

**“A Lake is More Unifying than a Common Roof”: The Mont-Orford National Park
Expansion Project and Conservation Discourses at Lac-Montjoie, QC**

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ABSTRACT

Since 2006, the Province of Quebec's *Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs* (MFFP) is leading an expansion project at Mont-Orford National Park, which aims at adding 4300 hectares of land to the park, representing a 172% increase. The project raises concerns among the riparian population of Lac Montjoie, the case study of this research, whose shores and islands have been partially acquired by the Government of Quebec. These lands are expected to be integrated to the Mont-Orford National Park and operated by the *Société des Établissements de Plein Air du Québec* (Sépaq), a state agent responsible for operating Quebec's national parks. While the MFFP, the Sépaq, and the riparian community all claim to seek to preserve the lake and its surroundings, these three actors express different views on conservation. As such, this thesis analyzes the variations in the conservation discourses of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and Lac Montjoie riparian dwellers in the context of the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project. I identify the conservation discourses of these three actors and explore their favoured conservation processes, practices of power and purposes. Accordingly, I apply a Foucauldian critical discourse analysis to examine official documentation as well as the data gathered from 23 semi-structured interviews with riparian households. I employ Feldman's (2017) conceptual framework to situate the discourses of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers in the conservation literature by comparing them to the 'fortress,' community-based, 'back to the barriers,' and neoliberal conservation discourses. The research concludes that the MFFP and the Sépaq share a similar narrative that primarily contains characteristics of the 'fortress' and neoliberal discourses, while Lac Montjoie riparian dwellers put forward a vision that I label as 'unenforceable disciplinary conservation.' The Mont-Orford National Park expansion project entails a renegotiation of governance at Lac Montjoie that exposes tensions between neoliberal and disciplinary conservation in the creation of environmental subjects, as well as different interpretations of the notion of 'heritage' as the cornerstone of the supposed intrinsic relationship between humans and nature.

RÉSUMÉ

Depuis 2006, le ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs (MFFP) de la province de Québec mène un projet d'agrandissement au Parc national du Mont-Orford, visant à accroître la superficie du Parc de 4 300 hectares, soit une augmentation de 172 %. Le projet soulève des préoccupations parmi la population riveraine du lac Montjoie, le cas à l'étude pour cette recherche, dont les rives et les îles ont été en partie acquises par le gouvernement du Québec. Ces terrains devraient être intégrés au parc national du Mont-Orford et administrés par la Société des Établissements de Plein Air du Québec (Sépaq), une société d'État responsable d'exploiter des parcs nationaux au Québec. Alors que le MFFP, la Sépaq et la communauté riveraine prétendent tous viser la préservation du lac et de ses environs, ces trois acteurs expriment des points de vue différents au sujet de la conservation. Cette thèse analyse les variations dans les discours de conservation du MFFP, de la Sépaq et des riverains du lac Montjoie dans le contexte du projet d'agrandissement du parc national du Mont-Orford. J'identifie les discours de conservation de ces trois acteurs et j'explore les processus de conservation qu'ils privilégient, leurs pratiques du pouvoir et leurs objectifs. J'applique une analyse critique du discours foucauldienne afin d'examiner des documents officiels ainsi que les données recueillies lors de 23 entretiens semi-structurés avec des ménages riverains. J'utilise le cadre conceptuel de Feldman (2017) pour situer les discours du MFFP, de la Sépaq et des riverains dans la littérature sur la conservation en les comparant aux discours de la conservation « forteresse », communautaire, « retour aux barrières » et néolibérale. La recherche conclut que le MFFP et la Sépaq partagent un narratif similaire qui rappelle les discours de la conservation « forteresse » et néolibérale, tandis que les riverains du lac Montjoie mettent de l'avant une vision que je qualifie de « conservation disciplinaire non contraignante ». Le projet d'agrandissement du Parc national du Mont-Orford implique une renégociation de la gouvernance environnementale au lac Montjoie. Ceci expose des tensions entre la conservation néolibérale et la conservation disciplinaire en ce qui a trait à la création de sujets environnementaux, ainsi que différentes interprétations de la notion de « patrimoine » comme fondement de la supposée relation intrinsèque entre l'humain et la nature.

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PREFACE

This thesis contains citations that I have translated from French to English in order to make the text more readable. The original citations as well as their translations can be found in Appendix A, which contains the interview quotes and citations of official documents mentioned in this thesis.

However, the names of ministries, laws and Quebec organizations deliberately appear in French. The reason for this choice is that nearly all the literature and press releases I consulted regarding conservation in Quebec and at Mont-Orford National Park are in French. Furthermore, not all French names have an official equivalent in English. As such, I consider that an individual researching this topic will more easily connect the content of this thesis with the literature if the names appear in French. Still, Appendix B provides a list of the French terms and names mentioned throughout the thesis with their English translation to ensure that the text remains accessible to non-French speakers.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning
APLM	<i>Association pour la Protection du Lac Montjoie</i>
CBC	Community-based conservation
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CMELCC	<i>Cabinet du Ministre de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les Changements Climatiques</i>
ECCC	Environment and Climate Change Canada
FAPEL	<i>Fédération des Associations pour la Protection de l'Environnement et des Lacs</i>
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MELCC	<i>Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les Changements Climatiques</i>
MDDELCC	<i>Ministère du Développement Durable, de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les Changements Climatiques</i>
MDDEP	<i>Ministère du Développement Durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs</i>
MFFP	<i>Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs</i>
RAPPEL	<i>Regroupement des Associations pour la Protection de l'Environnement des lacs et Cours d'Eau de l'Estrie et du Haut-Bassin de la Saint-François</i>
Sépaq	<i>Société des Établissements de Plein Air du Québec</i>
UNEP-WCMC	United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the 1970s and the adoption of the *Loi sur les Parcs* by the Province of Quebec, the provincial government started to create conservation and recreational parks, and to regulate the exploitation of resources in these spaces (MFFP, 2018b). In 2001, the modification of the *Loi sur les Parcs* established the title ‘national parks’ and further clarified their mission, which is to ensure the permanent protection of the natural, cultural, and scenic heritages of the Province of Quebec (*Loi sur les Parcs*, 2001).

In the Province of Quebec, the entity responsible for the management of parks is the *Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs* (MFFP). Complementarily, the *Société des Établissements de Plein Air du Québec* (Sépaq), a state agency, oversees the use of parks situated to the south of the 50th parallel (Sépaq, 2021b, n.d.). Since the creation of the Mont-Tremblant National Park in 1985 – Quebec’s first national park – the network of Quebec’s national parks has grown to 27 parks. Among them, 23 are fully operated by the Sépaq and one, the Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park, is co-managed with the federal agency Parks Canada (MFFP, 2021f; Sépaq, 2021e). The Kativik Regional Government manages the 3 parks situated above the 50th parallel (MFFP, 2018b).

Mont-Orford National Park is one of the 24 territories constituting the current national parks network managed by the Sépaq. Starting in 2006, the Province of Quebec’s MFFP launched an expansion project to modify the limits of Mont-Orford National Park, in part in response to the 2006 protests opposing the partial privatization of the park for the construction of condominium housing units and the expansion of the ski station. The expansion project now seeks to increase the park’s surface area by 4300 hectares, which represents a sizable 172%

increase in its footprint (MFFP, 2021a). Additionally, the park's land will be mainly dedicated to conservation as well as the implementation of recreational and educational activities managed by the Sépaq (MFFP, 2021a).

Among the people concerned by the expansion project are residents of Lac Montjoie, in Saint-Denis-de-Brompton, where this research is set. Riparian households and the *Association pour la Protection du Lac Montjoie* (APLM) have expressed concerns about the project. Indeed, while the expansion project seeks to increase Quebeckers' access to nature and is aligned with Quebec's objectives and commitments to increase the province's proportion of protected areas, the APLM approaches the acquisition of land bordering Lac Montjoie as a threat to residents' ability to manage conservation practices. Lac Montjoie distinguishes itself from other lakes in the Estrie region due to a combination of factors, namely its small size, a long water renewal time, and the absence of milfoil contamination. Access to the lake is currently limited to riparian dwellers, who have actively participated in conservation initiatives since the establishment of the APLM in 1969 in order to preserve the exceptional water quality of Lac Montjoie and its tranquil atmosphere.

In light of the current discussions taking place between the MFFP, the Sépaq, and the APLM and the significance of the expansion project on riparian dwellers' conservation practices, this thesis seeks to analyze conservation discourses centred on the expansion project of Mont-Orford National Park. I draw significantly from Feldman's (2017) framework for analyzing water resource policy to structure this research. Feldman (2017) approaches water politics through the combination of three concepts, namely 'process,' 'power,' and 'purpose'. I apply this categorization to the field of conservation to classify and analyze the data. My research question asks: How does the planned expansion of Mont-Orford National Park expose variations in

conservation discourses among the MFFP, the Sépaq, and Lac Montjoie residents? The associated sub-questions are: 1- What are the main conservation discourses put forward by these three actors?; and 2- How do the three dimensions of Feldman's framework, namely process, power and purpose, manifest in the conservation discourses of these actors?

The primary aims of this research are to identify and analyze the discourses of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and Lac Montjoie riparian dwellers. More precisely, I will consider major conservation discourses introduced in academic literature to conduct a critical discourse analysis of the discourses of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and Lac Montjoie residents. Accordingly, through 23 in-person semi-structured interviews with riparian residents and the analysis of primary data – official documentation from the MFFP, the Sépaq, and APLM – this research will shed light on the varying perceptions of conservation at Lac Montjoie among these actors.

The thesis is separated into 7 main chapters. In Chapter 2, I convey the conceptual framework and literature review that orient my research. I first present Feldman's (2017) framework and its three core concepts – 'process,' 'power,' and 'purpose,' – and their application in the context of my research. This framework allows me to examine how the conservation discourses of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers combine elements of multiple conservation discourses discussed in the conservation literature, and how they intersect. I then discuss four conservation discourses – 'fortress,' community-based conservation, 'back to the barriers,' and neoliberal conservation – and how they constitute expressions of distinct 'environmentalities' (Fletcher, 2010).

In Chapter 3, I outline the research context, providing a multi-scale overview of the main guidelines and conservation objectives related to the creation and management of protected areas, and the ways in which such guidelines inform the development of the Mont-Orford National Park

expansion project. Here, I consider the international, provincial, regional, and local levels of governance in terms of conservation practices and purposes and introduce Lac Montjoie, the case study of this research.

In Chapter 4, I detail the methodology that I apply to probe the conservation discourses of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and the riparian community, with Lac Montjoie as a case study. I describe how I gathered primary and secondary data by conducting semi-structured interviews and selecting official documentation from the MFFP, the Sépaq, and the riparian community, as well as my positionality as an insider/outsider researcher. I also elaborate about how I analyzed these data, as well as define ‘discourse analysis’ and the coding method.

In Chapter 5, I present the results from the interviews and official documentation regarding the favoured conservation practices, exercise of power, and objectives of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and Lac Montjoie riparian dwellers. I organize the data related to the conservation discourses of these three actors based on Feldman’s (2017) concepts of ‘process,’ ‘power,’ and ‘purpose’ to capture their respective discourse and facilitate their analysis in the following chapter.

In Chapter 6, I situate the conservation discourses of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers within the conservation discourses literature and analyze the ‘environmentalities’ they represent (Fletcher, 2010). This allows me to assess variations in conservation discourses of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers in the context of the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project.

Finally, this thesis's conclusion, Chapter 7, summarizes the main takeaways of each chapter as well as the answers to the research questions that guided this project. It also offers avenues for future research regarding the role of emotionality in conservation discourses.

Through this thesis, I aim to contribute to the scholarship of conservation discourses and their application in a 'Global North' context. To date, the literature specifically concerned with conservation discourses focuses primarily on African contexts (see Duffy, 2008; Hutton et al., 2005; Montgomery et al., 2020; Pochet, 2014; Siurua, 2006). Discussions on the 'North' tend to address conflicts and tensions associated with the management of protected areas rather than specific narratives per se (see Kaltenborn et al., 2011; Niedziałkowski et al., 2018). Therefore, in this project I intend to complement the literature, through the analysis of a case study situated in the Province of Quebec, and to work towards articulating conservation discourses that are representative of conservation practices at Lac Montjoie and the Mont-Orford National Park.

I find that the MFFP and the Sépaq share a common conservation discourse that primarily resembles the 'fortress' and neoliberal conservation approaches due to the central role of the state in conservation practices and the perceived compatibility between conservation and development. Contrastingly, I label the discourse of riparian dwellers as 'unenforceable disciplinary conservation.' Indeed, the community overall favours strict management and surveillance so as to protect a 'fragile' shared resource. Variations in the conservation discourses of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers stem from tensions between neoliberal and disciplinary conservation discourses and the distinct environmental subjects they create, as well as from discrepancies in the interpretation of the notion of heritage and of the supposed intrinsic connection between human and nature.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I present the conceptual framework guiding my analysis of conservation discourses regarding the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project. This chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section, I introduce the notions at the core of Feldman's (2017) water management policy analysis framework, namely, 'process,' 'power,' and 'purpose'. In the second section, building from Feldman's framework, I review four discourses common in conservation literature: the 'fortress' discourse; community-based conservation discourse; the 'back to the barriers' discourse; and the neoliberal conservation discourse. I introduce each discourse in a systematic manner, and I use the same approach in Chapter 5 to describe my data. Then, in Chapter 6, I situate the discourses of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and Lac Montjoie riparian dwellers in the conservation literature I review here.

2.1 Conceptual Framework: Feldman's Framework

Feldman's (2017) framework was initially designed as a contribution to the field of water politics. The framework builds on the premise that "the provision and management of water are not merely technical problems whose resolution hinges on hydrological principle, economic cost, or engineering feasibility" (Feldman, 2017, p. 5); they are also the result of institutional practices and decision-making processes. In other words, water management and politics are closely linked. The framework recognizes the multiplicity of actors involved in water management and a vast array of endeavours, such as the private sector's profitability goal, and civil society initiatives promoting fundamental human rights (Feldman, 2017).

Similarly, conservation and the establishment of protected areas cannot solely be addressed in terms of biological preservation, protected area categorization, and planning.

Conservation practices reflect variations of contexts and priorities, and they may cause debates. For instance, Mortimer-Sandilands (2009) discusses how national parks in Canada have held an ‘ideological role’ since the country gained independence in 1867; national parks are physical representations of the ‘conquest of the West’ and its wilderness by North American settlers, and contribute to the formation of a national federal Canadian identity (see also Moumaneix, 2012). The motivations behind the creation of individual national parks in Canada vary in accordance with shifting understandings of nature and their associated priorities (e.g., tourism, the economy, cultural heritage, ecological integrity) (Mortimer-Sandilands, 2009). Otherwise stated, conservation constitutes a political act, where history and politics highly influence epistemologies and discourses on protected area management, which is, in turn, influenced by these epistemologies and discourses (Forsyth, 2020; West et al., 2006). Hence, Feldman’s (2017) framework is also relevant to the study of conservation and protected areas more broadly. Conservation encompasses systems of governance involving fluid power relations and a diversity of actors holding various priorities, norms and rules (Carpenter, 2020; Foucault, 2003, 2008; West et al., 2006).

Feldman (2017) captures such fluidity through the concepts of ‘process,’ ‘power,’ and ‘purpose’¹ (Figure 1). ‘Process’ refers primarily to agenda-setting processes, means, and actors involved in resource management and with the ability to influence outcomes (Feldman, 2017). ‘Power’ primarily represents the capacity to influence the making of policies as well as societal norms and values (Ibid.). Finally, ‘purpose’ explores the concrete objectives as well as the beliefs and values associated with conservation initiatives (Feldman, 2017). Together, these three

¹ The concepts of process, power, and purpose are not monolithic notions; they intersect and complement each other in illustrating the broad implications of conservation discourses. However, I present them separately to convey the information more efficiently.

concepts allow me to analyze conservation in a manner that acknowledges nature as a social construction and the production of nature-related conservation discourses as a political process (Carpenter, 2020; Cavanagh, 2018; West et al., 2006).

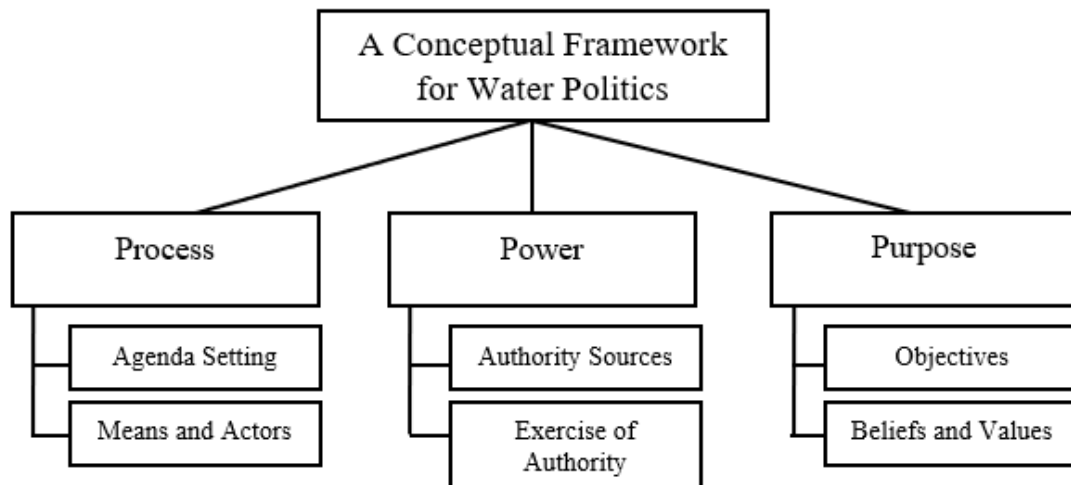


Figure 1 : Feldman's (2017) Framework

2.1.1 Process

‘Process’ encapsulates how policy-making processes reflect various interests and priorities or, in other words, how the conservation agenda is set and by whom (Feldman, 2017). Probing processes involves analyzing who gives prominence to conservation issues, and who sensitizes policymakers to such topics. ‘Process’ also encompasses the means used to formulate and apply policies. These include “negotiation, bargaining, and accommodation of various interests” among a diversity of actors such as governmental institutions, as well as private and civil society actors (Feldman, 2017, p. 6). Feldman (2017) perceives decision-making processes as dynamic and context dependent. In this sense, policies can be challenged.

2.1.2 Power

Feldman (2017) defines ‘power’ as the ability to influence outcomes by means of laws, norms, discourses, and unequal resource sharing. Relatedly, the author (2017, p. 12) emphasizes the idea that resources constitute “levers of influence” that allow actors to practise “discursive legitimacy,” described as “the ability [...] to represent and speak on behalf of some issue.” As such, power relations are asymmetric (Ibid.). This aligns with the conservation literature, where understandings of power tend to reflect poststructural political ecology thought highlighting that power is dynamic (Cavanagh, 2018). Poststructural scholarship, itself often inspired by Foucault’s work on governmentality and productive power, studies the influence of politics on knowledge creation which, in turn, influences practices and power relations (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016; Carpenter, 2020; Foucault, 1991). The notion that power is exercised – rather than held or pre-existing – is meant to avoid oversimplified dichotomies of winners and losers, and to instead consider the interplay of power relations among a multiplicity of actors at the local, regional, national, and international levels (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016; Bakker, 2013; Cavanagh, 2018; Feldman, 2017). Furthermore, power is not necessarily exercised over human beings, but also involves the control and/or involvement of animals and resources (Cavanagh, 2018; Latour, 2005).

Still, Cavanagh (2018, p. 1) argues that the concept of ‘power’ remains vague in political ecology. I consider that Cavanagh’s critique applies to Feldman’s interpretation of power, in that the concept necessitates further conceptualization to facilitate its application to the analysis of water policy. Hence, I employ Foucauldian scholarship on biopower to address this limitation and further clarify how I mobilise the notion of power in relation to conservation. As a result, I discuss biopower more extensively in the following section.

Biopower

“[T]he exercise of power, that very singular practice which men cannot escape, except in part and at times” (Foucault, 2008, p. 311)

Biopower and biopolitics are concerned with the management of populations (Cavanagh, 2018). Power previously represented the ‘right of life and death’ exercised by the sovereign over biological bodies. Otherwise stated, a sovereign had the authority to “have people put to death or [to] let them live” (Foucault, 2003, p. 240). As Foucault (2003) notes, there has long been an intrinsic imbalance in the practice of the right of life and death, while power over life had long constituted one of the key components of sovereignty in classical theories of sovereignty (Foucault, 2003). Here, *not killing* reflected the power to ‘make’ or ‘let’ live (Foucault, 2003). Foucault (2003, p. 241) argues that “the power to ‘make’ live and ‘let’ die” emerged in the nineteenth century, leading to a shift in understandings of the political rights of sovereigns; power now refers to “the right to intervene to make live” rather than “the right to take life” (Foucault, 2003, p. 248). This shift was accompanied by changes in technologies of power (Foucault, 2003). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, disciplinary technologies were directed at the individual body (Foucault, 2003). From then on, power practices became increasingly directed at the ‘man-as-living-being’ or ‘man-as-species’ with a lesser focus on ‘man-as-body’ and associated disciplinary practices (Foucault, 2003). Accordingly, emerging technologies of power have considered individuals as part of a greater whole, a group that is “affected by overall processes characteristic of birth, death, production, illness, and so on” (Foucault, 2003, p. 243). This focus on the exercise of power on the group, rather than solely on the individual, is what Foucault (2003, p. 243) refers to as the “‘biopolitics’ of the human race.”

Biopolitics are the locus of biopower, as the act of managing human and non-human populations with the aim to preserve life (Foucault, 2003). Biopower thereby constitutes a tool for biodiversity conservation, a project that notably encompasses rationalizing the preservation of natural spaces and the creation of protected areas (Fletcher, 2010). Importantly, linking biopower and conservation is meant to emphasize that conservation, the selection of areas for the establishment of protected areas and their management are political; beyond elaborating technical solutions to perceived technical issues, conservation initiatives are embedded in diverse social contexts which they simultaneously reflect and influence (Feldman, 2017; Fletcher, 2010).

Discussions on biopower tend to focus extensively on ‘power-knowledge’, a governance practice that seeks to regulate the conduct of populations through expertise (Svarstad et al., 2018); state institutions produce a ‘truth’ that strengthens and maintains social order through technologies such as discourses (Carpenter, 2020). However, power is not fixed, standardized, nor localized among elite actors or institutions (Carpenter, 2020; Deveaux, 1994). The conceptualization of power as fluid and renegotiable is thus particularly relevant in light of “the putative shift from ‘government to governance’” (Bakker, 2013, p. 284). As this shift occurs, the delegation of power from the state to non-state entities does not automatically involve the diminution of the state’s influence in biopolitical processes (Bakker, 2013). Indeed, power goes beyond formal legislative power and includes the capacity to influence “strategically-positioned groups [e.g., as capital holders]” and the resource management practices they advocate for (Feldman, 2017, p. 11). Ultimately, biopower is concerned with the shaping of ‘subjects’ who, together, form a population embodying norms and values that are representative of a rationale intended to protect life (Agrawal, 2005b; Foucault, 1991, 2003).

2.1.2.1 Power Negotiations

Agrawal (2005b) critiques Foucault's limited conceptualization of the subject, stressing that individuals are not 'empty' nor automatically subjected to the dominant 'gaze.' The social and political contexts, while influential, are not deterministic (Agrawal, 2005b). People have agency; their actions, including resistance strategies, contribute to shaping their sense of self and their practices. Further, the absence of overt signs of contestation does not automatically signify the unquestioned integration of the views of dominant classes. Silence can instead be due to fear or constraints (Agrawal, 2005b). At the microlevel, resistance manifests in the challenging of social constructions 'locally', meaning, through one's body (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016; Deacon, 1998). By situating resistance in the body and not only in institutions, renegotiation of the social becomes possible.

Such renegotiation is visible in conservation-related conflicts, in particular when actors (e.g., the state, NGOs, local populations, or the private sector) perceive that there are variations in objectives and interests occurring "at the expense of another" (Redpath et al., 2013, p. 100). Such conflicts are unavoidable considering the diversity of actors and interests involved in conservation. They often have an emotional component, leading to specific challenges such as distrust, which affects conflicting parties' disposition to negotiate toward achieving a common goal (Redpath et al., 2013). Conflict also emerges when incoherencies appear between the value attributed to conservation objectives at the local, national, and international levels, in the media, and in the legal framework. Redpath et al. (2013) further note that conservation conflicts are seldom resolved completely. Chapron & López-Bao (2020) add that discussions on conservation conflicts are usually people-centric, focusing on the resolution of tensions among people and shifting the focus away from conservation itself. Such conflicts favour people over nature,

notably by rarely considering anthropocentric impacts on nature as a conflict in itself (Chapron & López-Bao, 2020).

Conflicts are unavoidable (Redpath et al., 2013), yet they tend to be depicted as fundamentally ‘bad’ and needing resolution (Chapron & López-Bao, 2020). However, conflicts can be ‘useful’ (Lahaye, 2007) and can testify to “an ongoing shift of power” (Chapron & López-Bao, 2020, p. 800). More precisely, conflicts open space to negotiate and reshuffle perceived power imbalances among participants, as well as interpretations of the problem they seek to address (Lahaye, 2007). The nature of interactions among actors – whether they are cooperative, constructive (seeking agreement) and/or unconstructive (characterized by opposition and domination) – highly influences the prospect of such renegotiations (Lahaye, 2007).

2.1.3 Purpose

The third concept from Feldman’s (2017) framework, ‘purpose,’ comprises two aspects. Purpose first consists of tangible objectives and of the way in which they relate to social constructions on the use of water. Examples of such objectives may include access to water supply, the affordability of a resource, safety, recreation, and so on. Second, purpose encompasses beliefs on the value of a natural resource, on the proper means to obtain it, and on “its most beneficial uses” (Feldman, 2017, p. 17). Approaching such societal beliefs sometimes sheds light on conflicting objectives (e.g., using a resource for economic development versus leaving a resource ‘untouched’), and how they reflect diverse visions of the world (Feldman, 2017). The notion of ‘purpose’ emphasizes the idea that values and aspirations are influential in policy making. It also calls for a consideration of the broader social, environmental, and political contexts and the way in which ethics, culture, history, and tradition impact these (Feldman, 2017).

In this regard, studying conservation and protected areas yields opportunities to further explore the way in which individuals make sense of the world surrounding them (West et al., 2006). Protected areas management is representative of various (and sometimes conflicting) interpretations of ‘nature’ and the ‘environment.’ The governance of protected areas is also subject to reframing over time, through the modification of spatial boundaries, semantics – such as (re)naming and (re)labelling areas –as well as personal and collective meanings attributed to such spaces (West et al., 2006).

2.2 Literature Review: Feldman’s Framework Applied to Conservation Discourses

This section presents a summary of academic discussions surrounding discourses in conservation literature. First, I briefly introduce how conservation discourses represent different systems of governance in the production of environmental subjects, through the concept of ‘environmentalities.’ Second, I present four discourses that are widely discussed in conservation literature: the ‘fortress’; community-based; ‘back to the barriers’; and neoliberal conservation discourses. I build on Feldman’s (2017)’s framework to probe each approach, in a manner that is similar to how I situate, analyze and discuss the discourses of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and Lac Montjoie riparian dwellers in the upcoming chapters.

2.2.1 ‘Environmentalities’ and the Making of the Environmental Subject

According to Fletcher (2010), conservation discourses are “expressions of distinct ‘environmentalities’” (Fletcher, 2010, p. 171). Environmentality as a concept builds from the notion of ‘governmentality’, which Foucault (1991, p. 102) defined as a “form of power” that is exercised by an “ensemble” on a population; an “ensemble” is composed of institutions, their processes (e.g., laws and tactics) and the rationalities they emphasize in order to manage and

influence the conduct of individuals, Fletcher (2010) identifies four ‘environmentalities’ associated with specific practices of governmentality. These ‘environmentalities’ differ from one another as they relate to various Foucauldian governmentalities, or arts of government, that are not mutually exclusive and may interact and/or conflict each other (Fletcher, 2010).

First, disciplinary environmentality creates environmental subjects through the dissemination and incorporation of ethical and social norms (Agrawal, 2005a; Fletcher, 2010). Mechanisms for compliance include coercive institutions and punishments that are enforced more or less severely (Agrawal, 2005a). These mechanisms create fear of reprisals and prevent individuals from committing immoral actions (Fletcher, 2010). Enforcement is applied by authority figures as well as individuals, on and among themselves (Fletcher, 2010).

Second, sovereign environmentality refers to rationalization processes meant to allow a sovereign entity to exercise its authority in a coherent way, through appropriate mechanisms to achieve as such (Foucault, 2008). Sovereign power mechanisms involve the making and application of codified rules, sanctioning, and punishment deemed appropriate (Fletcher, 2010). The legitimacy of a sovereign entity to exercise such authority relies on its ability to ensure “the health and vitality of the subjected ‘population’” (Fletcher, 2010, p. 174).

