

UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À MONTRÉAL

THE GAY CRIME OF ‘SPENDING TIME’: CRUISING, CRIMINALIZATION, AND
THE CIRCUMVENTION OF PROVINCIAL CHARTER PROTECTIONS AT THE
CHUTES SAINTE-MARGUERITE

THESIS

PRESENTED AS PARTIAL REQUIREMENT OF THE MASTER IN
POLITICAL SCIENCE

BY

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FEBRUARY 2024

UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À MONTRÉAL

CRUISING, CRIMINALISATION, ET LE CONTOURNEMENT DE LA CHARTE PROVINCIALE AUX
CHUTES SAINTE-MARGUERITE.

MÉMOIRE

PRÉSENTÉ

COMME EXIGENCE PARTIELLE

DE LA MAÎTRISE EN SCIENCE POLITIQUE

PAR

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FÉVRIER 2024

UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À MONTRÉAL
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REMERCIEMENTS

This project would not have been possible without the generous financial support of the *Observatoire des Profilages* and the *Collectif de recherche Action Politique et Démocratie*.

DÉDICACE

To those who took me in and made me bad.

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RÉSUMÉ

Au Québec, les opérations policières ciblant des lieux de rencontre queers et ayant pour but la punition des comportements dits « indécents » restent monnaie courante. Malgré l'égalité juridique formelle (1977) et l'assurance que les relations intimes queers sont depuis longtemps décriminalisées, les interventions anti-queers étatiques persistent aujourd'hui sous la forme d'opérations contre les « actions indécentes ». Pour comprendre comment l'égalité juridique formelle coexiste avec la punition et la criminalisation continue de l'érotisme et des intimités queers, je porte mon attention sur les développements récents aux Chutes Sainte-Marguerite, un lieu de rencontre et de nudisme queer situé en territoire non cédé Anishinabewaki et Omàmìwininiwag (Algonquin) sur les rives densément boisées de la rivière du Nord, à Sainte-Adèle, au Québec. Prenant comme point de départ l'affirmation de Grönfors et Stalström (1987) selon laquelle « le contrôle de la sexualité et du comportement sexuel [...] est plus souvent caché derrière d'autres questions, reçoit d'autres noms, etc., jusqu'à ce qu'il soit parfois difficile de découvrir que ce qui est contrôlé est le comportement sexuel » [traduction] (p. 54), j'é mets l'hypothèse que les distinctions analogues, la désinformation, le *cover storying*, ainsi que les notions de « loi », de « sécurité » et d'« égalité » favorisent la coexistence harmonieuse de ces deux phénomènes. En m'interrogeant sur la façon que les distinctions analogues, la désinformation, le *cover storying*, la « loi », la « sécurité » et l'« égalité » favorisent cette coexistence, je me pose la question suivante : comment l'État a-t-il tenté d'imposer un comportement hétéronormatif aux Chutes sans déclencher les protections anti-discrimination prévues par la *Charte des droits et libertés de la personne*? Je soutiens que l'État a tenté de faire ceci, en premier lieu, en s'éloignant des motifs de discrimination juridiquement prohibés — ceux qui concernent l'identité sexuelle (homo/hétéro) — et en s'appuyant de plus en plus sur des motifs de discrimination juridiquement protégés — ceux qui concernent l'espace et son utilisation (usage queer/hétéronormatif). Je soutiens en outre que les campagnes de désinformation et de *cover storying* ont grandement facilité ce changement, masquant la substitution et, ce faisant, désactivant (temporairement et dans la mesure du possible) les protections de la *Charte* garantissant aux minorités sexuelles l'accès à l'espace public. Je soutiens, dans un deuxième temps, que cette désactivation a été rendue possible par les opérations d'obscurcissement de notions telles que la « loi » et la « sécurité », ainsi que par le déploiement d'une notion d'« égalité » considérablement affaiblie, que je nomme « égalité punitive ». En résumé, je soutiens que les distinctions analogues, la désinformation, le *cover storying*, la « loi », la « sécurité » et l'« égalité » constituent des dispositifs punitifs au moyen desquels l'État désactive les protections de la *Charte* et hétérosexualise l'espace public.

Mots clés : Cruising; police; technologies de pouvoir hétérosexistes; criminologie anarchiste et abolitionniste; accès à l'information; Sainte-Adèle; histoire des Laurentides

ABSTRACT

In the province of Québec, police operations targeting queer cruising grounds for the sake of punishing ‘indecent’ behaviour remain commonplace. Despite formal legal equality (1977) and assurances that queer sexual relations have long been decriminalized, anti-homosexual state action persists in the form of operations against ‘indecent actions’. To understand how formal legal equality coexists alongside the continued punishment and criminalization of queer erotics and intimacy, I turn my attention to recent developments at the Chutes Sainte-Marguerite, a historic queer cruising ground and nudist hangout located within unceded Anishinabewaki and Omàmìwininiwag (Algonquin) territory on the densely forested banks of the Rivière du Nord, in Sainte-Adèle, Québec. Taking Grönfors and Stalström's 1987 claim that “control of sexuality and sexual behaviour [...] is more often hidden behind other issues, given other names, etc., until it is difficult sometimes even to discover that what is being controlled is sexual behaviour” as my point of departure (p. 54), I hypothesize that analogue distinctions, disinformation, cover stories, as well as ‘law,’ ‘security,’ and ‘equality’ play a significant role in fostering the seamless co-existence of these two phenomena. Inquiring into the role that analogue distinctions, disinformation, cover stories, ‘law,’ ‘security,’ and ‘equality’ have played in fostering this co-existence, I ask myself the following question: how did the state attempt to enforce heteronormative conduct at the Chutes without triggering anti-discrimination protections provided for in Québec's *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*? I argue that the state attempted to do so, in the first instance, by moving away from legally prohibited grounds of discrimination—those regarding sexual identity (homo/hetero)—and relying increasingly on legally protected grounds of discrimination—those regarding space and its use (queer/heteronormative use). I argue, moreover, that disinformation and cover storying campaigns played an indispensable role in facilitating this shift, masking the substitution, and in so doing, deactivating (temporarily and as far as possible) the aforementioned *Charter* protections. I argue, in the second instance, that this deactivation was made possible via the obfuscatory operations of notions like ‘law’ and ‘security’, as well as by the deployment of a dramatically watered-down notion of ‘equality’, one which I have come to call ‘punitive equality’. In sum, I argue that analogue distinctions, disinformation, cover stories, ‘law,’ ‘security,’ and ‘equality’ constitute punitive devices by means of which the state deactivates *Charter* protections guaranteeing sexual minorities access to public space.

Keywords: Cruising; Policing; Heterosexist Technologies of Power; Anarchist and Abolitionist Criminology; Access to information; Sainte-Adèle; History of the Laurentians

INTRODUCTION

From 2016 to 2018, the *Société des établissements de plein air du Québec* held a registry with the names of individuals arrested for “grossière indécence” at the Parc national d’Oka—a popular destination for queer nudists (SÉPAQ, 2018). In 2017, the mayor of the Ville de Saguenay, Jean Tremblay, publicly denounced the acts of “grossière indécence” taking place in and around the Saint-Jean-Vianney woodlands—a queer cruising ground—and promised a crackdown: “je suis d'accord avec ça, moi, les encadrer. On va les encadrer avec la police” (Radio-Canada, 2016). In 2019, the crackdown came, and at least one person was arrested and allegedly convicted of, “grossière indécence” (Boivin, 2021). The registry, the arrest, the alleged conviction—none of this would be noteworthy were it not for the fact that, in Canada, ‘gross indecency’ ceased being a crime on January 1st, 1988, that is, over fifty years ago (Criminal Code R.S.C., 1985). Overwhelmingly used by the state to punish queer sexual relations, ‘gross indecency’ remains, in spite of its repeal, a privileged technology of heterosexist state power.

While gross indecency’s exceedingly long life might at first appear puzzling, it can readily be explained by the fact that its ‘partner in crime,’ article 157 ‘indecent action’ remains to this day, very much alive. Virtually indistinguishable from ‘gross indecency,’ both in terms of wording and selective application, ‘indecent action’ has provided ‘gross indecency’ with a legal front through which to pursue its heterosexist project. Despite formal legal equality and assurances that queer sexual relations have long been ‘decriminalized,’ anti-homosexual state action persists in the form of operations against ‘indecent actions’. In the province of Québec, police operations which target queer cruising grounds for the sake of punishing consensual erotic or sexual conduct remain commonplace. These operations include *Projet Sentier* [2011-2017] (SPVM, 2017b; SPVM, 2017d), *Opération Balayage* [2012] (SPVQ, 2012), *Projet Nirvana* [2012] (SPVM, 2017c), *Projet Narcisse* [2013-2014] (SPVM, 2017a), *Opération Mémoire* (SPAL, n.d.) and *Opération Mulot* [2015] (SPAL, 2015), as well as unnamed operations having taken place at the Parc de l’île Melville [2010-2011] (SQ, 2011), the Parc National d’Oka [2016-2022] (SÉPAQ, 2018; SÉPAQ, 2022), the Parc de la Colline [2016-2017] (SPS, 2016; SPS, 2017), the Saint-Jean-Vianney woodlands [2016-2021] (Radio-Canada, 2016; Boivin, 2021), the Mentana woods [2019-2021] (SPVM, 2019; SPVM, 2021), and the Chutes Sainte-Marguerite [2012-2022] (Lots 8 et 9..., 2012; Noël, 2017; St-Onge, 2020; Résolution No. CM-110-05-21).

Figure 1.1 Carte d'appel 911 du Service de Police de la Ville de Montréal (2021)

2021-05-21/20:31:18	REMA	MPTM0669 7049	38-2, DANS LE BOIS L'EST DE L'INTERSECTION, 6 HOMMES SONT PRÉSENT, AVEC TÉLÉPHONE CELLULAIRE EN MAIN ET SEMBLE ATTENDRE QUELQUE CHOSE... SONT TOUS SÉPARÉS ET ILS NE SE PARLENT PAS.
2021-05-21/20:31:47	REMA	MPTM0669 7049	38-2, AUCUNE ACTE SEXUELLE N'EST OBSERVÉ...
2021-05-21/20:32:27	REMA	MPTM0669 7049	38-2, LES VOISINS NOUS MENTIONNENT QU'IL S'AGIT D'UNE PROBLÉMATIQUE RÉCURRENTÉ. CE BOIS SERAIT UN LIEU DE RENCONTRE CONNU DE L'APPLICATION GRINDR POUR HOMMES HOMOSEXUELS...
2021-05-21/20:33:40	REMA	MPTM0669 7049	38-2, LES HOMMES SONT AVISÉS DE QUITTER. UNE ATTENTION SPÉCIALE POUR LE PDQ38, SERA RÉDIGÉE.
2021-05-21/20:36:36	COMP	MPTM0669 7049	38-2 C/VEF P/ [REDACTÉ], AUCUN FLAGRANT DÉLIT. LES VOISINS SONT RENCONTRÉS. TAO SUR PLACE. DES PATROUILLES PLUS RÉGULIÈRES SERONT EFFECTUÉES.
2021-05-21/20:36:36	FERMÉ	MPTM0669 7049	C/VEF P/ [REDACTÉ]

Tiré de SPVM. (2021). Enregistrement de l'historique de l'appel, appel no. SPVM21052103278. N/Réf.: 17-126417, Archives du Service de Police de la Ville de Montréal, Montréal, Québec.

These targeted operations typically involve urban planning and policing components.¹ Working together with urban planning specialists, maintenance staff, and municipal politicians, park managers redesign park

¹ For more detailed accounts of heterosexist planning and policing within the context of queer cruising, see : Ashford, C. (2007). Sexuality, Public Space, and the Criminal Law: The cottaging phenomenon. *Journal of Criminal Law*, 71(6), 506-19. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1768848> ; Caron, M. (2016). *Modernizing Mount Royal Park: Montréal's Jungle in the 1950s* [Mémoire, Université de Montréal]. Papyrus : Institutional Repository. <https://doi.org/1866/16132> ; Clement, B. (2018). *Geographies of Enforced Heteronormativity in Urban Public Parks* [Mémoire, University of Toronto]. TSpace Repository. <https://hdl.handle.net/1807/82901> ; Dalton, D. (2012). Policing 'Beats' in Australia [Ouvrage collectif]. Dans Paul Johnson et Derek Dalton (dirs.), *Policing Sex* (p. 67-81). Routledge. ; Dick, L. (2014). The

spaces in order to facilitate public and police surveillance of sites that have, over time, been clandestinely transformed into cruising grounds, that is, into spaces of sexual exchange which provide “respite from the abjection of homosexuality,” and within which it becomes possible to reformat “that very abjection” (Muñoz, 2019, p. 34).² These urban planning schemes are almost always accompanied by plainclothes

queer frontier: male same-sex experience in western Canada's settlement era. *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 48(1), 15–52. <https://doi.org/10.3138/jcs.48.1.15> ; Jeyasingham, D. (2010). Building heteronormativity: the social and material reconstruction of men’s public toilets as spaces of heterosexuality. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 11(4), 307–325. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649361003787706> ; Johnson, P. (2007). Ordinary Folk and Cottaging: Law, morality, and public sex. *Journal of Law and Society*, 34(4), 520–43. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/201097> ; Johnson, P. (2010). The Enforcement of Morality: Law, Policing and Sexuality in New South Wales. Australian & New Zealand. *Journal of Criminology*, 43(3), 399–422. <https://doi.org/10.1375/acri.43.3.399> ; Lvovsky, Anna (2017). Cruising in Plain View: Clandestine Surveillance and the Unique Insights of Antihomosexual Policing. *Journal of Urban History*, 46(5), 980–1001. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144217705495> ; Maynard, S. (1994). Through a Hole in the Lavatory Wall: Homosexual Subcultures, Police Surveillance, and the Dialectics of Discovery, Toronto, 1890–1930. *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 5(2), 207–242. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3704198> ; Merrick, J. (2002). “Nocturnal Birds” in the Champs-Élysées: Police and Pederasty in Prerevolutionary Paris. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies*, 8(3), 425–432. <https://doi.org/10.1215/10642684-8-3-425> ; Newman, Z. (2016). The Spectacle of Public Sex(uality): Media and State Surveillance of Gay Men in Toronto in the 1970s. Dans Emily van der Meulen et Robert Heynen (dirs.), *Expanding the Gaze: Gender and the Politics of Surveillance* (p. 213–239). University of Toronto Press. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3138/j.ctv1005f87.13> ; Swivel, M. (1991). Public convenience, public nuisance: Criminological perspectives on the the beat. *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 3(2), 237–249. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10345329.1991.12036522> ; Walby, K. et Smith, A. (2012). Sex and Sexuality under Surveillance: Lenses and Binary Frames. Dans Paul Johnson et Derek Dalton (dirs.), *Policing Sex* (p. 54–66). New York: Routledge. ; Walby, K. (2009). Ottawa’s National Capital “He asked me if I was looking for fags...”: Commission Conservation Officers and the Policing of Public Park Sex. *Surveillance and Society*, 6(4), 367–379. <https://doi.org/10.24908/ss.v6i4.3268> ; Walby, K. (2009). Surveillance of Male with Male Public Sex in Ontario, 1983–1994. Dans Sean P. Hier et Josh Greenberg (dirs.), *Surveillance: Power, Problems, and Politics* (p. 46–58). UBC Press.

