crystallizes most of the issues that are being raised at the time: a serious questioning of the industrial mode of production responsible for the environmental crisis, the rejection of a capitalist economy causing workers' health problems, the rejection of parliamentary democracy in favour of direct democracy, the promotion and creation of local alternatives<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Le Regroupement écologique québécois (1978) .Manifeste écologique québécois. Montréal : Le mouvement pour l'agriculture biologique. <https://archivesrevolutionnaires.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/manifeste-c3a9cologique-quc3a9bc3a9cois-1978.pdf>

The transnational circulation of ideas of emancipation, the struggle against oppression and social inequality carried by the counterculture trend and more generally the ideals of a better quality of life promoted by the New Left also contribute to an intensification of the participation of citizens in the decision-making process. With a spirit of contestation and resistance to the established order, citizens exercise their civic right of participation, their right to speak out in political arenas (for instance land use participatory planning mechanisms and the newly established Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement, etc.) in an attempt to influence public decisions and actions according to green values and interests (Savard & Boivin, 2014), a sense of justice and of the common good which support a change and a transformation of 'the representations of nature and of human-environment interaction' (Gendron & Vaillancourt, 2003, p. 9).

These citizen mobilisations allowed the green movement to expand even further, through protesting, denouncing and assertive militancy but also through dialogue (Savard & Boivin, 2014). This activism helps in the 1980s the setting up of the Green Party of Canada, the budding of non-governmental grass-roots organizations and the boosting of collaborative dynamics (Regroupement national des conseils régionaux de l'environnement du Québec, Centre québécois du droit environnement, Établissements verts Brundtland, Mouvement pour l'agriculture de l'environnement) and the solving of environmental issues – for instance the harmful effects of fossil fuels, the decline in biodiversity - in partnership with large corporations (and no longer exclusively against the latter). In the 1990s, these dynamics that promote less polluting sources of energy, sustainable development, fair trade, voluntary simplicity, etc. (Poirier & Savard, 2015) also favour new ecosystemic protection approaches; it is no longer a question of preserving elements of nature but rather a need of protecting evolutionary processes, and this marks for some authors a 'transition to a third phase of nature conservation' (Bonnin, 2008).

However, the 2000s present a mixed picture of the achievements; 'environmentalism has failed', concludes David Suzuki<sup>2</sup>. Actions are then downscaled to regional and local issues related to landscape protection (planning and construction of wind farms in the Gaspé Peninsula), the fight against groundwater pollution (shale gas exploitation in the St. Lawrence Valley), against hydrocarbon spills (TransCanada's 'Energy East' pipeline) or against agribusiness in support of other modes of production such as organic farming or urban gardening, etc. (Frioux & Lemire, 2012).

### **Land use planning and ecological concerns**

Participatory territorial management - as a set of social and institutional practices 'aimed at transforming an object or a system of (geographical) objects and the relations they maintain with their environment' (Debarbieux, 2004, p. 14) - is considered as a privileged lever of intervention (Bailly & Bourdeau-Lepage, 2011) when it comes to deal with socio-cultural, productive and ecological issues. It makes it possible to plan the productive function (exploitation of natural resources, creation or maintenance of agro-forestry jobs, agro-tourism industries, etc.) while meeting a certain level of food security. It also satisfies social expectations that have been growing steadily since the second half of the 20th century in terms of outdoor recreational activities development, landscape amenities maintenance and environmental protection. It also integrates cultural dimensions that refer to collective memory and identity. However, the legislative and administrative regime that has underpinned land use

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<sup>2</sup> Francoeur, L. -G. (2012, 25 mai). L'échec selon David Suzuki. *Le Devoir*. <https://www.ledevoir.com/opinion/chroniques/350827/l-echec-selon-david-suzuki>

planning in Quebec since 1979 is far from favouring sustainable practices: green, wooded or agricultural areas have been absorbed since the 19th century by diffuse or archipelagic urban growth that fragments natural habitats and weigh heavily on biodiversity.

Considering the interrelations between biotic and abiotic components, agro-forestry structures and systems, built elements, activities and territorial dynamics, different actions have since been implemented. More or less artificial green areas (squares, suburban parks, etc.), agricultural or forestry peri-urban green belts around cities have thus been developed. However, these measures are proving to be insufficient, particularly with regard to the protection of biodiversity. To facilitate the movement of fauna and flora, reduce the vulnerability of each species by increasing the genetic exchanges necessary for their survival and the probability of (re)colonising habitats (Bonnin, 2006), green corridors between city spaces, parks and forests have been planted since the 1990s, contributing to making urban space more pleasant and green areas more accessible. However, the overall assessment of these measures remains mixed as stressed by the the Minister of municipal affairs, regions and land occupancy : "developing monofunctional and low-density sectors disconnected from each other (...) urban sprawl increases the costs of construction and maintenance of transport network and collective facilities as much as it heavily weighs on the energy balance of the community and of Quebec (...) poor air quality, encroachment on agricultural land and natural areas<sup>3</sup>". The passing (2011) of a bill on sustainable land use planning (still under study) amending the 1979 law on land use planning and development and the five-yearly revision of regional land use planning and development schemas aim to correct these shortcomings.