Third, ‘truth’ governmentality consists of regulating through wisdom – emphasizing divine law and human knowledge, for instance – rather than science and rationality. The objective here is to govern based on a ‘truth’: “the truth of religious texts, of revelation, and of the order of the world” (Foucault, 2008, p. 311). In this sense, ‘truth’ environmentality emphasizes humans’ inherent relation with nature, which is understood as deep-rooted and in constant evolution (Fletcher, 2010). Narratives based on traditional ecological knowledge are examples of variants of ‘truth environmentality’ (Fletcher, 2010).

Finally, commodifying market-based neoliberal environmentalism involves rational calculations, usually based on economic and market logics, to achieve conservation. It favours the provision of financial incentives to encourage conservation. The commodifying market-based neoliberal environmentalism is guided by cost-benefit analyses rather than morality, and considers conservation as a way to achieve social justice through economic growth (Fletcher, 2010).

Environmental narratives produce perceptions as to what a ‘good’ social order should look like, as well as how natural resources should be utilized (Forsyth, 2020). As such, narratives ascribe ‘blame,’ ‘responsibility,’ ‘urgency,’ and ‘responsible behaviour’ and are associated with the use of mechanisms in the shaping of environmental subjectivities (Agrawal, 2005a; Forsyth, 2020). As Agrawal (2005a, p. 97) noted, “[n]ot all who are subjected to environmental government become environmental subjects.” Indeed, an individual is considered an environmental subject when they accept the rules put in place, respect the authority in charge of applying sanctions, and actively participate in processes “regulating the behaviour of their fellow community members” (Ibid.).

Shifting the focus from environmentalism toward conservation, the literature highlights four main discourses, which I probe next, beginning with the ‘fortress’ discourse. For each narrative, I first introduce the environmentalism it reflects, and I subsequently present the processes, practices of power, and purposes distinguishing each discourse.

2.2.2 ‘Fortress’ Discourse

The creation of Yellowstone National Park in 1872 in the United States prompted the emergence of the ‘fortress’ conservation discourse (West et al., 2006). Yellowstone National Park is considered the world’s first national park, and its United States military-backed establishment

involved the dispossession and displacement of Indigenous peoples (West et al., 2006). It also served as a model for the creation of parks in the United States and worldwide (West et al., 2006). The ‘fortress’ discourse, or ‘fences and fines approach,’ was predominant until the 1980s, most particularly in colonial and post-colonial Sub-Saharan Africa (Hutton et al., 2005; Pochet, 2014). This approach is closely linked with ‘sovereign’ environmentalism due to institutional authorities being central to the creation and policing of protected areas (Fletcher, 2010). According to Fletcher (2010), elites are the main beneficiaries of these spaces, which primarily serve recreation purposes. ‘Fortress’ approaches sometimes also reflect characteristics of ‘truth’ environmentalism, when protection of the sacredness of nature (i.e., from irrational human actions) serves as a justification for strict policing (Fletcher, 2010). The ‘fortress’ discourse involves specific combinations of processes, power practices, and purposes, which are summarized in Table 1. I discuss each category in more detail in the following subsections.

Table 1. ‘Fortress’ Discourse / ‘Fences and Fines’ ² 1872 – ~1980s		
Process	Power	Purpose
Agenda State priorities Means and Actors Regulation of economic and public practices Administration, management and exploitation of natural areas Restricted consumptive use of natural resources Fencing Policing Displacement of populations Territorialization State (central), may be supported by other actors (e.g., international NGOs, intergovernmental agencies)	Authority Sources State Centralized authorities Exercise of Authority Top-down technocratic management of rigid protected areas ‘Coercive’ state policies and rules Limited participation of local populations Sovereign environmentality ‘Truth’ environmentality	Objectives Limiting anthropocentric modifications of the environment Controlling access of human and non-human species ‘Protecting’ nature from human threats Beliefs and Values People and nature as monolithic, incompatible categories Humans as the main cause for environmental degradation and as a threat to the ‘integrity’ of protected areas and their ‘pristine,’ ‘wild,’ and ‘intact’ character Blaming of local populations Similarities with colonial narratives of ‘civilizing’ ‘uneducated’ populations

2.2.2.1 Process

Agenda setting processes in ‘fortress’ conservation reflect the priorities of the state (Pochet, 2014). Accordingly, the state is the central actor in implementing and directing conservation initiatives, although entities such as international non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental agencies can also be involved (Pochet, 2014). The means associated with the ‘fortress’ approach consist of the regulation of economic and public practices; the administering, management and exploitation of natural areas; the restricting of consumptive use of natural resources; fencing and policing; and the displacement of local populations (Hutton et

² Citations do not appear in the charts as they are already provided in the text. This also facilitates a smoother reading of the chart.

al., 2005; Montgomery et al., 2020; Saarinen, 2016). Territorial delimitation through fencing allows controlling human and non-human population movements and prevents human populations from establishing themselves in targeted areas, thus representing a form of territorialization (Hutton et al., 2005; Montgomery et al., 2020; Vandergeest, 1996).

2.2.2.2 Power

The exercise of authority is characterized through a top-down technocratic approach, where the creation of hermetic protected areas serves to control populations (Fletcher, 2010; Hutton et al., 2005; Pochet, 2014). Sovereign power aligns with ‘sovereign’ environmentality as it relies on the application of codified rules and sanctioning (Fletcher, 2010) as well as coercive policies (Pochet, 2014). ‘Truth’ environmentality manifests through references to human knowledge, divine principles and understandings of the ‘natural order’ of things deemed to protect the sacred character of nature (Fletcher, 2010; Foucault, 2008). The state is the main source of authority as it determines when and how nature can be used, and by whom (Pochet, 2014). Consequently, local population participation remains limited (Montgomery et al., 2020).

2.2.2.3 Purpose

The main objectives of ‘fortress’ conservation revolve around the notion of controlling access to nature to ‘protect’ it from the combined threats of human populations and their practices (Siurua, 2006). Accordingly, this approach seeks to limit anthropocentric modifications of the environment (Hutton et al., 2005). Complementarily, conservation initiatives aim to manage non-human species and ‘natural nuisances’, such as diseases and invasive species (Montgomery et al., 2020).

In terms of beliefs and values, the ‘fortress’ approach recognizes people and nature as monolithic and incompatible categories (Montgomery et al., 2020; Saarinen, 2016). More specifically, local human populations are blamed for being the main driver of environmental degradation, making coexistence with nature impossible (Pochet, 2014; Saarinen, 2016; Siurua, 2006). Paradoxically, conservation is performed through the regulation of economic and public practices, as well as the administering, management and exploitation of natural areas in order to maintain their ‘integrity’ and ‘pristine’ character (Saarinen, 2016). The ‘fortress’ discourse shares similarities with colonial narratives (Montgomery et al., 2020; Pochet, 2014; Saarinen, 2016) due to the intent of ‘civilizing’ ‘uneducated’ populations (Pochet, 2014).

2.2.2.4 Criticisms and Challenges

Criticisms of the ‘fortress’ approach focus on the human rights breaches associated with its practices, particularly in terms of land grabbing, dispossession, and displacement of local populations (Siurua, 2006). Limitations on access and restrained rights affect Indigenous populations, hunters, and pastoralists most significantly (Pochet, 2014; Siurua, 2006). ‘Fortress’ conservation measures prioritize nature over local populations, and the compensations offered to local populations are rarely sufficient to make up for restrained access to food and water resources (Siurua, 2006). These circumstances tend to drive acts of opposition by local populations such as “illegal hunting and grazing, timber theft, and other ‘everyday forms of resistance’ against the perceived injustice of conservation policies” perpetuated by ‘outsider’ elites (Siurua, 2006, p. 75).

2.2.3 Community-Based Conservation (CBC)

Community-based conservation (CBC) became prominent in the 1990s as an attempt to curtail the political and physical exclusion processes associated with ‘fortress’ conservation (Hutton et al., 2005). The transition from ‘fortress’ conservation to CBC stems from political and moral arguments (Hutton et al., 2005). Politically, in democratic contexts, it became evident that conservation cannot be sustained without support from local populations and their leaders (Hutton et al., 2005). Morally, CBC thus represents an attempt to address human rights issues emerging as a result of the ‘fortress’ discourse and the narrative of ‘ineffective’ management by local communities (Hutton et al., 2005; Montgomery et al., 2020). More precisely, CBC stresses the necessity to involve local populations and to redistribute the potential benefits that derive from their involvement in conservation initiatives within local communities (Montgomery et al., 2020).

Hutton et al. (2005) claim that four reasons explain the rapid diffusion of the CBC narrative at the international level. First, CBC aligned with the engagements of the international community in terms of sustainable development following the 1987 Brundtland Report and the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio. Second, there was a tendency to romanticize and idealize local communities and their ability to achieve positive social change (in lieu of the state). Third, CBC emerged simultaneously with a shift in development discourses “from the ‘top-down’, ‘technocratic’ models of the 1970s to ‘bottom-up,’ ‘decentralized,’ and ‘participatory’ planning” (Hutton et al., 2005, p. 345). Fourth, this approach emerged alongside policies emphasizing the market as a driver for desirable social change.

CBC comprises aspects of disciplinary and commodifying market-based neoliberal environmentalities (Fletcher, 2010). Indeed, this approach encourages participation through the

provision of diverse incentives. These include moral incentives, which seek to increase participation on the basis of ethical principles, as well as economic incentives, which intend to turn individuals into ‘micro-entrepreneurs’ through conservation-driven market opportunities (Hutton et al., 2005). Provisions allocated by state authorities and the market spanning these two categories may occur simultaneously (Hutton et al., 2005). Table 2 provides a summary of the main characteristics of the CBC discourse described in the subsequent sections.

Table 2. Community-Based Conservation (CBC) ~ 1990s		
Process	Power	Purpose
Agenda Economic aspects linking sustainability and conservation Means and Actors Decentralization/deconcentration of power Co-management or direct community management Using local languages Acknowledging traditional ecological knowledge Professional development opportunities through education and training Involvement of a variety of actors Local communities NGOs The market, to provide economic incentives to actors involved in conservation initiatives The state as a less central actor Intergovernmental agencies Private donors	Authority Sources Local communities via direct control/management of resources The state through devolution of power ‘Win-win’ policies balancing development and conservation Exercise of Authority Bottom-up participatory planning Institutional interpretation of the concept of ‘participation’ Disciplinary environmentalism Commodifying market-based neoliberal environmentalism	Objectives Responsible use of resources by communities ‘sustainable development’ Beliefs and Values Communities (rather than the state) driving social change Local resource management leading to responsible use Poverty reduction and environmental conservation going hand-in-hand Utilitarian vision of nature

2.2.3.1 Process

CBC agenda setting processes link economic priorities with sustainability and conservation concerns (Hutton et al., 2005). CBC involves the decentralization or deconcentration of power (Pochet, 2014), as well as “devolution to the local level for natural resources management” (Green, 2016, p. 88). Furthermore, it requires shifting the power balance between the local, national, and global levels of governance to facilitate co-management and/or direct community management of resources (Green, 2016; Hutton et al., 2005). In this sense, CBC encourages the use of local languages and dialects to increase the acceptance of conservation initiatives among communities as well as the acknowledgement of traditional ecological knowledge (Montgomery et al., 2020). CBC initiatives are intended to provide professional development opportunities through education and training of local populations, and to “promote alternative revenue-generating programs centred in local communities” (Montgomery et al., 2020, p. 1126). Such practices are flexible in order to be aligned with a variety of contexts and cultures (Montgomery et al., 2020). Diverse actors participate in CBC, including local communities; the market, which provides economic incentives; agencies; private donors; local revenue-making initiatives; and the state, but not as a prominent actor (Montgomery et al., 2020).

2.2.3.2 Power

The exercise of authority in the CBC model relies on bottom-up participatory planning and implies an institutional interpretation of the concept of ‘participation’ (Hutton et al., 2005; Pochet, 2014). Biopower and the management of populations derive primarily from the provision of ethical and financial incentives (Fletcher, 2010). Indeed, disciplinary power – characteristic to disciplinary environmentality – advances incentives that emphasize ethics, and further involves

the use of coercive institutions, and punishment. Monitoring is achieved by both the state and community members, who monitor themselves individually and among each other (Fletcher, 2010). In contrast, commodifying market-based neoliberal environmentality shapes behaviours through economic incentives (Fletcher, 2010).

Local communities constitute an important source of authority, as they manage natural resources directly and reap benefits from their participation in conservation initiatives (Green, 2016; Montgomery et al., 2020). Nevertheless, local actors' levels of control depend on the extent of the devolution of power by the state (Green, 2016), and to the balance between the objectives of creating 'win-win' outcomes both in development and conservation terms (Pochet, 2014).

2.2.3.3 Purpose

CBC primarily aims to achieve 'sustainable development' through the implementation of 'responsible' use of resources by local communities (Pochet, 2014). In terms of beliefs and values, CBC undeniably focuses on the role of communities in conducting conservation initiatives aligned with local objectives and priorities. A core belief in the CBC model is that the local management of resources leads to responsible use, while simultaneously reducing poverty and environmental degradation (Pochet, 2014; Saarinen, 2016; Siurua, 2006). Accordingly, the CBC approach supposes that achieving a "sustainable use of biodiversity" is actually possible (Hutton et al., 2005, p. 356). In this sense, this vision offers a utilitarian vision of nature where the environment is conceptualized based on the uses that individuals and the market can make of environmental resources (Pochet, 2014). The state has a lesser role in the CBC model as it does not intervene directly in conservation practices, but it nonetheless oversees power decentralization (Hutton et al., 2005).

2.2.3.4 Criticism and Challenges

The main criticisms and challenges raised against the CBC approach revolve around interpretations of its core concept; the idea of ‘community’ remains vague or is idealized through the promotion of ‘mythic communities’ (Pochet, 2014; Wilshusen et al., 2002). These processes tend to essentialize societies and often fail to acknowledge differences between contexts, cultures, and heritage, as well as the idea that not all local practices are sustainable (Montgomery et al., 2020; Wilshusen et al., 2002). Additionally, communities’ ability to participate in conservation initiatives that emphasize traditional knowledge has been impacted by rapid societal changes that contribute to the loss of such knowledge (Wilshusen et al., 2002).

The bottom-up nature of CBC is also associated with specific challenges. The decentralization of power is said to impede the ability to attain conservation objectives and policy coherence, which can complicate securing the financial resources required for achieving these objectives (Tian et al., 2019). Furthermore, local interests are not necessarily aligned with those of the local authority figures overseeing protected area management, thus lessening local support for conservation initiatives (Tian et al., 2019). More recently, the increased practice of ‘green’ militarization³ has emerged as a threat to CBC projects’ success, due to the physical abuse of individuals perpetrated by militants in the name of conservation (Montgomery et al., 2020). ‘Green’ militarization negatively affects populations’ trust towards conservation actors and delegitimizes community-based initiatives (Montgomery et al., 2020).

³ ‘Green’ militarization is not part of the CBC model but is rather a phenomenon that represents a challenge to the application of CBC. ‘Green’ militarization is sometimes associated with ‘fortress’ conservation (Montgomery et al., 2020).

2.2.4 ‘Back to the Barriers’

The ‘back to the barriers’ discourse emerged in the late 1990s in a context of increasing environmental globalization, as a response to the perceived ineffectiveness of community-based approaches and the international challenges provoked by climate change and biodiversity losses (Pochet, 2014). As such, this approach contributes to the construction of a global narrative in which conservation represents a solution to global ecological concerns (Hutton et al., 2005). The ‘back to the barriers’ discourse is associated with sovereign environmentalism, “with state-centred protectionism justified as the defence of non-human life” (Fletcher, 2010, p. 177). Whereas the state remains a major actor in this discourse, non-state actors such as non-governmental organizations are involved in creating and managing privatized protected areas, a process Fletcher (2010, p. 176) deems the “privatization of sovereignty.” Similar to the ‘fortress’ discourse, the management of protected areas for recreational purposes usually targets local and/or international elites (Fletcher, 2010). Table 3 encapsulates the main elements distinguishing the ‘back to the barriers’ discourse from other approaches.

Table 3. ‘Back to the Barriers’ Late 1990s – ...		
Process	Power	Purpose
Agenda Based on ‘global scientific knowledge’ Means and Actors Prioritization tools Trans-boundary natural resource management Payments for environmental services Public-private partnerships Conservation mainstreaming Policing and sanctioning Central authorities State Bilateral and multilateral donor community Conservation biologists NGOs Communities (consultation only)	Authority Sources ‘Global scientific knowledge’ Centralized authority Exercise of Authority Policing of protected area boundaries and sanctioning by central authorities Exclusivity of use and authoritarian management Commodification of nature Sovereign environmentalty	Objectives Expand protected areas to enable ‘landscape scale conservation’ Achieving the ‘common good’ Beliefs and Values ‘Protectionist paradigm’ Strict protection necessary in the context of economic and population growth The failure of community-based approaches restricts the availability of resources for conservation Narrative on global environmental urgency and threats to human survival Conservation as a moral imperative Conservation combined with development does not protect biodiversity

2.2.4.1 *Process*

The pairing of ‘global scientific knowledge’ with science-based conservation planning primarily guides ‘back to the barriers’ conservation agenda setting, which emphasizes centralized and coercive management (Hutton et al., 2005). Prioritization tools such as ‘gap analysis’ and the IUCN’s ‘Red List of Threatened Species’ quantify wildlife and biodiversity in specific areas, thus allowing the prioritization of certain territories over others for conservation (Pochet, 2014). Trans-boundary natural resource management consists of another process that reflects enhanced global environmental concerns, considering that biodiversity (e.g., migrating animals) are not subjected to state borders (Hutton et al., 2005).

‘Back to the barriers’ conservation promotes market activities – including nature commodification – as a vehicle to achieve ‘sustainable use’ (Hutton et al., 2005; Pochet, 2014). Local communities sometimes receive direct payments for environmental services to mitigate the costs generated by conservation initiatives (Hutton et al., 2005). However, the implementation of such ‘sustainable funding’ mechanisms involves significant technical challenges. These mechanisms are meant to make conservation initiatives ‘equitable’ and ‘effective’, yet they do not significantly empower local populations (Hutton et al., 2005). Instead, the public sector tends to partner primarily with the private sector (i.e., public-private partnerships). For instance, parks may be owned by the state but managed by private entities (Hutton et al., 2005). The level of participation from communities varies greatly depending on which organizations constitute the private sector (i.e., whether organizations are international, local, or owned by community members) (Hutton et al., 2005).

The main actors in ‘back to the barriers’ conservation consist of central state authorities, along with conservation biologists, non-governmental organizations, the World Bank, as well as the bilateral and multilateral donor communities (Hutton et al., 2005). Local communities may take part in consultation exercises, but they are excluded from the final decision-making processes (Hutton et al., 2005).

2.2.4.2 Power

Exercise of authority in ‘back to the barriers’ conservation is primarily enacted through authoritarian management, involving sanctioning as well as the policing of protected area boundaries for exclusive use (Hutton et al., 2005; Pochet, 2014). Similar to the ‘fences and fines logic’ of the ‘fortress’ approach, this more recent emulation uses sovereign power as a form of biopower to create patrolled protected areas (Fletcher, 2010). Here, environmental protection and

rational resource management call for strict management by a sovereign authority. The state thus plays a significant role compared to the CBC approach (Hutton et al., 2005). Additionally, ‘global scientific knowledge’ constitutes the main information source guiding conservation practices and tends to reflect a Western vision of conservation (Hutton et al., 2005; Pochet, 2014).

2.2.4.3 Purpose

The ‘back to the barriers’ discourse pursues the objective of creating and expanding protected areas to achieve ‘landscape scale conservation’ (Hutton et al., 2005). This approach conveys the idea that governments seek to achieve the ‘common good,’ and that ‘protecting nature’ involves prioritizing collective interests over individual freedoms (Wilshusen et al., 2002). However, Wilshusen et al. (2002) note that this conceptualization of ‘common good’ tends to be restricted to elites and their ‘special interests.’

The values and beliefs of the ‘back to the barriers’ discourse combine into a ‘protectionist paradigm’ that stresses the incompatibility of human populations and biodiversity conservation, “except [for] science and limited ecotourism” (Hutton et al., 2005, p. 347). This paradigm stems from the belief that nature, human populations and economic growth are incompatible, which justifies strict policing (Wilshusen et al., 2002). Protected areas are considered to be essential for humanity’s subsistence and well-being, while also exercising a unifying role among all sectors of society (governmental institutions, the private sector, civil society) (Tian et al., 2019, p. 234). The ‘back to the barriers’ discourse relays a narrative according to which global environmental urgency – including climate change, environmental catastrophes, biodiversity degradation – threatens human survival (Hutton et al., 2005; Pochet, 2014; Tian et al., 2019). In other words, “[e]mergency situations require extreme measures” (Wilshusen et al., 2002, p. 33). These global

concerns and the idea of achieving the common good justify foreign interventions in biodiversity conservation and supersede local interests (Tian et al., 2019). Indeed, conservation represents a moral imperative for the common good with pragmatic and moral aspects. These aspects include a utilitarian vision of nature and natural resources' economic and non-use values (e.g., for recreational purposes), nature's inherent right to exist, and its spiritual and aesthetic qualities that the world's 'global citizens' can enjoy (Wilshusen et al., 2002).

Despite tolerating and promoting the commodification of some aspects of nature, the 'back to the barriers' discourse also concedes that "[c]onservation linked to development does not protect biodiversity" (Wilshusen et al., 2002, p. 20). Therefore, not all protected areas should be accessible. Furthermore, pairing conservation with poverty reduction and social justice objectives draws attention away from conservation objectives and should be avoided (Wilshusen et al., 2002).

2.2.4.4 Criticism and Challenges

Critiques of the 'back to the barriers' approach highlight that 'global scientific knowledge' is emphasized at the expense of local knowledge (Wilshusen et al., 2002). National and global priorities are prioritized over local interests, which drives disproportionate impacts for targeted communities (Wilshusen et al., 2002). The 'back to the barriers' approach is also said to overlook political governance processes and communities' ability to adapt to change (Wilshusen et al., 2002). This approach focuses on the notion of 'effectiveness' to determine the success rate of conservation initiatives and neglects results directly affecting communities, such as strengthening local institutions and organizations (Wilshusen et al., 2002). Consequently, conservation practices are sometimes perceived by local populations as 'control strategies' rather than means to secure ecological or environmental services.

2.2.5 Neoliberal Conservation

In the 1970s, nature conservation became increasingly important within global environmental discourses, particularly in the ‘Global North’ (Fortin & Gagnon, 1999). This period is linked with ‘rational’ environmental and natural resource management. Indeed, the idea “[t]hat nature and the earth can be ‘managed’ is a historically novel assertion” (Escobar, 1996, p. 328). Escobar (1996) argues that such ‘management’ requires the capitalization and commodification of nature, contributing to the ‘reconciliation’ of economic growth and environmental conservation. This echoes the notion of neoliberal conservation, which consists of the attribution of monetary values to ‘nature’, through the increased privatization of conservation practices (Saarinen, 2016). As such, neoliberal conservation reflects a commodifying market-based neoliberal environmentality, which is characterized by cost-benefit analyses and the belief that economic growth can promote social justice (Fletcher, 2010). Table 4 outlines these main ideas.

Table 4. Neoliberal Conservation Late 1970s – ...		
Process	Power	Purpose
Agenda Cost-benefit analyses Commodification of nature Economic incentives Maximization of results Means and Actors Commodification of nature Neoliberal territorialization Privatization of means of control State Corporations, private entities, increased participation of business actors and non- governmental organizations	Authority Sources The state as an intermediary between humans and nature ‘Scientific knowledge’ Exercise of Authority ‘Reregulation’ by the state Decentralization of resource governance Commodifying market-based neoliberal environmentalty	Objectives Biodiversity conservation through attributing value to protected areas Market-oriented ‘sustainable development’ Beliefs and Values People and nature as monolithic and self-excluding categories Homo economicus The market as a vehicle for environmental enhancement Natural world as passive, resources as scarce Need for management, efficiency, productivity and rationality ‘Reconciliation’ of economic growth and environmental conservation The world as an interconnected system

2.2.5.1 Process

Neoliberal conservation agenda setting centres on cost-benefit analyses that encompass the commodification of nature, economic incentives and the pursuit of maximized results (Fletcher, 2010; Svarstad et al., 2018). The commodification of nature and the capitalization of natural resources are thus prerequisites of this conservation approach (Duffy, 2008; Fletcher, 2010; Saarinen, 2016). The privatization of natural resources, encouraged by the state-led decentralization of resource management responsibilities, allows these processes to materialize (Fletcher, 2010). The state usually prioritizes ‘reregulation’ over complete deregulation and remains an intermediary between humans and nature through establishing science-based rules

(Escobar, 1996; Igoe & Brockington, 2007). ‘Reregulation’ yields new forms of territorialization, which Igoe & Brockington (2007) identify as neoliberal territorializations. Fundamentally, territorialization refers to “the process by which states attempt to control people and their actions by drawing boundaries around a geographic space, excluding some categories of individuals from this space, and proscribing or prescribing specific activities within these boundaries” (Vandergeest, 1996, p. 159). In contrast, neoliberal territorialization comes along with the increased participation of business actors and non-governmental organizations in these processes (Fletcher, 2010; Igoe & Brockington, 2007). Although sometimes presented as a neutral practice (neoliberal) territorialization is a political process (Forsyth, 2020).

The main actors in neoliberal conservation are the state, corporations, private entities, business actors and non-governmental organizations (Fletcher, 2010; Igoe & Brockington, 2007; Saarinen, 2016). This model frames individuals as “eminently governable” subjects reactive to artificial (i.e., human-made) changes occurring in a world characterized by scarcity (Foucault, 2008, p. 270). Economic processes serve as tools provoking such changes. *Homo economicus* refers to self-interested and rational actors that “accept reality” and value competition and production over exchange and consumption (Foucault, 2008, p. 269; see also Fletcher, 2010). Decision-making in neoliberal conservation is methodical and calculated, though subjective; individual criteria – rather than societal and collective criteria – guide cost-benefit and opportunity-cost analyses (Schwinn et al., 2007). As such, *homo economicus* is not fundamentally preoccupied with future generations (Becker, 2006).

2.2.5.2 Power

In neoliberal conservation, authority is exercised primarily through the dissemination of scientific knowledge and ‘reregulation’ by the state (Escobar, 1996; Igoe & Brockington, 2007).

The latter arises with the decentralization of resource governance (Fletcher, 2010) and the rationalization of the state's existence and how it should act accordingly (Foucault, 2008). State intervention remains important here, as it has been said to foster an environment deemed favourable for the development of economic incentives and market practices targeting presupposed self-interested 'subjects' (Fletcher, 2010). The state shapes the market rather than being reactionary to its processes and outputs (as it would be in classical liberalism) (Fletcher, 2010). Consequently, the market is not considered an autonomous entity (Fletcher, 2010). In this context, biopower "would likely focus less on subjects' internal states than on the external structures within which they act," such as the market, which is considered essential to ensure human life and 'good practices' in conservation (Fletcher, 2010, p. 175).

2.2.5.3 Purpose

The objective of neoliberal conservation is to achieve market-oriented 'sustainable development' by attributing value to protected areas (Escobar, 1996; Fortin & Gagnon, 1999; Saarinen, 2016). Similar to the 'fortress' approach, neoliberal conservation frames people and nature as monolithic and self-excluding categories (Saarinen, 2016), where individuals are "self-interested rational actors" (Fletcher, 2010, p. 172). Individualism and economic liberalism are central values within this approach, where the market is framed as a vehicle for environmental enhancement (Tardif & Sarrasin, 2018). Related to such conservation initiatives, ecotourism represents a strategy to diversify regional and/or national economies and develop 'sustainably' (Duffy, 2008).

Neoliberal conservation approaches highlight poverty as both a result and a driver of environmental degradation (Escobar, 1996). Accordingly, economic growth is considered essential to protecting the environment and ensuring social justice (Escobar, 1996). Foucault

(2008, p. 140) relatedly describes the market as a “general social and economic regulator.”

Conceptualizations of nature in this context are primarily anthropocentric, as the ‘environment’ refers to both natural resources and their usage by humans (Escobar, 1996). The natural world is viewed as passive and finite, resulting in the need for management, efficiency, productivity and rationality (Escobar, 1996). The world acts as an interconnected system where the commodification of nature allows the ‘reconciliation’ of the “two old enemies” of economic growth and environmental conservation (Escobar, 1996, p. 328).

2.2.5.4 Criticism and Challenges

A fundamental critique of neoliberal conservation practices revolves around the link between conservation initiatives and increasing inequalities, and the essentialization of individuals “as self-interested rational actors who respond first and foremost to economic incentives” (Fletcher, 2010, p. 172). Neo-Marxist critiques further highlight that a small number of powerful entities – typically corporations and international agencies – control and disproportionately benefit from the commodification and consumption of resources, thus fostering power imbalances (Fletcher, 2010). Furthermore, the cost-benefit analyses that orient nature commodification processes tend to alter the social and cultural meanings attributed to resources, modify local practices and overlook community knowledge and desires in favour of economic incentives (Fletcher, 2010; Igoe & Brockington, 2007). However, Larner (2007, p. 218) recommends a more multifaceted understanding of neoliberal conservation than the one presented above, recognizing “a wide range of collective modes of ‘private’ property (communes, collectives, tribes, tenants in common, allotments, community gardens, rights of way, among others)”. Indeed, privatization is not automatically individualized, nor restricted to major corporations (Larner, 2007).