² For a beautiful and useful definition of cruising, see Lefebvre-Morasse, H. (2023). Le cruising comme pratique de faire-monde queer : Un inventaire des lieux d’intimité publique dans six villes régionales québécoises Québec [Mémoire, Université du Québec à Montréal]. Archipel. <http://archipel.ugam.ca/id/eprint/17270>. Here, cruising is defined as « un acte corporalisé [embodied] de subversion spatiale qui utilise des tactiques de discrétion, d’anonymat, d’éphémérité et de fluidité (autant spatiale et qu’identitaire) pour détourner des espaces publics hétéronormatifs dans le but d’y aménager un paysage d’intimités et de possibilités queers »

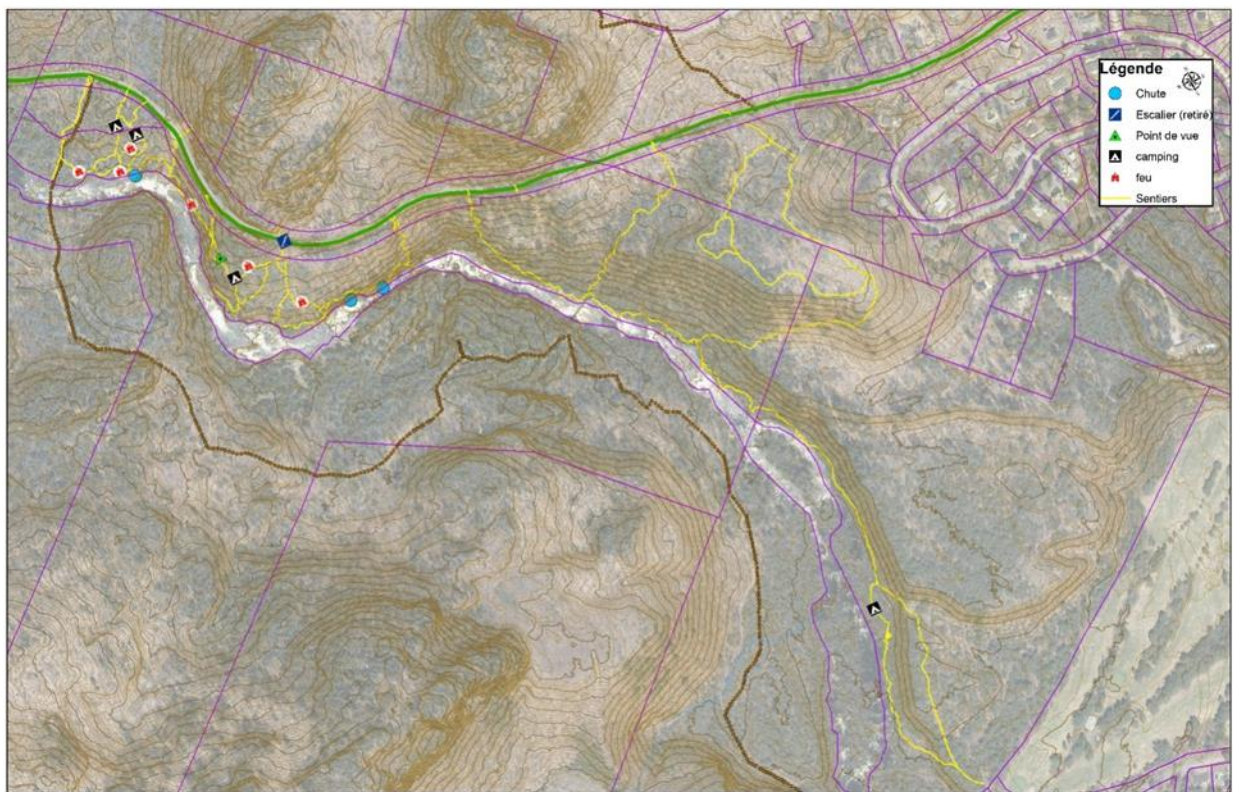
operations during which young, usually attractive male officers purposefully pose as queer men interested in consensual sexual relations with other men for the unexpressed ulterior purpose of ‘outing’ their targets and subjecting them to the humiliating tribulations of judicialization and criminalization (ACAB, 2018). Since plainclothes officers co-opt the identities of queer men, purposefully signalling consent to their targets for the purposes of punishing them, queer activists have rightfully characterized plainclothes police as queerbashers, and their stings as forms of heterosexist sexual violence (Robertson cited in Clement, 2018, p. 53).

Urban planning schemes and policing operations like these render heteronormative conduct obligatory, reinforcing “a hegemonic system of norms, discourses, and practices that constructs heterosexuality as natural and superior to all other expressions of sexuality,” limit the ability of sexual minorities to make use of public space, and stem, with varying degrees of success, attempts at queer world-making (Robinson, 2016, p. 1). As a result, they have been repeatedly condemned by queer activists and community organizations, including the *Centre Communautaire LGBTQ+ de Montréal* (hereafter, *CCLGBTQ+*) (Tanguay et al., 2017; Morin-Martel, 2021).

While each one of the above-mentioned anti-‘indecent’ operations deserve to be carefully scrutinized, for the purposes of this thesis, I have chosen to focus my attention on the case of the Chutes Sainte-Marguerite—a historic queer cruising ground and nudist hangout located in unceded Anishinabewaki and Omàmìwininiwag (Algonquin) territory, on the densely forested banks of the Rivière du Nord, in Sainte-Adèle, Québec, just off the Parc Linéaire du P’tit train du Nord. I do so for a couple of reasons. First, unlike the vast majority of cruising grounds of which I am aware, the site is patronized not only by queer men, but by a much more diverse set of people, including cisheterosexual women and men, queer women, as well as non-binary and trans folks. There is something distinctly queer, experimental, and exciting about the organic co-mingling of bodies bearing various markers of social difference. Second, to my knowledge, the site is the only cruising ground in the province of Québec where police repression has been met with unflinching, organized, and public community backlash, with the most outspoken critics going as far as designating the space a queer sanctuary (Labbé, 2017). Such language makes clear that this particular cruising ground has a special place in the hearts and of those who queer it. Recent artistic and literary production including Alex Côté’s *Plastic.Humans* (2018) and Gabriel Chloette’s *Carnets de l’underground* (2021) have, moreover, cemented the place of this site within regional and provincial queer imaginaries. Finally, my interest in the site also has a great deal to do with a (withdrawn) application for judicial review

that I submitted in May of 2021 against the *MRC des Pays-d'en-Haut* (hereafter, *MRC*) — the agglomeration of municipalities that, since 2016, has repeatedly attempted to put an end to the queering of the site. In the interest of dealing a significant legal blow to the state's ability to 'secure,' and thus, heterosexualize the site, I found myself dedicating substantial amounts of time researching the case. As a result of this involvement, I have come to know the case inside and out. The intimate, activist knowledge of the case that I have acquired is reason enough to justify my decision to make this site the subject of this thesis.

Figure 1.2 Plan du site (2019)



Tiré de Service de sécurité incendie. (2019). [Plan répertoriant les sentiers formels et informels des Chutes Sainte-Marguerite]. MRC des Pays-d'en-Haut, Sainte-Adèle, Québec.

It is worth noting that this is not the first time that the site has been studied within an academic context. In April of 1981, Françoise Courville and Diane Paquette submitted, as part of their projet terminal for the École d'Architecture de Paysage of the Université de Montréal, a paper entitled *Étude d'analyse et schéma d'aménagement proposés pour le Parc des Chutes de la Rivière du Nord Ste-Adèle, Québec*. While Courville,

Paquette, and I share an interest in the same site, our intentions in studying the site could not be more different. Unlike Courville and Paquette, my thesis does not aim to provide a blueprint for the municipal development and regulation of the site. In fact, one of my secondary aims is to show how, over time, such blueprints have set the groundwork for punitive practices which have gradually transformed the space into a site of social exclusion. Unlike Courville and Paquette, I write from the position of a queer researcher heavily invested in documenting heterosexist technologies of state power.

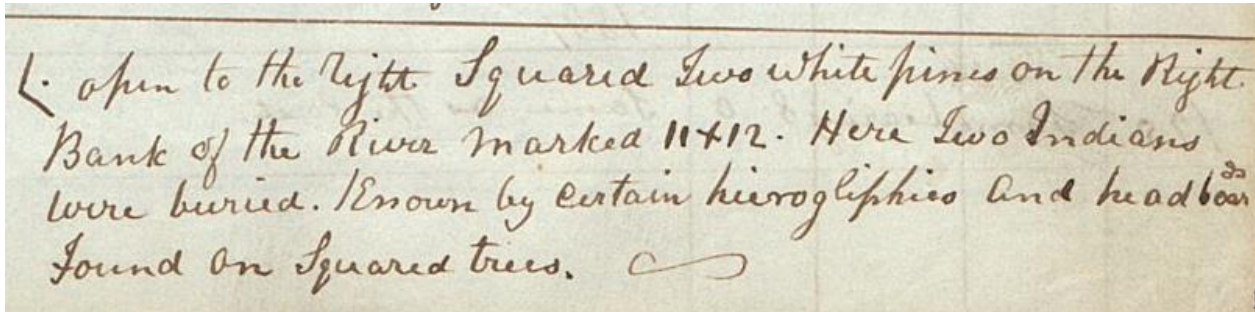
I write, also, from the position of a White settler with an affective attachment to the site. Through legal action and research, I have committed myself to restoring access to the site. And yet, if I am to do justice to my deep-felt political commitments, I must cease assuming the legitimacy of even the queerest White settler uses of the site and admit that restoring White settler access to the site, be it queer or straight, is a thoroughly inadequate and unjust political aim. Out of self-respect and out respect for the community to which I belong, I must work towards the lifting of heterosexist state restrictions, yet once these restrictions are lifted, a duty of solidarity compels me, immediately, to call into question White settler right of access to the site and to work towards a second, self-imposed (or voluntary) loss. What matters to me is not whether we (White queer settlers) lose the site, but to whom and under what circumstances the site is 'lost'. It is not the loss of a queer sanctuary *per se* that troubles me most, but the loss of a queer sanctuary to a privileged political class (straight White settlers) whose primary objective is the preservation of social, sexual, and political inequalities. I fight against the first, imposed loss, while requiring the second, self-imposed loss.

In 1847, two indigenous graves were identified on lots 11 and 12 by Owen Quinn as he surveyed the land of Canton Morin, the township within which the site under study is located (Quinn, 1847, p. 13).³ This passage of Quinn's notebook testifies to past indigenous use of and presence upon the site and demands further inquiry. The information his notebook contains is all the more important given that the site under examination is situated adjacent these marked graves, on lots 6 through 10 of Canton Morin. Crucially, Quinn also mentions the presence, near the 8th mile, of "a small island" and "two falls" of approximately "10 to 12 feet" slightly downstream from where the graves were found (Quinn, 1847, p. 11). This description of the site parallels Emery Féré's 1838 cartographic depiction of lot 8, further confirming the proximity of the graves to the site presently being studied (See Féré, 1838). Statistics Canada data from

³ I first came across this information in Allard, M. (2019, septembre). *Les autochtones ont-ils habité le territoire de Val-David?* Le Journal Ski-se-Dit. <https://collections.banq.qc.ca/ark:/52327/3104678>

2021 indicates that 1,7% of the population of the census subdivision of Sainte-Adèle—the municipality within which the site is located—is indigenous (Statistics Canada, 2021a). This statistic speaks, in a partial and incomplete manner, to the continued existence of indigenous people within (or within proximity of) the site.

Figure 1.3 Extrait du carnet de Owen Quinn dans lequel l’auteur documente l’existence de sépultures autochtones sur les lots 11 et 12 du Canton Morin (1847)



Tiré de Quinn, O. (1847). Carnet M020 Canton de Morin [Cote: E21,S60,SS3,PM20]. Archives nationales du Québec, Québec, Québec. <https://advitam.banq.qc.ca/notice/255117>

Figure 1.4 Extrait d’un plan du Canton Morin (1882). Les lots 11 et 12 sur lesquels des sépultures autochtones ont été découverts figurent au centre du plan. Ce plan a été restauré et numérisé par les Archives nationales du Québec à la demande de ce chercheur



Tiré de Leclair, J.H. (1882). Paroisse de Sainte-Adèle-d'Abercrombie et paroisse et village de Sainte-Adèle, comté de Terrebonne [Cote: CA601,S171,SS1,SSS2,D3-13-102]. Archives nationales du Québec, Québec, Québec. <https://advitam.banq.qc.ca/notice/466027>

According to Statistics Canada (2021), visible minorities make up a minute fraction of the Sainte-Adèle's population. Of Sainte-Adèle's close to 14 000 inhabitants, only 340 (.025%) are categorized as visible minorities. Over half of the population is bilingual (English and French), with unilingual French speakers making up approximately 41% of the population and unilingual English speakers making up .013% of the population (Statistics Canada, 2021b).