## **Participatory revision of Greater City Quebec region land use planning and development schema**

### **From confusion to action**

In undertaking the revision of Greater Quebec City region land use planning and development schema, the Greater Quebec City region Council entrusted a commission on July 2015 with the mandate of developing mechanisms and implementing a consultative procedure in accordance with the provisions of the land use planning and development Act. A questionnaire aiming at surveying public opinion is first circulated online (from October 8th to November 22nd 2015). Based on the responses of 204 participants, the Greater Quebec City region Council concludes that the majority of respondents (79%) support the planning and development orientations to be implemented<sup>4</sup>. A first revised land use planning and development schema is thus designed in April 2016; it tends to sharpen competitiveness in the field of research, scientific and technological innovation in delineating new technological and industrial parks dedicated to these high value-added sectors. It also extends the office park, outlines new commercial arteries and expands the residential area to accommodate 57,000 new residents in the 25 years to come. Complying with the land use Plan and the objectives of the Direction of regional development in Quebec which favorably considers the idea to expand urbanisation in the D'Estimauville regional urban pole rather than in other sectors<sup>5</sup>, the draft

3 Ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du territoire (2011). Projet de loi n° 47. Accès <http://m.assnat.qc.ca/fr/travaux-parlementaires/projets-loi/projet-loi-47-39-2.html>

4 Ville de Québec (2016). Vision stratégique d'aménagement et de développement de l'agglomération de Québec – 2040. Consultation en ligne tenue du 8 octobre au 22 novembre 2015. <https://www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/citoyens/participation-citoyenne/activites/CPFichierAzure.aspx?Fichier=5d57cfb0-7f49-4ef5-8ce0-fe94fdffb9b1.pdf>.

5 Ministère des affaires municipales et de l'habitation, Direction régionale de la Capitale-Nationale (2016). Avis sur le projet de règlement numéro PC2016-034 édictant le premier projet du schéma d'aménagement et de développement. [https://www.affmuncq.net/fileadmin/publications/ministere/acces\\_information/Diffusion\\_information/2019/2019-103\\_avis\\_non\\_conformite\\_SAD\\_quebec.pdf](https://www.affmuncq.net/fileadmin/publications/ministere/acces_information/Diffusion_information/2019/2019-103_avis_non_conformite_SAD_quebec.pdf).

schema dezones nearly 660 hectares of arable lands located to the east of the territory of Quebec City. The Sisters of Charity sell accordingly to Cominar Real Estate Investment Trust (founded by the Dallaire Group<sup>6</sup>) the Terres d'Espérance that stand for the largest landlocked parcel (approximately 200 hectares) in this area<sup>7</sup>.

The announcement of this dezoning (a video explaining the issues at stake in the revision is broadcasted, press releases are issued, a press conference is held on April 27th 2016) causes an uproar as evidenced by numerous questions and remarks from citizens during the public information sessions held on May 9th, 12th and 25th 2016<sup>8</sup>:

"You spoke a lot about the economy, which is one of the three pillars of sustainable development. How will the ecological and social pillars be developed? "

"Doe not destroying the last agricultural land near Quebec City, which is an important ecological territory, contradict the term sustainable capital used in the Plan? "

"What do you mean by resilience?"

"Are there guidelines specifying that we want to (...) have as many natural environments as possible? "

"Couldn't we set objectives to get a certain percentage of natural environments cover? "

"How does the schema develops the conservation of parks and green spaces? "

The indignation leads to the mobilisation of a public (Dewey, 2010) that engages in a work of justification during the hearing of opinions sessions on June 14th, 16th and 17th 2016<sup>9</sup> ; on that occasion, stakeholders not only exercise their right to get information but also establish themselves as interlocutors, speak out and confront their legal, scientific knowhow. The scope of their oral intervention is summed up in memos submitted beforehand to the Commission (59 submitted memos and 52 spontaneous oral interventions). Some stakeholder prove to have more control than others over this democratic process (Chateauraynaud, 2015).

The Union des producteurs agricoles, a union of farmers that considers itself the official voice of Quebec's farmers and forestry producers focuses on agricultural lands protection but not only; it is also a question of considering the importance of the ecosystem services provided by these peri-urban territories and of valuing resources that are both natural and cultural.

"Greater Quebec City region is planning to expand the urban perimeter by dezoning 660 ha of land located in agricultural zones (...) which are among the most productive in Quebec (...) Let's remember that only 2% of Quebec's territory is arable (...) These agricultural lands are just as productive as those located in the west of Quebec City (...) rational land-use planning consists of conserving these fragmented enclaved agricultural lands which help reducing the anthropogenic greenhouse effect and support biodiversity (...) that should be factored into the long-term commitment of Greater Quebec City region to maintain the agricultural lands surface area (...) This agricultural territory is part of collective heritage (...) the former lands of the Sisters of Charity which have

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6 Groupe Dallaire est le plus important propriétaire foncier de la région métropolitaine de Québec. Il détient 1300 hectares de terrains qui sont destinés au développement de projets diversifiés : immeubles de bureaux, commerciaux, industriels et polyvalents ainsi que résidentiels.

7 Les lots 1614961, 461945, 1614783, 1426540, 2033973, 4105206, 4386681, 4386880, 2240511, 1501698, 1501696, 1501699, 15011703, 1501701, 1501702, 1501694, 1501695, 1501700(Berthold, 2019).

8 Ville de Québec (2016). Séance d'information publique. Premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement (SAD) de l'agglomération de Québec. Compte rendu de la séance du 9 mai 2016. <https://www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/citoyens/participation-citoyenne/activites/CPFichierAzure.ashx?Fichier=5d57cfb0-7f49-4ef5-8ce0-fe94fdffb9b1.pdf>

9 Ville de Québec (2017). Rapport de consultation publique. Premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement révisé de l'agglomération de Québec. <https://www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/citoyens/participation-citoyenne/activites/CPFichierAzure.ashx?Fichier=5d57cfb0-7f49-4ef5-8ce0-fe94fdffb9b1.pdf>

been cultivated in Beauport since 1893 are an eloquent example of this agricultural heritage (...) this distinctive landscape and unique natural and historical heritage is a unique opportunity for the regeneration and enhancement of a more sustainable city<sup>10</sup>.