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter began with a presentation of the conceptual framework guiding this thesis. Feldman (2017) employs the concepts of ‘process,’ ‘power,’ and ‘purpose’ to emphasize the political nature of resource management. I operationalized this framework to probe four important conservation discourses that reflect and influence governance practices in the construction of environmental subjects.

In Chapters 5 and 6, I will apply the same framework to organize the data I gathered about the conservation discourses of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and Lac Montjoie riparian dwellers. As such, my objective is to situate the discourses of these three actors within the scholarship on conservation discourses reviewed above. This will ultimately allow me to capture variations in priorities, means, exercises of power, objectives, and beliefs regarding the expansion project of Mont-Orford National Park.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH CONTEXT

This chapter provides a multi-scale presentation of the context in which the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project unfolds. More precisely, it explores the guidelines and objectives associated with the establishment of protected areas motivating the expansion project of Mont-Orford National Park. To this end, the first section focuses on the international guidelines overseeing conservation practices and presents the involvement of Canada and the Province of Quebec within global initiatives. The second section consists of an overview of the distribution of protected areas in Quebec and probes the legal framework guiding the creation of national parks. The third section elaborates on the history and characteristics of Mont-Orford National Park and provides more details on the current expansion project. Finally, the fourth section presents the case study setting, Lac Montjoie.

3.1 International Level: Main Conventions and Frameworks

This section introduces the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (hereafter referred to as “the Convention”) as the core treaty guiding biological diversity conservation initiatives globally. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) likewise constitutes a core international organization guiding the establishment of protected areas through its categorization framework. I present the framework below, as it is currently used in the Province of Quebec to categorize provincial protected areas.

3.1.1 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity

The 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity is an international, legally binding treaty that aims to conserve biological diversity, ensure its sustainable use, as well as to promote equity and fairness in sharing the benefits deriving from the use of genetic resources (CBD Secretariat,

2009). The Convention frames biodiversity as a “global asset” that is imperiled by human usage, thus threatening current and future human populations (CBD Secretariat, 2021, n.d.). The 196 governments (at the time of this writing) that have ratified the Convention constitute the Conference of the Parties (COP) (CBD Secretariat, 2011).

Canada ratified the Convention on April 12, 1992 (ECCC, 2020). As an important aspect of the Convention, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets⁴ stipulate that participating countries, including Canada, must aim to ensure the sustainable and equitable use of natural resources in order to reduce pressures on biodiversity; to foster public support for conservation projects by increasing access to knowledge sources on biodiversity and ecosystem services; and to encourage active participation in conservation initiatives through increased awareness on the value of nature (CBD Secretariat, 2015).

For its part, the Government of Quebec recognizes that provinces have ‘responsibilities and powers’ in implementing initiatives aligned with the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy (MDDELCC, 2016). As such, Quebec has attempted to meet Aichi Target 11, ‘Protected areas increased and improved’, at the provincial scale since the 2010 Conference of the Parties (MDDEP, 2011). Accordingly, between 2010 and 2020, Quebec has set an objective to increase the extent of protected areas from 8.35% to 17% of its land, and from 1.3% to 10% of its marine territory (CMELCC, 2020; MDDEP, 2011).

⁴ The Aichi Biodiversity Targets consist of twenty objectives established by the Convention on Biological Diversity for the 2011-2020 period (ECCC, 2020).

3.1.2 The International Union for Conservation of Nature

Governments and civil society organizations founded the International Union for Conservation of Nature in 1948 (IUCN, 2021a). Its mission consists of four main components: the ‘protection’ of nature; conservation; scientific information through publication and knowledge production; and international cooperation (Gristwood, 2020). The IUCN holds no legal authority, but it is considered a reliable source of information (Mrosovsky, 1997). The tools and knowledge it provides contribute to the making of international conventions, including the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (IUCN, 2021a; Mrosovsky, 1997).

About 1400 members populate the IUCN, including states, government agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), Indigenous Peoples organizations, scientific organizations, academic organizations, and business associations (IUCN, 2021b). A number of government agencies, NGOs, and affiliates⁵ from the Province of Quebec are IUCN members, including the *Ministère de l’Environnement et de la Lutte contre les Changements Climatiques*, Parks Canada Agency, and the NGO Nature Québec (IUCN, 2021b). However, the *Société des Établissements de Plein Air du Québec* (Sépaq) and the *Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune, et des Parcs* (MFFP) – two key actors in the Mont-Orford National Park expansion plan I introduce below – are not IUCN members.

3.1.2.1 IUCN Framework for the Categorization of Protected Areas

Globally, most protected areas were established during the 20th century, which “is almost certainly the largest and fastest *conscious* change of land management in history” (Dudley, 2008, p. 2, emphasis added). The IUCN proposes a framework for the categorization of protected areas

⁵ Affiliates consist of IUCN members that cannot vote in the World Conservation Congress (IUCN, 2019).

meant to facilitate planning, information management, and the provision of tools for policy making and governance (Table 5). The IUCN defines a protected area as “[a] clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values” (Dudley, 2008, p. 8). Protected areas span multiple milieus (terrestrial, inland water, and marine zones), sizes, locations, regulations, management practices, and levels of control in terms of access and activities (Dudley, 2008).

Table 5. IUCN Protected Areas Categorization and Canadian Examples for Each

Category Name	Description⁶	Canadian Example
Ia Strict Nature Reserve	Protected areas subjected to strictly limited human activity (e.g., research and monitoring) to conserve ecosystems, species and/or geodiversity features	Ecological reserve of Mont-Gosford (Quebec) ⁷
Ib Wilderness Area	Protected areas managed to conserve their ‘unmodified’ or ‘slightly modified’ character	Polar Bear Provincial Park (Ontario) ⁸
II National Park	Protected areas combining the protection of natural biodiversity with spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational, and visitor opportunities	Mont-Orford National Park (Quebec) ⁹
III Natural Monument or Feature	Protected areas dedicated to the conservation of specific natural features (e.g., landform, sea mount, cave, etc.)	Mont Bélair voluntary conservation environment (Quebec) ¹⁰
IV Habitat/Species Management Area	Protected areas managed to maintain, conserve, or restore species and/or habitats	White-tailed deer containment area on the Assemetquagan River (Quebec) ¹¹
V Protected Landscape/ Seascape	Protected areas characterized by the human attribution of cultural, ecological, biological, or scenic value to landscapes and/or seascapes	Roche Percee Recreation Site (Saskatchewan) ¹²
VI Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources	Protected areas combining conservation and sustainable natural resource management systems	Caribou calving area to the north of the 52 parallel, Leaf River (Quebec) ¹³

⁶ (IUCN, 2021c)

⁷ (MELCC, 2021d)

⁸ (UNEP-WCMC, 2021a)

⁹ (MELCC, 2021d)

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

¹² (UNEP-WCMC, 2021b)

¹³ (MDDEP, 1999)

In Canada, biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of biological resources are matters of shared governance between the government of Canada, provinces, and territories (MDDELCC, 2016). Most protected areas are established on public lands, either historic Crown lands, or other lands dedicated to establishing parks. Nevertheless, private actors are openly encouraged to partake in conservation and ecosystem protection initiatives (Benidickson, 2011). It is important to note that lakes and other water resources fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government (Canada Water Act, 1985). According to the Canada Water Act, the federal government is responsible “for research and planning with respect to those resources and for their conservation, development and utilization to ensure their optimum use for the benefit of all Canadians” (Canada Water Act, 1985, pmb1). The act further declares that federal government ought to collaborate with the provinces to achieve these objectives.

3.2 Provincial Level: Protected Area Implementation and Management in Quebec

This section illustrates how the Province of Quebec has implemented the IUCN guidelines following COP 10 to increase the extent of its protected areas and marine territories. I then present two core provincial legislations specifically dedicated to the implementation and management of national parks in Quebec, namely, the 1997 and 2001 *Loi sur les Parcs*, and the 1984 *Loi sur la Société des Établissements de Plein Air du Québec*.

3.2.1 Protected Areas in Quebec

As of 2021, protected areas in Quebec amount to 16.7% (252,597 km²)¹⁴ of the province’s land, compared to 2.84% in 1999 and 8.35% in 2010 (MDDEP, 2011; ME, 1999;

¹⁴ In 2020, Quebec announced it had achieved Aichi Target 11 as it had dedicated 17.03% of the province’s land to the establishment of protected areas. This 0.03% difference is due to some protected areas being planned, although not yet implemented, on Anticosti Island (Léveillé, 2021).

MELCC, 2021d; see Figures 2 and 3). Over the same period, vast sections of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and St. Lawrence Estuary were designated as ‘territorial reserve for protected area purposes’, leading to an eightfold increase in marine protected areas, now covering 10.4% of the provincial territorial waters (CMELCC, 2020; MELCC, 2021a). As the figures below also show, vast protected areas have been created in Northern Quebec, which total most of the province’s protected surface area. Indeed, since 2019, the Government of Quebec has created and expanded protected areas situated in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Côte Nord, Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, Basse-Côte-Nord, and Eeyou Istchee Baie-James regions, as well as in Nunavik (MELCC, 2020). Many small-scale protection zones have also been created in southern regions of the province, where the largest population settlements are located.

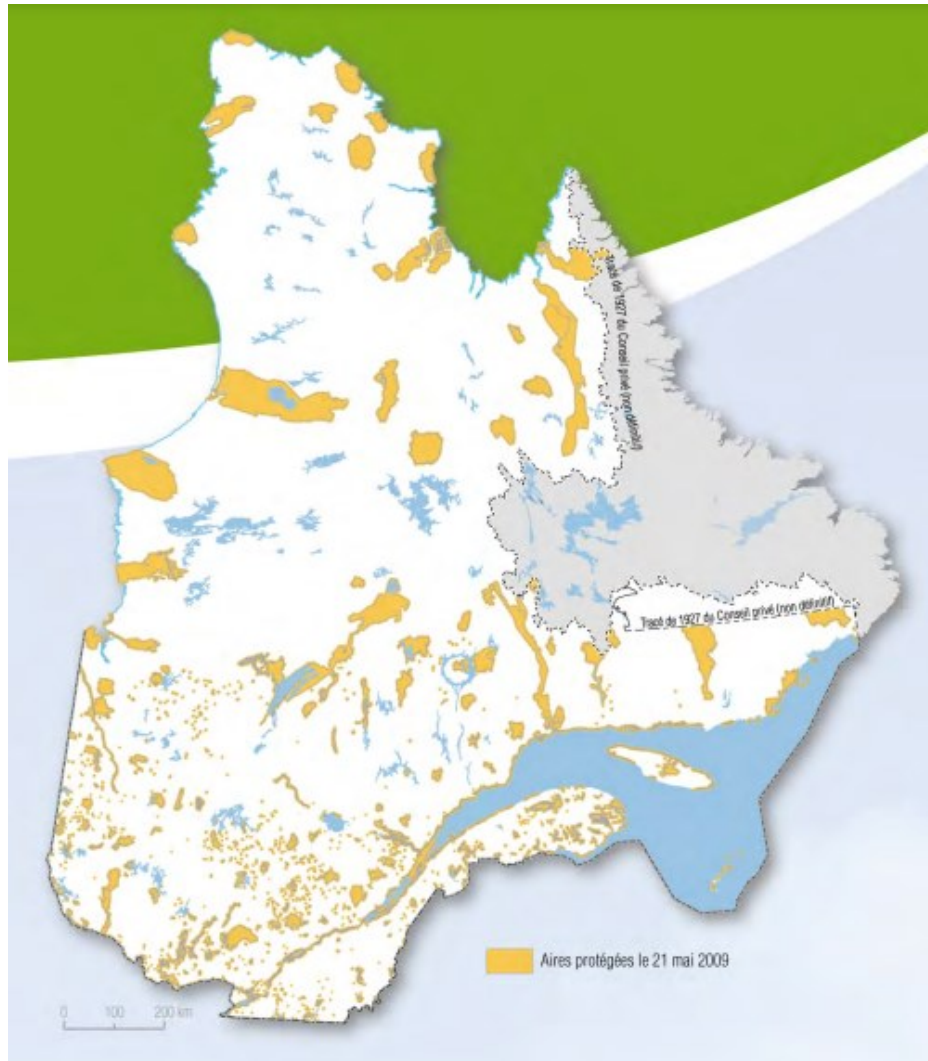


Figure 2. Protected Areas in Quebec in 2009. (MELCC, 2009).

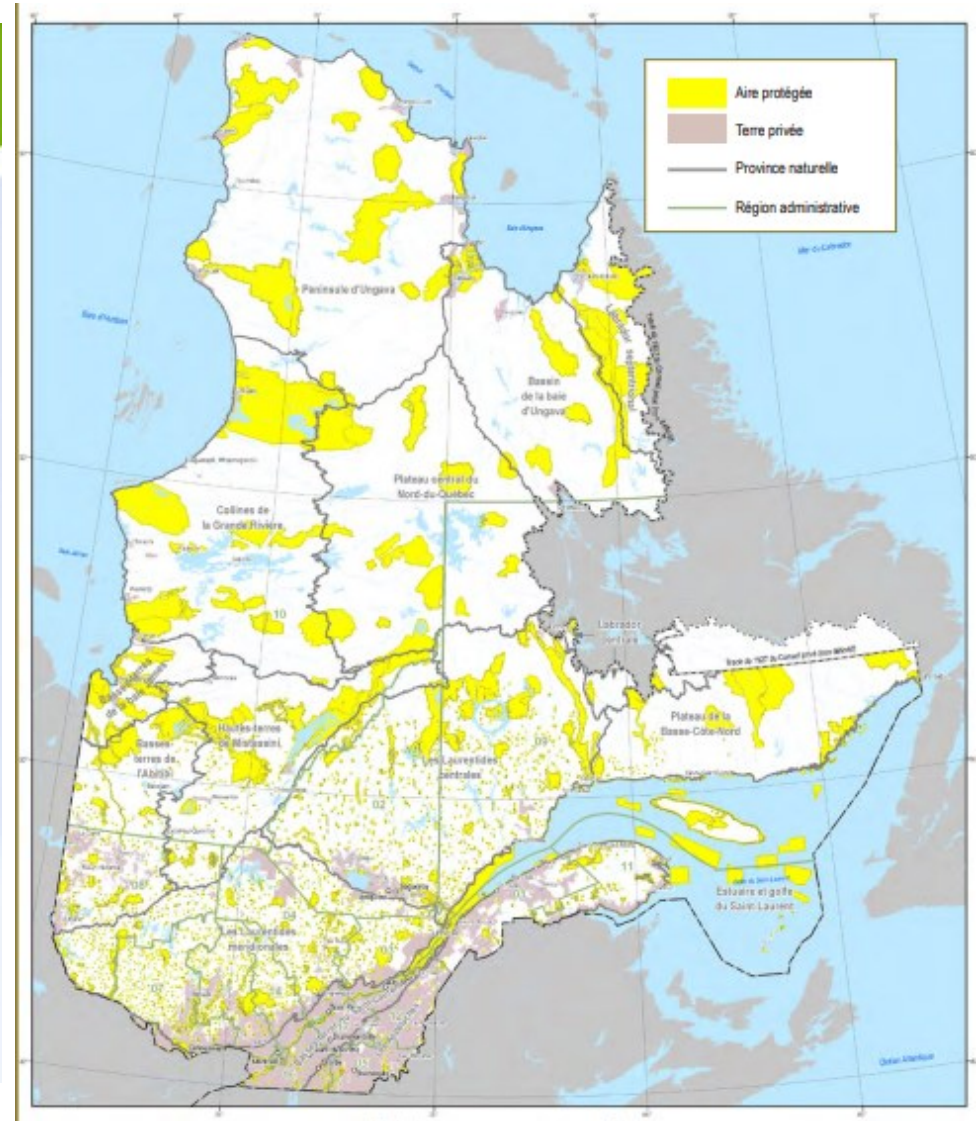


Figure 3. Protected Areas in Quebec in 2021. (MELCC, 2021b).

All IUCN categories are represented in Quebec except for Category V, ‘Protected Landscape/Seascape’ (see Figure 4 and Table 5). Category II, ‘National Park’, is the most prevalent in Quebec, representing 80% of the province’s protected areas (MELCC, 2021a). The fundamental mission of Quebec’s national parks (IUCN Category II) consists of “preserving the ecological and evolutionary integrity of large ecosystems representative of biological diversity” (MELCC, 2021a, n.d.).

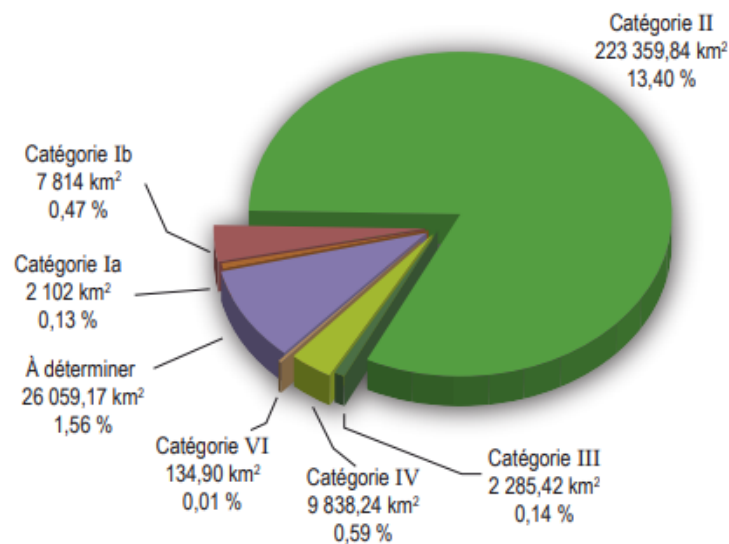


Figure 4. Distribution of Protected Areas in Quebec, by IUCN Category, in Surface Area (km²) and Percentage (%). (MELCC, 2021e).

3.2.2 The 1977 Loi sur les Parcs

The 1977 *Loi sur les Parcs* (amended 2001) defines a ‘park’ as such:

a national park whose primary purpose is to ensure the conservation and permanent protection of areas representative of the natural regions of Quebec and of natural sites with outstanding features, in particular because of their biological diversity, while providing the public with access to those areas or sites for educational or cross-country recreation purposes (Loi sur les Parcs, 2001, p. 2).

The law prohibits all activities related to the prospecting and exploitation of forests, minerals, and energy resources (Loi sur les Parcs, 2001). Furthermore, it establishes two categories of parks, specifically recreational parks and conservation parks, based on the territory's primary function (Loi sur les parcs, 2001). Such terminology was modified by the 2001 amendment so that all parks would be classified as 'national parks' (C. Gagnon & Lahaye, 2010). Changes to the law also clarify how such areas should be 'protected,' through their administration and regulation (Guerrero, 2011).

3.2.3 The 1984 *Loi sur la Société des Établissements de Plein Air du Québec*

The 1984 *Loi sur la Société des Établissements de Plein Air du Québec* created the Sépaq as a government-owned joint stock company primarily responsible for the development of the land, properties, and equipment situated within national parks' boundaries, for recreational and touristic purposes (Loi sur la Société des établissements de plein air du Québec, 1984). The Sépaq was officially founded one year later, in 1985, and received the mandate to manage activities and services in national parks to the south of the 50th parallel in 1999 (Sépaq, 2021b, n.d.). Prior to the Sépaq's existence, about 30 regional organizations managed parks and practised conservation and related commercial activities in heterogenous manners, which served as the main motivation for Quebec to centralize the management of natural parks, their activities, and services (Guerrero, 2011). Thus, the government created the Sépaq to meet international standards on conservation and national park management; to reap greater economic benefits from these activities; to improve the quality of the national park network (i.e., to increase the visitor rate); and to positively impact regional development through the meticulous management of natural areas (Guerrero, 2011).

To this day, the Sépaq manages a total area of 60,820 km² comprising 24 national parks (Sépaq, 2017, 2021e). It also co-manages the Saguenay-Saint-Lawrence Marine Park together with Parks Canada. Sépaq-managed lodging accommodations total 729 cottages, more than 7,200 camping sites, 545 ready-to-camp sites, 176 hotel rooms, and 185 rustic camps and shelters (Sépaq, 2017). Commercial activities and services also encompass catering, equipment rentals, 24 discovery and service centres, 266 short hiking trails, and 10 long hiking trails (Sépaq, 2017). The Sépaq employs some 3,000 individuals, receiving funding from the Government of Quebec and external donors (Sépaq, 2017). The Sépaq's profits are reinvested into the organization (Savard & Caron, 2020; Sépaq, 2017).

3.3 Regional Level: Mont-Orford National Park and Expansion Project

This section presents Mont-Orford National Park, a park classified as IUCN Category II and currently managed by the Sépaq. It addresses the history of the park together with that of the expansion project at the core of my case study.

3.3.1 Mont-Orford National Park: History and Characteristics

Mont-Orford National Park was founded in the Eastern Townships (in southwestern Quebec) in 1938 by the *Loi du Parc National du Mont Orford* (Cloutier, 2009). Magog-based Doctor George Austin Bowen was a key advocate for the creation of a national park at Mont-Orford since the 1920s (Sépaq, 2021c; Université de Sherbrooke, 2021). Eventually, 27 municipalities “agreed to acquire and cede the territory to the Québec government for the purpose of creating a park” (Sépaq, 2021c, n.d.). Mont-Orford was first categorized as a recreational park under Quebec's 1977 *Loi sur les Parcs*. Nowadays, as a national park, the Park's main mission is conservation (MFFP, 2021b). Despite being one of Quebec's smallest

national parks, covering an area of 58 km², it is also one of the most frequented, with 592,131 visitors in 2018-2019 (Sépaq, 2019). Mont-Orford is located in a peri-urban area in the Estrie administrative region, in the regional county municipality (RCM) of Memphremagog (population: 50,415) (Figure 5) (Statistics Canada, 2017a), where tourism represents a major economic activity (C. Gagnon & Lahaye, 2010). The main installations in the national park consist of alpine and cross-country ski stations, a golf course, a musical and cultural centre, as well as outdoor recreational areas (C. Gagnon & Lahaye, 2010).

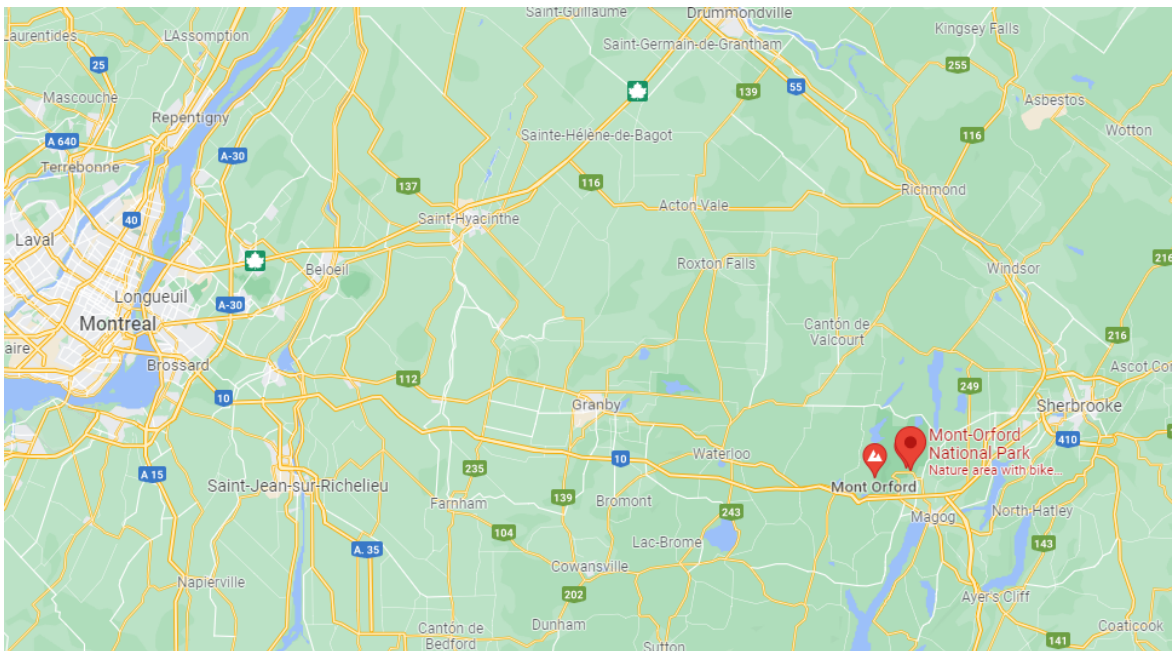


Figure 5. Mont-Orford National Park. (Google Maps, 2021).

3.3.2 The 2006 Protests

In Quebec, the mid-1980s marked the development of national parks near urban areas to ensure the conservation of biodiversity in urban settings (Guerrero, 2011). This initiative was followed by attempts by private entities, supported by the Sépaq, to increase the profitability of such spaces, primarily through partial privatization and real estate development (Guerrero, 2011). In the case of Mont-Orford National Park, Intermont Inc (later known as Mont-Orford

Inc.) submitted a project proposal in 2001 to build 900 condominium housing units and to extend the ski station, thus modifying the park's zoning (Cloutier, 2009). In 2002, as per the 2001 *Loi sur les Parcs*, the local population was consulted regarding the modification of the park's limits and the revitalization of the ski station and golf course (Lahaye, 2007). The project was relatively well received at that time (Cloutier, 2009).

Public hearings were held after the *Plan Directeur de Développement de la Station Touristique Mont-Orford* was published in 2004. In total, 265 research papers were submitted to the Quebec *Bureau d'Audiences Publiques sur l'Environnement* (BAPE), which recommended not to modify the zoning of Mont-Orford National Park (Gagnon & Lahaye, 2010). The following year, Thomas Mulcair, then *Ministre du Développement Durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs* in the Charest Quebec Liberal government, declared he was opposed to the partial privatization project. He stepped down in protest against the Quebec Liberal Party's position, which was in favour of modifying the zoning of Mont-Orford National Park (Cloutier, 2009). He was replaced by Claude Béchar, who authored Bill 23 overseeing zoning change despite the BAPE's recommendations (Gagnon, 2013; *Projet de loi n°23*, 2006). The law modified Mont-Orford National Park's limits by making 459 hectares of the park available for private development projects. At that time, Mont-Orford Inc. and Quebec's Liberal government emphasized economic arguments for these modifications, claiming that privatization was essential to the development of Mont-Orford National Park (Cloutier, 2009).

In response to this partial privatization and planned real estate development, activists, artists, and politicians created the SOS Parc Orford coalition (Cloutier, 2009). The project was a core topic motivating the 2006 March for the Earth in Montreal, which garnered 12,000 people. On May 23, 2006, a petition asking for the removing of Bill 23 with 86,000 signatures was

presented to the National Assembly (Cloutier, 2009; Gagnon & Lahaye, 2010). The Quebec Liberal government eventually cancelled the privatization project in 2007, and reintegrated 579 hectares of land into Mont-Orford National Park (Gagnon & Lahaye, 2010; Gagnon, 2013; Radio-Canada, 2021). Since 2006, and as a result of the protests, Quebec's *Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs* (MFFP) has led an expansion project aiming to increase Mont-Orford National Park's land area by 4,300 hectares (a 72% increase, [see Figure 6]) (MFFP, 2021). I present this project in more detail in the following section.

3.3.3 Mont-Orford National Park Expansion Project

The Mont-Orford National Park expansion project targets land areas situated in the municipalities of Racine, Saint-Denis-de-Brompton, Orford Canton, and Melbourne Canton, and span the shores of Lac Larouche, Lac Brompton, and Lac Montjoie (Figure 6) (MFFP, 2021). The latter lake is the locus of this research. The *Ministère des Transports* oversees all land acquisitions by Quebec government (Transports Québec, 2021). In this case, acquired lands are then transferred to the MFFP (Transports Québec, 2021). This includes the 54.5 hectares along the shores of Lac Montjoie, acquired in 2010 (Sépaq, 2021d). These holdings previously belonged to the Philosophat Saint-Charles, as discussed further in Section 3.4.2 (Sépaq, 2021d). More recently, the *Ministère des Transports* acquired land that belonged to local residents, including the two islands of Lac Montjoie (Île Olivier and Île Larocque), by mutual agreement with the former owners (R23). These new public lands have not been included in the park yet; they will be officially transferred to the Sépaq and integrated to Mont-Orford National Park once all targeted holdings are acquired and the park expansion plan is adopted (MFFP, 2021). Accordingly, these lands are currently publicly accessible, although activities such as wood cutting, open fires, and camping are restricted (Arcand & Marchand, 2012; MFFP, 2021). Since

the acquisition, riparian dwellers have noted an increased rate of visitors and the presence of four-wheeled vehicles, as the lands are not yet regulated by the Sépaq (R16).