In this thesis, I focus on the circumstances surrounding the struggle of local White, settler heterosexual political elites for control over the site, to the exclusion of colonial, racial, and gendered struggles which structure relations within the site. Scholarly studies of the political repression of queer men in the province of Québec are few and far between and existing scholarship has yet to take advantage of provincial access to information mechanisms. The data I have been able to collect via these mechanisms speaks specifically to this kind of violence. One mention of gendered violence (rape) surfaces within the data. Rather than centering the experience and well-being of the woman whose rape is mentioned, the author of the document in question mentions the rape only in passing and merely as a means of legitimating their call for the collective punishment of those who queer the site (*Violence au parc linéaire de ste marguerite*, 2020). Those interested in understanding gendered power relations within this site might take an interest in this document.

1.1 It Doesn't Get Better

In 1975, the National Assembly of Québec passed the *Charte des droits et libertés de la personne* (hereafter, *Charter*), a quasi-constitutional law which protects, *inter alia*, "le droit à l'égalité (10 à 20)". Article 10 of the *Charter* enumerates prohibited grounds of discrimination, while Article 15 specifies, *inter alia*, that no one may, on the basis of any one of these grounds, deny someone access to a public park. In 1977, 'sexual orientation' was added to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination. Combined, these two articles prohibit practices which seek, on the basis of sexual orientation, to limit the access of sexual minorities to parks. As the aforementioned list of anti-homosexual sting operations makes clear, these articles have been all but ineffective at guaranteeing such access.

In 1992, young neo-Nazi skinheads killed a queer man in Angrignon Park, in a section of the park known for queer cruising, bringing the number of recently murdered queers to 9 (Vear, 1992). In response to these cumulative acts of violence, the *CCLGBTQ+* publicly denounced heterosexist acts of violence committed against the community, expressing particular concern about the safety of queers who

patronized Montreal's Angrinon, Lafontaine and Maisonneuve parks (La Presse Canadienne, 1993). Determined to shed light on the structural, anti-homosexual dynamics propelling this recent spate of violence, the *Table de concertation des lesbiennes et gais du Grand Montréal* (hereafter, *Table*) demanded a public inquiry into both popular heterosexist violence and heterosexist police violence and profiling (Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse, 1994, p. 3). The public inquiry, led by the *Commission des droits de la personne* (hereafter, *Commission*) substantiated the claims made by the *Table* and the *CCLGBTQ+*, finding not only that gays and lesbians were subject to everyday forms of heterosexist violence and exclusion, but that this violence and exclusion was, in large part, driven by patterns of heterosexist police abuse (Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse, 1994). To prevent the unlawful interception and interrogation of gays and lesbians in parks and protect their right to circulate freely, the *Commission* urged the *Ministère de la Sécurité publique* to adopt “des directives claires dont l'objectif principal serait de prévenir des pratiques policières à caractère abusif et discriminatoire ciblant les gais et lesbiennes” (Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse, 1994, Recommendation 23).

This recommendation has proven to be just as ineffective as the aforementioned *Charter* articles. Between 2011 and 2017, the *Service de Police de la Ville de Montréal* (hereafter, *SPVM*) repeatedly conducted anti-homosexual sting operations in each of the parks previously identified by the *CCLGBTQ+* (SPVM, 2017a; SPVM, 2017b; SPVM, 2017c; SPVM, 2011). In so doing, the *SPVM* blatantly ignored Recommendation 23 of the *Commission*. By 2017, it should have been clear to us that police would more readily continue, albeit through ‘softer’ means, the work of their neo-Nazi predecessors, than listen to anything the *CCLGBTQ+*, *Charter* or *Commission* had to say. While Québec is frequently remembered as being the first province to add sexual orientation to its prohibited grounds of discrimination in 1977 (Chaire DSPG), it has now become clear that this ‘trailblazing’ addition has done little to curb heterosexist policing throughout the province and that formal legal equality can happily coexist alongside the continued punishment and criminalization of queer erotics and intimacy.

To gain insight into this apparent tension, and, more specifically, to identify the political technologies by means of which such coexistence is made possible, I turn my attention to recent developments at the Chutes Sainte-Marguerite. Over the past ten years, the site that has been the object of repeated heterosexist state intervention, much of which has been carried out with the help of allegedly gender- and sexuality-neutral distinctions, disinformation, and cover stories, as well as under the banners of ‘law,’

'security,' and 'equality'. Taking Grönfors and Stalström's 1987 claim that "control of sexuality and sexual behaviour [...] is more often hidden behind other issues, given other names, etc., until it is difficult sometimes even to discover that what is being controlled is sexual behaviour" as my point of departure (p. 54), I hypothesize that analogue distinctions, disinformation, cover stories, as well as 'law,' 'security,' and 'equality' play a significant role in fostering the seamless co-existence of these two phenomena. Inquiring into the role that analogue distinctions, disinformation, cover stories, 'law,' 'security,' and 'equality' have played in fostering this co-existence, I ask myself the following question: how did the state attempt to enforce heteronormative conduct at the Chutes without triggering anti-discrimination protections provided for in Québec's *Charter*? I argue that the state attempted to do so, in the first instance, by moving away from legally prohibited grounds of discrimination—those regarding sexual identity (homo/hetero)—and relying increasingly on legally protected grounds of discrimination—those regarding space and its use (queer/heteronormative use). I argue, moreover, that disinformation and cover storying campaigns played an indispensable role in facilitating this shift, masking the substitution, and in so doing, deactivating (temporarily and as far as possible) the aforementioned *Charter* protections. I argue, in the second instance, that this deactivation was made possible via the obfuscatory operations of notions like 'law' and 'security', as well as by the deployment of a dramatically watered-down notion of 'equality', one which I have come to call 'punitive equality'. In sum, I argue that analogue distinctions, disinformation, cover stories, 'law,' 'security,' and 'equality' constitute punitive devices by means of which the state deactivates *Charter* protections guaranteeing sexual minorities access to public space.

1.2 Conceptual Framework

Throughout this thesis, I make use of the concepts 'queer,' 'state,' 'security,' 'equality,' and 'heteronormativity'. Here, I define these terms, beginning with the term 'queer'. While Sam Bourcier (2018) conceptually links 'queerness' with homosexuality, other theorists have suggested that queerness in fact bears no necessary relationship to homosexuality or gender nonconformity. Cathy J. Cohen has simply defined 'queer' as an antagonistic "relationship to power" (Cohen cited in Dillon, 2018, p. 14). Writing in the same vein, Michael Warner suggests that queerness "gets a critical edge by defining itself against the normal rather than the heterosexual" (Warner cited in Lippert, 2010, p. 42). Drawing on Cohen, Stephen Dillon (2018) suggests that "the radical potential of queerness lies not in its ability to name the fact of embodying individually resistive gender or sexual identities but in its capacity to act as a force that could bring together all those deemed marginal and all those committed to liberatory politics" (p. 14). Jack Halberstam (2005) has also suggested we "detach queerness from sexual identity" and use the term to

designate and re-valorize alternative “way[s] of life” (Halberstam, 2005, p. 1). For the purposes of this thesis, I deploy these two understandings of queerness concurrently, using the term ‘queer’ both as a way of describing that which defies the dictates of heteronormativity, and as a way of denoting that which stands against and refuses forms of normativity separate and distinct from heteronormativity. Perhaps then, we can (and should) qualify as ‘queer’ that which stands against the ‘state’.

Élisée Reclus (2005 [1894]) expresses deep skepticism towards those who conceptualize the ‘state’ as a having “any kind of pure essence” or being “a philosophical abstraction”. Rather than thinking of the ‘state’ as an object that one might describe or a purely immaterial idea, Reclus adopts a micro conceptualization of the ‘state,’ urging us to view the ‘state’ as relational, the outcome of interactions between “a collection of individuals placed in a specific milieu and subjected to its influence” (p. 132). Gustav Landauer makes an identical observation, noting that “the State is a social relationship; a certain way of people relating to one another” (Landauer cited in Williams, 2018, p. 180). Stefano Harney and Fred Moten (2013) share this assessment. They characterize the state as a relational, networked “effect” (p. 143). One consequence of this is that the ‘state’ is “very, very thoroughly aerated” (Harney and Moten, 2013, p. 145) and “can be destroyed only by creating new social relationships; i.e., by people relating to one another differently” (Landauer cited in Williams, 2018, p. 180). Much like Harney, Moten, and Landauer, Gerald Taiaiake Alfred sees the ‘state’ not as “this great monolithic thing that occupies all of social and political life, but rather as” a diffuse relation composed of “fissures or cracks or empty spaces” that remain uncaptured and ungoverned (Alfred cited in Dupuis-Déri, 2016, p. 53). Francis Dupuis-Déri (2016) deepens this analysis, suggesting that the ‘state’ or ‘statism’ is “a system of domination, oppression, appropriation and exclusion” always “based on a non-egalitarian division of political work involving two classes, the governors and the governed” and which operates at macro (system), meso (institutional), and micro (interpersonal) levels (Dupuis-Déri, 2016, p. 43-4). For the purposes of this thesis, I restrict myself to analysing the meso (institutional) manifestations of the ‘state,’ concentrating my attention on local, municipal, and provincial networks of governance. The networks that interest me the most are those that formed between the *Ville de Sainte-Adèle* (the municipality within which the site is located), *Corporation Première Équité* and *Compagnie 141941 Canada Inc.* (the two corporations who attempted to privatize significant portions of the site in the early 1990s), the *MRC des Pays-d’en-Haut* (the agglomeration of municipalities responsible for managing the parking lot located adjacent the site), the *Corporation du P’tit Train du Nord* (the non-profit organization tasked with the planning and development of the Parc Linéaire—the park used by queer patrons to gain access to the site), *Sécurité XGuard Inc.* (the private security firm tasked with

controlling access to the parking lot adjacent the site in 2020), *Groupe Sûreté Inc.* (the private security firm tasked with controlling access to the parking lot adjacent the site from 2021 to 2022), the *Sûreté du Québec* (the provincial police force with jurisdiction over the site), the *Comité des Chutes Glen-Wexford* (a committee composed of local residents with properties located within short distance of the site), and the *Ministère des Énergies et des Ressources* (the ministry that transferred, in the 20th century, ownership of the lots upon which the site is located to the municipality).

Mark Neocleous defines 'security' as a "political technology through which individuals, groups, classes, and ultimately, modern capital is reshaped and reordered" (2008, p. 4). Shifting "attention away from material conditions and questions," 'security' acts as an obfuscatory device, depoliticizing conflict and pacifying the governed (Neocleous, 2011, p. 21). I use the term 'security' in the same sense defined by Neocleous in order to critically map its depoliticizing effects at the Chutes Sainte-Marguerite.

Queer abolitionists tend to think of 'equality' as a political technology on par with 'crime' and 'security'. To understand why this is, we need to specify what queer abolitionists have in mind when they put forward their critique of 'equality'. Doing so requires us to take a short detour into the world of gay and lesbian respectability politics, also referred to as 'inclusion politics,' 'assimilationist politics,' 'rights-based politics, or 'single-issue' politics. Rather than dispose of heteronormativity, and, by the same token, render in-existent the sphere of sexual respectability responsible for the unequal distribution of life chances, gay and lesbian respectability politics seeks only to enlarge the sphere of respectability, to ensure that those who differ only minimally from the norm gain access to the privileges and protection usually reserved for those who abide by heteronormative codes (Stryker, 2008; Spade, 2015; Rubin, 1998). In demanding access to these privileges and protection, respectability politics translates the queer demand for equality into a demand for inclusion. This particular translation strips equality of its radical edge, transforming it into a mechanism of assimilation. 'Equality' becomes a disciplinary device, an attack against, rather than embrace of queerness (Conrad, 2014). What is more, statements of 'equality' frequently operate as "measures of good performance" within institutional settings. Instead of guaranteeing equal treatment or leveling the playing field, statements of 'equality' become disculpatory devices, masking inequality and shielding institutions from accountability (Ahmed, 2017, p. 103). I use these radical queer and feminist theorizations of 'equality' to shed light on the political manoeuvres through which 'equality' was transformed into a tool which upholds rather than abolishes heteronormativity.

1.3 Thesis Outline

This thesis is separated into three chapters. The first chapter details the theoretical and methodological frameworks that informed my study of the site. This chapter contains an overview of anarchist and abolitionist criminological thought followed by a discussion of case study and freedom of information theory. I end this chapter by elucidating my data collection and analysis process. The second chapter takes a look at the founding, development, regulation, use, and heterosexist privatization of the Chutes Sainte-Marguerite, from the moment of its theft and appropriation by White settlers in the late 1800s to its alleged 'shut down' in 2022. In reconstructing the history of the site, I shed light on the role of disinformation and cover storying played in depoliticizing heterosexist state violence and in circumventing *Charter* protections. In the third and final chapter, I concentrate my analysis on analogue distinctions, 'law,' 'security,' and 'equality,' unpacking the role that these distinctions and notions played in deactivating the protections offered to sexual minorities by the *Charter*.

CHAPITRE 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

“[T]he first sustained US-based consideration of the social, ethical, and cultural place of homosexuality,” writes Terence Kissack, “took place within the English-language anarchist movement” (Kissack, 2008, p. 3). It seems appropriate then, that this research project ground itself in and draw life from, this queerly anti-authoritarian movement. ‘Law’, ‘security’, and ‘equality’ are punitive devices and much like ‘crime,’ their operations can only be understood once one ceases presuming their innocence and begins viewing them skeptically. Likewise, the political operations of disinformation, cover storying and analogue distinctions would go unnoticed were it not for a healthy dose of skepticism—a dose which, we will soon see, anarchist and abolitionist criminologies are more than willing to provide. Given the potential that anarchist and abolitionist criminologies have to make visible the mechanics of heterosexist criminalization, these criminological siblings constitute my chosen theoretical point of departure.