The Conseil régional de l'environnement de la Capitale nationale, a non-profit organization that seeks to federate associations, institutions and individuals who are committed to promote collective rights for a better quality environment, states that

"Greater Quebec City area land use planning and development schema shall define a sustainable vision in order to adequately face the challenges of the environment protection, the fight against climate change and the impact of demographic growth. The Agglomeration Council cannot go on with a strategy that consistantly expands the urbanization perimeter to the detriment of natural lands, wetlands and agricultural land (...) which is harmful to the environment, particularly with regard to water quality and air quantity (...) the protection of agricultural land is (also) of heritage concern, particularly in the case of the Terres d'Espérances that have been farmed for 114 years to supply the Saint-Michel-Archange hospital with dairy products, meat, fruits and vegetables<sup>11</sup>".

Assuming research and advocacy missions, Vivre en Ville also objects to the expansion of the urbanization perimeter

"The land use planning and development schema should set sustainable objectives that protect areas of historical, cultural, ecological and aesthetic interests and enhance the value of these areas to preserve the identity of the agglomeration's territory and to support the quality of life of citizens. The rezoning of this heritage land contradicts these objectives<sup>12</sup>".

A number of non-profit organizations working in the field of environment and nature protection also engage into the deliberative arena. Arbres Québec requires that "Greater Quebec City region keeps the agricultural zone intact (...) commits itself to the sustainable development of the territory by protecting the natural areas of interest<sup>13</sup>". Denouncing the financialization of agricultural land, Protec-Terre whose core activity is to promote biodynamic agriculture and associative agriculture also objects to the expansion of the urbanization perimeter<sup>14</sup>.

The Collectif 55+ bringing together seniors who wish to share their knowhow and experience also engage into this democratic process.

"Since the entering into force in 1985 of the first Greater land use and development schema (more than 30 years ago!), public opinion has focused on environmental and social issues and these should be the priorities of the schema; it should focus on a better life quality for people and for a diversity of living species which we refer in our

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10 Union des producteurs agricoles (2016). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2 (2016) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65404>

11 Conseil régional de l'environnement de la Capitale nationale Capitale (2016). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2 (2016) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65385>

12 Vivre en Ville (2016). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2 (2016) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65377>

13 Québec Arbres (2016). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2 (2016) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65399>

14 Protec-Terre (2016). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2 (2016) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65383>

layman's language as a return of nature to the city (...) What we have learned about the importance of biodiversity, ecosystem, wetland protection and the urban forest should be implemented in the schema<sup>15</sup>".

Other citizen organizations and collectives share the same aspirations:

"ecological governance is at the heart of sustainable urban development (...) The shaping of a sustainable city requires innovative practices (...) the realisation of a vast urban agriculture strategy based on an economy of solidarity and respect for our environment (...) in line with the traditional nourishing, therapeutic and social functions of these lands<sup>16</sup>".

By passing various tests; overcoming certain shyness and susceptibility, knowing how to introduce themselves, exposing themselves to the political-administrative apparatus, complying with the orchestration of role-playing and speaking turns; some citizens also show courage and determination while engaging into this institutional arena. They point out that

"There is a lot of rhetoric around the concept of sustainable development, leading to projects that are often cosmetic or artificial and lack of consistency in implementing social and environmental sustainability. The opportunity for Greater Quebec City region to forge a path to sustainable development must not be missed<sup>17</sup>",

"For more than a century, these lands have been the property of the Sisters of Charity and have fed up to 5,000 people, notably the patients of the former psychiatric hospital as well as the nursing staff. As such, the realization of a vast urban agriculture project based on an economy of solidarity and sustainable farming would be in line with the purpose of these lands<sup>18</sup>",

"a moratorium prohibiting all buildings (whether residential, commercial, etc.), roads, bridges or parking lots construction on these 204 hectares commonly referred to as the Sisters of Charity's land should be passed<sup>19</sup>".

The emotional mobilization of this democratic public (Dewey, 2011) also engages in other spaces a collective reflective deliberation through which 'a society produces and organises itself (...) by giving itself new contexts of description, categorisation, explanation and interpretation' (Cefaï, 2013, paragraph 22). The spokespersons of organisations aiming to increase citizen participation in democratic life (including the Institut du Nouveau Monde), agricultural and environmental advisors to collectives, representatives of agricultural unions and soil scientists mobilize indeed public opinion in getting their opinions circulated in the local and regional press.

"The land of the nuns (...) shall not be sacrificed on the altar of urbanisation<sup>20</sup>".

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15 Collectif 55 (2016). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2 (2016) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65418>.

16 Collectif (2016). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2 (2016) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65410>.

17 Mémoire individuel (2016). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2 (2016) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65388>

18 Mémoire individuel (2016). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2 (2016) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65410>

19 Mémoire individuel (2016). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2 (2016) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65388>

20 Lessard, M., Vachon, B. (2015, 5 janvier). Sacrifier l'agriculture pour la densification urbaine, Le Devoir. <https://www.ledevoir.com/opinion/idees/428062/terres-des-soeurs-de-la-charite-sacrifier-l-agriculture-pour-la-densification-urbaine>

"Without being an agronomist or soil scientist, anyone who has travelled around Quebec can easily notice that most of lands, 95% of the entire territory of Quebec, are not suitable for agriculture (...) On the other hand, urbanization can expand almost everywhere<sup>21</sup>".

"It is time for Quebec City to consider its agricultural land as a heritage asset and not as a spare space ready for urbanization at any cost<sup>22</sup>".