In 2020, the Sépaq was commissioned to evaluate the potential costs and benefits of exploiting ‘new’ territories adjacent to the Mont-Orford National Park (Savard & Caron, 2020). Although, specific details about future infrastructures and zoning of the expanded Mont-Orford National Park are not yet disclosed publicly, minutes from a 2020 APLM general meeting provide a summary of planned infrastructures. These include: a rental accommodation of 20 to 30 rooms at Pointe des Pères for students, corporate members, and individuals with mental illness (Figure 7); rental services for boats, kayaks and paddle boards; a wooden marquee near Baie Fleury for outdoor meetings and yoga (Figure 7); a walkway around Lac Chevreuil (Figure 7); as well as hiking and bicycle trails (APLM, 2020b). The APLM executive committee met with MFFP and Sépaq representatives on three occasions to discuss the expansion project. According to a proposal statement addressed to the MFFP and the Sépaq, the APLM suggested adaptations to the project due to their concerns regarding water quality, biodiversity preservation, and control of access (APLM, 2020a). Notably, the expansion project included plans for the creation of camping sites on Larocque and Olivier Islands (Figure 7), which the Sépaq eventually cancelled as it generated great concern among the riparian population (R6, R8).

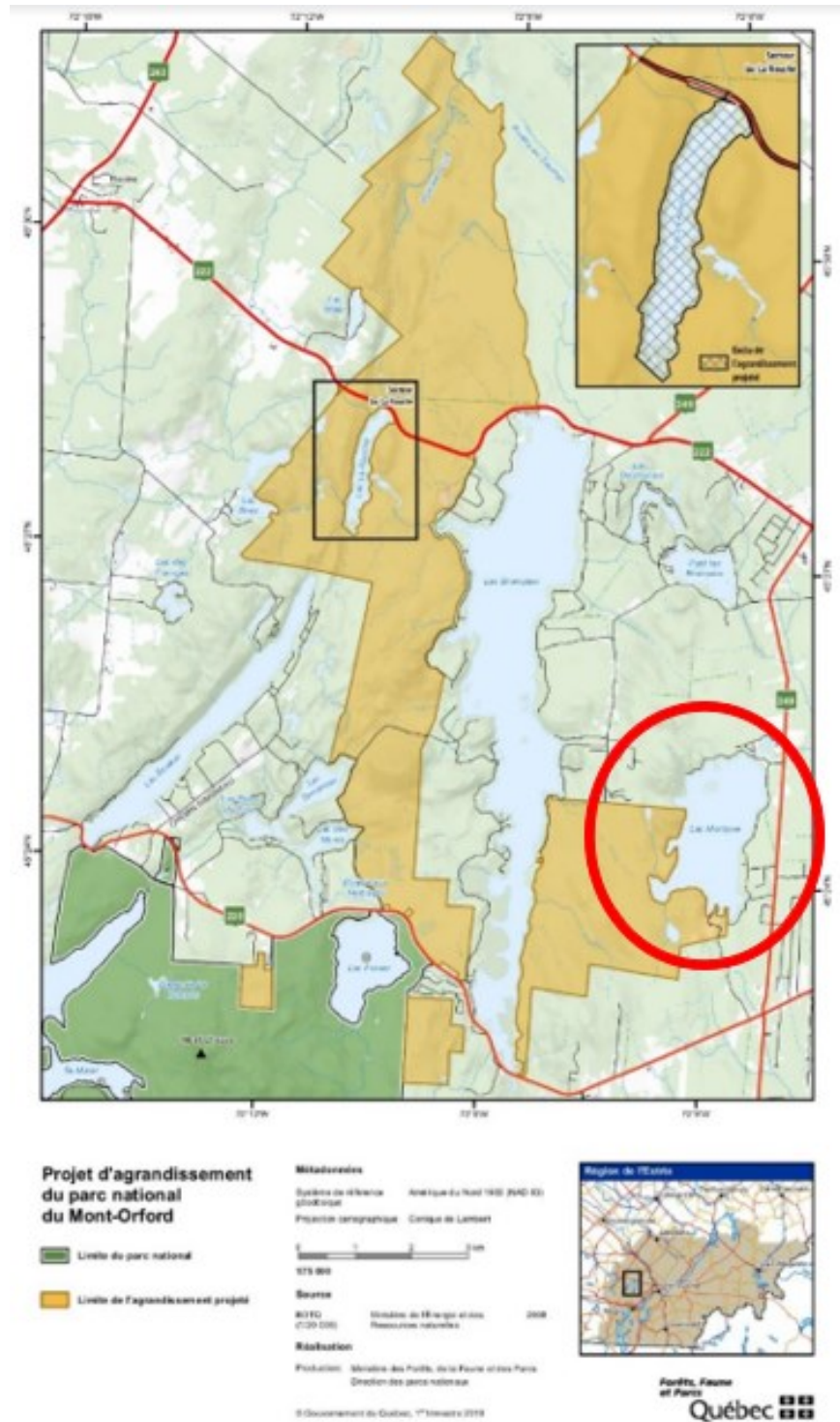


Figure 6. “Carte du parc national du Mont-Orford” Expansion Project. (MFFP, 2019).¹⁵

¹⁵ Areas in green represent the current limits of Mont-Orford National Park, while areas in yellow represent the projected limits of Mont-Orford National Park in view of the expansion project. Lac Montjoie, the case study, is circled in red.

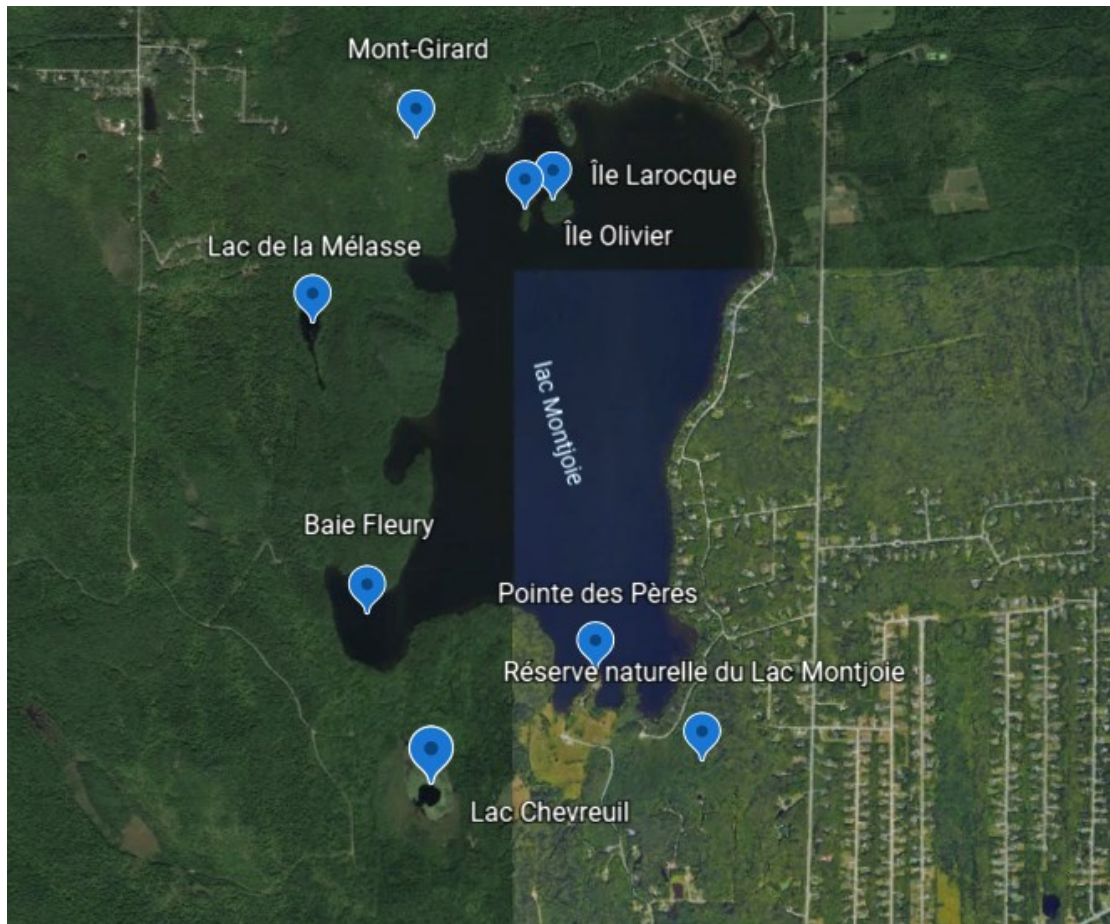


Figure 7. Lac Montjoie. (Google Earth, 2021).

Still, the expansion plans remain vague and challenging to access, especially as they are not yet finalized. Notably, Olivier and Larocque Islands, as well as other lands acquired from local households, have not yet been included in the map of Mont-Orford National Park's expected boundaries after expansion. This suggests that changes occurred after the initial plan (Figure 6) was set out¹⁶. Also noteworthy is the recent disposition to exclude Lac Larouche from the expanded version of Mont-Orford National Park (Larocque, 2019), which I discuss further in Chapter 5.

¹⁶ As will be explained in Chapter 4, the MFFP refused to participate in the study, mentioning that the Ministry and the Sépaq could not comment further on the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project due to the plans not being completed yet.

3.4 Local Level: Lac Montjoie and Conservation Practices

This section introduces Lac Montjoie, the case study of this research project. It specifically focuses on some environmental circumstances, on the history of settlement along the lake's shore and on the local riparian residents' association, the Association pour la protection du Lac Montjoie (APLM).

3.4.1 Lac Montjoie and Its Characteristics

Lac Montjoie is a small lake covering an area of 10.69 km² situated in the municipality of Saint-Denis-de-Brompton (population: 4,054) (Statistics Canada, 2017b). There are 112 households surrounding the lake, and approximately 60% of its shores are developed, the rest being covered with forest (Samson & Nielly, 1993). The lake has a prolonged renewal time of 618 days, which is lengthier than the average renewal time of 30 to 120 days of other lakes in the area (Boucher et al., 2006). Lac Montjoie is a headwater lake fed by only two small lakes (Lac Chevreuil and Lac de la Mélasse [Figure 7]), underwater sources, and precipitation (Boucher et al., 2006). Unlike other lakes in the region – such as Lac Brompton and Lac Fraser – Lac Montjoie is part of a distinct sub-watershed and flows into the Ruisseau Brook (Boucher et al., 2006). Lac Montjoie was the source of drinking water for Bromptonville and Saint-Élie d'Orford (Sherbrooke) residents until 2006 (Boucher et al., 2006). The lake remains the source of drinking water for most of the riparian population.

A distinctive aspect of Lac Montjoie is its exceptional water quality. In 2017, the *Réseau du CRSNG sur l'État des Lacs au Canada* collected water samples from 217 lakes in Eastern Canada, among which 112 were tested to detect organic contaminants such as pesticides, pharmaceutical products, personal care products, and industrial materials (Huot & Segura, 2020).

This research concluded that over 90% of the 112 lakes contained at least one contaminant (Huot & Segura, 2020). Among the 45 lakes situated in Quebec, 5 lakes did not contain any contaminants, including Lac Montjoie (Huot & Segura, 2020). Huot & Segura (2020) consider that the local municipal sewage system, restricted residential development, regulations on usage, and the activities of the *Association pour la Protection du Lac Montjoie* (APLM) constitute key factors in explaining such water quality.

Furthermore, there is currently no watermilfoil contamination in Lac Montjoie (Lévesque & Robitaille, 2020; Pion, 2021)¹⁷. This situation further differentiates Lac Montjoie from neighbouring lakes, especially considering that the highest proportion of watermilfoil-contaminated lakes is located in the Estrie region relatively to other regions in Quebec (Lévesque & Robitaille, 2020). Whereas boats navigating in more than one lake are major vectors for propagation, the lack of public access at Lac Montjoie attenuates this risk (Lévesque & Robitaille, 2020).

3.4.2 History of Settlement at Lac Montjoie

Documentation refers to the mid-nineteenth century as the beginning of settlement at Lac Montjoie, thus disregarding that the region is situated on Abenakis customary territory (Boucher et al., 2006; O'Neill Sanger et al., 2021; Native Land Digital, 2021). More precisely, Missisquoi Abenakis established themselves on land surrounding Mont-Orford in the late prehistorical and early historical periods, notably for agriculture (O'Neill Sanger et al., 2021). Regrettably, Indigenous history remains largely absent from the literature and grey literature consulted in the

¹⁷ Watermilfoil is an invasive aquatic plant found in approximately 50% of lakes in the Estrie region (Labbé & Gagné, 2021). There are currently no fast and inexpensive solutions to watermilfoil invasion (MELCC, 2021b). The impacts of the invasive plant on the environment are not well-known. Watermilfoil can limit access to recreational activities (MELCC, 2021b).

context of this research, which speaks to the racialized and exclusionary biases of settlement narratives, and the establishment of protected areas alike (Mortimer-Sandilands, 2009).

By the year 1855, Isidore Gendron established himself on the shores of Lac Montjoie¹⁸ and built the Montjoie farm which still exists to this day (Boucher et al., 2006). In 1889, Isidore Gendron donated two acres of land to the *Pères de la Corporation Épiscopale du Séminaire de Sherbrooke* (hereafter referred to as “the Corporation”), who already frequented the lake since 1882 for recreational purposes. Still in 1889, the priests bought two additional acres of land from Isidore Gendron in the south end of Lac Montjoie, with the intention of building a residence (Boucher, 2006). The Corporation and its students organized annual summer retreats starting in 1891 (Boucher et al., 2006; Samson & Nielly, 1993).

Over the years, the Corporation acquired most of the land along the lake’s shores (Boucher et al., 2006). These acquisitions and exploitation expenditures proved to be costly, however, thus motivating the fathers to sell land along the northern shore of Lac Montjoie, mostly to individuals connected to the Philosophat Saint-Charles. Residential development began in 1967 (Samson & Nielly, 1993). However, no environmental norms formally regulated residential and leisure developments until the application of the 1972 *Loi sur la Protection de l’Environnement* (Samson & Nielly, 1993). Accordingly, the first phase of residential development at Lac Montjoie was marked by deforestation of the southern shore – where the Corporation had established itself. In the northern sector, levelling, the use herbicides, silting, and construction of concrete walls occurred as well. Additionally, between the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Government of Quebec granted logging and mining rights to Orford Mining

¹⁸ Prior to 1968, the name of Lac Montjoie was ‘Lac Webster.’ The name change was suggested by Abbé Girard while he managed the *Pères de la Corporation Épiscopale du Séminaire de Sherbrooke* (Boucher, 2006).

and Cooperate International (also known as the Greif Brothers) for regional exploitation of natural resources (Boucher et al., 2006). All these factors, combined with the circulation of gas-powered motorboats and increasing residential infrastructure density, led to greater shore erosion and to the proliferation of green algae (Boucher et al., 2006; Samson & Nielly, 1993).

These impacts together with concerns over wastewater discharge motivated riparian households to create the *Association pour la Protection du Lac Montjoie* (APLM) in 1969. That same year, riparian dwellers initiated procedures for the instalment of a sewer collector system, which was still an uncommon practice in rural areas at that period of time (Samson & Nielly, 1993). The APLM obtained a subvention in 1972 to construct the sewer collector system in the north sector of Lac Montjoie (Boucher et al., 2006), and a wastewater treatment plant was inaugurated in 1974 (Samson & Nielly, 1993).

A second residential development phase began in 1978, which was mainly concentrated along the eastern lakeshore (Samson & Nielly, 1993). During this second phase, development projects were more aligned with ecological principles (Figure 8): bigger land plots allowed for lower residential infrastructure density, and shores remained largely forested (Samson & Nielly, 1993). As a result, 40% of the shores in areas dedicated for residential development and leisure remain in their natural state, whereas 35% are ‘well developed’ (based on the ecological principles mentioned above), and 24% are ‘poorly developed’ (Samson & Nielly, 1993).



Vivre au bord de l'eau !



Pêches et Océans
Canada

Fisheries and Oceans
Canada



Bon aménagement



Mauvais aménagement

Figure 8. Living by the Water. (RAPPEL, n.d.).

Additionally, this second phase saw the extension of the sewer collector system to the southern sector as well as the banning of gasoline motorboats (Boucher et al., 2006). Land transaction contracts concluded between the Philosophat Saint-Charles and new residents during that same period contained 13 clauses intended for the conservation of Lac Montjoie. These clauses notably referred to the banning of gasoline motorboats (which were officially legal then), the impossibility to subdivide land parcels (including to allocate right of way), and, in case of resale, the need to provide the Philosophat with a pre-emptive right over the land (Boucher et al., 2006, R20). This initiative from the Philosophat obtained significant support for the APLM as it was then undergoing political procedures to ban the use of motorboats (Boucher et al., 2006). As a result of these various initiatives, water quality at Lac Montjoie has upheld a high standard over time (Samson & Nielly, 1993).

3.4.3 The Association pour la Protection du Lac Montjoie (APLM)

The *Association pour la Protection du Lac Montjoie* (APLM) acts as a community organization for riparian dwellers at Lac Montjoie. Its objectives consist of ensuring water quality and the preservation of the ‘natural character’ of Lac Montjoie (Boucher et al., 2006). Members pay an annual voluntary membership fee (currently CAD\$50) and can make additional monetary contributions for fish stocking and maintenance of a tennis court owned by the APLM (Boucher et al., 2006). The APLM is principally responsible for raising awareness among the riparian community on practices favouring the preservation of water quality (Boucher et al., 2006). In this regard, the APLM joined the *Fédération des Associations pour la Protection de l’Environnement des Lacs* (FAPEL) soon after its creation in 1975, and the APLM is currently part of the *Regroupement des Associations pour la Protection de l’Environnement des lacs et Cours d’Eau de l’Estrée et du Haut-Bassin de la Saint-François* (RAPPEL) (Boucher et al., 2006).

In 2002, the APLM acquired the Lac Montjoie dam from the Philosphat Saint-Charles for CAD\$1 after having presented a management plan for the control of Lac Montjoie’s water level (Boucher et al., 2006). Initially, the dam simplified timber and ore transport, as well as water storage (Boucher et al., 2006). Currently, the dam primarily serves to regulate water levels (Boucher et al., 2006). In 2005, the dam needed important reparations, and 105 out of 109 riparian households contributed monetarily for this project. However, the lake’s water level is a source of tension within the community (Boucher et al., 2006). By ceding the dam to the APLM, the Philosphat sought to maintain the ‘original private character’ of Lac Montjoie (Boucher et al., 2006, p. 120).

The APLM plays an important social role in the community. Volunteers organize an annual corn roast for the riparian population (Boucher et al., 2006). Furthermore, there used to be sailing and swimming lessons, regatta competitions, and fishing tournaments (Boucher et al., 2006). The tennis court also constitutes an important element of community life at Lac Montjoie (Boucher et al., 2006). However, most interview participants consider that social life at Lac Montjoie is not like it used to be, in that the population is increasingly individualistic (R7, R12, R14). Participants attributed this to changes in the composition of the community. Those who established themselves at Lac Montjoie during the two phases of residential development are aging, children have grown up and moved away, and new residents are moving in. A current perception of new residents is that they privilege peace and tranquility over being part of an active and closely knitted community. Real estate value has also boomed over the last decades.

In addition to its sensibilization and its social roles, the APLM partakes in political debates, notably at the municipal level, relating to concerns such as urbanization and water management (Boucher et al., 2006). An example of its political engagement concerns the banishing of gasoline motorboats, a process that began in 1975 (APLM, 2017). By then, most riparian dwellers applied this measure on a voluntary basis following individual meetings with the APLM executive committee (Boucher et al., 2006). In 1979, the Quebec National Assembly amended the Municipal Code of Quebec on the APLM's demand, to allow municipalities to regulate or prohibit gasoline motorboats on lakes with a diameter smaller than five miles (8 km) (Boucher et al., 2006). Consequently, Saint-Denis-de-Brompton and Saint-Élie-d'Orford¹⁹ each adopted a municipal regulation forbidding the circulation of gasoline and diesel motorboats on Lac Montjoie (Boucher et al., 2006). An individual then contested the regulation on the basis that

¹⁹ The lake was spread over both cities at that time.

lakes are under the federal jurisdiction (Boucher et al., 2006). Legal and political negotiations resulted in the Province of Quebec allowing municipalities to present requests regarding marine navigation restrictions to the federal government. Saint-Denis-de-Brompton submitted such a request, asking for gasoline and diesel motorboats to be banned at Lac Montjoie (Boucher et al., 2006). The proposition was accepted, resulting in Saint-Denis-de-Brompton and Saint-Élie-d'Orford adopting this regulation in 1989 (Boucher et al., 2006).

Private entities have also been involved in the conservation of Lac Montjoie. In 1984, a group of riparian dwellers created a registered company (132625 Canada Inc.) following rumours that Mont-Girard, located on the northern end of the lake, might be sold and dedicated to residential developments (Boucher et al., 2006). This company was active from 1984 to 2005 (Boucher et al., 2006). According to interviews, the purpose for creating the company ranged from a desire to protect the environment to fears towards wealthy individuals, developers, or even a well-known criminal group acquiring the mountain. Riparian residents involved in the company could secure enough capital to acquire Mont-Girard, but they could not guarantee the survival of the corporation in the long term. By 1993, financial difficulties became more important, and the land the company owned was sold to a riparian family after a majority vote (Boucher et al., 2006). This family aimed to continue the 'adequate protection of nature and its environment' and allowed the riparian population to access the land (Boucher et al., 2006, p. 104).

An example of an ongoing private initiative is the *Société de Fiducie Foncière du lac Montjoie* (hereafter referred to as "the *Société*"). In 2003, 50 riparian residents financed the creation of the *Société*, leading to the establishment of the Lac Montjoie Natural Reserve at the southeastern edge of Lac Montjoie in 2006 (APLM, 2017) (see Figure 7). The Government of

Quebec recognizes the 0.144 km² reserve as a protected area, but it is not categorized within the IUCN framework (MELCC, 2021d). According to interviewees, the objective of the *Société* is to protect the lake and its surroundings. Access is granted to those asking permission to circulate on the reserve's territory.

3.5 Conclusion

The Mont-Orford National Park expansion project unfolds in a context characterized by a multiplicity of guidelines, from local to global levels of governance. At the international level, Canada ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity. Quebec followed suit and set the objective to establish protected areas over 17% of its land surfaces and 10% of its marine areas by 2020. National parks account for most of Quebec's protected areas according to the IUCN categorization. Legal guidelines oversee the creation and management of parks, including that of Mont-Orford National Park. Protests occurred in 2006 against its partial privatization and prompted the current expansion project, which seeks to increase the park's area and public access. While distinct, the 2006 protests and current negotiations on the expansion project indicate the continuity of negotiations regarding conservation discourses at Mont-Orford National Park. This research project focuses specifically on how these negotiations unfold at Lac Montjoie, building on data obtained through using the research methods I detail next.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I describe the methodology that allows me to identify, analyze and interpret the conservation discourses of Lac Montjoie residents, the *Société des Établissements de Plein Air du Québec* (Sépaq) and Quebec's *Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs* (MFFP) in relation to the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project. In the subsequent chapters, I will present these three actors' practices, exercises of power, and objectives in order to identify variations in conservation discourses among them. Accordingly, I apply qualitative methodologies to my case study at Lac Montjoie. I conduct a Foucauldian critical discourse analysis of primary and secondary data, which I gathered from in-person semi-structured interviews and official documents and. I analyzed the data using a heuristic and cyclical coding process.

4.1 Lac Montjoie: A Qualitative Case Study

My research explores social constructions of conservation and considers the world as an assemblage of interpretations made by individuals who attribute meaning to their social environment (Denzin & Ryan, 2007; Fujii, 2017). Therefore, the world is constantly being constructed rather than being in a static, pre-existing state. While reality cannot be fully captured, qualitative research seeks to represent 'reality' to the most feasible extent (Denzin & Ryan, 2007). More concretely, qualitative research aims to capture participants' attitudes, viewpoints, and beliefs (Denzin & Ryan, 2007).

In the context of this project, I focus specifically on conceptualizations of conservation at Lac Montjoie. A case study consists of a thorough investigation of a precise unit of analysis (Orum & Feagin, 1991), which can be "an individual, a community, an organization, a nation-

state, an empire, or a civilization” (Sjoberg et al., 1991, p. 36). The researcher gathers data – which constitute the basis of the case study – and uses them to present or explain a phenomenon theoretically (Mitchell, 2008). Case studies facilitate understandings of social interactions, historical processes, and bureaucratic practices (e.g., decision-making, secrecy, deviance, silences) (Sjoberg et al., 1991). They also capture variations in perspectives among groups with asymmetric power relations (Ibid.). Case studies have high levels of unicity due to their “low level of abstraction” (Mitchell, 2008, p. 37). In other words, case studies allow for the analysis of a specific phenomenon in great detail by considering the ‘unique’ and distinctive aspects of a determined case, which may not be transferable to other contexts (Mitchell, 2008).

One challenge associated with case studies and their unicity is their limited ability to generalize a study’s findings (Platt, 2007). However, Law (2004) remarks that criticisms of case studies tend to be based on the positivist notion that reality and social processes are fixed. Instead, Law (2004) argues that the world is often unpredictable, fluid, and ‘generative’ of new practices and interpretations. Skepticism of such an ever-changing world may arise from a “desire for certainty”, universalism and a sense of security (Law, 2004, p. 9). Mitchell (2008) likewise questions whether the ability to generalize conclusions drawn from specific cases truly constitutes a criterion for determining the reliability and validity of a research project.

In the context of this research, conducting a case study allows me to consider the conservation discourses of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and Lac Montjoie riparian dwellers in relation to the planned expansion of Mont-Orford National Park (Platt, 2007). Additionally, I can account for the distinct history of Mont-Orford National Park as a protected area in Quebec, including earlier social protests and contestation events (Cloutier, 2009; Lahaye, 2007). Nevertheless, findings about the conservation discourses of the MFFP and the Sépaq could potentially apply to

other cases and serve to better understand the standing of the Quebec Province on the conservation of protected areas.

4.2 Data Collection

The data I introduce in my result chapter are separated into two main categories: secondary data and primary data. I first gathered secondary data by selecting and analyzing online official documents of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and the APLM. Then, I collected primary data through conducting in-person semi-structured interviews based on the principles of relational interviewing, which suggests that data are produced from interactions between the researcher and collaborators (Fujii, 2017). This section further details the processes I used to select the data and my shifting positionality as an insider/outsider researcher.

4.2.1 Secondary Data

I gathered secondary data from the *Association pour la Protection du Lac Montjoie* (APLM), the *Société des Établissements de Plein Air du Québec* (Sépaq) and Québec's *Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs* (MFFP). First, the APLM documentation consists of a self-edited book, *Lac Montjoie au Fil du Temps* (Boucher et al., 2006), which provides information on the history of Lac Montjoie and the practises of the APLM. Second, I reviewed five documents from the Sépaq, which include strategic plans and the annual reports of the organization (Savard & Caron, 2020; Sépaq, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2021a). Together, these documents provided the most recent information regarding the Sépaq's mission statement, objectives, and strategies. These resources can be found on the Sépaq website. Third, to analyze the discourses of the MFFP, I selected the MFFP strategic plan (MFFP, 2021c) and parks-related laws and policies (Loi sur les Parcs, 2001; MFFP, 2018b, 2021e; Loi sur la Société des

Établissements de Plein Air du Québec, 1984). These documents are available on the MFFP's website and Quebec's website *Légis Québec: Source Officielle*.

I utilized non-probability purposive sampling for identifying relevant secondary data (Bullock, 2016). More specifically, I used criterion sampling to identify data that met pre-established criteria (Roy, 2019). For the APLM, the self-edited book specifically addresses conservation at Lac Montjoie, and was written by members of the APLM. The criteria I set for the MFFP and the Sépaq are as follows: for yearly reports and conservation plans, I chose the most recent version of each resource; each document explicitly mentions national parks and protected areas; each document currently guides conservation initiatives; finally, each document is directed at or authored by (in its entirety or collaboratively with) the MFFP and/or the Sépaq.

A considerable advantage for selecting these documents is the fact that they provide an extensive quantity of information on the specific topic of protected areas in Quebec, as viewed by each actor (Mitchell, 2008). Additionally, all are easily accessible online. That being said, although the above documents specifically address the topic of national parks, there is limited information publicly available on the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project per se. In an email I received from the MFFP towards the end of my data collection, a Ministry representative suggested that I consult the Mont-Orford National Park webpage from the MFFP website and the *Politique sur les Parcs Nationaux du Québec* (MFFP, 2018b, 2021a) which I had already done. The Ministry would not commit to sharing further resources with me.

4.2.2 Primary Data

I gathered original data through in-person semi-structured interviews in July and August 2021, following Quebec's public health guidelines in the context of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic

(described below). The primary target population consisted of Lac Montjoie riparian residents. I conducted interviews with 23 Lac Montjoie households, out of 115. Here, a 'household' refers to individuals living in the same residence who were willing and available to participate in the interview process. While the interviews were meant to last between 45 and 60 minutes, I did not impose a time constraint. As a result, many interviews lasted well over one hour.