I have chosen to ground this research in anarchist and abolitionist criminology, largely to the exclusion of queer theory. This may come as a surprise given the existence of clear conceptual links between the practice of cruising and queer theory. I have shied away from these theories for two distinct reasons. First, such links are already being ably explored by my colleagues Hugues Lefebvre-Morasse and Guillaume Tardif in their Master’s theses, making recourse to these theories redundant.⁴ Until now, cruising has never been studied through the theoretical lenses of anarchist and abolitionist criminology. Second, I draw upon anarchist and abolitionist criminology rather than upon queer theory because I take heterosexist social relations to be a subclass of hierarchical power relations, rather than a class of social relations in their own right. While this subclass of hierarchical power relations has its own specificities, heterosexist social relations are problematic, fundamentally-speaking, because they classify subjects hierarchically in a manner that is, by all accounts, unjustifiable. If this assumption is correct, then anarchism, which offers a thoroughgoing critique of hierarchical power relations, could very well offer the most fundamental (or radical) critique of heterosexist social relations possible. In assuming heterosexist social relations to be a

⁴ See Lefebvre-Morasse, H. (2023). *Le cruising comme pratique de faire-monde queer : Un inventaire des lieux d’intimité publique dans six villes régionales québécoises Québec* [Mémoire, Université du Québec à Montréal]. Archipel. <http://archipel.uqam.ca/id/eprint/17270> and Tardif, G. (2023). *Drague et sexualité dans les lieux publics : une recherche exploratoire en travail social sur le phénomène du cruising au Québec* [Mémoire, Université du Québec à Montréal]. Archipel. <http://archipel.uqam.ca/id/eprint/17172>

subclass of social relations rather than a class in its own right, I run the risk of overlooking heterosexism's specificities. This is a regrettable risk, yet I take it because I am interested in getting to the moral heart, or root of things and because what concerns me most is not putting an end to this particular form of hierarchical power relation but putting an end to all unjustifiable, hierarchical power relations. I draw upon the critical perspectives of abolitionist criminologies as well because they sharpen anarchism's antiauthoritarian critique of hierarchical power relations by identifying problematic power relationships and providing situated analyses of them.

Without always seeing eye to eye, or for that matter, recognizing one another, anarchists and abolitionists have long formulated overlapping critiques of 'crime' and criminal punishment and injustice systems. Their shared skepticism towards hierarchy and penal state logics has, moreover, led them to develop alternative, community-centred conflict resolution mechanisms that are antipathetic to heteronomy, punishment, and conflict expropriation, and sympathetic towards plurality and uncertainty. Recognizing the affinities that exist between anarchist and abolitionist approaches to 'crime' and criminal punishment, Walby (2011), has urged researchers to recognize the complimentary nature of these two militant criminological traditions: "Penal abolition needs an explicitly anarchist posture, since many abolitionists have never been clear about their broader political aims. Yet anarchism needs abolition to continually provide concrete sites for rebelliousness" (p. 289). Recognizing this complementarity means developing an 'anarcho-abolitionist' theory of 'crime' and criminal punishment—one that weaves together the theoretical and practical insights of both anarchists and abolitionists and delivers a debilitating "counterpunch to the belly of authority" (Ferrel, 1998, p. 3).

In this chapter, I take stock of this criminological, anarcho-abolitionist 'counterpunch.' After running through analytic definitions of 'anarchism' and 'abolitionism,' I summarize anarchist and abolitionist deconstructions of the category 'crime.' These deconstructions theorize 'crime' as a sociopolitical construct, suggest that 'crime' has no ontology, and argue that 'crime' is nothing more than an obfuscatory device. Having summarized these three deconstructions, I synthesize anarchist and abolitionist redefinitions of 'crime.' I then shift my attention away from theoretical arguments against the category 'crime' in order to attend to anarchist and abolitionist critiques of existing criminal injustice and punishment systems: law, police, courts, and prisons.

Before diving into the heart of this chapter, two short disclaimers are in order. First, while I have done my best to capture the core analyses of anarchist and abolitionist criminological thought, anarchist and abolitionist critiques of ‘crime’ and criminal punishment are too numerous and diverse to capture within a chapter of this length. In writing this chapter, I have drawn heavily on contemporary Black feminist abolitionist work coming out of the U.S., somewhat to the detriment of European and Canadian abolitionists whose work in this field is noteworthy. Furthermore, while there exists a wide range of quantitative abolitionist scholarship, I focus my attention on qualitative scholarship, primarily because I believe that this is where the most radical normative critiques of ‘crime’ and criminal punishment are being (and can be) articulated. This also happens to be the field in which I am most comfortable. Second, while I acknowledge that anarchist and abolitionist criminologies have both critical (negative) and constructive (positive) sides, I leave these positive sides unaddressed. This is perhaps the most regrettable exclusion to mark this chapter. As I will soon note, abolitionism seeks not only to critique but also to ‘grow away from’ that which it critiques. ‘Growing away from’ ‘crime’ requires developing and experimenting with concrete harm reduction and conflict resolution mechanisms which reflect core anarchist and abolitionist commitments. Contemporary anarchists and abolitionists have experimented with two major types of community-led alternatives to state-centred punitive modes of conflict resolution: restorative and transformative justice. These alternative models of justice represent the constructive side of abolitionist, and to a large extent, anarchist, criminology. Any review which aspires to be comprehensive must address them. I set these models aside not because I deem them unimportant, but rather because they are only tangentially related to my chosen research question.

2.1 Anarchism

In a short piece published in *La Revue Anarchist*, Émile Armand once asked whether “man” has the capacity to live life free of all political authority and constraint. He concedes the impossibility of doing away with all political authority and constraint but maintains that this admission is of little theoretical consequence: “Judging by appearances, I see no man who does without authority; I see no minority escaping from “all” constraints. In fact, I don’t really care. I feel that I am an anarchist, and that’s enough.” (Armand, 2019 [1930], p. 22). Armand’s position is consistent with the definitions of anarchism put forward by Michael Bakunin and Noam Chomsky, each of whom think of anarchism as a “principled skepticism” towards authority, rather than an outright rejection of all authority (Franks et al., 2018, p. 2). Much like Bakunin’s steadfast refusal to accept as infallible the wisdom of any one person—be they a layperson or expert (Bakunin, 2005a [1871], p. 90)—Chomsky’s demand that hierarchical structures be able to justify

themselves reflects well this skepticism (Chomsky, 2013). George Woodcock's definition of anarchism as a "doctrine which poses a criticism of existing society; a view of a desirable future society; and a means of passing from one to the other," touches upon the skepticism expressed by both Bakunin and Chomsky, all the while gesturing towards anarchism's constructive aspiration: the prefigurative establishment of non-hierarchical, autonomous communities of voluntarily-associated subjects attuned to social difference (Amster, 2018; Bray, 2018; Franks, 2018; Lazar, 2018).

2.2 Abolitionism

Writing for *Jacobin* magazine, Dan Berger, Mariame Kaba, and David Stein have defined abolition as "a radical critique of state violence" which emerged "in response to private property and nineteenth-century chattel slavery" (Berger et al., 2017). Drawing on the Latin roots of the term abolition, *ab-adolere*, Kevin Thompson and Perry Zurn have suggested that abolition represents an attempt to stem the growth of and destroy apparatuses of state violence as well as an accompanying commitment "to grow away from" these apparatuses (Thompson and Zurn, 2021, p. 19). For Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, abolitionism is, critically, an attempt "to elaborate a different mode of living together with others" (Harney and Moten, 2013, p. 119), a mode which actively disavows punitive state logics and works towards the "founding of a new society" (Harney and Moten, 2013, p. 42). More than simply critiquing and plotting the destruction of penal state apparatuses, abolition is a moral and political project aimed at prefiguratively "challeng[ing] hegemonic norms and standards which ask us to accept penal institutions" (Coyle et Scott, 2021, p. 1).

2.3 Anarchist and Abolitionist Deconstructions of 'Crime'

In *Police Power and Disorder* (2020), Will Jackson argues that "criminology continue[s] to prop up the basic categories that underpin policing" (p. 109). Since criminology takes its foundational categories for granted, "criminology cannot deconstruct crime" (Jackson, 2020, p. 97). The task of deconstructing 'crime' falls, therefore, upon anarchist and abolitionist shoulders. Anarchist and abolitionist deconstructions of crime typically fall into three categories. The first consists in pointing out that 'crime' is a sociopolitical, rather than neutral or apolitical category. Arguments of this nature are important because they impute normative (non-neutral) content to the category 'crime,' thereby opening it up to contestation. Deconstructions that fall into this category render the political content of 'crime' apparent by a) pointing to continual changes in the substantive content of the category, b) noting that blatantly criminal state offences are never categorized as 'crime,' and c) attempting to illustrate how the category of race structures the concept of 'crime.' The second consists in showing that 'crime' has no ontology—that is to say, no unifying or defining

feature—and then arguing that the category ‘crime’ is at best useless and at worst mystifying. Deconstructions that fall into this category also point towards the continual change in the substantive content of ‘crime;’ however this time, they do not do so in order to show that ‘crime’ is a political category, but rather to challenge the idea that ‘crime’ qualifies as a category at all. Arguments that fall within the third category maintain that ‘crime’ is a concept which does things rather than simply describes objects, and suggest, furthermore, that ‘crime’ impedes real-world attempts to address the root causes of conflict. ‘Crime’ it is argued, depoliticizes conflict, and masks its structural causes, operating as ruling class technology of power.

2.3.1 ‘Crime’ as Sociopolitical Construct

Anarchists and abolitionists alike understand ‘crime’ to be a sociopolitical construct. Voltairine de Cleyre argues that “crime has not been decided from all time: crime, like everything else, has had its evolution according to place, time, and circumstance” (de Cleyre, 2020 [1903], p. 134). Jalil Muntaqim, a formerly incarcerated member of the Black Liberation Army, also understands crime to be socially and politically determined: “[...] concepts of ‘crime’ are not terminal. The very nature of crime is [...] defined by time and place and those who have the power to make definitions” (Muntaqim, 2005 [1996], p. 29). Contemporary academic abolitionists including Nicolas Carrier, Justin Piché, and Viviane Saleh-Hanna have likewise characterized ‘crime’ as a socially constructed category (Carrier and Piché, 2015, para. 20; Saleh-Hanna, 2008, p. 419). The definitions of ‘crime’ that anarchists and abolitionists advance reflect this constructivist understanding.

Muslim anarchist and prisoner Sean Swain puts forward a definition of ‘crime’ that is emblematic of anarchist and abolitionist understandings of this notion. Swain defines ‘crime’ as “conduct perceived to be deviant that has been designated as ‘punishable’ by those who assume the ‘right to rule.’” For Swain, deviance—understood as the transgression of norms—is a necessary but not sufficient condition of ‘crime.’ To qualify as ‘criminal,’ the deviant act must also have been “designated as ‘punishable’ by those who assume the ‘right to rule’” (Swain, 2018, p. 129-130; see also Dunne, 2005 [1998], p. 44). Given the regularity with which political leadership changes and social norms vary, “what does or does not constitute a crime depends on the historical time; who is charged with lawbreaking is politically—or socially—determined” (Buck, 2007, p. 239). Far from being a historic invariant, ‘crime’ is a category “laden with invested social meanings” which “reflect and resonate with wider social and political, economic, and cultural concerns and with commitments, paranoias, and moral panics” (Goldberg, 2000, p. 207).

To drive home the idea that ‘crime’ encodes ruling class norms, anarchists and abolitionists point out that ‘criminal’ behaviour, when carried out by representatives of the state, somehow always escape being categorized as ‘crime’ (see also: Neocleous, 2020, p. 22; Seri, 2020, p. 42). Bakunin reminds us that crimes carried out by state agents for “reason[s] of state” are easily excused and their perpetrators forever shielded against the possibility of criminal sanction (Bakunin, 2005b [1867], p. 84). Despite the state having a proven track record of unimaginable brutality, state agents responsible for brutalization are taken to be “guiltless or even heroic” rather than criminal (Rainer et Cantine, 2005 [1950], p. 8-9). Manifestly, “harmful acts committed by corporations and nation-states are not crimes” (Saleh-Hanna, 2008, p. 427; see also Duff, 2021, p. 12). ‘Crime,’ then, is a technology of state power which “distinguishes between what the abuser can do to his victims and what his victims cannot do to him or to each other” (Saleh-Hanna, 2017, p. 431). ‘Crime’ is, to borrow Bakunin’s trenchant characterization, “the privilege of the state” (Bakunin, 2020b [1873], sp.70).

Some abolitionists, like Angela Davis, argue that ruling class norms—private property and anti-Blackness—are foundational to the concept of ‘crime,’ rather than incidental to it. For Davis, it makes no sense to speak of ‘crime’ without reference to racial legacies and logics. ‘Crime’ is a product and technology of racial capitalism, a seemingly neutral yet racially coded category designed to capture and facilitate the punishment of Black subjects. She writes: “crime is thus one of the masquerades behind which ‘race,’ with all its menacing ideological complexity, mobilizes old public fears and creates new ones” (Davis, 1998a, p. 62). Likewise, Saleh-Hanna maintains that white supremacy is “a necessary backdrop to crime’s inception” (Saleh-Hanna, 2017, p. 420).