Professors in engineering physics engage in political debates on the issues, making use of Radio-Canada and ICK-FM, while representatives of Protec Terre, of Voix Citoyenne and of the farmers union appear on the Jean-Garon TV channel. Inviting individuals to join into a political community, the farmers union collects in early 2015 on social media signatures for the *Sauvegardons les terres patrimoniales des Soeurs de la Charité* petition. Equiterre also posts ongoing communications on its website making public that "when passing the land use planning and development Plan in 2012, the Minister of Municipal Affairs clearly expressed concerns about the protection of agricultural zones against urbanization<sup>23</sup>". Supported by the expertise of Copticom, a team of public relations strategists concerned by the climate crisis, the environmental protection and the reduction of social inequalities, the Conseil régional de l'environnement de la Capitale-Nationale, the David Suzuki Foundation, Vivre en Ville, Équiterre, Nature Québec, Action Patrimoine, Craque-Bitume, Les Urbainculteurs and AmiEs de la terre de Québec also make use of the informal and more or less interactive digital space by widely making circulated online their analysis of a poll conducted on June 3rd and 4th 2016 concluding that the great majority of the population (70%) is strongly opposed to the rezoning of 600 hectares of agricultural lands. Trying to get some stakeholders more involved the Conseil régional de l'environnement région de la Capitale nationale also multiplies roundtable discussions and media interventions, among others a meeting with the farmers union on April 1st 2015 and with the Observatoire en agroenvironnement de la Capitale-Nationale on November 17th 2015, and also a press conference on November 2nd 2015<sup>24</sup>.

However, not every collective, every grass root association is keen on engaging against the rezoning. Some structurally dependent on public funding associations whose objectives are to develop and promote eco-responsible actions and eco-citizenship, namely Craque-Bitume, prefer to avoid taking public positions on that matter. As far as the Urbainculteurs are concerned, they would rather not oppose too vehemently to the rezoning, wishing to benefit from the financial support of the Dallaire Group's philanthropic works (in the event of rezoning) to develop further urban and rooftop gardening.

Reaffirming its intention to build up 6500 housing units on the Terres d'Espérance, the Dallaire Group expresses full support to the passing of the land use planning and development schema: "the schema channels the suburbanisation and reduces anarchic urban sprawl and its

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21 Tardif, L. (2015, 09 février). Les Sœurs de la Charité causent un mouvement citoyen, Le Soleil numérique, <https://www.lesoleil.com/opinions/carrefour-des-lecteurs/les-soeurs-de-la-charite-causent-un-mouvement-citoyen-49899be4042f53bbfa0c79b2d5221e4c>

22 Rémillard, D. (2014, 13 décembre). Terrains des Soeurs de la Charité : l'UPA lance un appel à la population. Le Soleil numérique. <https://www.lesoleil.com/actualite/la-capitale/terrains-des-soeurs-de-la-charite-lupa-lance-un-appel-a-la-population-18755b612aa03a4300d0d3de90e83ead>

23 Equiterre (2016, 31 mai). Projet de schéma : non au dézonage agricole à Québec. [Projet de schéma : non au dézonage agricole à Québec | Équiterre \(equiterre.org\)](http://Projet%20de%20sch%C3%A9ma%20-%20non%20au%20d%C3%A9zonage%20agricole%20%C3%A0%20Qu%C3%A9bec%20-%20%C3%89quiterre%20(2016).pdf)

24 Conseil régional de l'environnement – région de la Capitale nationale (2016). Rapport d'activités. [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5596a440e4b04990388f0909/t/584edec59cc6892ae1a9c13/1481563874077/CRE\\_Rapport+annuel+15\\_16.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5596a440e4b04990388f0909/t/584edec59cc6892ae1a9c13/1481563874077/CRE_Rapport+annuel+15_16.pdf)

negative consequences<sup>25</sup>". The Sisters of Charity also try to get the support of public opinion by stating that "50% of the profits generated by the residential development would benefit the poorest as a testimony of the ongoing charitable contribution of the congregation<sup>26</sup>". The team of the president of Greater Quebec City region and Mayor of Quebec City then confirms its firm political intention to dezone these agricultural and peri-urban green spaces: "We want to dezone these agricultural lands<sup>27</sup>".

### **From the mobilization of a public to the adoption of the land use planning and development schema**

However, in consultation with other ministries, the Minister of municipal affairs, regions and land occupancy opposes the passing of the land use planning and development schema (August 18th 2016)<sup>28</sup>. The Greater Quebec City region Council then mandates various experts from the Centre de recherche en aménagement et développement of Laval University to compare different residential scenarios with regards to the multiple dimensions of sustainable development (economic constraints, expectations and needs of the population, environmental impacts). The Greater Quebec City region Council endorses the recommendations of the experts ; the Bourg-Royal sector (the Terres d'Espérance) seems to be the ideal location to meet the residential demand of Greater Quebec City area in the coming years till 2036 ; and slightly amends the land use planning and development schema<sup>29</sup>.

In order to invalidate criticisms on policies and action programmes designed by technocratic bureaucracies cut off from the realities or indifferent to public opinion, the Commission holds again public information sessions on May 9th and 11th 2017. Many questions and remarks are addressed to the Commission:

What is a viable agricultural zone?

"Isn't de zoning this type of land likely to encourage speculators to go on betting on buying agricultural land?

How does the city intend to promote urban agriculture in order to compensate for the possible loss of agricultural land?

How the schema will protect existing and future parks and green spaces? <sup>30</sup> "

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25Groupe Dallaire (2016). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2 (2016) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65386>

26 Gaudreau, V. (2015, 20 janvier). Le Soleil numérique. (2015). Terres des Sœurs de la charité : il faut dézoner, réitère Labeaume. Le Soleil numérique, <https://www.lesoleil.com/affaires/terres-des-soeurs-de-la-charite-il-faut-dezoner-reitere-labeaume-80056dd1616606d1e3f36a647fe4a0b1>

27 Thériault, M., Des Rosiers, F., Vandersmissen, M.-H. (2017). Comparaison de scénarios de développement résidentiel pour Québec et sa périphérie dans une perspective de développement durable Rapport Étude réalisée pour le Service de la planification et de la coordination de l'aménagement du territoire, Division de la planification stratégique du territoire Ville de Québec. [https://www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/apropos/planification-orientations/amenagement\\_urbain/sad/docs/Scenarios\\_developpement\\_residentiel\\_Rapport\\_Final\\_Avril%202017.pdf](https://www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/apropos/planification-orientations/amenagement_urbain/sad/docs/Scenarios_developpement_residentiel_Rapport_Final_Avril%202017.pdf).