As with secondary data, I used non-probabilistic sampling methods, namely convenience and snowball sampling. Indeed, convenience sampling implies that the first participants were recruited based on their reachability, in terms of how easily I could contact them. Then, snowball sampling allowed me to increase the sample size based on recommendations from interview participants (Bullock, 2016). Notably, the APLM provided me with a list of riparian households who they believed would be interested in participating in the research project and would have opinions regarding the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project. This list, together with suggestions from participants, constituted my main resource for selecting and contacting riparian households.

Convenience sampling was useful in establishing first contacts, although this strategy is said to involve selection bias and lack of representativeness of the sample (Roy, 2019). Those who decided to participate at first likely felt compelled by the research topic in some way. I do not see this as a problem per se, considering that snowball sampling allowed to contact individuals with a wide diversity of opinions on the Mont-Orford expansion project. Snowball sampling allowed me to expand my sample, as the first collaborators identified potential participants who belonged to their own networks and whom I might not have contacted otherwise (Roy, 2019). The potential challenges associated with this technique relate to the potential bias from the participants recommending future collaborators, as well as the

researcher's limited control over the sample and its representativeness (Roy, 2019).

Nevertheless, the combination of these two sampling methods led to increased access to the riparian community (Fujii, 2017), which exposed me to a vast variety of opinions and perspectives.

The interviews took place in the context of the ongoing SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. Accordingly, I followed Quebec's public health guidelines (Gouvernement du Québec, 2021). Almost all interviews were conducted outside to ensure physical distancing. When the weather did not allow for outdoor interviewing, riparian dwellers and I wore a mask indoors and physically distanced. Other measures included frequent hand washing, sanitization of shared material (e.g., pens for signing the informed consent forms), and leaving at least two hours between each interview. Furthermore, as I live in Estrie, going to Saint-Denis-de-Brompton did not involve cross-regional travel, which public health guidelines discouraged.

I intended to interview representatives from the MFFP and the Sépaq. However, I did not anticipate that the individuals I contacted would be on vacation when I first sent invitations to participate in the research project. Once their vacation was over, I received one email from the MFFP which summarized information already mentioned in the secondary data sources I had selected. The message stated, in the names of the MFFP and the Sépaq, that they could not discuss the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project further as the plans have not yet been finalized nor made public.

4.2.2.1 Relational Interviewing

Fujii (2017)'s conceptualization of relational interviewing guided how I conducted the interviews. According to this author, relational interviewing is an interpretivist method, in that

the data are considered as being produced during the interview, through interactions between the researcher and participants (Fujii, 2017). In practice, this technique relies on four main aspects. First, active listening consists of being fully aware of one's surroundings in addition to remaining attentive to participants' words (Fujii, 2017). It requires engaging the five senses in capturing metadata from the environment where the interview takes place, as well as participants' attitude and reactions. Active listening seeks to help explore what is said, how it is communicated, and non-verbal cues. The second aspect of relational interviewing is familiarity with participants' ways of expressing themselves, which includes their spoken language and specialized vocabulary. Such familiarity allows the production of representative data (Fujii, 2017). Third, mistakes should be seen as learning opportunities as well as potential gateways to unexpected yet relevant discussions for the study (Fujii, 2017). Finally, dignity and respect are core aspects of the interview process and involve considering individuals as 'ends' in themselves (Fujii, 2017). The researcher should treat participants equally, regardless of the quantity or 'appropriateness' of the information that is shared and co-produced (Fujii, 2017).

Relational interviewing also questions the notion of 'rapport,' in that creating harmonious relationships with participants is not necessarily enough to create a space where they feel comfortable to openly communicate with the researcher (Fujii, 2017). Conversely, building a connection with collaborators sometimes represents a significant challenge, although the lack of a bond between a researcher and participants does not automatically prevent meaningful interactions from happening (Fujii, 2017). Fujii (2017) recalls the example of Blee (1998) who adopted a "distant but *not* neutral researcher" stance in order "[t]o analyze the motivations, ideological understandings, and political identities of racist activists" (Blee, 1998, p. 385-386). Blee (1998) reports experiencing fear more so than empathy towards her participants (and vice

versa), as well as a feeling of voyeurism. Nevertheless, she regarded women racist activists as ‘ends,’ as complex individuals, and sought to accurately represent their lives rather than categorizing them as ‘deviant’ (Blee, 1998). Blee (1998)’s research stresses the significance of emotions and positionality in the establishment of working relationships with participants in qualitative research. Such relationships are negotiated between the researcher and participants. Indeed, engaging with one another is a two-way practice (Hoskins & White, 2013). The researcher should facilitate working relationships but cannot predict or guide them in their entirety.

Of course, this research project did not involve engaging with groups or individuals whose values differ from mine as drastically as was the case for Blee (1998), who interviewed racist women activists. Nevertheless, Blee’s (1998) research demonstrates that it is possible to conduct meaningful interviews even when the researcher’s values are diametrically opposed to those of participants. To a lesser extent, this research project exposed me to diverging opinions on conservation practices and beliefs at Lac Montjoie, some of which were more or less in accordance with my own personal perspectives. Without minimizing the potential significance of my own positionality or the emotionality associated with conservation practices, I suggest that relational interviewing represented an adapted method to build significant working relationships with participants. I also argue that it allowed me to gather diversified data.

4.2.2.2 Positionality

Although I had no contacts in Saint-Denis-de-Brompton and no travel history to Lac Montjoie prior to this research project, I share a similar language and social characteristics with the research participants living along the lake. Indeed, I currently live in Estrie, next to a small lake where activities are regulated by an association of riparian households. I am also a frequent

visitor of national parks managed by the Sépaq. Accordingly, I consider myself as possessing core characteristics of an insider researcher (Zhao, 2017). The notion of ‘insider’ is closely linked to questions of a researcher’s view towards the concept of objectivity, as in finding a balance between engaging with participants and remaining ‘neutral’ (Hoskins & White, 2013). Sharing that I am a riparian dweller myself facilitated access to the Lac Montjoie community and the establishment of feelings of trust and understanding (Beoku-Betts, 1994).

As the interviews progressed, I experienced ‘spaces of betweenness’ in relation to the idea of researcher as an insider/outsider (Nast, 1994; Zhao, 2017). More precisely, the notion of ‘betweenness’ refers to the idea “that a researcher is separate from yet related to the researched” (Zhao, 2017, p. 186). Indeed, at the beginning of the research project, my level of knowledge regarding the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project was similar to that of the riparian dwellers. Public information relating to the project remains scarce, with the main source of information being a map of the expected future boundaries of the park (Figure 6). However, the more I conducted interviews, the more I had access to information regarding potential development plans at Lac Montjoie. I eventually managed to assemble the data to get an overall idea of past and current negotiations regarding the expansion project. Accordingly, I was eventually in a position where I could be an informer for riparian households. However, the information I had gathered was not confirmed by documentation from the MFFP or the Sépaq. I also did not wish to influence participants’ views of the expansion project. I started to become more aware of my shifting positionality (Zhao, 2017) and the need to balance information sharing, particularly when participants had very little knowledge on the specificities of the project (Unluer, 2012). For instance, during an interview with a newly established resident at Lac Montjoie, I disclosed information about development plans targeting parcels of land located near

her home. As the participant had limited contact with the APLM, she had not consulted documentation summarizing the negotiation between the APLM, the Sépaq, and the MFFP. I considered that sharing such information was relevant in order to discuss her impressions on the project. I attempted to remain as neutral as possible when disclosing the information to avoid influencing her view of the expansion project.

Considering that social and personal characteristics shape interactions, perceptions, and reactions (Fujii, 2017), I practised critical auto-reflexivity during interviews and note transcription. My objective was to understand how my own subjectivity may impact my interactions with collaborators, the selection of data, data analysis, and the writing of my thesis (Compaoré, 2017). I kept an interview journal and reflected on my interview notes after transcribing them to evaluate how my positionality may impact the way I viewed and understood the data. When conducting interviews, being confronted with ideas that one opposes or disagrees with sometimes impedes engagement with participants, as these exchanges may challenge some aspects of our identity (Hoskins & White, 2013).

In my case, I was not under the impression that conducting this research forced me to question fundamental aspects of my identity, nor have I been confronted with ideas that were diametrically opposed to my values. Nevertheless, I was aware of the possibility of feeling more sympathetic towards Lac Montjoie residents and romanticizing their stories due to my current status as a riparian dweller (Hoskins & White, 2013). Although I did not consistently keep up with the activities carried out by our local association over the years, I developed a feeling of attachment for the area where I live and value certain practices (e.g., avoiding gasoline motorboats, not feeding ducks) aimed at conserving the lake. Accordingly, I had to be careful not to merge my own experiences with those of Lac Montjoie riparian dwellers.

4.3 Analysis

This last section specifies the conceptualization of ‘discourse analysis’ in the context of this research. More precisely, I elaborate on the concept of discourse and its interpretation as applied in a Foucauldian critical analysis. Subsequently, I present the coding process I utilized, which consists of a cyclical and heuristic analysis of the data using a combination of traditional and digital means.

4.3.1 Discourse

There are multiple definitions of discourse. Locke (2004) makes a distinction between discourse as an ‘abstract noun’ and discourse as a ‘countable noun’. The former is mainly related to representations of the world through language, namely through texts, while the latter is concerned with constructions of meaning. Accordingly, discourse as a countable noun “can involve matters like context, background information or knowledge shared between a speaker and hearer” (Bloor et al., 2013, p. 7). For Lynch (2007), non-verbal cues, the unsaid, and social contexts can be included in the study of meaning for written and spoken language. In this sense, discourse is a social phenomenon that possesses a structure and involves processes, such as intentionally putting forward elements of one’s subjectivity to convey meaning (Charaudeau, 2007; Phillips, 2004). Discourse also constitutes a relational form of communication involving the production of knowledge, meanings and norms that simultaneously shape and regulate behaviours and interpretations of reality through language (Charaudeau, 2007; Phillips, 2004). Such construction of meaning is embedded in history and standardized in discourse, thus constituting a political process (Forsyth, 2019).

4.3.1.1 Foucauldian Critical Discourse Analysis

In his book *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault (2002) provides insights on his theoretical conceptualization of the notion of discourse, without outlining specific methods to apply the concept. Nevertheless, he explains the key notion of discursive relations: “they determine the group of relations that discourse must establish in order to speak of this or that object, in order to deal with them, name them, analyze them, classify them, explain them, etc.” (Foucault, 2002, p. 51). In other words, when Foucault (2002) mentions discourse, he does not refer to the utterance of text, but rather to the social processes – shaped by institutions, contexts and norms – that allow an object to exist. Discourses establish rules, or ‘conditions of possibility’, pertaining to what can and cannot be said, how, by whom and in which circumstances in a given period of time (Phillips, 2004). Accordingly, discourse is intrinsically related to notions of power, knowledge, and subjectivity, as the production of discourse reflects power relations and challenges to the ‘conditions of possibility’ (Phillips, 2004). McHoul & Grace (1993) consequently regard Foucault as a critical discourse theorist.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) considers discourse as a historically situated representation of social contexts (Schröter & Taylor, 2018). CDA refers to the analysis of discourse with the objective of identifying “structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, and control” (Wodak, 2001, p. 3). A central idea of CDA is that individuals are active; they can interact with discourses and, as a result, contest dominant understandings of reality and present alternatives (Locke, 2004; Wodak, 2001). This element is foundational to this research project, as I intend to understand how the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers view conservation and ongoing negotiations regarding the expansion project. Indeed, CDA consists of analyzing not only the texts, but also the processes that resulted in the creation of these texts, particularly

within social institutions (Wodak, 2001). Consequently, the relevance of CDA for this research is principally related to its emphasis on the existence of a multiplicity of discourses and the manner in which such multiplicity leads to the production of varying ‘conditions of possibility’ (Phillips, 2004). As such, I consider three conservation discourses from three different types of actors involved in the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project, namely, a ministry (the MFFP), a state agent (the Sépaq), and a local community (Lac Montjoie riparian dwellers).

The researcher’s subjectivity is the most significant limit associated with CDA, which is an interpretative method of analysis. Therefore, results are informed by one’s understanding, criteria, and selection of data (Locke, 2004). Researchers’ biases may affect the selection of texts, codes, and interpretations (Von Münchow, 2018). This limit to CDA further demonstrates the relevance of practising critical auto-reflexivity during the entirety of the research project (Compaoré, 2017).

4.3.2 Coding

I qualitatively coded the data using a combination of traditional means (highlighting, colour coding, sticky notes) and more recent means (digital classification of the data in charts in Microsoft Word). The process was cyclical (Saldaña, 2009); I utilized traditional means to execute the first cycle of coding in order to identify tendencies and major themes. More precisely, this first step consisted of identifying the broad concepts and assumptions of the riparian dwellers, the MFFP and the Sépaq. For the subsequent cycles, I classified the information using digital charts drawing from Feldman (2017)’s framework which I describe in Section 2.1.

More precisely, I first classified the data from each document based on the categories of ‘process,’ ‘power,’ and ‘purpose.’ Then, I summarized these results into a second set of charts to determine the conservation discourses expressed by the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers (see Chapter 6). The process was heuristic, in that some codes were predetermined to provide some consistency in the analysis of each document, while others were determined during the analysis of the data to avoid imposing meanings on the texts (Saldaña, 2009). The predetermined codes were ‘process,’ ‘agenda setting,’ ‘means,’ ‘actors,’ ‘power,’ ‘authority sources,’ ‘exercise of authority,’ ‘purpose,’ ‘objectives,’ ‘norms,’ and ‘values’ as these concepts are at the core of my conceptual framework. These codes are descriptive because they organize information so that data can be related to specific conservation discourses (Saldaña, 2009). The second category of codes were not predetermined. They emerged in subsequent coding cycles to assess actors’ specific perspectives on conservation and to further specify my descriptive codes. Examples include ‘nature’s guardians,’ ‘temporality,’ and ‘emotional attachment’.

4.4 Conclusion

The gathering, analysis and interpretation of both secondary and primary interview data will allow me to identify variations in conservation discourses among the MFFP, the Sépaq, and Lac Montjoie riparian dwellers in the context of the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project. As such, I conducted a case study situated at Lac Montjoie to better understand the processes, power practices and objectives of the three main actors I selected regarding conservation. In this sense, I use a Foucauldian critical discourse analysis to analyze and interpret the data gathered from the 23 interviews I conducted and from official documentation of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and the riparian community. I then classified the information based on Feldman’s framework in Chapter 5. In doing so, I was able to determine the discourses of the

MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers, to compare them, and to situate their respective narratives in conservation discourse literature in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

This thesis seeks to demystify variations in conservation discourses in relation to the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project. Accordingly, my research question asks: “How does the planned expansion of Mont-Orford National Park expose variations in conservation discourses among the MFFP, the Sépaq, and Lac Montjoie riparian residents?” Under this broad research question, I have two sub-questions: “What are the main conservation discourses put forward by these three actors?”; “How do the three dimensions of Feldman’s framework, namely process, power and purpose, manifest in the conservation discourses of these actors?”.

This chapter elaborates on the results I gathered from interviews and official documentation. I organize these results along Feldman’s (2017) conceptualization of ‘process,’ ‘power,’ and ‘purpose,’ a key component from my conceptual framework (see Section 2.1). In other words, I consider the processes that each actor employs to implement conservation initiatives, how power is exercised, and the purposes motivating conservation initiatives. This conceptual framework enables me to situate the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers’ conservation discourses within the literature in the analysis chapter. This framework also allows me to assess complementarities and divergences between global conservation discourses and the conservation discourses of three Quebec-based actors.

5.1 Process

In this section, I present the processes by which the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers set a conservation agenda. I then elaborate on the means that each actor uses to practise conservation. As will become evident, these aspects manifest in similar ways for the MFFP and the Sépaq, due to their links with the Government of Quebec as a ministry and a state agency,

respectively.²⁰ I discuss the riparian community separately as it possesses no similar connections to the Government of Quebec.

5.1.1 Agenda setting

5.1.1.1 The MFFP and the Sépaq

Both the MFFP and the Sépaq's agenda primarily reflect governmental priorities. In the MFFP's park division and in the context of the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project, agenda setting aligns with three main governmental orientations enshrined in the *Politique sur les Parcs Nationaux du Québec* (MFFP, 2018b, p. 1). These three orientations are to expand the Quebec network of national parks; to conserve natural, cultural and scenic heritage; and to support citizens' quality of life and that of their community. Given these parameters, decisions to create or expand national parks account for how a targeted territory is representative of Quebec's natural landscape, its biodiversity, scenic and recreational tourism values, accessibility, and levels of support from local and Indigenous groups (MFFP, 2018b). The MFFP prioritizes national park projects based on governmental orientations and on how the creation/expansion of national parks yield economic prospects in terms of diversifying and stimulating regional economies (MFFP, 2018b).

These aspects guide decisions on future developments (e.g., new types of accommodation) aiming to increase the 'attractiveness' of nature tourism while ensuring long-term territorial integrity (Savard & Caron, 2020; Sépaq, 2017). As such, the Sépaq anticipates and identifies sociodemographic trends and expectations from a diversified 'clientele' (Sépaq, 2017). As an "agent of the state with a commercial vocation" (Savard & Caron, 2020, p. 35), the

²⁰ I therefore present the MFFP and the Sépaq processes together, and stress distinctions when they arise. I use the same approach throughout this chapter and in Chapter 6.

Sépaq is responsible for the application of governmental conservation policies aligned with the *Loi sur les Parcs* in national parks (Sépaq, 2016, 2017).

5.1.1.2 Riparian Residents and the APLM

At Lac Montjoie, agenda setting is overseen by the *Association pour la Protection du Lac Montjoie* (APLM), which is intended to represent the priorities of the riparian dwellers and guided by scientific knowledge gathered from water analysis (Boucher et al., 2006, R18). Since the APLM created its guiding charter in 1970, it has aimed to: maintain the lake's water quality and environment by uniting the riparian community; prevent and overcome water pollution by all legal means; uphold tranquility and hygiene standards; and facilitate the delivery of community services (Boucher et al., 2006).

The APLM “claims to be the inheritors of the priests” (R6), highlighting that riparian residents share a vision of conservation that derives from the heritage of the Philosophat Saint-Charles. Hence, the APLM says it acts as an ‘avant-garde’ entity holding the responsibility to continue the environmental protection legacy of the priests. Yet, the APLM seeks to avoid the replication of past ‘mistakes’ from the early 1970s and the first residential development phase (see Chapter 4). Measures have since been adopted to address these effects, including forbidding fertilizers, compost, and gasoline motorboats, and imposing a 10-meter-wide protection zone along the shore and coastline (Boucher et al., 2006, p. 55). Riparian dwellers thus consider that the APLM's current agenda and priorities testify to a ‘change of mentality’ regarding practices, behaviours, and systems of regulation that aim to ensure water quality.

5.1.2 Means and Actors

5.1.2.1 *The MFFP and the Sépaq*

The MFFP oversees environmental regulations enshrined in the *Loi sur la Conservation et la Mise en Valeur de la Faune* and related documents (MFFP, 2021c). The law specifies the rights, obligations, and prohibitions that hunters, trappers, and fishers must observe (MFFP, 2021c). In order to ensure the development and sustainable management of the national park network, the MFFP can acquire property ‘amiably’ or by expropriation (*Loi sur les Parcs*, 2001). In all circumstances and as specified in the *Loi sur les Parcs* (2001), the creation or closing of a park, as well as changes to the borders of an existing park, all have to be announced in the *Gazette Officielle du Québec*. The law further specifies that after this is done, citizens have a 60-day period to express their opposition to the project in written form to the *Ministre du Développement Durable, de l’Environnement et des Parcs* (MDDEP). Public hearings must also be held before the project is officialized (*Loi sur les Parcs*, 2001).

The MFFP has access to a variety of means for planning and monitoring. Notably, the zoning of national parks “divides up a national park into different zones in order to adjust the degree of protection provided to a sector” (MFFP, 2018a, p. 16). The Sépaq is responsible for ensuring that park visitors abide with the MFFP zoning regulation (Sépaq, 2021a). Most of the Mont-Orford National Park area is dedicated to ‘*Préservation*’ (preservation) and ‘*Ambiance*’ (natural environment zones), both of which allow for the exploration and discovery of ambient environments (Figure 9) (*Règlement sur les parcs*, 2020). ‘*Récréation intensive*’ (intensive recreation zones) include golf and/or ski stations, while reception, information and management services can be found in ‘*Services*’ (services zones) (*Règlement sur les parcs*, 2020). The MFFP is also responsible for ensuring the ‘good practices’ of lease holders in national parks, such as the

Club de golf du Mont Orford and Station de ski Mont Orford (MFFP, 2018b). Leases set conditions for the planning and development of activities (MFFP, 2018b, p. 34).

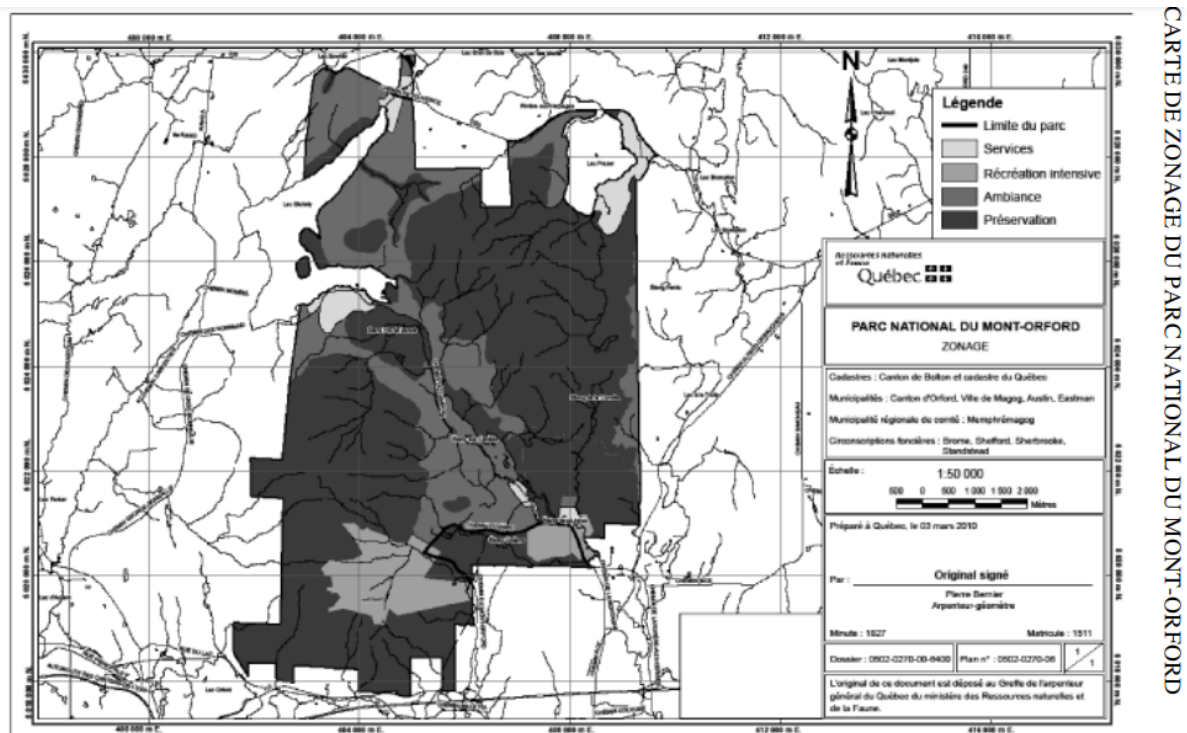


Figure 9. Zoning of Mont-Orford National Park. (Québec: Éditeur officiel du Québec, 2020).

The MFFP regulates the extent to which national parks are accessible to the public, establishes the conditions under which people can frequent these areas, and sets the criteria for expelling individuals from parks. Correspondingly, the government of Quebec adopts regulations aiming to “ensure order” (Loi sur les Parcs, 2001, p. 5). Accessing, visiting, circulating and practising an activity in a national park requires buying a permit delivered by the *MMMEP* or the *Sépaq* (Loi sur les Parcs, 2001; MFFP, 2021e; Savard & Caron, 2020). Forbidden activities include hunting; trapping; exploiting forestry, mineral or energetic resources; building pipelines or transmission lines; making fires outside prescribed areas; and modifying a park’s fauna and flora by, for instance, cutting a tree, introducing a new species in a park, or feeding animals (Loi sur les parcs, 2001; MFFP, 2021c). Additionally, commercial activities cannot be conducted by

actors other than the Sépaq without approval or a contract from the *ministry* (Loi sur les Parcs, 2001).

The MFFP and the Sépaq emphasize participatory processes, particularly in relation to knowledge acquisition and decision-making. Both institutions claim that they consult scientists, local and indigenous communities, ministries and governmental organizations, and highlight the need to cooperate with peripheral regional actors, such as municipalities, ministries, and conservation groups (MFFP, 2018b; Sépaq, 2021a). Both the MFFP and the Sépaq collaborate with Indigenous communities through consultations and the valorization of traditional knowledge (MFFP, 2018b; Sépaq, 2021a). They have also undertaken public consultations and joined consultative committees and coordinating groups (MFFP, 2018b; Sépaq, 2021a). The Sépaq also emphasizes ‘collaboration among neighbours’ as an approach to foster regional dynamism (Sépaq, 2021a, p. 42). It further claims that its *Programme de Suivi des Indicateurs Environnementaux* (PSIE) enables conservation plans to be established based on a park’s characteristics and the tracking of parks’ ‘health’ (Savard & Caron, 2020; Sépaq, 2017). Plans are created in a “decompartmentalized”, “adaptable” and “flexible” manner where actors continuously share knowledge (Sépaq, 2017, p. 11).

A core aspect distinguishing the Sépaq from the MFFP is its focus on nature tourism as a way to achieve conservation and raise awareness (Savard & Caron, 2020; Sépaq, 2021a). The Sépaq offers ‘nature products,’ outdoor activities and services to Quebecers and foreigner visitors (Sépaq, 2017). Its clientele is composed of tourists, schools, and corporations (Sépaq, 2017). The Sépaq markets and promotes its ‘products’ and ‘experiences’ by collaborating with online ‘influencers’, creating web capsules to demonstrate the accessibility of parks, and organizing free activities (Savard & Caron, 2020). In addition to nature tourism, the Sépaq

conducts ecological characterization and intervenes to manage animal populations (e.g., whitetail deer, wolves, Torngat Mountain caribou) and plant species (e.g., Japanese Knotweed, watermilfoil) when judged necessary (Savard & Caron, 2020; Sépaq, 2021a).

5.1.2.2 Riparian Residents and the APLM

The APLM's means for regulation, management, and monitoring differ from those of the MFFP and the Sépaq. Riparian dwellers must respect regulations such as protecting a 10-meter-wide zone adjacent to the coastline, as well as the banning of gasoline motorboats (Boucher et al., 2006). Furthermore, land purchase agreements passed between the Philosphat Saint Charles and early residents contained 13 clauses aimed at ensuring the lake's conservation (Boucher et al., 2006), as discussed in Section 3.4.2. However, an informant confirmed these clauses had no binding legal value whatsoever (R20).

In addition to these regulations and clauses, the APLM makes recommendations pertaining to reforestation, boat cleaning, maintaining water quality, and the banning of pesticides, fertilizers and compost. It also manages non-human species through fish stocking and interventions aimed at preventing the spread of watermilfoil (Boucher et al., 2006). Almost all the riparian dwellers interviewed mentioned the sanitary sewer system established in 1974 as one of the main means to ensure water quality and a demonstration of the “avant-garde” character of Lac Montjoie (R6, R17). As the APLM does not wield the legal authority to enforce its recommendations, it relies instead on sensibilizing the population, ‘educating’ new residents, and applying political pressure and leading political actions. Accordingly, the APLM acts as a “patrol” (R8) or “lake police” (R14).

Additionally, the APLM conducts multiple water tests and analyses and shares results during its annual assemblies (Boucher et al., 2006). It also collaborates with associations such as the *Fédération des Associations pour la Protection de l'Environnement et des Lacs* (FAPEL) and the *Regroupement des Associations pour la Protection de l'Environnement des Lacs et des Bassins Versants* (RAPPEL).

5.2 Power

This section focuses on the ability of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers to influence decision-making and biopolitical processes (Feldman, 2017). Accordingly, I first discuss how the MFFP, the Sépaq, and the APLM act as authority sources in the making of conservation initiatives. Then, I detail how these three actors exercise their authority in the Mont-Orford National Park and/or Lac Montjoie contexts.

5.2.1 Authority Sources

5.2.1.1 The MFFP and the Sépaq

The MFFP and the Sépaq act as authority sources at the provincial level. The MFFP controls and manages national parks, and the Sépaq is responsible for their “exploitation”, albeit with some exceptions that mainly pertain to Nunavik (MFFP, 2018b, p. 3). More precisely, the MFFP plans and develops Quebec’s network of national parks, establishes parks, oversees the exploitation of park by the Sépaq, ensures their surveillance and protection, and manages communications and outreach (MFFP, 2018b).