If Davis and Saleh-Hanna identify race as foundational to ‘crime,’ they also readily recognize that ‘crime’ is born of, reflects, and enforces systems of domination distinct from, adjacent to, or interlocking with, race. This point is made most vivid by Saleh-Hanna’s coinage of the term “Racist-Imperialist-Patriarchy [R.I.P.]” which she uses to designate not only the racial, but also colonial and gendered roots of ‘crime’ (Saleh-Hanna, 2017, p. 420). Despite making space for and at times emphasizing other systems of domination, Davis and Saleh-Hanna’s analyses of ‘crime’ consistently accord a high degree of primacy to race. David Theo Goldberg gently pushes back against this tendency to grant race a privileged analytic position, arguing that “there is no naturalized notion of crime, *whether in racial terms or more broadly socially*” [my emphasis] (Goldberg, 2000, p. 207). Goldberg does not deny that race has and continues to play a particularly important role in shaping the content of the category ‘crime’; instead, he argues that

the role race has played in shaping this content is one that could just as easily have been played by any other axis of power.

2.3.2 'Crime' as Baseless Amalgamation of Practices and Events

In addition to arguing that 'crime' is a political concept, anarchists and abolitionists argue that 'crime' has no ontology. To make this point, it is useful to return to Bakunin, Dachine Rainer and Holley Cantine, and Saleh-Hanna's aforementioned observations regarding the non-applicability of the label 'crime' to criminal state action. These observations strongly suggests that 'crime' bears no necessary relationship with moral considerations of harm or violence. Other abolitionists have made corroborating observations. Hal Pepinsky and Paul Jesilow use wartime conscription laws to de-link 'crime' from harm and violence. They write: "it can be considered criminal to refuse to kill, as conscientious objectors have discovered during wartime. It can legally be tolerated to kill, in self-defence or in defence of property" (Pepinsky et Jesilow cited in Saleh-Hanna, 2008, p. 431). If, as abolitionists suggest, "the definition of acts as criminal is based not on harmful acts" (Saleh-Hanna, 2008, p. 425), then to link crime with "some fixed set of lofty moral principles" is to perpetuate a "false belief" which obscures rather than brings to light the roots of 'crime' (Swain, 2018, p. 131). Since harm and violence are the characteristics most widely assumed to bind all 'crime' together, showing that 'crime' bears no necessary relation to either one of these moral considerations deals a significant blow to the category of 'crime.'

Implicitly stemming off suggestions that 'crime' might be a category unified by considerations other than harm and violence, Vincenzo Ruggiero, drawing on Louk Hulsman, argues that the social objects commonly categorized under the banner of 'crime' "have separate properties and no common denominator" whatsoever (Hulsman cited in Ruggiero, 2015, para. 20):

"What makes dangerous driving similar to fencing? And political violence to pollution? Neither the motivation of those involved nor the techniques required, let alone the consequences of those specific conducts, display a precise set of common components" (Hulsman cited in Ruggiero, 2015, para. 20).

More than just failing to reflect a normative commitment to harm reduction or peacemaking, 'crime' cannot even be said to designate a class of actions which share common set of motivations, techniques, or consequences. What we have then is a category with no intrinsic unifying feature and whose sole extrinsic unifying feature is the fact "that the criminal justice system is authorized to take action against" those actions which the State itself defines as 'criminal' (Ruggiero, 2015, para. 20). Reduced to a "baseless

amalgamation of practices or events that share no similarities whatsoever,” ‘crime’ is stripped of all explanatory value (Carrier et Piché, 2015, p. 18).

2.3.3 ‘Crime’ as Obfuscatory Device

In addition to deconstructing ‘crime,’ anarchists and abolitionists pay a great deal of attention to how ‘crime’ operates, to what ‘crime’ does. Abolitionists typically identify delegitimation, dehumanization, and obfuscation as being a function or effect of ‘crime.’ Despite the absence of any reliable linkage between ‘crime’ and harm, ascribing the label ‘criminal’ to someone conveniently implies that this person is “bad, harmful, dangerous,” delegitimizing and dehumanizing them in the process (Duff, 2021, p. 12-14). ‘Crime’ acts as an obfuscatory device either by depoliticizing the political acts of marginalized or subordinate social groups or by mystifying structural causes of conflict. Zeroing in on the depoliticizing function of the term, Davis writes: “a political event is reduced to a criminal event in order to affirm the absolute invulnerability of the existing order” (Davis, 1998b, p. 44). The affirming of which Davis speaks is made possible by means of legal abstraction which forces a forgetting of the concrete historic circumstances responsible for the emergence of particular ‘criminal’ prohibitions (James, 2005, p. xxiv). Furthermore, ‘crime’ draws our attention away from structural causes of social strife. Via mystification (Hess cited in Saleh-Hanna, 2008, p. 425; de Haan cited in Carrier and Piché, 2015, p. 18), ‘crime’ impedes our ability to think critically about and address the harms and violence with which, ironically, ‘crime’ it is said to be most concerned.

2.4 Structural Analyses of ‘Crime’

Building on his definition of ‘crime’ as deviance designated as punishable by those who assume the right to rule, Swain suggests that “if we are serious and sincere in our commitment to eradicate “crime,” we could collectively accomplish that goal in less than fifteen minutes” (Swain, 2018, p. 132). Provocative—yet no less coherent—suggestions like these might give some the impression that anarchist and abolitionist analyses of ‘crime’ are overly simplistic and painfully dismissive of the harms caused by conduct currently classified as ‘crime;’ however, one need only read a bit further to realize that this impression is entirely unfounded:

“Crime”—deviance designated by those who assume the “right to rule” as punishable—vanishes as soon as there no longer exists anyone with the imagined “right to rule” to designate what is punishable. Admittedly, the existence of deviance may well continue, but *the elimination of deviance is a separate question from the question of eliminating “crime”* [my emphasis] (Swain, 2018, p. 133).

While Swain thoroughly trashes the concept of ‘crime,’ he readily recognizes the existence of and need to address forms of conflict and harm. For reasons which should have been made clear above, anarchists and abolitionists distinguish sharply between ‘criminal’ conduct, which reflects ruling class norms and may or may not be harmful, violent, or worthy of moral reproach, and behaviour that is harmful to individuals or damaging to the social relations. Far from dismissing the harms caused by certain forms of criminal behaviour, anarchists and abolitionists are invested in finding ways of fully recognizing and addressing these harms.

Recognizing and addressing these harms requires abandoning the “grammar of criminalization” and shifting from behavioural to structural analyses of harm (Carrier and Piché, 2015, para. 17). Hulsman urges us to recast ‘crime’ as ‘problem situations’ (Hulsman cited in Carrier et Piché, 2015, para. 19). Carrier and Piché go even further, suggesting a move towards ‘problematized situations’ (Carrier et Piché, 2015, para. 19). The emphasis this notion places on ‘problematization’ forces us to acknowledge that the process by means of which harm is defined, identified, and acted upon is itself subject to social and political circumstance. The turn to ‘situation’ avoids the individualizing, naturalizing, and pathologizing effects of behavioural analyses by contextualizing harm and spotlighting structural elements.

Anarchists usually identify existing social arrangements as the source of most problem(atized) situations. While the term ‘problem(atized) situations’ is relatively recent, with most anarchists simply using the term ‘crime’ critically, attempts to spotlight the structural causes of such situations are far from new. Bakunin argues that “social organization is always and everywhere the only cause of crimes committed by men” (Bakunin, 2020a [1869], p. 62). Herbert Read echoes Bakunin, arguing that “crime is a symptom of social illness—of poverty, inequality and restriction,” and suggesting that it can be eliminated by ridding “the social body of these illnesses” (Read, 2009 [1940], p. 6). De Cleyre makes a similar, though less grand claim, arguing that oppressive social conditions play a significant, though not singular role in producing harmful “outbursts” (de Cleyre, 2020 [1903], p. 138). While anarchists disagree on the extent to which social organization is responsible for ‘crime,’ they unilaterally agree that oppressive social organization plays a central role in its production.

Anarchist analyses of crime typically identify authoritarian social relations as the chief source of ‘crime.’ The day “political, intellectual, and economic authority” disappears, Armand (2019 [1930]) wrote, the illegallists—anarchists who practiced crime as a political act—“will also disappear” (p. 30). Speaking of

everyday, rather than ‘political’ ‘crime’ Marius Jacob wrote: “If there is theft it is only because there is abundance on one hand and famine on the other” (Jacob, 2019 [1905], p. 36). Charlotte Wilson, likewise, wrote that “crime as we know it is a symptom of the strain upon human fellowship involved in the false and artificial social arrangements which are enforced by authority” (Wilson, 2005 [1886], p. 130). Like Armand, Jacob, and Wilson, Victor Serge was of the mind that “from the moment that people are hungry, lack air and sun, and break down in factories and barracks it is inevitable that they will rob and murder” (Serge, 2019 [1910], p. 73). Of all the crime-generating inequalities produced by adherence to the principle of authority, economic inequality, generated by capitalist accumulation, is the form of inequality that anarchists most blame for generating ‘crime’. Thus William Goodwin wrote: “The fruitful source of crimes consists in this circumstance, one man’s possessing in abundance that of which another man is destitute” (Goodwin, 2005a [1793-97], p. 21).

2.5 Anarchist and Abolitionist Critiques of Criminal Punishment and Injustice Systems

Anarchists and abolitionists do not content themselves with theoretical deconstructions of crime. Their treatment of ‘crime’ also involves, fundamentally, identifying and scrutinizing the real-world components of criminal punishment and injustice systems. Carlo Cafiero breaks criminal punishment and injustice systems into four primary components: “law, judge, policeman, and jail” (Cafiero, 2005 [1880], p. 112). Daniel Defert, for his part, breaks these systems down into three main pieces: “the police, the legal system, and the prison” (Defert, 2021 [1971], p. 73). For the purposes of this thesis, I break these systems into four primary components: law, police, courts, and prisons. I treat anarchist and abolitionist critiques of these institutions separately all the while heeding a *La Santé* prisoner’s warning not “to saw the tree into planks before cutting it down” (anonymous prisoner cited in Thompson and Zurn, 2021 , p. 21).

2.5.1 Law

It is necessary to distinguish between ‘crime’ and ‘law.’ ‘Crime’ is frequently assumed to be a by-product of ‘law,’ a category that follows ‘law’ and that could not exist without it—a category, in other words, without a life of its own. And yet, as Davis (1998b) points out, one can have ‘crime’ without ‘law.’ Drawing on Carl Schmitt, “Nazi Germany’s foremost constitutional lawyer,” Davis (1998b) writes: “A thief, for example, was not necessarily one who has committed an overt act of theft, but rather one whose character renders him a thief (*wer nach seinem wesen ein Dieb ist*)” (p. 42). It follows that ‘crime’ is, first and foremost, a social, rather than legal category. Consequently, critiques of ‘law’ will necessarily be distinct from critiques of ‘crime.’

Anarchists and abolitionists hatred of law is grounded in at least four different considerations. First, both anarchists and abolitionists recognize that law is born of, relies upon, and consecrates violence (Magón, 2005 [1918], p. 260; Walby, 2011, p. 299; Kropotkin, 2020 [1886]; Malatesta, 2005 [1920], p. 406; Goodwin, 2005b [1797], p. 173; Bakunin, 2005c [1871], p. 105). Second, they recognize that law encodes ruling class norms and therefore acts as an instrument of class power (Proudhon, 2005 [1851], p. 54; Swain, 2018, p. 132; Malatesta, 2020 [1921]; Davis, 2000, p. 64). Third, they recognize that law is ineffective at resolving conflict. Anarchists and abolitionists substantiate this claim in at least five different ways. For anarchists and abolitionists alike, the problem with law is not simply that it encodes dominant norms. The problem lies in the act of encoding itself. Encoding crystallizes norms, dulling our ability to think critically about issues as they arise and preventing us from responding to these issues in a meaningful, appropriate, and timely manner (Kropotkin, 2020 [1886], p. 95; Goodwin, 2005b [1797], p. 173; Malatesta, 2020 [1921]). Second, they argue that social feeling cannot be produced by law, rather, it antecedes law (Kropotkin, 2020 [1886], p. 127; Reclus, 2005 [1894], p. 131; Rose Sr., 2018, p. 107). Third, the protection that the law is said to provide can easily be co-opted or nullified by dominant interests (de Cleyre, 2005 [1912], p. 169; Goodwin, 2005b [1797], p. 172). If anarchists readily admit that certain legal guarantees and protections—such as those provided by the welfare state—benefit dominated and oppressed classes, protecting them against unlimited abuse (Dupuis-Déri, 2016, p. 49-50), they also try to keep in mind the fact that “reforms change the names of things and not the things themselves” (Ryner, 2019 [1905], p. 57). This position, sometimes referred to as a ‘yes, but’ stance towards the legal reform, provisionally recognizes and defends laws which may temporarily provide life-improving or life-saving protections, all the while aiming to abolish the social and political conditions that vitiate life in the first place (Williams, 2018, p. 184). Without entirely dismissing the importance of the benefits that the law sometimes provides to dominated and oppressed classes, abolitionists conceptualize such benefits as concessions the state makes in order to pacify populations whose life the state itself has made intolerable (Yves, 1988, p. 33). Fourth, law operates categorically. As a result, resolving conflict by means of law either means mechanistically forcing new cases into old categories or ceaselessly elaborating new generalizations each of which will, in turn, be found deficient (Goodwin, 2005b [1797], p. 171). Law either requires us to ignore the specificity of emerging cases or construct a contradiction-prone “labyrinth without end” where “chronic uncertainty” is the rule rather than the exception (Goodwin, 2005b [1797], p. 171-3; Kropotkin, 2020 [1886]; Obadele, 2005 [2001], p. 162; Goodwin, 2005b [1797], p. 172). Fifth, “tedious, minute, circumlocutory,” law has a profoundly disempowering effect on those upon whom it is brought to bear (Goodwin, 2005b [1797], p. 172; Shakur, 2005 [1978], p. 83). Finally, anarchists and abolitionists argue against law on the basis that it has the

potential to—and in fact commonly does—transform vice into virtue (Muntaqim, 2005 [1996], p. 31; Kropotkin, 2020 [1886]). In a perverse act of normalization, the law permits police to beat people “to within an inch of their lives or even going that inch or two further and actually taking their lives [...] so long as it is regarded as necessary and appropriate” (Neocleous, 2020, p. 28).