28 Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Habitation (2016). Avis sur le projet de règlement numéro PC2016-034 édictant le premier projet du schéma d'aménagement et de

développement. [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)

29 Thériault, M., Des Rosiers, F., Vandersmissen, M.-H. (2017). Comparaison de scénarios de développement résidentiel pour Québec et sa périphérie dans une perspective de développement durable Rapport Étude réalisée pour le Service de la planification et de la coordination de l'aménagement du territoire, Division de la planification stratégique du territoire Ville de Québec. [https://www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/apropos/planification-orientations/amenagement\\_urbain/sad/docs/Scenarios\\_developpement\\_residentiel\\_Rapport\\_Final\\_Avril%202017.pdf](https://www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/apropos/planification-orientations/amenagement_urbain/sad/docs/Scenarios_developpement_residentiel_Rapport_Final_Avril%202017.pdf).

30 Ville de Québec (2017). Rapport de consultation publique. Second projet de Schéma d'a ménagement et de développement révisé de l'agglomération de Québec. <https://www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/citoyens/participation-citoyenne/activites/CPFichierAzure.ashx?Fichier=e4a2ed2e-d8ef-436e-99ab-b958fc7e43.pdf>

Hearings of opinions are also held on August 29th, 30th and 31st 2017 (91 memos and 65 spontaneous oral interventions); several stakeholders take then the opportunity to develop further their argumentation.

The Jean Garon Institute (named after the former minister of agriculture, fisheries and food) pleads for new forms of agricultural production (organic, permaculture, etc.), for a green revolution:

"This revolution is not only about the nice green roofs and community gardens that are flourishing everywhere in our cities. It is about introducing small-scale, intensive organic and sustainable agricultural production units into the urban perimeter, as well as about satisfying citizens' thirsting for healthy food and green spaces (...) With a little vision and a few million dollars, it would be possible to found on the Sisters of Charity's land a world-class centre of expertise in urban agriculture<sup>31</sup>".

For the Conseil de quartier des Jésuites, maintaining the agricultural character of the Terres des Sœurs de la Charité is a key priority:

"For this community rooted in its history and looking to the future, development of this land will enhance its cultural and natural heritage value (...) The 200-hectare Terres des Sœurs de la Charité and its agricultural vocation has played a special role throughout Quebec City history since the French regime (...) Their preservation until now in the heart of a large agglomeration is a driving force to develop their potential as an educational, cultural, spiritual and recreational resource (...) They also would add value to Quebec City's tourism offer in addition to being an asset for the overall economy (...) they also exemplify large parts of Quebec's history that revolve around agricultural practices and the positive role of religious communities<sup>32</sup>".

Protec-Terre stands for 'Maintaining the quality of the environment and the landscape (for) research in urban agriculture (for) education on healthy eating<sup>33</sup>', while Québec Arbres focuses its argument on the rehabilitation of green and wooded areas.

However, citizen collectives count among the stakeholders who exercise the most actively their political power. Formed when the rezoning of the Sisters of Charity's land was made public by federating mostly seniors, the collective Voix citoyenne engages without respite for "the preservation and conservation in perpetuity of this land (...) for social (...) educational (...) and scientific purposes<sup>34</sup>". At "the crossroads of various social circles and in the midst of organisations and institutions that facilitate or refrain their individual and collective freedom of action" (Cefai et al., 2012, p.3), citizens who are capable of qualifying and criticising beings, objects and devices and who are able of identifying the principles that structure situations also engage in the arena. They grab the opportunity to participate effectively and not just symbolically in the decisions making process (Cefai, Carrel, Talpin, Eliasoph & Lichterman, 2012).

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31 Institut Jean-Garon (2017). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3 (2017) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65327>

32 Conseil de quartier des Jésuites (2017). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3 (2017) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65297>

33 Protec-Terre (2017). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3 (2017) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65322>

34 Voix citoyenne (2017). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3 (2017) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65334>

"It makes no sense to destroy arable land of such high quality, based on statistical data that could easily be questioned. This land is a natural jewel<sup>35</sup>".

"(this agricultural land) allows us to reconnect with nature, the rhythm of the seasons (...) helps to reduce the pollution caused by food transport (...) to fight against greenhouse effect. Let's the farmland of the Sisters of Charity be our Central Park ! <sup>36</sup> ".

"This land in the heart of the city is a common good that the entire population should be able to enjoy<sup>37</sup>".

"This land in Greater Quebec City area is the symbol of the works of charity of the religious congregations, a dimension of Quebec cultural context<sup>38</sup> ".

"It is therefore important to preserve them in order to perpetuate this cultural heritage and its transmission to future generations (...) The Lands of the Sisters of Charity could thus be decreed or designated a heritage site<sup>39</sup> ".

"These lands are part of the history of Greater Quebec City region and deserve to be preserved as they witness to the evolution of agricultural practices in Quebec and will be representing the urban agriculture in the 21st century<sup>40</sup>".

"Sustainable development is no more a compromise between environmental, social and economic dimensions (...) The concept of weak sustainability ignores the fact that our environment is not a non-extinguishable resource (...) this conception is an outdated model for sustainable development, especially as far as land use planning is concerned<sup>41</sup> ".

"We have a collective moral obligation to re-evaluate our societal choices, to rethink the way we conceive planet earth, and not just in utilitarian or economically profitable terms (...) and thus to impose the terms of a promising new paradigm (...) And we could! So let us dream of another possible world! <sup>42</sup>".