The Sépaq is an agent of the state. It is an “emotion and memories creator” (Sépaq, 2017, p. 8) with a “commercial vocation” (Savard & Caron, 2020, p. 35). Accordingly, the *Règlement sur les Parcs* (2021e) stipulates that a park director is responsible for the selection of educational

and recreational activities offered in a park. Parks directors (or the MFFP) are responsible for determining when, where and how visitors can conduct such activities in accordance with zoning guidelines (Savard & Caron, 2020). Activities that could negatively affect the fauna, the natural environment, or people's tranquility and well-being are forbidden.

The Sépaq's powers, responsibilities, and structure are determined in the 1984 *Loi sur la Société des Établissements de Plein Air du Québec*. The MFFP is responsible for handling the application of the law, which entitles the Sépaq to 'administer,' 'exploit,' and 'develop' goods and territories that remain in the field of the rule of law. The law mentions that the Sépaq can acquire goods by mutual agreement ('*gré à gré*') and does not have the same expropriation power as the MFFP. In terms of governance, the government of Quebec names the nine members of the Sépaq's board of directors, and determines the salary, social benefits, and overall working conditions of its chief executive officer (Loi sur la Sépaq, 1984; Savard & Caron, 2020).

5.2.1.2 Riparian Residents and the APLM

At Lac Montjoie, the APLM holds authority at the local level, although it has no formal legislative nor coercive power. For instance, those who fail to comply with the APLM charter face no sanction (R23) and paying the annual subscription fee is not mandatory (R6). Additionally, as R2 pointed out, bodies of water fall under federal jurisdiction and riparian citizens or resident associations have no rights over lakes. Nevertheless, regulations and environmental studies contribute to most residents at Lac Montjoie perceiving the APLM and its conservation measures as legitimate and necessary (R6). Indeed, the APLM emphasizes measures that abide to, and reinforce, legal guidelines. It has also maintained a longstanding collaboration with Université de Sherbrooke-based researchers, shared knowledge and expertise

with the RAPPEL, and taken part in its shore rewilding program (Boucher et al., 2006). Such collaborations contribute to maintaining the APLM's autonomy and control of conservation processes at Lac Montjoie (R6).

5.2.2 Exercise of Authority

5.2.2.1 *The MFFP and the Sépaq*

The MFFP and the Sépaq's exercise of authority both reflects and relies on provincial legislation, primarily Québec's *Loi sur les Parcs* (2001) and the *Règlement sur les Parcs* (MFFP, 2021e). Firstly, the 2001 law sets park creation procedures and lists penal provisions for those violating park regulations, such as fines, confiscation of banned possessions, permit suspensions (for hunting), and even imprisonment (*Loi sur les Parcs*, 2001). Secondly, both the *Loi* (2001) and *Règlement* (MFFP, 2021e) establish park entry fees and circulation guidelines. Thirdly, the MFFP oversees zoning and visitors' access, stays and activities, and determines the roles and responsibilities of national park employees (*Loi sur les Parcs*, 2001).

5.2.2.2 *Riparian Residents and the APLM*

Riparian residents' exercise of authority differs significantly, mostly because the APLM holds no formal legislative authority. The APLM's exercise of authority comes in part from Lac Montjoie residents' perception that the APLM represents the riparian community. The APLM's perceived legitimacy was particularly salient in comments on the APLM's water protection measures, and its role in raising awareness regarding the lake's protection. Conservation measures were described as "salutary" (R1), "normal" (R3), and justified by scientific studies (R6, R11, R14). Most of the residents I met also acknowledged the great expertise of the APLM's board of directors. Yet, some wondered whether the measures that the APLM

champions sufficed considering the lake's "fragility" (R9). Others, like R11, mentioned: "At first, we thought they were a little intense [...] Now, we agree 100%." R11 explained that his opinion towards the APLM's recommendations changed after "understanding" the environmental motives behind such measures, and the connection between the condition of the lake and the financial value of riparian houses. Like him, most residents express trusting the expertise of APLM.²¹

For instance, R10, when asked whether he trusted people living outside of Lac Montjoie to apply conservation measures, replied: "I trust our organization [the APLM]". Research participants also mentioned that both residents and the APLM exercise peer pressure that shape behaviours. R11 recalled an APLM meeting during which 'residents with green grass' – a formula frequently used by participants to talk about households suspected of using fertilizers and pesticides – were present and 'felt bad.' Another resident, R12, expressed culpability for not being more aware of the APLM and not participating actively in its activities. She confessed that she felt "frustrated" and sent the APLM a letter apologizing for not being more involved. R13 made similar comments, declaring that it was "probably appalling" for her not to know more about the APLM. Both R12 and R13 are newly established permanent residents at Lac Montjoie.

The APLM's lack of formal legislative power becomes evident when riparian dwellers do not respect recommendations regarding the lake and the surrounding environment. A member of the APLM commented that "we [the APLM] are purists, but we don't have authority over people [...] there is no police" (R14). Instead, the APLM relies on scientific knowledge and on disseminating this knowledge to members. Another way the APLM exercises authority without

²¹ Although most participants shared a relatively positive view of the APLM, others expressed having reservations about the way the APLM is managed and decided not to pay the membership fee.

formal power is through political action. As a ‘neighbour’, the APLM executive was invited to meet with MFFP and Sépaq representatives to discuss the Mont-Orford expansion project (R6). The APLM adopted a confrontational approach during the first such meeting in an attempt to maintain access to Lac Montjoie restricted. The AMPL then changed to a more collaborative tone in two follow-up meetings in hopes to reach a compromise. These three meetings had already been held by the time I started conducting fieldwork.

Regarding the Mont-Orford National Park expansion plan, the APLM currently undergoes what R6 qualifies as “peripheral processes” and “peripheral strategies.” These mainly consist of raising awareness among politicians regarding increased access at Lac Montjoie, and exercising political pressures by collaborating with ‘peripheral’ actors (e.g., charitable organizations, professionals, ministries). R16 also recalled that the APLM presented documentation from the 2006 protests when meeting with elected politicians to demonstrate that people had mobilized in the past regarding Mont-Orford and could potentially do so again.

Riparian residents conveyed that their ability to sensitize external actors and exercise political pressure comes from their “knowledge of the environment” (R1) of Lac Montjoie. Such local knowledge has made them aware of the ‘fragility’ of the lake, a shallow source lake with a long water renewal time of approximately two years (R6, R21, R22). Riparian dwellers expressed concerns regarding the lake being considered “like any other lake” (R5). R5 explained: “We know the terrain, we can tell them what conditions have to be maintained [...] we are in a good position to maintain the quality of what we have”. Most riparian collaborators called for the APLM and residents to be further involved in the decision-making processes surrounding the expansion project for this same reason.

5.3 Purpose

In this third section, I elaborate on the MFFP's, the Sépaq's and the Lac Montjoie riparian community's perspectives regarding the purpose of conservation processes. I first detail the tangible objectives each actor pursues. I then present the main beliefs and values associated with such objectives, focussing specifically on the notions of 'common good' and access to nature. I concentrate on these two aspects since most interview participants linked the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project with discussions on the desirability of increased public access to the park and who would benefit from such access. I conclude this section by probing ongoing discussions between the Sépaq and the APLM regarding the creation of a hostel project, which illustrates the latter actor's attempt to compromise in light of diverging opinions on the topic of access.

5.3.1 Objectives

5.3.1.1 *The MFFP and the Sépaq*

The *Plan Stratégique* (2021c) of the MFFP emphasizes economic development via the forestry sector – representing 2% of the provincial GDP – as an “economic engine for the province of Quebec and its regions” (MFFP, 2021c, p. 5). However, language is different when it comes to parks. For instance, the MFFP (2018b, p. 2) states that national parks “protect [a natural collective heritage] in perpetuity” while “instilling pride” among the province's population. ‘Perpetuity’ is associated with preserving biodiversity, limiting the impact of human activities and facilitating harmonious cohabitation of humans with their surrounding environment (p. 15). The Sépaq's 2018-2019 annual report also state that national parks' primary objective is to “ensure the conservation and permanent protection of territories [...] while making them

accessible to the public for education and extensive recreation purposes” (Savard & Caron, 2020, p. 2).

According to email exchanges with the MFFP (who also responded in the name of the Sépaq, see Section 4.2.2), the Mont-Orford expansion project abides to the objectives from the *Politique sur les Parcs Nationaux du Québec* (2018b), which aim to: “continue the development of the network of national parks in Quebec” (p. 11); “ensure the conservation of natural, cultural and landscape heritage” (p. 15); and “contribute to the quality of life of citizens and communities” (p. 23). These orientations seek to achieve the ‘double objective’ of ensuring conservation and enhancing access, while simultaneously contributing to regional development. In this way, the overlying project guiding the conservation activities of the MFFP, including the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project, is to ensure the durability of national parks while rendering them more accessible – through offering recreational and educational activities – to contribute to regional development and foster a feeling of pride towards the parks’ natural, cultural and landscape heritage among Quebecers.

The Sépaq’s objectives closely align with those of the MFFP (Savard & Caron, 2020, p. 5). Briefly put, the Sépaq’s objectives encompass (re)connecting the population of Quebec with nature via a customer experience that fosters a perennial feeling of pride and belonging towards provincial natural heritage among current and future generations. The Sépaq is responsible for fostering feelings of “wonder,” encouraging “relaxation” and providing leisure activities that showcase natural resources to the highest number of individuals possible (Savard & Caron, 2020, p. 4; Sépaq, 2017, p. 5, 7; 2021a, p. 5). As such, the Sépaq provides opportunities for recreational and educational activities that increase the likeliness of the population favouring the conservation of natural spaces (Savard & Caron, 2020). The Sépaq and

MFFP thus share the same double objective of making protected territories accessible while preserving their biodiversity.

Furthermore, the concept of ‘sustainability’ that is central to the Sépaq’s mandate is multilayered. Here, the Sépaq must ensure the sustainability of territories and assets entrusted by the government, the sustainability of biological diversity, and the sustainability of its own finances (Sépaq, 2017). Consequently, a related objective is to offer a distinctive, personalized, and improved customer experience by diversifying the Sépaq’s services and customer base (Savard & Caron, 2020; Sépaq, 2017).

5.3.1.2 Riparian Residents and the APLM

Among the riparian community, regardless of the opinions expressed about the Mont-Orford expansion project, the most salient objective of conservation was to maintain water quality at Lac Montjoie. In this regard, the 1970 APLM charter mentions the objective to unite the lakeside population to conserve the lake water’s “natural beauty” and “purity” (Boucher et al., 2006, p. 61, 63). Research participants emphasized that preserving water quality is their main priority in regard to the expansion project, and that this is particularly important since the lake serves as a source of drinking water for many riparian households. The threat of watermilfoil colonizing the lake also stood out as the greatest ‘fear’ among interviewees and contributes to a shared desire to avoid the presence of boats ‘from outside’ and raise awareness of this plant’s threat among the riparian population. Banning boats from ‘outside’ is understood as one of the most effective strategy in containing the spread of the invasive watermilfoil, particularly considering that nearby lakes are currently coping with watermilfoil contamination.

The objective to maintain the lake's 'natural state' was frequently mentioned among participants. R13 and R22, for instance, pointed out the necessity of maintaining a balance between the fauna and the number of people enjoying the lake. Riparian residents link 'natural state' with the notion of longevity. Accordingly, limiting human interventions on the lake or near its shores would benefit the lake life cycle and concomitantly allow current and future generations to enjoy this environment.

The idea of the lake's 'natural state' connects with a major conservation objective that many interviewees share, namely, to maintain Lac Montjoie's tranquil, peaceful and relaxing atmosphere for current and future generations. The APLM conveys that the absence of gasoline-powered motorboats greatly contributes to maintaining a 'paradisiac character' and limiting noise pollution (Boucher et al., 2006). Some interviewees even suggested that Lac Montjoie was even too calm and somewhat boring at times. While protecting the lake's 'natural state' stood out as a clear objective driving conservation measures, the idea of tranquility was debated among participants. R22 said – quietly – that “tranquility” is a taboo word that should not be uttered. When asked to elaborate, R22 added that riparian dwellers' desire to maintain a sense of “tranquility” contributes to perceptions of Lac Montjoie's riparian population as privileged and eager to keep blocking public access to the lake. R22 further argued that overcoming such negative perceptions without granting public access is a challenging endeavour.

Whereas interviewees seldom mentioned economic development as an objective, many referred to a connection between the value of their houses and the lake's water quality. According to R18, economic development is necessary, but it must respect nature and be conducted in a 'decent' and 'respectful' manner. Therefore, rather than refusing development

projects per se, R18 considers that the community should instead justify their opposition and find solutions.

5.3.2 Beliefs and Values: The Concept of Common Good

5.3.2.1 *The MFFP and the Sépaq.*

Both the MFFP and the Sépaq consider access to nature as a common good to be shared by the greatest number of individuals and view enhancing people's access as a way contribute to a healthy lifestyle and increase environmental awareness and pride (MFFP, 2021c; Sépaq, 2017, 2021a). Yet, official documents do not substantiate nor nuance this claim in much more detail.

5.3.2.2 *Riparian Residents and the APLM.*

Lac Montjoie's residents also emphasized links between conservation and the common good, although their version of the latter concept remains vague and debated. More precisely, I encountered varying versions of the notion of 'common good' and whom it should include. The first interpretation understands the private character of Lac Montjoie as a facilitator for the achievement of the 'common good'. This interpretation exclusively includes Lac Montjoie riparian dwellers and excludes other people, either implicitly or explicitly. Many interviewees primarily referred to the riparian community when insisting that the APLM's conservation measures were beneficial for 'all'. This first interpretation identifies the APLM as the entity responsible for ensuring the wellbeing of 'all' riparian residents as a group of sensibilized individuals, thus justifying restricted access. The second interpretation expands the notion of 'common good' to people from 'outside' (i.e., the general population), claiming that access to the lake would be beneficial for all who wish to enjoy it. Those emphasizing this second

interpretation connected it with the concept of social justice, arguing that it would be more just to provide greater access.

5.3.3 Beliefs and Values: Access to Nature

5.3.3.1 The MFFP and the Sépaq

Both the Sépaq and the MFFP put forward the notion of a ‘nature-deficit’ among Quebec’s population, referring to the limited amount of time people spend in natural settings (MFFP, 2018b; Sépaq, 2017). The MFFP attributes this deficit to a lack of access to nature, which can be addressed by the Sépaq offering increasingly high-quality nature tourism options to a greater customer base (MFFP, 2018b; Sépaq, 2017). The Sépaq claims that nature contributes to healthy lifestyles that foster physical and psychological wellbeing (Savard & Caron, 2020; Sépaq, 2017). The Sépaq thus considers itself as “a staple” (Sépaq, 2017, p. 5) in providing opportunities to unwind and live memorable experiences. The Sépaq sees greater access and connection with nature causing the ‘outdoors’ to become more central to Quebec culture, or even lead to people “falling in love” with nature: “Future generations will also be able to fall in love with nature and mobilize to protect it” (Sépaq, 2021a, p. 42). Luc Blanchette, MFFP minister, declared in his opening statement of the *Politique sur les Parcs Nationaux du Québec* (MFFP, 2018b) that conservation is a cultural project that rallies people around a common identity. This perspective links to the belief that (re)connecting with Quebec’s natural heritage contributes to an intergenerational sense of pride and feeling of belonging, which encourages conservation and sustainable development (Savard & Caron, 2020; Sépaq, 2016, 2017).

5.3.3.2 *Riparian Residents and the APLM*

While the riparian community expressed a diversity of opinions on the notion of access, all participants highlighted tensions between enhanced public access and potential environmental impacts on the lake. Interestingly, support for the expansion project was not automatically linked with support for greater access to Lac Montjoie. Similarly, a negative view of the expansion project does not necessarily correspond to a strictly negative view of increased access (Table 6). Instead, regardless of their opinion on the expansion project, riparian dwellers share a common concern over the potential negative impacts of increased access on the environment and the peaceful character of Lac Montjoie.

Table 6. Opinions of Riparian Dwellers on the Expansion Project and Increased Access²²

		Opinion on the expansion project		
		Against	Ambivalent	In favour
Opinion on increased access	Against	2	0	0
	Ambivalent	3	9	3
	In favour	0	0	5

In the context of the expansion project, arguments against increasing access included doubts about the Sépaq’s ability to properly account for Lac Montjoie’s specificities as a source lake with exceptional water quality and no watermilfoil. R21 argued that these two features make Lac Montjoie “a small pearl that must be exploited” in the eyes of the Sépaq, an organization

²² One riparian dweller did not express an opinion on the subject.

that, according to R21, would seek to make the lake accessible to the greatest number of people possible. Most interviewees mentioned the terms ‘fragility’ and ‘vulnerability’ in relation to the lake and elaborated on the risks that increased access might have on water quality. They stressed that the lake remains a source of drinking water for many riparian households. Noise pollution was another concern, especially for newly established residents and those living closer to the land acquired by the MFFP and targeted for park expansion. Another resident explicitly mentioned he would prefer maintaining a private access to the lake (R23).

My interview data highlight that many residents fear that the achievements and efforts of the APLM over the past 40-50 years would vanish as a result of the expansion project. Riparian residents who are ambivalent or against the project tend to state that they ‘understand’ the ‘enhancing access’ argument, but they also claim that the Sépaq ought to be as rigorous as the residents: “we were so excessively careful about everything” (R1). If the Sépaq were too lax about protecting the lake, interviewees conveyed that the degradation of Lac Montjoie would be extremely rapid. Other lakes nearby – such as Lac Fraser which is under the Sépaq’s jurisdiction – were cited as examples where watermilfoil contamination and people disregarding boat speed limits had become major problems. Some participants questioned why Lac Larouche had been excluded from the expansion project, despite its shorelines being completely surrounded by the park’s expected new limits (Figure 6). Land surrounding Lac Larouche belongs to the Bombardier foundation and was, according to press reports (Larocque, 2019), excluded from the project to allow BRP, a Bombardier subsidiary, to continue jet ski testing.²³ Some riparian dwellers believe this attests to a double standard: “Bombardier has more power than 100

²³ Bombardier produces jet skis in a nearby plant in Valcourt.

residents. They have to keep the lake to test personal watercraft. Us, we have to keep the lake to protect it, but it's not worth much as an argument" (R22).

Arguments favouring increased access in the context of the expansion project emphasized the notion of security. Notably, R5 expressed: "We are better off with a public authority than no authority at all." The argument states that while the expansion project would bring more people in and around the lake, access would be regulated and less dangerous. This version shows that some residents view the Sépaq and the MFFP as entities that can enforce regulations. Additionally, the expansion project constitutes an "additional guarantee [...] for eternity" (R10) that there will be no residential development in that area. This same argument brought R16 to refer to the project as a "blessing"; the expansion project is 'frightening', but not enough to oppose it. The residents sharing this vision contend that the park is necessary to prevent the construction of condominiums. Interestingly, regardless of whether interviewees were for or against the expansion project and/or increased access, there was a consensus that a public institution is a better neighbour than a private one or a promoter, as debate is possible with a public entity.

Participants in favour of the project tended to feel somewhat isolated from the community and mentioned the need to address 'irrational fears' related to the 'protection versus access' debate. Interviewees stressed the importance of 'logic,' 'reason,' and 'fairness' when establishing strategies to manage increased access to Lac Montjoie. R4 even expressed the idea that "denying access to nature is unnatural." Many participants reported that, currently, only two to five kayaks and sailboards can be seen on the lake during the nice and 'busy' midsummer days. These participants felt that more people should be able to benefit from Lac Montjoie as long as 'outside boats' are prohibited and that the Sépaq oversees the future boat rental service.

Regardless of their point of view on the project, these individuals tended to fear that some park visitors would not respect rules and that the Sépaq would manage the area poorly: “If it happens like it does in other parks, it would be totally unacceptable” (R11).

A significant proportion of riparian dwellers were ambivalent towards both increased access and the expansion project (Table 6). Many mentioned feeling ‘egoistical’ and ‘guilty’ for wanting to keep access to Lac Montjoie restricted, while acknowledging that nature ‘belongs to everybody’ and that people have the right to access it. The issue at stake is thus not necessarily access per se, but rather mistrust towards future visitors and towards the Sépaq’s capabilities in controlling access, as failure could result in water contamination from ‘outside’ boats and mismanagement of trash and human waste. Interviewees claimed that ‘good management’ should ensure that people can visit the lake in a safe, regulated, and controlled manner. However, most believed that the Sépaq lacks the financial resources required to appropriately monitor a territory as vast as the future Mont-Orford National Park. Many also expressed doubts regarding the long-term purpose of the measures currently being negotiated between the MFFP, the Sépaq, and the APLM following their three previous meetings (see Section 3.3.3). Participants stated that nothing can guarantee that development projects beyond what has already been planned at Lac Montjoie (see Section 3.3.3) will not be undertaken. R8 eloquently – and somewhat ironically – conveyed that he maintained: “a healthy skepticism towards the idea that the projects will not change.” These doubts emerge from the perception that the Sépaq’s primary objectives are enhancing access, development, and financial profitability, and that these goals ultimately overshadow its environmental mission.

5.3.4 An Attempt to Reconcile Purposes: The Hostel Project

The exact plans for the Mont-Orford National Park expansion at Lac Montjoie are yet to be confirmed. Nevertheless, interviews with riparian dwellers who did discuss with the Sépaq and MFFP representatives suggest that expansion plans include the building of a boat rental centre, bicycle and hiking trails, as well as the building of 10 ‘micro-cottages’ and one hostel near Lac Montjoie’s shore. The micro-cottages and the hostel would be available for rent by the public. The APLM did not agree with this latter proposition due to concerns over the negative consequences of increased access. As a compromise between the expansion project that emphasizes access for all as promoted by the Sépaq, the APLM proposed that the hostel be dedicated to offering respite care for kids with physical and mental disabilities and their families. As such, access would be “domesticated” (R21), more aligned with the lake’s environmental capacity, and controlled by healthcare and community networks and the municipality. Additionally, the “clientele” would be less “invasive,” according to R21. The hostel project would also ‘fix’ the motivation of the expansion project in time and potentially prevent further developments (R16, R21).

Reportedly, the Sépaq has listened to the riparian community’s concerns, as voiced by the APLM, and made some modifications to the expansion project accordingly. As mentioned in Section 3.3.3, the Sépaq cancelled the project to develop canoe-camping sites on Lac Montjoie’s islands. However, the Sépaq has expressed disapproval towards the respite care centre project, claiming that restricting access to specific groups of people goes against its mandate to ensure public access to the greatest number of people. While a member of the APLM’s board of directors expressed his disappointment regarding the Sépaq’s response, another member remains confident that the project will come to existence, as the Sépaq is apparently not completely

opposed to this idea. In the meantime, the APLM is conducting consultations and exercising political pressure at the municipal and provincial levels to promote the hostel project for kids and their families.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the results of interviews I conducted with Lac Montjoie riparian dwellers and my analyses of official documentation from the MFFP and the Sépaq. More precisely, building from Feldman (2017)'s framework, I described the processes, power practices and purposes of these three actors regarding conservation initiatives. In terms of processes, the MFFP and the Sépaq set their conservation agenda based on governmental priorities, which revolve primarily around the notions of heritage, quality of life, development and 'attractiveness'. The MFFP and the Sépaq employ a variety of participatory and legal means, as well as promote nature tourism, in order to pursue the conservation of national parks. At Lac Montjoie, the APLM is the main entity responsible for establishing conservation priorities, in accordance with the main concerns of residents, namely water quality and the area's overall tranquility. The means employed by the APLM are largely legally unenforceable.

Differences in terms of access to legal means for enforcing rules becomes evident in the 'power' section. The MFFP and the Sépaq exercise power based on provincial legislation and are, in themselves, authority sources. For its part, the APLM has no formal legal power, but it is generally perceived as a legitimate source of authority by residents, principally due to the APLM's gathering of scientific knowledge and collaborations with associations such as RAPPEL and FAPEL. The Lac Montjoie population also expressed that their knowledge of the local terrain constitutes a source of legitimacy justifying their desire to be more directly involved in the elaboration of the expansion project.

Finally, the ‘purpose’ section showcased the objectives, and related beliefs and values of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers. On one hand, the MFFP and the Sépaq seek to secure the permanent protection of natural parks and their heritage, so as to achieve a ‘reconnection’ between people and nature. As such, they conceptualize the idea of the common good as access for all and prioritize increased public access. On the other hand, riparian dwellers formulate their conservation objectives in terms of water quality, tranquility, and the preservation of the ‘natural state’ of Lac Montjoie and its surrounding environment. Riparian dwellers remain ambivalent regarding the idea of the common good and who it includes thus explaining the varying perspectives on the notion of increased access in the context of the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project. Indeed, some riparian dwellers are against increasing access to Lac Montjoie due to its ‘fragile’ character, while others consider that the expansion project will help protect the lake from future residential development. Most interview participants were ambivalent and expressed feeling guilty or egoistical for wishing to maintain restricted access. A common and core preoccupation explaining this ambivalence relates to the potential negative consequences of uncontrolled access to the lake and a lack of surveillance. The APLM’s suggestion to institute the hostel project, which restricts access to Lac Montjoie to a specific population – kids with physical and mental disabilities and their families – represents an attempt to compromise and reconcile the conservation purposes of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers.

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the Foucauldian critical discourse analysis I conducted to answer the research question guiding this project, which is, to recall: “How does the planned expansion of Mont-Orford National Park expose variations in conservation discourses among the MFFP, the Sépaq, and Lac Montjoie riparian residents?” Guided by this broad research question, my sub-questions are: “What are the main conservation discourses put forward by these three actors?”; “How do the three dimensions of Feldman’s framework, namely process, power and purpose, manifest in the conservation discourses of these actors?”.

The analysis is divided in two sections. In the first section, I situate the conservation discourses of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian residents within the literature in light of the processes, practices of power and purposes favoured by each actor, as presented in Chapter 5. In doing so, I analyze the environmentality regimes guiding the discourse of each actor. Then, I assess complementarities and divergences between the global conservation discourses and those that the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers uphold. The second section further investigates variations in the conservation discourses of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian residents in the specific context of the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project. My analysis highlights tensions between how these actors borrow from neoliberal conservation and strict disciplinary (but unenforceable) conservation approaches, and how they interpret ‘truth’ environmentality differently.

6.1 Conservation Discourses

Building from Feldman's (2017) framework, in this section I probe the overall conversation discourses from the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers in light of the processes, practices of power and purposes documented in my conceptual framework. I also investigate how the visions of these actors correspond to how processes, practices of power and purposes typically manifest within 'fortress,' community-based, 'back to the barriers' and/or neoliberal conservation discourses. I argue that the discourse of MFFP and the Sépaq is closer to 'fortress' neoliberal conservation that reflects sovereign, commodifying market-based neoliberal, and 'truth' environmentalities. Lac Montjoie riparian dwellers rather favour disciplinary (yet unenforceable) conservation that encompasses elements of all four conservation discourses, but with important limitations. Their conservation discourse reflects disciplinary and 'truth' environmentalities.

6.1.1 Conservation Discourse of the MFFP and the Sépaq

6.1.1.1 *Environmentalities*

The discourse of the MFFP and the Sépaq represents three environmentalities. The first is sovereign environmentality, which supposes a rationalization of a sovereign's practices to allow for the coherent exercise of authority with appropriate mechanisms (Fletcher, 2010; Foucault, 2003, p. 20). The MFFP embodies this approach mostly through mechanisms such as codified rules, sanctioning and punishments. Likewise, the passing of the 1984 *Loi sur la Société des Établissements de Plein Air du Québec* and subsequent creation of the Sépaq marked a "putative shift from 'government to governance'" (Becker, 2006, p. 284). While the Sépaq acts in a relatively autonomous manner, the MFFP remains an undeniable authority source guiding its activities.

The second environmentality is commodifying market-based neoliberal environmentality, which is embodied primarily by the Sépaq's focus on the provision of a customer experience. The Sépaq's focus on market perspectives and anticipating market trends in nature tourism illustrates its reliance on rational, economic calculations emphasizing cost-benefit analyses models (Fletcher, 2010; Sépaq, 2017). The Sépaq seeks to grant access to parks to the greatest number of people, who pay entry fees, by offering of a multiplicity of recreational and educational activities. This objective connects with the belief that conservation-driven economic growth contributes to social justice, which is understood in terms of access to nature (Fletcher, 2010; Sépaq, 2017).

Both the MFFP and the Sépaq emphasize aspects of 'truth' environmentality, which suggests an inherent and deep-rooted connection between people and nature (Fletcher, 2010). These two actors depict national parks as spaces where education and recreation contribute to an increased and intimate appreciation of the cultural, scenic, and natural heritage of Quebec (Loi sur les Parcs, 2001; MFFP, 2018b, p. 2018, 2021c; Sépaq, 2021a).