Despite being a harmful state technology designed to disempower subjugated classes, law retains a powerful sway over us when it comes to conflict resolution, consistently presenting itself to as the only or most effective solution to all of our problems:

“In existing States a fresh law is looked upon as a remedy for evil. Instead of themselves altering what is bad, people begin by demanding a law to alter it. If the road between two villages is impassable, the peasant says: —“There should be a law about parish roads.” If a park-keeper takes advantage of the want of spirit in those who follow him with servile observance and insults one of them, the insulted man says, “There should be a law to enjoin more politeness upon park-keepers.” If there is stagnation in agriculture or commerce, the husbandman, cattle-breeder, or corn speculator argues, “It is protective legislation that we require” (Kropotkin, 2020 [1886], p. 93).

In state societies, law is looked upon as saving grace. Kropotkin argues that this fetishization is the result of a ruling class strategy. Like Swain, he argues that law reflects ruling class norms. And yet, he also recognizes that if law were nothing but a set of enforceable ruling class norms, it would never generate sufficient public support. To make codified ruling class norms palatable to those under subjection, the ruling class intelligently incorporates within its codes laws which reflect universal or uncontroversial social norms:

Customs, absolutely essential to the very being of society, are, in the code, cleverly intermingled with usages imposed by the ruling caste, and both claim equal respect from the crowd. “Do not kill,” says the code, and hastens to add, “And pay tithes to the priest.” “Do not steal,” says the code, and immediately after, “He who refuses to pay taxes, shall have his hand struck off” (Kropotkin, 2020 [1886], p. 98).

The intermingling of laws grounded in norms that just about everybody deems reasonable provides the law with an aura of legitimacy sufficient to mask law’s ruling class operations. The intermingling of laws grounded in uncontroversial norms is, on Kropotkin’s account, an psychological act of trickery, one designed to make it more difficult to identify and critique the violence which undergirds law.

2.5.2 Police

As “the most comprehensive, and therefore necessarily the vaguest” form of power, police power “has never been clearly circumscribed” (Freund, cited in Neocleous, 2020, p. 19). “[E]xpansive, amorphous, and awesome,” police power has, since its inception, been tasked with “the whole of the legislative and administrative regulation of the community,” and thus with regulating the “disorderly, unruly, criminal, indecent, disobedient, disloyal, and lawless” (Neocleous, 2020, p. 11-15). Unsurprisingly then, police fabrication of social order “takes place via a range of institutions that are not the police per se, but which together constitute an overwhelming police power” (Neocleous, 2020, p. 18). Social order is fabricated, that is to say, constructed and preserved, via a variety of police “rules, offices, agents, and mechanisms” and encompasses “visible interventions to preserve order” as well as “minute acts supporting [...] the routine reproduction of social relations” (Seri, 2020, p. 36-39; Wall and Linnemann, 2020, p. 87). Hence, policing has been described as “a fluid, amorphous, discretionary, alegal, multifaceted form of power flowing through offices, forms of agency, practices, and rules” (Seri, 2020, p. 40). Whatever form it takes, “police power emanates from the power of violence” (Wall and Linnemann, 2020, p. 86).

While critical definitions of police like the one just presented are vital, they should not divert our attention away from the fact that the police, understood in institutional terms rather than as a diffuse activity, continue to play a central role in fabricating social order. Geo Maher, an abolitionist working within a Marxist and Black intersectional framework, argues that the police have always functioned as an “anchor” of racial capitalism, “patrol[ling] the boundaries of whiteness and wealth” (2021, p. 28). Black feminist arguments made within the U.S. context genealogically and functionally link contemporary police forces with slave patrollers and anti-Black vigilantism of earlier centuries, inscribing police within racial, colonial, and capitalist state projects (Davis, 1998b, p. 41; Gaither, 2000, p. 196-197; Maher, 2021, p. 23). Indigenous arguments against police tend to concentrate on the role that police played—and continue to play—in territorializing the colonial state (Nichols, 2014, p. 446). It should come as no surprise then, that police systematically disrespect, mislead, lie to, torment, brutalize, and murder those who are “under its supposed care” (Neocleous, 2020, p. 28; For examples of police abuse, see: McLeod, 2018, p. 1187; Suh, 2000, p. 153; Jaga, 2005, 241; Su, 2000, p. 248; G.I.P., 2021a [1972], p. 167; Gaither, 2000, p. 193; Maher, 2021). As more and more instances of abuse are documented, it becomes less and less possible to think of these instances in isolation (Williams, 2007, p. 8). The abuse becomes an inherent rather than extrinsic to or a merely unfortunate part of policing. For Saleh-Hanna (2017) police are indistinguishable from abusers. They are “professional bullies” who keep “the people who currently stand at the bottom of the

social hierarchy in their ‘place,’ where they ‘belong’ — at the bottom” (Williams, 2007, p. 21-24; see also Jackson, 2020, p. 107). Violent by definition, police work sediments power asymmetries (Seri, 2020, p. 41).

According to Neocleous, the police will to abuse is so absolute that “not moving (lingering or loitering), moving too quickly, moving too slowly, moving in an unusual manner, and moving furtively” have all — and in many places remain — legitimate grounds for police violence (Neocleous, 2020, p. 24). It is common knowledge that “the cops can pull you over for anything” (Wall and Linnemann, 2020, p. 80). What is more, questioning a police officer’s authority is liable to trigger police violence (Torres and Love, 2000, p. 227). As Neocleous writes: “[i]f the state demands it in the name of the police, and the police demand it in the name of the state, we are forced to give it up” (Neocleous, 2020, p. 26). “If all citizens are equal according to the text of the law,” writes Victor Serge, “in practice no word can counterbalance the words spoken by a cop” (Serge, 2019 [1910], p. 74; see also Wall and Linnemann, 2020, p. 89). Hence, police do not simply “uphold and preserve the law,” they “make and remake the law as well” (Maher, 2021, p. 35; see also Williams, 2020, p. 23). As petty, street-level sovereigns who perform violence work, police fabricate an authoritarian and hierarchical social order, rebuilding the world in their image (Maher, 2021, p. 35). They “rupture the horizontal bonds of community, replacing them with vertical bonds to the police themselves” (Maher, 2021, p. 126).

Anarchist and abolitionist arguments against the police draw inspiration from a variety of theoretical sources, including Marxist, Black feminist, and indigenous critiques. Anarchists, especially those operating within Black feminist and intersectional frameworks, draw heavily upon each one of these anti-police streams (see for instance: CrimethInc, 2017). Together, Marxist, Black feminist, and indigenous critiques of police and police power make it highly unlikely that the state will ever be able to respond satisfactorily to the anarchist demand that coercive institutions justify themselves. Marxist, Black feminist, and indigenous critiques of police power therefore provide anarchists with the structural analyses required to undermine police claims to political legitimacy.

2.5.2.1 Homocop

Anti-queer plainclothes policing has done little to bolster police claims to political legitimacy. Like all other exploited, oppressed, or marginalized communities, queer men, have their own, community-specific reasons for adopting an antagonistic attitude towards police. For queer men, this antagonism has a great deal to do with the history of plainclothes policing operations — operations during which young, usually

attractive male officers purposefully pose as queer men interested in consensual sexual relations with other men for the unexpressed ulterior purpose of ‘outing’ their targets and subjecting them to the humiliation of judicial and criminal proceedings. In the time leading up to these operations, plainclothes officers familiarize themselves with queer cruising codes, acquiring the remarkable levels of fluency required to successfully infiltrate cruising communities (Lvovsky, 2017). During these operations, plainclothes officers have been known to lick their lips, place their hands suggestively around their groin area, engage in friendly conversation for upwards of 50 minutes, and loiter suggestively around known cruising grounds (Bourbonnais, 1997; Laberge, 2010; Lvovsky, 2017). According to Lvovsky, these officers systematically misrepresent their intentions and work in court, presenting themselves as victims of unwanted sexual advances, thereby misleading judges and guaranteeing the conviction of their queer targets (Lvovsky, 2017). For this reason, Robertson (2016) has rightfully described plainclothes operations as being “fundamentally coercive, manipulative, and violent” (Robertson cited in Clement, 2018, p. 53). The violent, voyeuristic gaze of these officers transform cruising grounds into open-air “prison-like trap[s]” (Caron, 2016, p. 15).

2.5.3 Courts

Anarchists and abolitionists share just as much disdain for courts. They attack as misguided the assumptions that underpin adjudication within these formal state settings. These assumptions include a presumption in favour of ‘objectivity,’ ‘impartiality,’ individualizing analysis, ‘victim-perpetrator’ framing, adjudicator immunity, and finality. To anarchists and abolitionists, ‘objectivity’ and ‘impartiality’ are, in fact, dangerous signs of divestment and detachment—investment and attachment being necessary components of meaningful conflict resolution. Anarchists and abolitionists make a similar argument regarding the absence of structural analysis, arguing that such absence seriously undermines understanding, and therefore resolution of, conflict. At worst, excluding structural elements from consideration means getting things very, very wrong. It means, for instance, putting poor people, rather than poverty, on trial (Black, 2015, p. 11). ‘Victim-perpetrator’ framing of conflict falsely assumes that ‘victim’ and ‘perpetrator’ are mutually exclusive categories, once again preventing a nuanced understanding of conflict and undermining resolution (Anderson et al., 2021, p. 41). To make matters worse, courts are never put on trial (Black, 2015, p. 11). They therefore remain, by and large, immune to criticism and unaccountable to those who are forced to bear the consequences of their decisions. Abolitionists also take issue with the “moral unassailability of criminal conviction’s finality”. The point of judgment should not put an end to moral and constitutional concern (McLeod, 2015, p. 1213). Such

fetishization of finality not only reveals the profound arrogance of the court, but also fails to do justice to the ambiguous, messy, organic, and frequently unfinished nature of conflict (McLeod, 2015, p. 1213). Finally, anarchists and abolitionists also pay attention to the historic role that courts have played in sanctioning injustice. Rather than promoting justice, courts have repeatedly protected those engaged in unethical, oppressive, and violent behaviour (Seis et al., 2020, p. 11; for concrete examples see McLeod, 2015, p. 1212-3; Su, 2000, p. 249; Ibish, 2000; p. 298).

2.5.4 Prisons

As perhaps the most blatant manifestation of state power and violence (Foucault and Deleuze, 2021, p. 283), prisons have received a great deal of scrutiny from anarchists and abolitionists. Critiques of prison fall into two broad categories: functional and grounded. The first set of arguments attempts to establish continuities between historic techniques of anti-Black and colonial control and prisons (see Davis, 1998 and Nichols, 2014). Grounded critiques of prison use the experiential knowledge of the incarcerated to attack the three justificatory pillars upon which the legitimacy of this institution stands: “the unholy trinity of retribution, deterrence, and reform” (Howe cited in Davis, 1998d, p. 103). The anarchist and abolitionist attack against these pillars takes as its point of departure concrete observations of the day-to-day functioning of prisons. For reasons of space, I limit myself to discussing grounded critiques which take aim at the pillar of ‘reform.’

Contemporary prison writings provide anarchists and abolitionists with the factual ammunition they need in order to undermine arguments according to which prison produces reformatory effects. These writings describe prison as a site of extreme abuse. Writing about her time in prison, Laura Jane Whitehorn describes “[m]uch of what [she] experienced and witnessed in [her] years in prison” as “abuse” (Whitehorn, 2007, p. 276). Prison, she recalls, is a place of “haphazard, unspectacular cruelties delivered daily to people who are viewed by administrators, staff, and guards as simply not worthy of decent treatment” (Whitehorn, 2007, p. 276). This sentiment is echoed by other prisoners who document experiences of racial (Díaz-Cotto, 2000, p. 125, 129; Jackson, 2007, p. 124; Pinar, 2007, p. 298; Rodríguez, 2007, p. 53; Ross, 2000, p. 137; Mayhew, 1988, p. 12; Nichols, 2014, p. 252; Hackett and Turk, 2018, p. 55), gendered (Buck, 2007, p. 262, 240; Buck and Whitehorn, 2007, 262; Shakur, 2005 [1978], p. 82; Ross, 2000, p. 140; Belknap, 2000, p. 111-112;), sexual (Yves, 1998, p. 27; McLeod, 2015, p. 1181; Pinar, 2007, p. 299-230; Whitehorn, 2007, p. 286; Mead, 2005 [2003], p. 120), medical (Belknap, 2000, p. 117, 119; Berkman, 2005 [2003], p. 290, 291, 293; Buck and Whitehorn, 2005 [2001], p. 264; Defert, 2021 [1971], p. 73; Mead, 2005

[2003], p. 128; Graham, 2018, p. 125; Hackett and Turk, 2018, p. 61), economic (Davis, 1998a, p. 68; Yves, 1988, p. 25), and emotional abuse that they experienced or witnessed while incarcerated (Yves, 1988, p. 26; Davis, 1998c, p. 33; Deleuze and Defert, 2021, p. 193; Willmott, 2000, p. 316; Pinar, 2007, p. 297). Such abuse is made possible by the discretionary powers which prison guards enjoy (Belknap, 2000, p. 32; Buck, 2007, p. 239; G.I.P., 2021b, p. 105, 107; Foucault and Vidal-Naquet, 2021 [1971], p. 113; Foucault, 2021 [1972], p. 236; G.I.P., 2021c, p. 125; Deleuze and Defert, 2021, p. 193; Davis, 2000, p. 71-2; Whitehorn, 2007, p. 277). In addition to guaranteeing abuse, the “nearly unlimited” (Belknap, 2000, p. 32), “ever changing arbitrary power” (Buck, 2007, p. 239) of guards facilitates the proliferation of degrading, absurd, and incoherent sets of prohibitions, including prohibitions against receiving both mathematics and mechanics books (it’s one or the other) (Foucault and Vidal-Naquet, 2021 [1971], p. 113), yawning (Domenach, 2021 [1972], p. 336), laughing (Domenach, 2021 [1972], p. 336), singing (G.I.P., 2021c, p. 125), mailing hand-drawn images of roses (Domenach, 2021 [1972], p. 333), homosexual relations (Deleuze and Defert, 2021, p. 193), all forms of sexual relations (Shakur, 2005 [1978], p. 83), and lying down under a blanket at night (G.I.P., 2021b, p. 105). These prohibitions are accompanied by obligations that are equally as degrading, including the obligation to crawl on the floor (Davis, 2000, p. 71-2) and the obligation for women to pee with one leg up like dogs (Whitehorn, 2007, p. 277). These prohibitions and obligations vary immensely from prison to prison—a state of affairs which speaks to the extreme and arbitrary condition of control in which prisoners find themselves. In the anti-democratic ‘dead zone’ that is prison (James, 2005, p. xxxi), prisoners are stripped of rather than taught the values that are required for successful re-integration post-release. Designed to degrade, maim, and torture, prison “consumes, destroys, breaks down, and then rejects” those who are forced to pass through it (Foucault, 2021 [1972], p. 292). Prison does not reform, it eliminates.