At this point, the public dispute over the rezoning prompts the Terre d'Espérance Limited Partnership (mandated by the Dallaire Group to develop these lands) to readjust its residential development project:

"The aim is to integrate agriculture into urban growth (...) We will consider the relationships between the elements that make up the territory: the morphology of the natural site, the urban form and structure, the urban fabric, the architectural types. We will take into account the potential of the environment, i.e. the strategic positioning of

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35 Mémoire individuel (2017). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3 (2017) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65346>

36 Mémoire individuel (2017). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3 (2017) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65336>

37 Mémoire individuel (2017). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3 (2017) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65291>

38 Mémoire individuel (2017). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3 (2017) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65341>

39 Mémoire individuel (2017). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3 (2017) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65347>

40 Mémoire individuel (2017). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3 (2017) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65291>

41 Mémoire individuel (2017). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3 (2017) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65270>

42 Mémoire individuel (2017). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3 (2017) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65357>

the plots in relation to the adjoining urban centres, the existing motorway and road systems, the public transport connections, and the proximity to nearby shops and services<sup>43</sup>".

Despite these collective actions against the rezoning of these peri-urban lands, the presidency of Greater Quebec City region and the executive committee of the mayor Quebec City confirm the following intentions:

"we want to put an end to urban sprawling<sup>44</sup>,

" Quebec city is in favour of the project ; the metropolitan land use plan already includes these lands into the urban zoning<sup>45</sup> ».

Reinforcing lines of resistance and opposition, tireless activists, emerging political party leaders and the president of Action patrimoine among others redouble their efforts to mobilize public opinion and political spheres, particularly through the media channels.

"Could Quebec City care about its agricultural heritage, rather than just considering cashing future property taxes ? <sup>46</sup> "

"Yet this is an area of prime ecological interest (...) by virtue of its size, the quality of its soil and above all its location (...) we are dealing here with a unique and exceptional oasis in the immediate vicinity of Quebec city center<sup>47</sup>".

"The long-term benefits for the Quebec City community far outweigh the short-term profits that foundations and private investors will make. These lands need a perpetual protection status, nothing less<sup>48</sup>".

"When panels on climate change calls on cities to protect green spaces and to promote urban agriculture, these 567 hectares of agricultural heritage require to get safeguarded<sup>49</sup>".

In July 2017, the Ordre des agronomes also address an open letter to the Mayor of Quebec City. A group of environmental organizations - the David Suzuki Foundation, Nature Québec, Vivre en Ville and Équiterre - also post statements on various websites related to a series of municipal interventions that seriously damage farmlands and the environment : "Our analysis evidences a strong resistance from the presidency of Greater Quebec City region and the executive

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43Société en commandite Terre d'Espérance (2017). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3 (2017) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/25450/widgets/102874/documents/65330>

44 Piedboeuf, G. (2017, 12 juin). Terres des Sœurs de la Charité : le maire soutient le Groupe Dallaire. Le Soleil numérique. <https://www.lesoleil.com/actualite/la-capitale/terres-des-soeurs-de-la-charite-le-maire-soutient-le-groupe-dallaire-60291a26a2bf317d2722bdf9f20ba317>

45 Association des étudiantes et étudiants en agriculture, alimentation et consommation (2017, 17 février). L'AGÉTAAC se positionne pour préserver les terres agricoles des Sœurs de la Charité. Journal L'AGRAL. <https://journalagral.wordpress.com/2017/02/17/lagetaac-se-positionne-pour-preserver-les-terres-agricoles-des-soeurs-de-la-charite/>

46 Mercier, L. (2015, 01 avril). Terres patrimoniales des Sœurs de la Charité. Agriculture urbaine à inventer. <https://www.magazinecontinue.com/terres-patrimoniales-des-soeurs-de-la-charite-agriculture-urbaine-a-inventer/>

47Boutin, M. (2017, 15 mai). Terres des Sœurs de la Charité : la Ville de Québec ne reconnaît pas leur valeur écologique. Droit de parole. <http://www.droitdeparole.org/2017/05/terres-soeurs-de-charite-ville-de-quebec-ne-reconnait-valeur-ecologique/>

48 Côté, N. (2017, 10 juin). Terres des Sœurs de la Charité : un bien collectif. Droit de parole. <http://www.droitdeparole.org/2017/06/terres-soeurs-de-charite-bien-collectif/>

49Boutin, M. (2017, 15 mai). Terres des Sœurs de la Charité : la Ville de Québec ne reconnaît pas leur valeur écologique. Droit de parole. <http://www.droitdeparole.org/2017/05/terres-soeurs-de-charite-ville-de-quebec-ne-reconnait-valeur-ecologique/>

committee of the Mayor Quebec City to the adoption of measures that aimed at limiting urban sprawl and at protecting wetlands and agricultural land<sup>50</sup>.

Bringing together fundamental knowledge of scientists, technical knowhow of urban planners and the concrete experience of farmers and citizens, the Collectif 55+ also sets on 1 March 2017 the Colloquium - A World in Transition, Rethinking Democracy. Engaging in unconventional forms of expression and action, the Conseil régional de l'environnement, ProtecTerre, the David Suzuki Foundation, the Union paysanne, Stop Oléoduc, the Union des producteurs agricoles, Equiterre, Les AmiEs de la Terre, Craque-Bitume and Nature Québec get 200 citizens to protest on June 10th 2017. On the occasion, Protec-Terre's speech highlights most of the demands and claims :

"Land is not only a commodity but a common good because of its specific nature and essential role (...) By selling the land to real estate investors, we are depriving future generations of the benefits of the land (...) this is a serious breach of intergenerational fairness<sup>51</sup> ".