6.1.1.2 Conservation Discourse

The conservation discourse of the MFFP and the Sépaq is closer to 'fortress' neoliberal conservation, with restricted aspects of community-based conservation (CBC) and 'back to the barriers conservation.' The 'fortress' aspects of their discourse revolve primarily around the significant role of the state in determining priorities and implementing enforceable means for conservation (Pochet, 2014). The zoning of Quebec's national parks (see Chapter 5, Figure 9), the codification of conditions of stay, and the management of activities exemplify the regulation of visitors' practices in protected areas through enforceable legal means and controlled access (Hutton et al., 2005; Montgomery et al., 2020; Saarinen, 2016). The management of parks

establishes conditions determining which individuals can visit these areas – those paying an entry fee, in the context of the Sépaq –, as well as how individuals ought to use these spaces (Pochet, 2014). Management also targets nonhuman populations that are considered a ‘natural nuisance’ for biodiversity (Montgomery et al., 2020). Examples at Mont-Orford National Park include the control of watermilfoil at Lac Stukely, as well as the characterization and control of common reeds (Savard & Caron, 2020). The practice of sovereign power, characterized by codified rules, monitoring by park rangers and sanctioning, serves to protect provincial heritage from human behaviours and nonhuman ‘nuisances’ within national parks (Fletcher, 2010).

Nonetheless, the MFFP and the Sépaq diverge from the ‘fortress’ model and the idea of maintaining natural spaces in ‘pristine’ conditions, as they do not strictly exclude human populations on the grounds that they are the main contributors to environmental degradation (Montgomery et al., 2020; Saarinen, 2016). Instead, the MFFP and the Sépaq seek to simultaneously preserve natural spaces and modify the environment for the benefit of local populations and to encourage regional economic growth (MFFP, 2018b, 2021c). This approach aligns best with the neoliberal conservation discourse.

The conservation discourse of the MFFP and the Sépaq involves both the rationalization and commodification of nature. National park projects are assessed based on their potential for diversifying the local economy (MFFP, 2018b), which parallels the neoliberal notions of cost-benefit analyses of nature (Fletcher, 2010) and the maximization of results (Svarstad et al., 2018). Entry fees contribute to processes of neoliberal territorialization by regulating access through attributing a monetary value to bounded natural spaces (Escobar, 1996; Igoe & Brockington, 2007; MFFP, 2021e; Vandergeest, 1996). The Sépaq’s approach is more explicitly neoliberal than that of the MFFP due to the former actor’s goal to offer ‘attractive’ customer

experiences and generate profit to ensure financial sustainability in addition to conservation (Sépaq, 2017).

The MFFP and the Sépaq emphasize the idea that conservation and development are compatible, a central tenet in neoliberal conservation discourse. In order for conservation to be a regional development engine, economic and environmental priorities must be equilibrated (MFFP, 2021c). Biodiversity thereby constitutes a ‘living capital’ that contributes to creating employment, fosters local and regional economic diversification, and becomes necessary for human development and survival (MFFP, 2018b, 2021c). In other words, natural resources are considered assets that can create wealth, as illustrated by the participation of the Club de golf du Mont Orford and Station de ski Mont Orford in the provision of activities at Mont-Orford National Park (Igoe & Brockington, 2007; MFFP, 2018b, 2021c).

The ‘reconciliation’ of economic growth and the environment is particularly visible in the Sépaq’s ‘double objective’ of achieving conservation and accessibility, which currently guides the elaboration of the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project (Escobar, 1996).²⁴ In this scenario, the Sépaq relies on ecotourism to simultaneously serve objectives that span economic diversification, biodiversity conservation, protected area creation, provincial heritage conservation, and increasing quality of life (Duffy, 2008; MFFP, 2018b; Savard & Caron, 2020). Additionally, entry fees contribute to the protection and enhancement of national parks, while portraying parks as economic benefit engines to communities (MFFP, 2018b).

That said, the MFFP and the Sépaq partner with a wider array of actors and deploy more participatory processes than what the neoliberal conservation discourse suggests. Fundamentally,

²⁴ Based on electronic communications with an MFFP representative.

the MFFP shares its role as an intermediary between humans and nature with the Sépaq, hence diminishing “direct government intervention from market transactions” (Fletcher, 2010, p. 172). The MFFP and the Sépaq also aim to collaborate with a diversity of actors including scientists, indigenous communities and municipal administrations (MFFP, 2018b; Sépaq, 2021a). This approach is closer to the CBC discourse emphasizing interdisciplinary research and the involvement of various local environmental authorities (Montgomery et al., 2020). In the context of the expansion project, riparian dwellers expressed mixed feelings regarding the approach of the Sépaq. Many felt that the organization is attentive to their comments and requests, yet most interview participants wished to be more directly involved, especially as access to information on the project remains limited.

Table 7 provides a condensed summary of the MFFP and the Sépaq’s discourse. An idea that emerges from this discourse, which is absent from the four conservation discourses, relates to the idea that conservation yields improved connections between humans and nature. Indeed, the MFFP and the Sépaq ‘conserve’ and sometimes modify the environment within national parks to evoke an emotional response among visitors and to foster a feeling of belonging. Beyond the neoliberal objective of ‘reconciling’ economic growth and the environment, the MFFP and the Sépaq also aim to ‘(re)connect’ the population of Quebec with nature via a customer experience that fosters a perennial feeling of pride and belonging towards provincial natural heritage among current and future generations (Escobar, 1996; Savard & Caron, 2020; Sépaq, 2017, 2021a).

Table 7. Conservation discourse of the MFFP & the Sépaq Primarily ‘Fortress’ Neoliberal Conservation		
Process	Power	Purpose
Agenda Governmental priorities Means and Actors Rationalization and commodification of nature Zoning Leases Regulated access and activities Entry fees Participatory processes with peripheral actors Scientific and cultural knowledge <i>Programme de suivi des indicateurs environnementaux</i> (PSIE) Ecological characterization of national parks Nature tourism MFFP Sépaq Private actors Scientists Indigenous communities Municipal administrations	Authority Sources MFFP Sépaq Exercise of Authority Provincial legislation Sovereign environmentalism Commodifying market-based neoliberal environmentalism ‘Truth’ environmentalism	Objectives Permanent protection of natural, cultural and scenic heritages Develop Quebec’s network of national parks Quality of life of citizens ‘(Re)connecting’ individuals with nature Access to nature and conservation Sustainability (biological and financial) Beliefs and Values Conservation requires management of human and nonhuman populations Existence of a ‘nature deficit’ Common good associated with the notion of access to nature for all ‘Nature-oriented tourism’ as an economic lever Nature as a provider of ecological services Entry and lodging fees as a contribution for the protection and enhancement of natural parks Environment-economy connection National parks as a nationalistic project Values: expertise; creativity; multistakeholder collaboration; respect; fun; inclusion; trustworthiness; engagement; courage; excellence

6.1.2 Conservation Discourse of Riparian Residents and the APLM

6.1.2.1 *Environmentalities*

Riparian dwellers and their conservation discourse primarily reflect two environmentalities: one variation of disciplinary environmentality and one version of ‘truth’ environmentality. Disciplinary practices traditionally involve the enforcement of rules by an authority figure. Individuals act in accordance with these regulations due to fear of punishment and coercion (Agrawal, 2005a; Fletcher, 2010). In the case of Lac Montjoie, the main authority source in relation to conservation practices is the APLM, even though it does not have legal and coercive powers. Still, members of the APLM executive board exercise forms of surveillance that are enhanced by the riparian population monitoring their own behaviours and those of others. The APLM and the residents share a common objective of protecting a shared resource. Some individuals expressed feelings of guilt, rather than fear of reprisals as they might with disciplinary environmentality, for their limited involvement in the activities of the APLM. Overall, the population incorporated ethical and social norms pertaining to conservation that translated into common practices, perceptions of the lake, and a narrative regarding its ‘fragility’ (Agrawal, 2005a; Fletcher, 2010).

The riparian dwellers’ discourse also expresses elements of ‘truth’ environmentality, particularly in terms of the tangible and affective connection that individuals share with the lake (Fletcher, 2010). Lac Montjoie residents implement common lake shore management practices, practise the same aquatic activities, and share the same drinking water source. Their common lifestyle is highly influenced by the lake’s setting and tranquil atmosphere, to which they are emotionally attached.

6.1.2.2 *Conservation Discourse*

The conservation discourse of riparian residents and the APLM could be described as ‘unenforceable disciplinary conservation²⁵.’ This version encompasses aspects of the ‘back to the barriers,’ ‘fortress,’ CBC, and neoliberal discourses, though none of these fully encapsulates the situation at Lac Montjoie, as they all view the state as an influential conservation actor, to varying degrees (see Section 3.2). In the case of Lac Montjoie, the government of Quebec has, insofar, not directly participated in the management of the lake and its environment. Governance is overseen by riparian dwellers, and conservation practices reflect this community’s specificity and priorities. Accordingly, situating the conservation discourse of riparian dwellers in existing conservation literature proves more challenging.

Similarities between conservation at Lac Montjoie and the ‘back to the barriers discourse’ stem from the reliance on scientific knowledge to achieve and justify strict management of protected areas, which benefit a small number of individuals (Hutton et al., 2005). However, the two discourses differ in terms of scale. Agenda setting at Lac Montjoie derives primarily from scientific studies and water analyses conducted locally (see Section 5.1). Knowledge is mainly coproduced by residents in collaboration with Université de Sherbrooke-based researchers and the RAPPEL. Yet, the fact that local scientific knowledge informs conservation strategies at Lac Montjoie differentiates riparian dwellers’ discourse from the ‘back to the barriers’ approach that emphasizes ‘global scientific knowledge’ (Pochet, 2014).

²⁵ Here, the term ‘unenforceable’ refers to unenforceable sovereign power, in that the APLM and Lac Montjoie residents hold no formal legal power to reinforce the norms and behaviours it promotes through codified rule. Riparian residents exercise disciplinary power through the diffusion of norms and the practice of surveillance on and among themselves but cannot legally punish individuals who breach the recommendations of the APLM.

Likewise, while the ‘back to the barriers’ discourse promotes the objective of achieving the ‘common good’ (Wilshusen et al., 2002), Lac Montjoie’s riparian dwellers version of such good is more limited in scope. It includes Lac Montjoie and the adjacent environment, riparian dwellers and, for some, the population of Quebec. The international community is absent from local narratives, which would be expected from ‘back to the barriers’ discourse. Another core difference with the ‘back to the barriers’ discourse is that riparian dwellers believe that controlled and limited residential development can be compatible with conservation, whereas the ‘back to the barriers’ approach views them as incompatible (Wilshusen et al., 2002).

Attitudes towards the conservation of the lake and its surroundings most closely resemble ‘fortress’ conservation discourse, as the population seeks to ‘protect’ a ‘fragile’ lake through strict management, education and awareness. These objectives recall the narrative emphasizing the necessity to manage natural areas in order to maintain their ‘integrity’ and ‘pristine’ character (Saarinen, 2016). The objective of protecting the ‘natural’ character of Lac Montjoie justifies the environmental recommendations that the APLM puts in place, as well as attempts to limit anthropocentric modifications of the environment and to manage invasive nonhuman species such as watermilfoil (Hutton et al., 2005; Montgomery et al., 2020; Siurua, 2006).

However, a key difference between the riparian dwellers’ discourse and the ‘fortress’ discourse is that riparian dwellers live on the land that they seek to preserve. Indeed, the ‘fortress’ discourse would favour their displacement as it considers humans and their practices as threats to nature (Montgomery et al., 2020; Saarinen, 2016; Wilshusen et al., 2002). Contrastingly, riparian residents seek to limit interventions in terms of development for the sake of the ‘paradisiac’ character of the lake, its peaceful and relaxing atmosphere, and limited noise

pollution, so future generations can enjoy these aspects too. Riparian dwellers revisit the argument framing coexistence between humans and nature as impossible and instead suggest that as a sensibilized population, Lac Montjoie residents represent a smaller, manageable ‘threat’ to nature compared to actors favouring large residential projects, scenic views through shore deforestation and/or the use of gasoline motorboats (Siurua, 2006).

Clear connections emerge between the active involvement of riparian dwellers in conservation practices and the community-based conservation discourse. Indeed, the local population directly manages all conservation processes and benefits from such processes (Montgomery et al., 2020). The riparian community autonomously establishes conservation practices and experiences the results of such practices in their daily lives in terms of water quality and tranquility. The recommendations of the APLM align with the notion of ‘responsible usage’ of resources (see Section 2.2.3.3) by communities that facilitates ‘sustainable development’ (Pochet, 2014). Sustainability is mainly assessed here with reference to the preservation of water quality.

Both the CBC and riparian dwellers’ discourses favour disciplinary (albeit unenforceable) power, with an emphasis on ethics and monitoring as incentives for conservation practices (Fletcher, 2010). Nevertheless, the concept of the devolution of power constitutes one of the principal divergences between these two discourses. Contrarily to the CBC discourse, suggesting that community participation results from a devolution of power by the state (see Section 2.2.3.2), the riparian community has always directly managed conservation practices. When the Philosophat Saint-Charles sold its land, the priests entrusted the lake’s conservation to riparian dwellers, who have since been involved in residential development and the formation of the Lac Montjoie community and the APLM. Importantly, however, the Mont-Orford National Park

expansion project challenges this absence of direct governmental involvement in the lake's conservation.

The riparian dwellers' discourse contains nuanced elements of neoliberal conservation discourse as well. First, while private actors control natural resource management at Lac Montjoie, diverse modes of private management do co-exist here. For example, owning a property on the shores of Lac Montjoie grants access to the lake. Additionally, the ecological reserve created by the *Société de Fiducie Foncière du lac Montjoie* and the former Corporation 132625 for the protection of Mont-Girard represent two other examples of private entities dedicated to the conservation of Lac Montjoie (see Section 3.4.3). Private property is considered acceptable and compatible with conservation as long as it is riparian dwellers who own the land.

Second, the main economic benefit riparian dwellers associate with conservation is the increased market value of their houses. However, they frame such economic benefits as a consequence of past and current conservation practices, rather than as a motivation for protecting Lac Montjoie. Among the riparian landowners who sold land to the Sépaq for the expansion project, monetary benefits clearly did not represent a significant motivation. Instead, R5 decided to sell the land to avoid conflicts in his large family regarding which relative would inherit the land. He considered selling to the Sépaq a better alternative to safeguard the conservation of his land than selling it to a promoter. R23 and his family also sold their land as they did not want to stay at Lac Montjoie in a context where access to the lake is augmented, which they associate with increased noise and boat navigation.

Third, the neoliberal conservation discourse depicts natural resources as scarce, resulting in the need for management, efficiency, productivity and rationality (Escobar, 1996). Riparian dwellers also consider natural resources to be scarce and necessitating protection, but the concept

of scarcity refers primarily to the ‘fragility’ of the lake rather than natural resource extraction and production. Table 8 summarizes the ideas discussed above and illustrates the riparian dwellers’ discourse.

Table 8. Conservation discourse of Lac Montjoie Riparian Dwellers and the APLM ‘Unenforceable Disciplinary Conservation’		
Process	Power	Purpose
Agenda Riparian dwellers’ priorities, represented by the APLM Scientific knowledge Social vocation and heritage from the Philosophat Saint-Charles Avoiding past ‘mistakes’ Means and Actors Collaboration with associations (FAPEL, RAPPEL) Reforestation Sensibilization Water sampling and analysis Scientific studies APLM recommendations (banning pesticides and fertilizer, no boats from other lakes) Political pressure and political action Purchase contracts APLM Charter Surveillance Management of nonhuman species (e.g., watermilfoil) Sanitary sewer system No public access (private properties) Riparian residents Academics/scientists APLM Société de protection foncière du lac Montjoie Philosophat Saint-Charles (formerly) Corporation 132625	Authority Sources APLM as a representative of the riparian community Scientific knowledge Exercise of Authority APLM Charter Collaboration between APLM and RAPPEL Assemblies Municipal regulations Disciplinary environmentalty ‘Truth’ environmentalty	Objectives Water quality Preservation of the ‘natural state’ of the lake and its environment Tranquility Sustainable development Heritage Community services Beliefs and Values Riparian dwellers sharing ‘preservation ideology’ Lac Montjoie as a fragile ressource Common good as more or less restricted to the riparian population Strict control of access as a necessity for preserving water quality and tranquility Coexistence between humans and nature is possible if human interventions are limited Promoters and real estate projects represent threats to the environment Values: communal engagement in conservation; respect of environmental measures; sustainability; tranquility

In light of the preceding analysis, the second section of this chapter focuses on divergences in the conservation discourses of the MFFP and the Sépaq, and Lac Montjoie riparian dwellers. Indeed, the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project makes such variations apparent.

6.2 Variations in Conservation Discourses in the Context of the Mont-Orford National Park Expansion Project

This section introduces the main variations in conservation discourses that emerge in the context of the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project. First, I discuss tensions between neoliberal and disciplinary conservation that become visible through the diverging perceptions of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and the riparian community regarding the desirability of increased access to Lac Montjoie. These conservation discourses are known to create environmental subjects that are distinct from one another (Agrawal, 2005b). Uncertainty towards the ability of the Sépaq to 'shape' sensibilized environmental subjects motivates a desire for strong biopower practices among the riparian community. Second, I explore discrepancies in the 'truth' environmentalities that the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers convey and the nuances that make their respective conservation discourses distinct from one another. The three actors suppose the existence of an intrinsic connection between humans and nature through emphasizing the notion of heritage. However, the MFFP and the Sépaq connect the concept of heritage with national identity, while riparian dwellers emphasize historical and familial legacy, as well as a specific version of sustainability. I conclude by suggesting that these differences entail different interpretations of these actors' roles as 'guardians' of nature in light of the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project.

6.2.1 Tensions Between Neoliberal and Disciplinary Conservation

6.2.1.1 *Distinct Environmental Subjects*

The prioritization, regulation and forbidding of certain practices and activities contribute to the formation of environmental subjects (Agrawal, 2005b). The Mont-Orford National Park expansion project exposes divergences between the conservation discourses of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers, and the environmental subjects associated with both discourses (Agrawal, 2005b).

Humans stand out in the conservation discourses of the MFFP and the Sépaq as the main beneficiaries of conservation practices. The environmental subjects that emerge from the MFFP and the Sépaq's governmentality are clients experiencing a temporary customer experience that revolves around nature tourism and the enjoyment of selected leisure activities (e.g., camping, hiking, skiing) for educational and recreational purposes. These subjects consist of individuals who need a '(re)connection' with nature and the natural, cultural, and scenic heritage of the Province of Quebec (Savard & Caron, 2020; Sépaq, 2017). An entry fee limits the size of this clientele, although the Sépaq aims to encourage higher visitor rates by keeping these entry fees low (Savard & Caron, 2020; Sépaq, 2017).

The APLM is the main entity shaping environmental subjects within the riparian community, due to its perceived situated legitimacy in the construction and diffusion of knowledge about the lake (Leino & Peltomaa, 2012). The local scientific knowledge it produces enhances the credibility of the APLM and its recommendations, which guide the behaviours and beliefs of riparian dwellers (Leino & Peltomaa, 2012). Riparian dwellers, as environmental subjects, are permanent residents owning private property on the shores of Lac Montjoie. As such, they have access to the lake, which prompts shared preoccupations about tranquility and

water quality. They thus avoid practices such as composting and using pesticides and gasoline motorboats, and they engage in practices such as reforesting riverbanks. These individuals monitor their own behaviours and, to some degree, those of other residents, even in private spaces (e.g., by monitoring the use of pesticides, the presence and use of motor craft and pontoons, the reforestation of shores, etc.). Community meetings serve as spaces for generating behavioural changes, through implicit and explicit social pressure. The APLM formulates recommendations, ‘educates’ new residents upon their arrival, and functions as a ‘police’ force without legal coercive power. Undoubtedly, the community is not homogenous; expertise is not restricted to the APLM and riparian dwellers do not follow all recommendations unquestionably (Leino & Peltomaa, 2012). Nevertheless, all riparian dwellers interviewed claimed to respect the main conservation guidelines, including people that are not paying the APLM contribution.

Riparian citizens value engaging in communal conservation initiatives, respecting environmental measures, and sharing a passion for the lake’s protection and tranquility. These common values cement the community. As one participant who also owns a condo elsewhere quipped: “A lake is more unifying than a common roof” (R15). These values shape the establishment of a common conservation culture, which interviewees referred to as a “lake protection culture,” (R1) a “preservation ideology” (R1), a “social indoctrination” (R15) and a “life choice” (R4). The same values have also led to a “preselection” (R15) process of residents, in that individuals who establish themselves at Lac Montjoie already share at least some of these values. Riparian residents share a common language in relation to the lake, using the same expressions (almost in the same order) to highlight the ‘extraordinary’ character of Lac Montjoie (Anderson, 2006). Indeed, I was repeatedly told that the lake is ‘fragile’ because it is a ‘head-water lake with few tributaries’, with an ‘long water renewable rate of approximately two years.’

From the discussion above, one can identify core distinctions between the environmental subjects shaped by the MFFP and the Sépaq, and the riparian community. On the one hand, the environmental subjects of the MFFP and the Sépaq are clients (1), whose stay in national parks is temporary (2) and whose experiences with nature are meant to achieve a reconnection with the environment through education and recreation (3). On the other hand, the environmental subjects of the riparian community are riparian dwellers who privately own land surrounding the lake (1), whose stay is permanent (2) and for whom contact with nature is part of everyday life and practices, fostering a feeling of shared values and the monitoring of behaviours (3). These differences emerge from tensions between neoliberal and disciplinary conservation discourses and explain the desire of riparian residents to implement robust biopower practices in relation to the expansion project, so as to ‘protect’ Lac Montjoie.

6.2.1.1.1 Desire for Disciplinary Biopower Practices.

Biopower involves the combination of disciplinary practices on individual bodies and the governing of human-as-species, meaning, the exercise of technologies of power on humans as a group rather than as individual bodies (see Section 2.1.2.1) (Biermann & Anderson, 2017; Foucault, 2003). The practice of biopower by a conservation authority does not necessarily translate into the formation of environmental subjects (Agrawal, 2005a). In the context of the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project, interviewees expressed worry regarding the Sépaq’s ability to shape, as Agrawal (2005) would call, environmental subjects, and its resourcefulness and/or willingness to practise what Fletcher (2010) considers disciplinary forms of biopower. The MFFP and the Sépaq can certainly apply enforceable laws to influence individuals, by legally regulating and sanctioning ‘undesirable’ practises, which the APLM and riparian community cannot.

Overall, many interviewees, such as R22, tended to believe in the ‘good intentions’ of the Sépaq, although they mentioned that the organization underestimates the ‘fragility’ of the lake and the impacts of increased access and ‘risky’ visitor behaviours on water quality. As such, riparian dwellers often questioned the efficacy of the Sépaq’s practices to achieve what Biermann & Anderson (2017) call the biopolitical conservation of Lac Montjoie. Biopolitical conservation “derive[s] from and reinforce[s] the asymmetric valuation of life, in which certain life forms are marked more or less valuable and thus more or less killable” (Biermann & Anderson, 2017, p. 3). Using terms from Foucauldian literature, riparian dwellers are concerned about the Sépaq considering Lac Montjoie as ‘killable’ and substantiate this claim with reference to the ‘poor’ state of neighbouring lakes under the management of the Sépaq, such as Lac Fraser.

Many interviewees personified the Sépaq as simultaneously the ‘best’ and most untrustworthy new neighbour. For example, one participant said that the arrival of the Sépaq was a “relief” (R16) when associated with stricter control of the newly acquired land surrounding Lac Montjoie.²⁶ Riparian dwellers declared preferring having the Sépaq as a neighbour over a private developer that would build housing complexes and deforest the area. As such, a number of participants claimed that the Sépaq is a less “invasive” (R6) neighbour than promoters. However, for participants such as R19, the Sépaq still constitutes an “invader” (R19) or an “intruder” (R19) prone to – as Biermann & Anderson (2017) would frame it – ‘let’ the lake and its surroundings ‘die.’ With many interviewees acknowledging the Sépaq’s need to ensure its own financial sustainability, participants’ perceptions of the Sépaq’s lack of human and financial resources to exercise surveillance and monitoring greatly raised their concerns. Here, the vast majority of

²⁶ These territories are currently under the management of the MFFP and, as a result, accessible to the public with limited surveillance and regulations. This transitory status is causing great concern among the riparian population.

interviewees questioned the coherence between the Sépaq's engagements and the concrete measures it implements to control the behaviours of incoming visitors.

The riparian population's desire for robust biopower practices stems in part from a lack of trust towards 'outsiders' and their (potentially limited) embodiment of environmental principles (Agrawal, 2005a; Fletcher, 2010). Based on my interviews, most riparian dwellers espoused characteristics of environmental subjects that accept the APLM's rules and acknowledge its legitimacy and its active participation in conservation (Agrawal, 2005a). Unlike Lac Montjoie's permanent residents, the identities of the potentially numerous future visitors, as well as their dispositions to adhere to the lake community's current conservation practices, are unknown. The riparian community's perceptions stem from the generalized impression that they make, for the most part, a sensibilized population, which distinguishes lakeside residents from 'outsiders.' Most research participants perceived non-residents as not having the same commitment level towards the protection of Lac Montjoie because their stay is temporary. In contrast, riparian residents reiterated their respect for the measures in place because the APLM's meetings contribute to making the community aware of the fragility of the lake (R19), and because they monitor themselves as well as one another in their private spheres. One informant considered sensibilization as an "innate" (R1) trait among residents, particularly long-term residents (referred to as "first settlers" [R1]). Others acknowledged that not all riparian dwellers are equally sensibilized and dedicated to applying the APLM's recommendations regarding conservation. Still, living at Lac Montjoie provides the riparian population with unique insights on the lake's particularities and fragility; it distinguishes lakeside residents from non-riparian visitors.

6.2.1.1.2 The Hostel Project as a Space of Negotiation.

The hostel project represents a space for negotiating the vocation of Lac Montjoie as part of the expanded Mont-Orford National Park and its future environmental subjects (Agrawal, 2005a; Lahaye, 2007). The role of the hostel project, in the eyes of the APLM, is to ‘fix’ the social vocation of Lac Montjoie as put forward by the priests. The hostel project emerges as the sole guarantee that the vocation of the expanded Mont-Orford National Park would not change and lead to more commercial developments in the future (e.g., building campgrounds). The APLM claims the hostel project would help cohere both the Sépaq and APLM’s objectives in relation to access; access to Lac Montjoie would be increased but in a limited and controlled manner, and to a ‘vulnerable’ and ‘peaceful’ population rather than to a large ‘clientele’ (Agrawal, 2005a; Savard & Caron, 2020; Sépaq, 2017). According to interviewees who took part in meetings with the Sépaq regarding the hostel project, the Sépaq opposes the idea of restricting access to a predetermined population because this contradicts its mission to provide access to nature to everyone. Some riparian dwellers, such as R16, criticize the Sépaq’s stance because: “[we need to] stop thinking that everybody has two arms, two legs, money, and is white.” R16’s point was that partaking in activities that the Sépaq offers requires physical capabilities and the capacity to pay for access and overnight lodging fees. While most riparian dwellers acknowledged being part of a privileged group – due to their current access to Lac Montjoie – some (including R16) recognized that the expansion project would not necessarily foster social justice to a notable extent.

Discussions regarding the hostel project are still ongoing and represent power negotiations meant to determine the characteristics of future environmental subjects, as well as the vocation of the expanded Mont-Orford National Park. These discussions illustrate

negotiations between the access-centred, customer-based approach of the MFFP and the Sépaq, and the disciplinary, local-centred approach of Lac Montjoie residents and the APLM.

6.2.2 Different Interpretations of ‘Truth’ Environmentality

The expansion project exposes variations in interpretations of ‘truth’ environmentality and how the MFFP, the Sépaq, and the riparian population frame the intrinsic link connecting humans and nature. All three actors consider that humans and nature are deeply connected, with the notion of heritage being key to their respective discourses (see Section 5.3.1). Yet they have different interpretations of heritage, and their favoured approaches for strengthening the link between people and natural heritage likewise differ.

Montgomery et al. (2020) discuss heritage in the context of community-based conservation, highlighting that human-heritage-centred conservation primarily focuses on knowledge. However, the MFFP, the Sépaq, and the riparian populations’ versions of heritage differ from Montgomery et al.’s (2020) assertion. The MFFP and the Sépaq instead link the notion of natural heritage to nationalism (Mortimer-Sandilands, 2009). Through a customer experience, the Sépaq provides visitors the enjoyment of ‘cultural ecosystem services’ (Roux et al., 2020), that is, activities that facilitate interactions between individuals and nature (e.g., hiking, research and education). The Sépaq and the MFFP intend to associate the positive feelings of ‘wonder’ and ‘relaxation’ that such activities generate with the scenic, cultural and natural heritage of national parks to achieve a ‘(re)connection’ with nature (Colléony et al., 2020; Roux et al., 2020; Savard & Caron, 2020; Sépaq, 2017, 2021a). Such activities, increasingly offered in protected areas, foster public support for conservation (Roux et al., 2020). Relatedly, the label ‘national’ park rather than ‘natural’ park in Quebec demonstrates a clear conceptualization of parks as spaces dedicated to the formation of a national identity

(Moumaneix, 2012). These spaces are performative, human-planned, delimited and managed in their representation of (selected) provincial heritage to foster feelings of pride and belonging to the Quebec nation (Mortimer-Sandilands, 2009). The national parks associated with the MFFP and the Sépaq embody physical representations of the intrinsic connection between nature and Quebec identity.