2.6 Conclusion: The Anarcho-Abolitionist ‘Counterpunch’

Anarchist and abolitionist criminologies are chronically skeptical of ‘crime,’ of its origins, meanings, and political uses, and of state apparatuses tasked with regulating, repressing, and punishing ‘crime:’ law, police, courts, and prisons. Refusing to take the legitimacy of criminological apparatuses, whether discursive or concrete, for granted, anarchist and abolitionist criminology attack the foundational assumptions of criminology and in so doing, force us to acknowledge ongoing legacies of state colonialism, racism, sexism, and abuse. Anarchist and abolitionist criminology emerges when anarchism’s skepticism of authority combines with abolition’s anti-racist and anti-colonial critique of state violence. As a hybrid

criminology, anarcho-abolitionist criminology deconstructs and redefines 'crime' in such a way as to loosen its damaging hold on us.

2.7 Methodology and Data Collection: Case Study Approach and Provincial Access to Information Law

In this section, I provide a brief overview of the case study approach before providing a detailed account of access to information theory and practice. I then provide insight into my own use of provincial access to information law, highlighting some of the difficulties involved gaining access to relevant and comprehensible data.

2.7.1 Case Study Approach

Closely associated with qualitative research, this approach allows "researchers to immerse themselves in the uniqueness of real-life events" (Mills et al, 2010, p. 109-110). Case studies provide 'thick,' 'holistic,' and 'contextual' descriptions of complex, bounded phenomena. Hence, this approach to research has been described as "small-scale research with meaning" (Tight, 2017, p. 9). Offering "real-life insight into social phenomena, flexibility of methods, and sensible translations of theory," this approach is well-suited to capturing and making sense of the messiness of social life (Bent and Flyvbjerg cited in Mills et al., 2010, p. 112).

2.7.2 Provincial Access to Information Law and Access to Information Theory

In the province of Québec, access to documents produced by public bodies takes place within the legal framework established by the *Act respecting Access to documents held by public bodies and the Protection of personal information, R.L.R.Q.* (hereafter, *Act respecting Access*). The *Act respecting Access* grants to every person "a right of access, on request, to the documents held by a public body," irrespective of the form the document takes. Like other access to information regimes, the *Act respecting Access* allows for mediated access to what Walby and Larsen (2012) have called the 'live archive,' "mounds of text detailing how governments do what they do, added to every day by civil servants" (p. 4-5). Dickson (2012) uses the term 'access regime' to describe "not only the statutes but also the machinery that governments and public bodies create to meet their obligations" (p. 68). Whether or not one is successful in "coercing information from state governments" has a lot to do with the state of this machinery, and by extension, with "ATI coordinators, their tools and training," the "decisions, practices, and procedures of oversight bodies", the nature and degree of the powers granted to such bodies, administrative cultures, the level of government "investment in the infrastructure and bureaucracy of access", and site-specific record-

creation, record-keeping, and record-retrieval practices (Dickson, 2012, p. 68; Piché, 2012, p. 242; Walby and Larsen, 2012, p. 17).

Even the most well-run access regime does not guarantee the production of disclosures. Numerous factors, including mandatory and discretionary legal exemptions, “direct involvement of political partisans in the [access to information] process”, “superficial and arbitrary document retrieval” practices, “internal rules crafted to impose order on the disclosure process”, bureaucratic idiosyncrasies, the proliferation of vast amounts of “unstructured [electronic] data”, processing fees and delays, the deliberate destruction or non-production of documents, or inversely, the deliberate production of documents “crafted with an uninvited public audience in mind”, act as barriers to access (Dickson, 2012, p. 70; Monaghan, 2015, p. 55; Roberts, 2006, p. 20; Walby and Larsen, 2011, p. 37; Knox et al., 2020, p. 18) .

Despite the existence of multiple barriers to access, numerous competing factors facilitate disclosure. These include the emergence of networked as well as digitized forms of governance, the always incomplete character of censorship, and the coercive nature of access to information law (Roberts, 2006; Hameed and Monaghan, 2012; Piché, 2012). In addition, a number of strategies geared towards mitigating the impacts of the above-mentioned barriers can be deployed. These strategies including filing ‘round-robin’ requests (similar or identical requests with multiple public bodies), filing ‘cascading’ requests (using information from previous disclosures to target related documents that have yet to be disclosed), filing ‘piggy-back’ requests (using the disclosures produced by other researchers to identify and target further documents for disclosure), filing a combination of broad and surgical requests, filing ‘warm’ requests (building rapport with access to information coordinators prior to or during the processing of an access to information request), filing revision requests (requesting access to information oversight bodies to review the decision of a public body), making use of oversight bodies’ mediation processes (engaging in dialogue with access to information coordinators in the presence of an ‘impartial’ mediator), familiarizing oneself with the information that is already publicly available (collecting and analyzing proactively-disclosed data), and, when all else fails, resorting to litigation (suing public bodies for data) (Roberts, 2006, p, 105 ; McKie, 2012, p. 332 ; Jobb, 2015, p. 35 ; Hier, 2012, p. 256-6 ; Yeager, 2012).

When an access to information request does produce a disclosure, the disclosure package is almost always composed of “fragmented objects” and making sense of them “is akin to trying to do a jigsaw puzzle while blindfolded: one has only a vague sense of the overall picture, and little notion of its component pieces”

(Bronskill, 2012, p. 98; Mackinnon, 2020, p. 128; see also Luscombe and Walby, 2017). For this reason, access to information requests “are most useful when used as one tactic within a larger strategy of data collection” (McKie, 2012, p. 72). Yet, it is important to recall that even a mixed methods approach to data collection cannot produce a “complete picture” (Pich, 2020, p. 148).

2.7.2.1 Access to Information Journal

I began filing access to information requests long before having taken the decision to make the Chutes Sainte-Marguerite (hereafter, the site) the subject of my Master’s thesis. My first request about the site dates back to June 27th, 2018. A short time prior to filing this request, I had passed by the *CCLGBTQ+*, probably to drop off some flyers. I got to chatting with the librarian who was there that day and, noticing my keen interest for documenting the policing of cruising grounds, they kindly pulled up some articles about the 2017 nudity raids which had taken place on site. Shortly thereafter, I filed an access to information request asking for documents relating to the planned installation of a security checkpoint at the entrance to the site. The mayor had gone public with this plan for the security checkpoint in the days following the nudity raids. The timing of this plan was highly concerning to me as it suggested that the municipality was tactically modifying its approach to regulating queerness at the falls, opting for permanent control over intermittent, repressive raids. I received a response from the municipality indicating that plan to install the checkpoint was a thing of the past and seemed to have fallen to the wayside. Rather than responding to the request in due form—on municipal letterhead and citing specific paragraphs of the *Act respecting Access*—the access coordinator responded informally via email, informing me that « actuellement, aucune résolution n’a été adoptée pour l’installation d’une guérite. Ce ne semble plus dans les plans » (Senneville, 2018). Satisfied (somewhat naively) with this response, my research into the checkpoint ended there. My interest in the site would, however, be revived in 2020 when, turned away at the checkpoint by security, I would realize that the checkpoint was far from being a thing of the past.

Figure 2.1 Guérite de contrôle installé à l'entrée du stationnement Sainte-Marguerite-Station (2021)



Tiré de Morin-Martel, F. (2021). Chutes Sainte-Marguerite: L'accès au « havre de paix » LGBTQ+ compromis. La Presse. <https://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/2021-07-15/chutes-sainte-marguerite/l-acces-au-havre-de-paix-lgbtq-compromis.php>

As we arrived at the parking lot, our car was promptly turned away by a security guard who looked at us and, without the slightest interaction, immediately informed us that « les chutes sont fermées, les gars ». After asking to park temporarily in order to read the pamphlet we had been given, we watched another car be admitted to the parking lot, were told that it was « illégal de marcher, » that provincial police would be raiding the falls later that day and threatened with arrest. This was a significant departure from my previous experience at the falls which had been cop-free and therefore rather enjoyable. Given the context in which talk of the checkpoint had emerged, the dystopic (yet not unprecedented) prohibition against

walking⁵, the threat of yet another raid, and the frightful rapidity with which my group was turned away as we pulled up to the checkpoint, it was difficult for me not to experience the denial of entry as continuous with previous anti-queer regulatory actions.

Between the time that I filed my first request about the checkpoint and today, I have filed over 200 access to information requests relating to the site. Following Maynard's (1991) suggestion that those interested in writing gay history locate and analyze "those institutions [...] which have criminalized or otherwise regulated homosexual lives in many different ways over time." (p. 199), I filed these requests with a wide-range of public bodies including the *Ville de Sainte-Adèle*, the *MRC des Pays-d'en-Haut*, the *Sûreté du Québec*, the *Corporation du P'tit Train du Nord*, and the *Ministère des Énergies et des Ressources Naturelles*. Of these 200 requests, approximately 30 requests produced noteworthy disclosures. Disclosures were deemed noteworthy either because they described the creation, development, use, regulation, and/or attempted shutdown of the site, contained descriptions ascribing value to the site, or because they dealt specifically with issues of 'law,' 'security,' or 'equality'. Disclosures containing the terms 'grossière indécence', 'indécent', 'indécence', 'nudité', 'nudiste', 'nudisme', 'nu', 'gai', 'gay', 'homosexuel', 'homo', 'LGBT', 'sécurité, or 'loi', were also selected for analysis. Disclosures of interest primarily include correspondence (in both letter and email form), meeting minutes, legal contracts, operational plans or summaries, allotment plans, photographs, and development plans.

Once selected, disclosures were arranged chronologically. Passages relating to any one of these selection criteria were flagged and subsequently used to reconstruct a history of the municipal and provincial governance of the site. Emerging narratives were cross-checked with those of other disclosures in order to identify points of "convergence and divergence" (Mackinnon, 2020, p. 133). In addition to looking out for potentially contradictory or inconsistent narratives, I did my best to remain skeptical of the narratives contained within the disclosures, even when they turned up in multiple disclosures. "[H]omosexuals," writes Maynard, usually appear in "crime-related records". As a result, "lesbian and gay researchers need to remain skeptical of archives in the same way as we are of many public institutions" (Maynard, 1991, p. 199-200). Following in the footsteps of Saidiya Hartman, I read these disclosures "against the grain, disturbing and breaking open the stories they told in order to narrate my own" (Hartman, 2020, p. 34). In

⁵ Within the context of anti-homosexual policing in Parc Marie-Victorin, a prohibition against walking on unmarked trails (desire lanes) was passed by the municipality of Longueuil. See (SPAL, 2015) and related documents reproduced within Annexe C for more details.

so doing, I took special care not to reproduce the dominant, cis and heterosexist gender and sexuality-neutral narratives found within certain disclosures. Furthermore, in order to avoid reproducing narratives which implicitly associate queerness with depravity (and thereby legitimate the punitive measures taken by the state to annihilate queerness), demonizing and hyperbolic narratives whose violent, anti-queer character might not have been immediately obvious, were deliberately excluded from the historical chapter, but included in the chapter on 'security' and 'equality'. This decision has, I hope, allowed me to balance my obligation to faithfully reproduce the details contained within the disclosures, with my desire to make manifest the latent violence of certain passages. For this reason, in the historical chapter of this thesis, I tend to work 'with' the disclosures, while working 'against' them in the chapter on analogue distinctions, 'law', 'security,' and 'equality'.

Throughout the course of my data collection process, I experimented with an antagonist and skeptical approach to access to information. Rather than building rapport with access to information coordinators, I maintained a great deal of distance with coordinators, interacting only when absolutely necessary.⁶ I did my best to limit myself to written exchanges, in order to produce a documentary trail. I filed requests systematically (at times filing a few, multi-part requests, per day with the same public body) and filed cold, cascading, round-robin, as well as revision requests if I was under the impression that even the slightest detail was missing from the disclosure or if I was told that no documents existed and had reason to believe that this was untrue. I followed up regularly when deadlines for responses were missed. When necessary, I did not hesitate to word my requests in terms that might alert access coordinators to the 'political' nature of the request or in terms that the municipality might consider 'unfriendly'. Yet I was never so imprudent as to provide details regarding the reasons that I was filing the request. At first, this antagonistic approach to access to information was a choice. I had no interest in building rapport with coordinators ('censors' would be a more appropriate title) who I very well knew, would make unilateral decisions about whether or not state documents detailing the abuse of my community at the hands of authorities would become public or remain hidden from public view.

⁶ For examples of access to information strategies that involve building rapport see Walby, K. et Larsen, M. (2011). Access to Information and Freedom of Information Requests: Neglected Means of Data Production in the Social Sciences. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 18(1), 31-42. and Hier, S. P. (2012). Accessing Information on Streetscape Video Surveillance in Canada. Dans *Brokering Access: Power, Politics and Freedom of Information Process in Canada* (p. 261-284). UBC Press.