Concerned by this democratic uproar of protestation, the Minister of municipal affairs, regions and land occupancy opposes again after due consultation with other ministries the passing of the land use planning and development schema (August 21st 2018<sup>52</sup>). Greater Quebec City region Council must therefore amend the schema ; the updated version satisfies neither the Ministry (notice of August 23rd 2019) nor the democratic opposition. Voix Citoyenne launches online as from May 14th 2018 the campaign *The Great Movement to Protect Agricultural Land in Urban Areas of Quebec* and publicly shares on August 26th 2018 an analysis explaining the project's non-conformity with governmental policies. 104 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 address on September 24th 2018 an open letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Land Occupancy. 125 co-signatories also address on October 16th 2018 an open letter to the Capitale-nationale Minister. Voix citoyenne and the Jean Garon Institute even try to get a meeting with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; the invitation dated November 6th 2018 is declined. Voix citoyenne organizes also the event *Rêvons les terres des Sœurs de la Charité* (November 3rd 2019) in association with various performing artists and with Protec-Terre which leads a conference on agroecological social utility trusts. Eventually, the presidency of Greater Quebec City region amends again the schema whose final version is ratified on February 7th 2020.

### **Discussion: building a common world in a green polity?**

The revision of the land use planning and développement schema results in a 'polemical process of political will formation' (Fourniau, 2007, p. 176) confirming that 'public problems, their effects and their scope are often a matter of controversy and confrontation between

50 Fondation David Suzuki (2018, 4 juillet). Communiqué conjoint – Un regroupement d'organismes environnementaux dénonce le rôle des municipalités dans la protection de l'environnement et du territoire. <https://fr.davidsuzuki.org/communiques-presse/communiqu%C3%A9-conjoint-un-regroupement-dorganismes-environnementaux-denonce-le-role-des-municipalites-dans-la-protection-de-lenvironnement-et-du-territoire/>

51 Protec-Terre (2017, 10 juin). Allocution. <http://protec-terre.org/Documents/Soeurscharite%20-%20juin%202017.pdf>

52 Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Habitation (2018). Avis sur le de règlement RAVQ 1200 édictant le schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'agglomération de

Québec - 23027 \_2SAD\_MAM. [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)

stakeholders (Cefai, 1996). In a pluralist democracy such disagreements are undoubtedly legitimate (Mouffe, 2004): legitimacy of public policies and actions is achieved through public debate, through continuous work of justification across available orders of worth. In this case, the dispute attests of the capacity of citizens organisations, environmentalists, green activists, heritage organization spokesperson, farmers lobbyists to get concerned and organized, to mobilize various rationales to advocate their positions, to build convincing arguments concluding that the outcome of the draft schema is unfair.

Gathering all necessary solid evidences, some stakeholders contest indeed the relevance of the functional and morphological criteria invoked on the grounds of rational land management to justify the rezoning of this land. The logics of justification do not seem to contest the industrial principle of reference but the arrangement of the orders of worth of certain actions. They wish indeed to maintain the productive function of these fertile lands and this productivity imperative perfectly expresses the common higher principle of the industrial world. In an industrial polity that best exemplifies instrumental rationality, the critical arguments stress the importance of the positive externalities associated with maintaining peri-urban green spaces, among others the regulatory services such as "rainwater capture, prevention of wastewater overflows into waterways, biodiversity conservation, the fight against heat islands and climate change mitigation"<sup>53</sup>. Willing to 'internalise ecological concerns within a technical argumentation' (Lafaye & Thévenot, 1993, p.509), the stakeholders nevertheless seem determined to accelerate the structural mutation of the industrial polity, to bend the current industrial production system:

"the high-cost agro-industrial growth in the post-war period based on petrochemical-derived inputs and all the technical developments that followed (...) has been efficient in the short term but heavily weigh on the long run on forest destruction, on pollution and erosion of soil (...) on the enslavement of entire rural populations and on the desarticulation of social structures (...) the economic and financial returns are furthermore increasingly based on land speculation"<sup>54</sup> .

"Quebec City and its citizens have to change the current agro-industrial paradigm that is not sustainable, neither for us locally, nor for the planet globally"<sup>55</sup>.

However, the justifications do not fully match the model designed by Boltanski and Thévenot (1991). Driven by the ideas of overcoming capitalism and getting out of productivism, stakeholders wish to promote processes of institutional change and shifts from industrial and market logics to new ones: we have a collective obligation to re-evaluate our societal choices, to bring under control the exploitation and the degradation of our environment and of resources upon which all life on planet earth depend".

Questioning the sharing of resources in the name of the general interest and of the common good, they testify of "an ecopolitical and ethical courage (that) consists in supporting new

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53Québec Arbres (2016). Consultations publiques Québec Arbres Schéma d'aménagement et de développement Agglomération de Québec. Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2 (2016) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/schema-amenagement-developpement-agglomeration-quebec>

54Mémoire collectif 029 (2017). Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'agglomération de Québec : Évitions les pièges de l'étalement urbain. Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2 (2016) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/schema-amenagement-developpement-agglomeration-quebec>

55Mémoire collectif 029 (2017). Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'agglomération de Québec : Évitions les pièges de l'étalement urbain. Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2 (2016) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/schema-amenagement-developpement-agglomeration-quebec>

initiatives, alternatives (...) Effective and sustainable" that falls within the regime of civic justification:

" (such as) an agri-urban business incubator, a bio-intensive vegetable farm, an orchard designed to feed thousands of families and supply food banks, gardens where citizens can grow their own food, melliferous meadows to enrich habitats for pollinators, pedestrian and bicycle paths (...) research and teaching activities, day camps, nature classes<sup>56</sup>".

Inspired by values such as conviviality and solidarity, the stakeholders aim at implementing new territorial management practices that are more ecological, reasonable or responsible. In that respect, several stakeholders including Protect-Terre, Voix citoyenne launch the idea to collectively acquire the Terres d'Espérance, possibly with the financial support of the Generations Fund<sup>57</sup>, to entrust its management to a social utility trust in charge of implementing alternative forms of production "focused on social economy and sustainable development<sup>58</sup>", "in line with the traditional nourishing, therapeutic, social and cultural vocation of this land<sup>59</sup>". Regardless of property regimes, they promote so the setting of rules of collective access, use, management of the Terres d'Espérances that update the question of commoning: the commons can indeed be conceived as the outcome of a democratic experimental process aiming at collectively managing resources for the sake of a whole community (Dardot & Laval, 2014).