For Lac Montjoie riparian residents, heritage revolves around the family and the idea of bequeathing a healthy lake to future generations. More precisely, heritage relates here to the idea of perpetuating the character of Lac Montjoie as an exceptional lake, a source of drinking water, an environment with minimal noise pollution, and where the population values the banning of gasoline motorboats and upholding powered boat speed limits.²⁷ Drinking Lac Montjoie's water is a core and esteemed act uniting riparian residents with the lake, with interviewees referring to this as a life-sustaining practice and an act of pride demonstrating the tangible connection between the population and the lake. One research participant enthusiastically repeated on multiple occasions that he would grab a cup of water and drink it in front of us should we ask him to do so. The lake is also central to some residents' family histories. One interviewee, R5, expressed being saddened after selling his land to the Government of Quebec, but that as he ages, the prospect of conflict emerging over the land between his many descendants represents a greater risk than letting it go. He hopes that his conservation efforts spanning over half a century will be "crystallized" by the Sépaq for the public's general interest. Another riparian dweller, R19, expressed that she dreams of her children taking over her house. She also anticipates aging

²⁷ Electric powered boats are currently permitted at Lac Montjoie, with regulations regarding speed limit.

at Lac Montjoie in a peaceful manner in this tranquil environment, stating that if she passes away in her home, she will “die calmly” (R19).

These variations in the intrinsic connection between different environmental subjects and Lac Montjoie result in the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers interpreting their role as ‘guardians of nature’ differently (Boucher et al., 2006; MFFP, 2021d; Sépaq, 2017). The concept of a ‘guardian of nature’ is seldom discussed in conservation literature. In archeology, “scholars refer to a guardian of nature as an ‘owner,’ ‘master,’ ‘lord’ and so forth” (Hoff, 2011, p. 43). This notion usually refers to spiritual guardians – such as nature spirits and natured gods protecting specific animal populations – rather than human entities (Hoff, 2011). Conversely, Forsyth & Walker (2008) discuss the dichotomous, discursive framing of ethnic minorities in northern Thailand as ‘forest guardians’ or ‘forest destroyers’. The authors comprehend ‘guardians’ as individuals partaking in the ‘guarding’ of life on a land that is considered active and diversified (Forsyth & Walker, 2008). This latter version is closer to the visions of the three actors I focus on here. The MFFP and the Sépaq perceive themselves as the guardians of extraordinary territories and the provincial heritage these territories represent. The *Politique sur les Parcs Nationaux* reads: “Together, we are the guardians of these superb territories!” (MFFP, 2018b, p. iv). Similarly, the Sépaq defines itself as a “guardian of the richest natural territories in Quebec and the most beautiful landscapes they make up” (Sépaq, 2017, p. 8). For these actors, conservation requires constant guardianship, as parks constitute a collective heritage, a source of pride and inspiration, as well as a core aspect of Quebec’s cultural identity (MFFP, 2021c; Sépaq, 2018). In turn, these circumstances justify the Sépaq’s interventions specifically, such as

vegetal and animal population control²⁸ and sensibilizing visitors to the adverse effects of animals familiarizing themselves with humans, claiming that the latter represents a danger for both groups (Sépaq, 2021a).

For their part, riparian dwellers also stated perceiving themselves as the ‘guardians’ of a fragile lake that is distinct from other bodies of water in Quebec’s Eastern Townships region. While interviewees depicted Lac Montjoie residents as a group pampering a ‘fragile’ and shared resource, they also acknowledged the many ‘battles’ this community fought for the establishment of regulations aiming to protect the lake. While Lac Montjoie’s current condition is excellent, the lake requires rigorous “guarding” (R5) to maintain residents’ access to the lake over the long-term. The vocabulary participants used to describe such control often reflected discipline semantics. For instance, R4 stated that riparian dwellers are “watchdogs.” For the riparian dwellers, the lake’s conservation requires guardianship based on control and vigilance, as uncontrolled access is ‘dangerous’ and threatens its ‘paradisiac’ character.

6.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I analyzed the conservation discourses of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and Lac Montjoie riparian dwellers by assessing how their views relate and contrast with discourses from conservation literature, namely the ‘fortress,’ community-based, ‘back to the barriers’ and/or neoliberal conservation discourses. The discourse of the MFFP and the Sépaq is an expression of sovereign, commodifying market-based neoliberal and ‘truth’ environmentalities that primarily intermeshes ‘fortress’ and neoliberal conservation discourses. The MFFP and the Sépaq act in

²⁸ Current examples include the management of common reeds at Mont-Orford National Park, and the increasing deer population at Saint-Bruno National Park, which the Sépaq refers to as “effets de cerfs” (‘deer effect’) (Sépaq, 2021a), a play on words with the French expression ‘effet de serre’ (greenhouse effect).

accordance with governmental priorities to protect ‘exceptional’ natural areas in the Province of Quebec using codified rules. Their discourse emphasizes a possible balance between conservation and development and the rationalization and commodification of nature through a customer experience that contributes to creating feelings of pride and belonging towards the environment among visitors. The MFFP and the Sépaq hope these positive feelings encourage conservation in the long term. The riparian dwellers’ narrative reflects disciplinary and ‘truth’ environmentalities in a discourse that could be described as unenforceable disciplinary conservation. This model shares similarities with ‘fortress’, community-based, ‘back to the barriers’ and/or neoliberal conservation discourses. Yet, the state’s absence as an active actor in conservation arises as an important distinction.

The Mont-Orford National Park expansion project entails a renegotiation of governance at Lac Montjoie, due to the planned future involvement of a state agent – the Sépaq – in conservation processes. Neoliberal aspects of the MFFP and the Sépaq discourse confront the disciplinary elements of the riparian discourse, particularly in relation to the capacity and disposition of the Sépaq to control access to Lac Montjoie. These variations in conservation discourses entail the production of distinct environmental subjects. The MFFP and the Sépaq shape environmental subjects that are essentially ‘clients’ who temporarily experience educational and recreational activities in planned and regulated natural spaces. In contrast, the APLM seeks to shape riparian dwellers who, as permanent residents, adopt certain behaviours considered beneficial to water quality, to the lake and to the surrounding environment. While heterogenous, the community largely shares a common vocabulary and set of beliefs regarding the lake. Access to the community is limited by the land ownership criterion, rendering access predictable. In light of these differences, riparian dwellers expressed their desire for the MFFP

and the Sépaq to implement what Fletcher (2010) and Agrawal (2005) could describe as disciplinary biopower practices, requesting that access to Lac Montjoie remain controlled to preserve water quality.

The expansion project also exposes different understandings of the assumed intrinsic connection between humans and nature, which emerge through my focus on the notion of heritage. The MFFP and the Sépaq consider heritage as a marker of national identity, which can be enhanced by visiting parks and experiencing a pleasant ‘reconnection’ with nature. Riparian dwellers share a more personal conceptualization of heritage, describing their connection with the lake in terms of sustainability, family history, and tranquility.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

In accordance with the Government of Quebec's objectives and commitments to expand and improve its network of national parks, the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project aims to add 4300 hectares of land to the park, although the final plans for the project are still being discussed. The project involves shifts in governance in terms of conservation practices at Lac Montjoie, in Saint-Denis-de-Brompton, where the riparian community has autonomously managed conservation initiatives to date.

In light of current negotiations between the MFFP, the Sépaq, and the riparian community regarding the development of the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project, this thesis has sought to capture how these three actors conceptualize conservation and conservation practices. Correspondingly, the research questions aimed at identifying the variations in conservation discourses of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and the riparian community, as well as their related processes, exercise of power, and purposes for conservation. In this concluding chapter, I revisit the main takeaways of each chapter and provide suggestions for future inquiries, particularly in relation to the role of emotionality in conservation practices.

In Chapter 2, I elaborated on Feldman's (2017) framework and the application of the concepts of 'process', 'power', and 'purpose' to the context of my research. Briefly, 'process' encompasses agenda setting, means, and actors (Feldman, 2017). 'Power' refers to identifying authority sources and how authority is exercised (Ibid.). I specifically employed Foucault's (2003) concept of biopower. Finally, 'purpose' involves identifying conservation objectives as well as the beliefs and values associated with such aims (Feldman, 2017). Then, I applied Feldman's framework to present four discourses discussed in the conservation literature – 'fortress', community-based conservation, 'back to the barriers', and neoliberal conservation –

and their associated ‘environmentalities.’ Organizing the literature review around Feldman’s (2017) framework facilitated my comparisons between the conservation discourses found in the literature and those of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers in subsequent chapters. The ‘fortress’ discourse is primarily an expression of sovereign and ‘truth’ environmentality based on governmental priorities, coercion, and strict management (Fletcher, 2010; Hutton et al., 2005; Pochet, 2014). Community-based conservation reflects disciplinary and commodifying market-based neoliberal environmentality involving decentralizing and/or deconcentrating power from the state to local communities (Fletcher, 2010; Green, 2016). ‘Back to the barriers’ connects with sovereign environmentality and is associated with authoritarian management, based on ‘global scientific knowledge,’ for the protection of nonhuman life (Fletcher, 2010; Hutton et al., 2005; Wilshusen et al., 2002). Lastly, neoliberal conservation is a manifestation of commodifying market-based neoliberal environmentality characterized by the commodification of nature and the involvement of private entities in conservation practices (Fletcher, 2010; Igoe & Brockington, 2007).

Chapter 3 introduced core international, regional, provincial, and local guidelines influencing the development of the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project. Following the 2010 Conference of the Parties for the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Province of Quebec committed to establishing more protected areas, which now represent 16.7% of Quebec’s land and 10.4% of its territorial waters (CMELCC, 2020; MELCC, 2021a). The Province of Quebec uses the IUCN framework to classify its protected areas into seven categories, among which Category II National Parks is the most prominent (MELCC, 2021a). The Mont-Orford National Park falls under this category. As a response to the 2006 protests against the partial privatization of Mont-Orford, the current expansion project involves a 172% increase of the

park's surface and improved access to nature for the general population (MFFP, 2021a). Among the areas targeted by the expansion project is Lac Montjoie, in Saint-Denis-de-Brompton, the case study of this research. Lac Montjoie distinguishes itself from other lakes in the Eastern Townships region due to its exceptional water quality (Boucher et al., 2006; Huot & Segura, 2021, Samson & Nielly, 1993). Since the creation of the APLM in 1969, the riparian community has been actively involved in conservation processes and has also acted autonomously. Past and current private entities, led by Lac Montjoie riparian citizens, also partake in conservation projects (Boucher et al., 2006).

In Chapter 4, I discussed the methods that allowed me to study the conservation discourses of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers. I first defined the notion of a qualitative case study in the context of this research as the analysis of a precise unit with the goal of investigating social constructions of conservation. I then elaborated on the data collection methods. I gathered secondary data by collating official documentation from the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers, while I gathered primary data by conducting 23 in-person semi-structured interviews with Lac Montjoie riparian dwellers following the principles of relational interviewing. As a riparian dweller myself and a frequent national parks visitor, my positionality was closely related to that of an 'insider' researcher that experienced 'spaces of betweenness' (Nast, 1994; Zhao, 2017). In terms of data analysis, Chapter 2 defines the Foucauldian critical discourse analysis I employed as a historically situated set of social processes that allow an object to exist, which are reflective of power relations among actors (Foucault, 2002; Phillips, 2004; Schröter & Taylor, 2018). The chapter concludes with a discussion of my coding strategy.

Together, Chapters 5 and 6 served to answer the research questions that asked how the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project exposes variations in conservation discourses

among the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian residents; what conservation discourses are put forward by these actors; and what are their respective processes, practices of power, and purposes for practising conservation. In Chapter 5, I classified the data gathered from the analysis of official documentation and semi-structured interviews according to Feldman's (2017) framework in order to identify the processes, the exercise of power, and the conservation purposes favoured by each actor. In Chapter 6, I situated the discourses of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers in the conservation discourse literature to allow for their analysis and comparison. I then connected the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers' discourses with the 'environmentalities' they express and how they create specific environmental subjects (Agrawal, 2005b; Fletcher, 2010). Assessing the complementarity and divergences between global conservation discourses and those of the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers allowed me to highlight variations in the narratives of the three actors in relation to the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project.

The conservation discourse of the MFFP and the Sépaq primarily contains characteristics of the 'fortress' and neoliberal approaches, and expresses elements of sovereign environmentality, commodifying market-based neoliberal environmentality, and 'truth' environmentality. Indeed, governmental priorities serve as the main guidelines for establishing their conservation agendas, which consist primarily of preserving provincial heritage, ensuring the quality of life of citizens and communities, and guaranteeing the 'attractiveness' of national parks (Sépaq, 2017). These priorities motivate the decentralization of power from the Government of Quebec to the Sépaq and guide the development of a customer experience through educational and recreational activities. The MFFP and the Sépaq ensure the protection of parks through the codified regulation of activities and practices and emphasize the need to

involve a variety of actors in conservation initiatives (MFFP, 2018b; Savard & Caron, 2020; Sépaq, 2021a). The main objective of these two actors is to foster a ‘reconnection’ between people and nature by favouring increased access to nature to the highest number of people possible. This ‘reconnection’ is expected to foster feelings of pride and appreciation towards the natural, cultural, and scenic heritages of parks in Quebec, thus promoting the long-term conservation of such spaces (Savard & Caron, 2020).

I labelled the discourse of Lac Montjoie riparian dwellers as ‘unenforceable disciplinary conservation’ and as an expression of disciplinary and ‘truth’ environmentalities. Here, the APLM sets the agenda, which reflects the chief priorities of riparian dwellers to preserve the lake’s water quality and calm atmosphere. Unlike the MFFP and the Sépaq, the APLM makes recommendations that are not legally enforceable, although the riparian population generally considers such measures legitimate. Situating the discourse of riparian dwellers into the conservation literature proves to be more challenging than situating the discourse of the MFFP and the Sépaq. Indeed, the four conservation discourses analyzed in this thesis presuppose a link between the state and conservation practices, which is currently nonexistent at Lac Montjoie. Contrastingly, the MFFP and the Sépaq, as a ministry and state agent respectively, act in accordance with governmental priorities and objectives (MFFP, 2018). As such, the Mont-Orford National Park expansion project marks a shift in governance which reveals how the MFFP, the Sépaq, and the riparian community differ in terms of conservation processes, exercise of power, and objectives.

In particular, the debate on the desirability of increased access reveals tensions between neoliberal conservation as practised by the MFFP and the Sépaq, and disciplinary conservation as practised by riparian dwellers. Indeed, these approaches shape different environmental

subjects, namely temporary ‘clients’ regarding the former organizations and permanent riparian dwellers regarding the latter. As such, Lac Montjoie residents favour the implementation strong disciplinary biopower practices by the Sépaq, to ensure that the behaviours of visitors align with the environmental principles of the riparian community, and to preserve (drinking-) water quality (Agrawal, 2005b; Fletcher, 2010).

The debate on increased access also highlights divergences in points of view among the riparian population regarding the expansion project and increased access at Lac Montjoie. Arguments against increased access in the context of the expansion project primarily emphasize the ‘fragile’ character of Lac Montjoie, while those in favour of increased access put forward the notion of security as provided by public authorities in the forms of greater regulations and protection of acquired conservation gains. Still, riparian dwellers share a common preoccupation regarding the negative consequences of uncontrolled access on water quality and tranquility, and express varying levels of confidence in the Sépaq and its ability to implement sufficient disciplinary measures.

The expansion project also reveals different understandings of ‘truth’ environmentality and the presupposed intrinsic connection between nature and humans. The MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers all consider that the notion of ‘heritage’ contributes to this inherent connection, yet they understand the concept of heritage differently. The MFFP and the Sépaq emphasize a more nationalistic interpretation of heritage, associating the act of visiting national parks and participating in park activities with a positive sentiment towards the national heritage these spaces represent as well as an improved sense of belonging to the Quebec nation (Mortimer-Sandilands, 2009; Savard & Caron, 2020).

Contrastingly, Lac Montjoie interviewees associate heritage with the family and the conservation of the lake's water quality and tranquility for future generations (Boucher et al., 2006). Riparian dwellers experience a connection with the lake through performing daily activities – such as drinking its water – and, for some, through the relationship between the lake and their family history. In light of these variations of understanding of the concept of 'truth' environmentality, the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers have distinct perspectives regarding their role as 'guardians' of nature. The MFFP and the Sépaq consider themselves the guardians of Quebec's collective heritage, while riparian residents see themselves as the guardians of a 'fragile' shared resource (MFFP, 2018b; Sépaq, 2017).

The four conservation discourses I focused on – 'fortress,' community-based conservation, 'back to the barriers,' and neoliberal conservation – place limited emphasis on the emotional component of conservation practices and motivations. Yet, the conservation narratives from the MFFP, the Sépaq, and riparian dwellers – although distinct – all put forward an emotional component in their justification for conservation. The MFFP and the Sépaq intend to create positive emotions among individuals benefiting from a greater connection with nature via a customer experience, which contributes to feelings of wonder and pride (Colléony et al., 2020; Savard & Caron, 2020). The Sépaq further emphasizes the notion of developing an intimate emotional connection with nature by suggesting that closer links with the environment allow people to "fall in love" (Sépaq, 2021a, p. 42) with nature, which serves as a motivation for protecting biodiversity for future generations. Riparian dwellers expressed a tangible and close relationship with the lake as a "peaceful oasis" (R18), a place representing their childhood and family (R23), or "all their life" (R4). I further suggest that emotionality (i.e., the feeling of an emotional connection with nature) constitutes an overlooked component of 'truth'

environmentality that is seldomly represented in the conservation discourses considered in this thesis. Accordingly, future inquiries may consider the roles that affect and emotions play in conservation practices, particularly in relation to ‘truth’ environmentality, and connect these findings with conservation discourses and their implementation in Quebec and/or other ‘Global North’ contexts.

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APPENDIX A: TRANSLATION OF CITATIONS FROM INTERVIEWS AND OFFICIAL DOCUMENTATION

Chapter 3 Research Context		
Source	Original Citation in French	Translated Citation in English (as Used in the Text, in Order of Appearance)
(MELCC, 2021a, n.d.).	Préserver l'intégrité écologique et évolutive de grands écosystèmes représentatifs de la diversité biologique	Preserving the ecological and evolutionary integrity of large ecosystems representative of biological diversity

Chapter 4 Results		
Source	Original Citation in French	Translated Citation in English (as Used in the Text, in Order of Appearance)
(Savard & Caron, 2020, p. 35)	Société d'État à vocation commerciale	Agent of the state with a commercial vocation
R6	[L'APLM] prétend être les héritiers des Pères	[The APLM] claims to be the inheritors of the priests
(Loi sur les Parcs, 2001, p. 5)	Ensure order	Assurer l'ordre
(Sépaq, 2017, p. 11)	The Sépaq seeks a structure that is "décloisonnée" "souple" "flexible"	The Sépaq seeks a structure that is "decompartmentalized" "adaptable" "flexible"
R6	Avant-gardiste	Avant-garde
R8	Patrouille	Patrol
R14	Police du lac	Lake police
(MFFP, 2018b, p. 3)	Exploitation	Exploitation
(Sépaq, 2017, p. 8)	Créateur d'émotions et de souvenirs	Emotions and memories creator
(Savard & Caron, 2020, p. 35)	Vocation commerciale	Commercial vocation
R1	Salutaire	Salutary
R3	Normales	Normal

Interview data	Fragilité	Fragility
R11	On les trouvait un peu intenses au début [...] Maintenant, on est 100% d'accords.	At first, we thought they were a little intense [...] Now, we agree 100%.
R10	J'ai confiance en notre organisation [APLM]	I trust our organization [the APLM]
R12	Frustration	Frustrated
R13	Probablement épouvantable	Probably appalling
R14	On [l'APLM] est puriste, mais on n'a pas d'autorité sur le monde [...] il n'y a pas de police	We [the APLM] are purists, but we don't have authority over people [...] there is no police
R6	Démarches périphériques	Peripheral processes
R6	Stratégies périphériques	Peripheral strategies
R1	Connaissance du milieu	Knowledge of the environment
R5	Comme n'importe quel lac	Like any other lake
R5	Nous on connaît le terrain, on peut leur dire qu'elles sont les conditions qui doivent être maintenues [...] on est en bonne position pour maintenir la qualité de ce qu'on a.	We know the terrain, we can tell them what conditions have to be maintained [...] we are in a good position to maintain the quality of what we have.
(MFFP, 2021c, p. 5)	Moteur économique pour le Québec et ses régions	Economic engine for the Province of Quebec and its regions
(MFFP, 2018b)	Protéger à perpétuité	Protect [a natural collective heritage] in perpetuity
(MFFP, 2018b)	Inspirer la fierté	Instilling pride
(Savard & Caron, 2020, p. 2)	Assurer la conservation et la protection permanente de territoires [...] tout en les rendant accessibles au public pour des fins d'éducation et de récréation extensive	Ensure the conservation and permanent protection of territories [...] while making them accessible to the public for education and extensive recreation purposes
(MFFP, 2018b, p. 11)	Poursuivre le développement du réseau des parcs nationaux du Québec	Continue the development of the network of national parks in Quebec
(MFFP, 2018b, p. 15)	Assurer la conservation des patrimoines naturel, culturel et paysager	Ensure the conservation of natural, cultural and landscape heritage
(MFFP, 2018b, p. 23)	Contribuer à la qualité de vie des citoyens et des collectivités	Contribute to the quality of life of citizens and communities
(Savard & Caron, 2020;	« émerveillement » et « détente »	“wonder” and “relaxation”

Sépaq, 2017, 2021a)		
(Boucher et al., 2006, p. 61, 63)	« Beauté naturelle » et « pureté »	“natural beauty” and “purity”
R22	Quiétude	Tranquility
(Sépaq, 2017, p. 5)	Incontournable	A staple
(SÉPAQ, 2021, p. 42)	« Tomber en amour »	Falling in love
(SÉPAQ, 2021, p. 42)	Les générations futures vont aussi pouvoir tomber en amour avec la nature et se mobiliser pour la protéger	Future generations will also be able to fall in love with nature and mobilize to protect it.
R21	Une petite perle qu’il faut exploiter	A small pearl that must be exploited
R1	On a tellement excessivement fait attention à tout	We were so excessively careful about everything
R22	Bombardier a plus de pouvoir que 100 résidents. Ils doivent garder le lac pour faire les essais de motomarines. Nous on doit garder le lac pour le protéger, mais ça ne vaut pas cher comme argument	Bombardier has more power than 100 residents. They have to keep the lake to test personal watercraft. Us, we have to keep the lake to protect it, but it's not worth much as an argument
R5	On est mieux avec une autorité publique que pas d’autorité pantoute	We are better off with a public authority than no authority at all
R10	Garantie supplémentaire [...] pour l’éternité	Additional guarantee [...] for eternity
R16	Bénédiction	Blessing
R4	Refuser l’accès à la nature, c’est contre nature	Denying access to nature is unnatural
R11	Si ça se passe comme dans d’autres parcs, ce serait totalement inacceptable	If it happens like it does in other parks, it would be totally unacceptable
R8	Un sain scepticisme envers l’idée que les projets ne changeront pas	A healthy skepticism towards the idea that the projects will not change
R21	Domestiqué	Domesticated
R21	Invasives	Invasive

Chapter 5 Analysis		
Source	Citation in French	Citation in English (as Used in the Text, in Order of Appearance)
R15	Un lac est plus unifiant qu'un toit commun	A lake is more unifying than a common roof
R1	Culture de protection du lac	lake protection culture
R1	Idéologie de préservation	Preservation ideology
R15	Endoctrinement social	Social indoctrination
R4	Choix de vie	Life choice
R15	Présélection	Preselection
R16	Soulagement	Relief
R6	Envahissant	Invasive
R19	Envahisseur	Invader
R19	Intru	Intruder
R1	Inné	Innate
R1	Premiers arrivants	First settlers
R16	Arrêter de penser que tout le monde a deux bras, deux jambes, de l'argent, et est blanc	[We need to] stop thinking that everybody has two arms, two legs, money, and is white
R5	Cristalliser	Crystallized
R19	Mourir dans le calme	Die calmly
(MFFP, 2018b, p. iv)	Ensemble, nous sommes les <i>gardiens</i> de ces superbes territoires!	Together, we are the guardians of these superb territories!
(Sépaq, 2017, p. 8)	Gardienne des plus riches territoires naturels du Québec et des plus beaux paysages qu'ils composent	Guardian of the richest natural territories in Quebec and the most beautiful landscapes they make up
R5	Gardiennage	Guarding
R4	Chiens de garde	Watchdogs

Chapter 7 Conclusion		
Source	Original Citation in French	Translated Citation in English (as Used in the Text, in Order of Appearance)
(Sépaq, 2021a, p. 42)	Tomber en amour	Fall in love
R18	Oasis de paix	Peaceful oasis
R4	Toute notre vie	All their life

APPENDIX B: TRANSLATION OF FRENCH TERMS

Translations of French Terms	
Term in French (as used in the text, in alphabetical order)	English Translation
<i>Association pour la Protection du Lac Montjoie</i>	Association for the Protection of Lac Montjoie
<i>Bureau d'Audiences Publiques sur l'Environnement</i>	Office of public hearings on the environment
<i>Fédération des Associations pour la Protection de l'Environnement des Lacs</i>	Federation of Associations for the Protection of the Environment of Lakes
<i>Gazette Officielle du Québec</i>	Official Quebec Gazette
Lac Montjoie, Lac Larouche, Lac Brompton, Lac Chevreuil, Lac de la Mélasse, Ruisseau Brook, Lac Stukely	Montjoie Lake, Larouche Lake, Brompton Lake, Chevreuil Lake, Mélasse Lake, Brook Stream, Stukely Lake
<i>Lac Montjoie au Fil du Temps</i>	Montjoie Lake Over Time
<i>Légis Québec: Source Officielle</i>	Legis Quebec : Official Source
<i>Loi Concernant le Parc National du Mont-Orford</i>	An Act Concerning <i>Parc National du Mont-Orford</i> [Mont-Orford National]
<i>Loi du Parc National du Mont Orford</i>	Mont-Orford National Park Act
<i>Loi Permettant d'Assurer l'Aggrandissement du Parc National du Mont-Orford, la Préservation de la Biodiversité de Territoires Limitrophes et le Maintien des Activités Récréotouristiques</i>	An Act to Ensure the Enlargement of <i>Parc National du Mont-Orford</i> [Mont-Orford National Park], the Preservation of the Biodiversity of Adjacent Lands and the Maintenance of Recreational Tourism Activities
<i>Loi sur la Conservation et la Mise en Valeur de la Faune</i>	Act Respecting the Conservation and Development of Wildlife
<i>Loi sur la Protection de l'Environnement</i>	Environmental Protection Act
<i>Loi sur la Société des Établissements de Plein Air du Québec</i>	Act Respecting the <i>Société des Établissements de Plein Air du Québec</i> [Society of Outdoor Establishments of Quebec]
<i>Loi sur les Parcs</i>	Parks Act
<i>Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les Changements Climatiques</i>	Ministry of the Environment and the Fight against Climate Change
<i>Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune, et des Parcs</i>	Ministry of Forests, Fauna and Parks
<i>Ministère des Transports</i>	Ministry of Transport

<i>Ministre du Développement Durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs</i>	Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks
<i>Pères de la Corporation Épiscopale du Séminaire de Sherbrooke</i>	Fathers of the Episcopal Corporation of the Sherbrooke Seminar
<i>Plan Directeur de Développement de la Station Touristique Mont-Orford</i>	Master Plan for the Development of the Mont-Orford Tourist Resort
<i>Plan Stratégique 2019-2023 (Édition Révisée - Janvier 2021)</i>	2019-2023 Strategic Plan (Revised Edition – January 2021)
<i>Politique sur les Parcs Nationaux du Québec</i>	Policy for Quebec National Parks
<i>Programme de Suivi des Indicateurs Environnementaux</i>	Environmental Indicators Monitoring Program
<i>Règlement sur les Parcs</i>	Parks Regulations
<i>Regroupement des Associations pour la Protection de l'Environnement des Lacs et Cours d'Eau de l'Estrie et du Haut-Bassin de la Saint-François</i>	Grouping of Associations for the Protection of the Environment of Lakes and Watercourses in the Eastern Townships and the Haut-Bassin de la Saint-François
<i>Réseau du CRSNG sur l'État des Lacs au Canada</i>	NSERC Canadian Lake Pulse Network
<i>Société de Fiducie Foncière du lac Montjoie</i>	Lake Montjoie Land Trust Company
<i>Société des Établissements de Plein Air du Québec</i>	Society of Outdoor Establishments of Quebec