The justifications could constitute a compromise conciliating the industrial and civic worlds. However, many stakeholders intend to:

"Do not miss the next green revolution (...) the citizen and urban revolution",  
"to make an immediate turnaround. We have a collective obligation to re-evaluate our societal choices, to rethink our way of conceiving of the land, not just in utilitarian or economically profitable terms.

They thus deploy justifications that do not simply fit into the repertoire of existing politics. Expanding the field of their concerns and their actions, these ecologically conscious collectives also intend to make up for the shortcomings of previous strategies of conservation by developing a "structuring network of green corridors between the agricultural plots, the wooded areas, the wetlands (especially those which get an access to rivers) and more generally to ecosystems<sup>60</sup>, venturing to define relatively precise objectives - "a minimum vegetation cover of 12% of urbanised areas over the next 25 years and an average canopy of at least 40% over

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56Galarneau, V. (2016, 29 juin). Quel avenir pour les terres agricoles de Québec ? Le Devoir. <https://www.ledevoir.com/societe/transports-urbanisme/474404/quel-avenir-pour-les-terres-agricoles-de-quebec>

57Mémoire individuel 077 (2017)., Terres nourricières en ville chargées d'histoire à préserver comme patrimoine culturel et à conserver dans sa mission initiale de nourrir la population locale. Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3 (2017) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec, <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/schema-amenagement-developpement-agglomeration-quebec>

58 Mémoire individuel 086 (2017). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3 (2017) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/schema-amenagement-developpement-agglomeration-quebec>

59 Mémoire collectif 045 (2016). Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 3 (2017) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/schema-amenagement-developpement-agglomeration-quebec>

60Mémoire collectif 029 (2017). Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'agglomération de Québec : Évitions les pièges de l'étalement urbain. Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2 (2016) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/schema-amenagement-developpement-agglomeration-quebec>

the entire territory<sup>61</sup> " - or even utopian ones - "Let's design a Central Park ! Imagine a 660-acre oasis in Quebec City! <sup>62</sup>".

### **Concluding remarks**

Two hypotheses have been put forward. According to the first one, stakeholders deploy robust justifications that aim to raise awareness of a natural and cultural heritage in all its manifestations in order to have it protected through more ecological, reasonable or responsible territorial management practices. Based on multiple reality checks that incriminate the demultiplication of pollution sources, the depletion of natural resources and the deregulation of ecosystem services, the justifications revealing particular local socio-eco-political sensitivities and differentiated appropriation and legitimisation of the territory build a domestic argumentation in order to establish the socio-cultural and environmental importance of these peri-urban natural and cultural spaces which have belonged for centuries to the Sisters of Charits whose charity work is well-remembered and recorded as part of Quebec history and heritage (Berthold, 2019). Acknowledging the ancestral connection to the territory, they question not only what they inherit but also what they engage going forward through their actions; these green-minded stakeholders evoke then different measures aiming to protect from any irreversible transformation arable lands and natural resources deemed indispensable to present and future generations. Re-evaluating the market relation between private interests and the public good, they attempt not only to patrimonialize these green peri-urban territories whose parceling system evokes the great domains inherited from the 19th century as well as the practices associated with them, but they also intend to promote collective actions which aim, beyond property regimes, to set rules of collective access, use, management of the Terres d'Espérances that update the question of communing in a civic polity.

According to the second hypothesis, stakeholders try by resorting to the resources of the polity of opinion to resolve socio-cultural and ecological problems in bringing out green justifications out of a plurality of forms of agreement (Lafaye & Thévenot, 1993). The arguments and senses of justice deployed in the public space do indeed underpin the hypothesis of a green polity; the integration of a collective awareness of the consequences of the expansion of the oecumene into the critique testifies to a growing societalization of the ecological question (Mélard, 2008, p. 14), i.e., to a social phenomenon that aspires "to a more or less strong environmental inflection of (legal or implicit) norms and practices in force" (Ginelli, 2015, p. 53). Furthermore, the argumentation makes it possible to segregate practices that are more or less ecological (principle of dissimilarity), to classify them according to an order of worth (principle of order), to gauge the sacrifice (investment formula) necessary to reach the highest order of worth (planning the territory according to sustainability criteria, protecting green spaces, promoting less polluting modes of production and consumption) and so to satisfy a certain conception of common good (principle of common good). These elements may not fully comply with all the parameters needed for the the full deployment of a green polity : the various arguments do not specify the contours of the community of beings entitled to engage (principle of dignity) 'in the questioning of the just' (Lafaye & Thévenot, 1993, p. 516) nor do they

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61Québec Arbres (2016). Consultations publiques Québec Arbres Schéma d'aménagement et de développement Agglomération de Québec. Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2 (2016) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/schema-amenagement-developpement-agglomeration-quebec>

62Mémoire individuel 057 (2016). Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'agglomération de Québec : Évitions les pièges de l'étalement urbain. Mémoire déposé dans le cadre de la phase 2 (2016) de la consultation préalable sur le premier projet de Schéma d'aménagement et de développement de l'Agglomération de Québec. <https://participationcitoyenne.ville.quebec.qc.ca/schema-amenagement-developpement-agglomeration-quebec>

explicitly set a fundamental equivalence between various entities (natural elements, human beings) coexisting in the world (principle of common humanity). However, the collective adherence to ecological imperatives, to which the modes of justification witness, makes it possible to suspend any certainty regarding the subordination of the good of nature to that one of humans with regard to the relations of interdependence between humans and non humans (Latour, 1995, p. 19) and therefore object to an easy dissolution of ecology into the other modes of justification identified by Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot (1991).

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