After applying for judicial review my access to information approach became inevitable, rather than optional. By this point, access to information coordinators had already pinned me down as an ‘anti-police’ activist — perhaps the most damaging label a requester can have ascribed to them and one which is certain to make an access to information coordinator think twice before releasing a disclosure package (Dafnos, 2012, p. 214). Despite having been ascribed this label and in spite of having been accused of being an ‘abusive’ requester by the *Ville de Sainte-Adèle* (the access to information coordinator was apparently annoyed by the fact that my requests amounted to over 20% of the requests received by the municipality in 2021), I continued to receive disclosures that contained bits of dirty data which I would go on to mobilize within the context of both my research and my application for judicial review. While this approach might be considered unwise, I suspect that it is partly because I rarely took no for an answer, developing a belligerent (yet always cordial) approach to access to information, that I was able to force the disclosure of historically significant bits of data.

This does not mean that I was always successful. Brokering access to documents was a difficult, time-consuming task—one at which I frequently failed. The vast majority, of my requests produced no disclosures or disclosures that were of little consequence, both from a legal and research standpoint. Since I was submitting round-robin requests, a lot of the time I would get excited only to realize that the new release package I had just received contained documents which I had already received from another public body. Some disclosures contained heavily redacted passages, making them unusable. In one case, the meeting minutes of what I consider to be the most politically significant meeting of *the Comité de Sécurité Publique de la MRC des Pays-d’en-Haut* were released, but only in summary form. The complete original minutes had been stored on a USB key and, as a result of “des problèmes informatiques”, became unrecoverable (Watchorn et Williams, 2017). I frequently made use of the free mediation process offered by Québec’s access to information oversight body, the *Commission d’accès à l’information*. Sometimes mediation led nowhere. In one case, the *Ville de Sainte-Adèle* revised its own decisions after I had filed multiple revision requests contesting its decisions. In another case, dissatisfied with a public body’s claim that the requested documents were drafts shielded from disclosure, I presented my case in front of an administrative judge and lost.

While losses in front of an administrative judge are disheartening and always have me wondering whether they are worth the time and investment, it is useful to remember that as one drags a public body through a mediation or administrative court process (review, mediation, and hearing), one can frequently force

the disclosure of additional undocumented information. This information can be useful in formulating subsequent requests and in gaining a general sense of how the public body views the subject matter of the request. What is more, sometimes, information shared during mediation or with the administrative judge is documented in the necessarily written judgments of the oversight body. Dragging a public body through mediation or an administrative court process can therefore be a way of getting reluctant or guarded public body to speak as well as a way of producing additional documentation about the topic of interest.

The documents I obtained via provincial access to information structure the story I am about to tell. The documents to which I have been able to gain access rarely make reference to the social positions of those they problematize. If gender and sexuality are sometimes mentioned, race is, for its part, conspicuously absent. Furthermore, since the documents with which I have chosen to work are produced by White colonial state institutions and represent White settler interests, information regarding past and present indigenous use of the site is altogether absent. Far from being benign, these silences contribute to the erasure of indigenous existence and experience. Furthermore, administrative documents have a tendency to be dry, rendering any attempt to narrate their content dull and lifeless. Despite these significant drawbacks, I have chosen to rely almost exclusively upon archival material. I have done so, first and foremost, because, absent any attempt to retrieve and render public state archives relating to the site, these documents will, within a foreseeable future, become irretrievable either because they have been destroyed in accordance with various institutional conservation calendars or because inadequate conservation practices will have rendered the documents difficult or impossible to find. Significantly, certain documents obtained from the *Ministère des Ressources naturelles* were meant to have been destroyed years before I filed a request for them. While conducting this research, I therefore found myself in a race against time, and it is this desire to preserve documents which were at risk of being lost that explains my reliance upon White, settler colonial archival material. I also focus on this material because the state is notoriously self-interested and tight-lipped, and unlikely, therefore, to divulge its heterosexist strategies let alone admit to engaging in such strategies. In addition to offering evidence which is difficult to deny, archival material produced by the state represents one of the only avenues through which to document such strategies.

2.7.3 Complimentary Data Collection Tools: Google Searches, Site-Specific Searches, Testimony Collection, and Archival Research

Even so, using access to information law is like looking through a keyhole (Mackinnon, 2020, p. 128). To mitigate the impact of this methodological limitation, data obtained through access to information was triangulated with data obtained through both *Google* and *Advanced Google* searches, *Facebook* searches, testimony collection, and archival work with the *CCLGBTQ+*, the *Archives nationales du Québec*, and the archives of the *Cour Supérieur du Québec*. I began triangulating data sources by performing simple *Google* searches. These searches, performed using the below search terms, produced various media articles about the site. To compliment these searches, I performed site-specific searches using *Google's* advanced search function. This function allows users to search specific websites for keywords or phrases. For the purposes of my own research, I used this function to search the following websites: <https://ville.sainte-adele.qc.ca/>, <https://lespaysdenhaut.com/>, <https://www.sq.gouv.qc.ca/>, and <https://ptittraindunord.com/>. I searched for results with the following key words: “gai”, “gay”, “LGBT”, “homo”, “homosexuel”, “homophobie”, “grossière indécence”, “indécence”, “indécent”, “nudité”, “nudiste”, “chutes”, “chutes Sainte-Marguerite”, “chutes Glen-Wexford”, and “Sainte-Marguerite-Station”. To be sure that no documents were missed, I performed manual searches of these websites as well, using the website’s native tabs to look through pages which might contain relevant documents. Together, these *Google*, *Advanced Google*, and manual searches allowed me to identify a few additional documents of interest, including meeting agendas, meeting minutes, annual reports, and urban planning schemes relating to the site. In addition to performing site-specific searches of key websites, I used *Facebook's* search function to look through relevant *Facebook* posts, using the same key words. These searches were limited to *Facebook* because the official social media presence of relevant public bodies was limited to this platform. The pages searched included the personal page of the mayor of the *Ville de Sainte-Adèle*, the official page of the *Ville de Sainte-Adèle*, the official page of the *MRC des Pays-d'en-Haut*, and the official page of the *Journal Accès*, a local newspaper. These additional searches were useful in formulating access requests and allowed me to identify two long-winded and telling posts by the ex-mayor of Sainte-Adèle, Nadine Brière⁷.

As part of my application for judicial review, I drafted, with Étienne Pineault, a call asking those who had been turned away at the checkpoint to share their experiences with the court, in the form of an affidavit.

⁷ While individual political actors bear responsibility for their role in sustaining patterns of state abuse, I limit myself to analyzing and critiquing political decisions and actions, rather than individual actors. My interest lies squarely in identifying structural, rather than individual forms of heterosexism.

The call out was published on the *Facebook* page of the *CCLGBTQ+* and within a few months, we had received a total of 6 testimonies. While these testimonies were initially collected for the sole purpose of supporting our legal arguments, I quickly realized that they contained information which would be useful in counteracting the sanitized framing of the checkpoint that I was coming across in disclosures. Deposited into the court file, these testimonies are now considered public documents. Documents disclosed by the private security firm during pre-trial discovery and subsequently deposited into the court file were also collected. To further combat sanitized state framings, I asked the *CCGLBTQ+* for any documents relating to its involvement in countering anti-queer policing taking place within the site. This request produced three documents as well as an email.

Finally, I reviewed newspaper articles written about the site from the 1890s to 1950s using the digital platform of the *Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec*. I searched for articles describing the site using the following key words: “Montagne du Sauvage” (the name of the mountain located beside the site), “Chutes de la Montagne du Sauvage” (the name of the waterfalls located within the site), “Sainte-Marguerite-Station” (the name of the decommissioned train station located nearest the site), and “Montreal & Occidental” (the name of the company responsible for building the railroad located in close proximity to the site). I also requested and received documents from the *Archives nationales du Québec* which were not accessible via this digital platform.

2.7.4 Reproduction of Access to Information Disclosures

Documents obtained by filing access to information requests are reproduced in the annexes of this thesis. Due to their size, the annexes of this thesis have been published separately. I have taken care to include within these annexes publicly available documents which contain politically compromising data and which, for this reason, are at risk of being modified, buried, or removed from the web entirely. I have also included publicly available documents which might eventually become hard if not impossible to find. This includes the ex-mayor's *Facebook* post pertaining to the site and the annual reports of the *SQ-MRC des Pays-d'en-Haut*. Believing that access to the material disclosed to me within the access to information process contains information that other community members or researchers might eventually find interesting or of use, I have decided to reproduce access to information disclosures in full even though I only cite or make use of a fraction of this data. This decision is also motivated by my desire to avoid decontextualizing disclosures (by, for instance, only reproducing one email in an email chain), and thus, by my desire to remain transparent. I have, however, excluded documents disclosed to me in response to general and

purposefully broad requests because most of the data contained within these disclosures bears no relationship to the site. Those wishing to access complete meeting minutes of the *Ville de Sainte-Adèle* (beyond what is already available on the municipality's site), the *pleniers annotés* of the *Ville de Sainte-Adèle*, or meeting minutes of the *Table de Sécurité Publique* of the *MRC des Pays-d'en-Haut* can easily file requests with the *Ville de Sainte-Adèle* and the *MRC des Pays-d'en-Haut*. Unless included within disclosures, I have not reproduced municipal resolutions.

CHAPITRE 3

AN ANARCHO-ABOLITIONIST HISTORY OF THE CHUTES SAINTE-MARGUERITE

This chapter tracks the creation, development, use, regulation, and attempted shutdown of the Chutes Sainte-Marguerite, a site formerly known under the names of Chutes de la Rivière du Nord (1920s), Chutes de la Montagne du Sauvage (late 1930s to late 1950s), le Parc de Sainte-Adèle (late 1950s to late 1970s), le Parc des Chutes (mid 1970s to early 2010s), and les Chutes Glen-Wexford (2000s), and located within unceded Anishinabewaki and Omàmìwininìwag (Algonquin) territory. After it was made accessible to White settlers in the late 19th century by the *Montréal & Occidental* railroad company, the site, famous for its breathtaking views and idyllic atmosphere, has routinely become the subject of municipal interest. From the moment the *Municipalité de la paroisse de Sainte-Adèle*⁸ (hereafter, the municipality) began discussing the creation of the park in 1957, the site has undergone periods of officialization (1957-1960), defensive democratization and policing (1975-1981), failed privatization and de-democratization (1989-1994), municipal commodification (1994-2012), and heterosexist regulation and policing (2012-2022). Beginning in 1957, the municipality and the *Ministère des Terres et Forêts* (hereafter, *Ministère*) worked together to officialize and protect the site's public vocation, thereby transforming the site into a public good accessible to even the poorest of people. From 1975 to 1981, the municipality acted aggressively to defend the space against the twin forces of urbanization and privatization, all the while setting the groundwork for the environmental regulation of the park by police. Word of mouth suggests that it is precisely around this time that queer uses of this site began to burgeon (Tanguay et al., 2017). From 1989 to 1994, the special clause protecting the public character of the park would come close to being de-registered following attempts by two influential businessmen to transform lots adjacent the park into an exclusive private country club. Beginning in 1994 and up until 2012, the municipality would attempt to commodify and regulate the use of this public good, transforming it into a revenue-generating "produit touristique" that would contribute to the economic health of the region. By 2012, the municipality by and large dropped its plans to commodify the site, choosing instead to pour available resources into heterosexist regulation and privatization.⁹ This history critically documents the political interventions responsible for transforming this public good into a privatized, heterosexual good. Along the way, it sheds

⁸ Throughout this chapter, I refer to public bodies using the names attributed to them during various historic periods. As such, the reader should expect them to change as the history progresses.

⁹ The periodization I propose is provisional. It is based upon limited archival documentation and freedom of information disclosures.

light on the role that state disinformation and cover storying played in depoliticizing this regressive transformation, deactivating *Charter* protections, and ultimately masking structural, anti-queer violence.

I begin this chapter with a brief history of the site's colonization. I do so because queer research cannot afford to overlook the colonial arena within which heterosexist state violence took place. I spend a great many pages detailing the provincial, municipal, and corporate creation, conception, and attempted modification of the site in the decades and century preceding its heterosexist privatization. While lengthy, establishing the existence of these for the most part unrealized public and corporate efforts to transform these lands is essential. The impressive scale of the proposed transformations as well as the extended time period over which they were hatched, put into play, abandoned, and at times reconsidered makes it impossible for the municipality to claim ignorance of the site's 'public' character. These sections and the details they contain, allow me to establish beyond a reasonable doubt, the municipality's foreknowledge of the site's longstanding 'public' status. Establishing this fact is essential because it allows me to claim that the municipality's 2017 and 2020 claims regarding the 'private' character of the site amount to 'disinformation'.

3.1 Settler Colonization (1891-1895)

Figure 3.1 Plan du site (1838)



Tiré de Féré, E. (1838). *Plan du township d'Abercrombie*. Archives nationales du Québec, Québec, Québec. <https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/4369414>

In 1891, the *Montréal & Occidental* railroad company began work around the Montagne du Sauvage, detonating hundreds of boxes worth of dynamite within “le roc vif” of the mountain in order to create “une ouverture de soixante pieds de hauteur” through which the much anticipated “Train du Nord” would pass (*Le Royaume du Nord*, 1892, p. 135). According to Benjamin-Antoine Testard de Montigny, the mountain was named after a certain “sauvage Iroquois du nom de Commandeur [qui] s’y était établi il y a bien des années” (de Montigny, 1887, p. 48). Described as “le plus difficile à franchir sur toute la ligne”, this passage had, until this point, posed an important obstacle to White settlers whose collective aim was to expropriate and occupy Indigenous territories (*Au Nord*, 1891). Multiple workers were injured and at least one worker lost their life as a result of the dynamiting (*Échos du Nord*, 1891; *Ste-Adèle*, 1891). Despite the danger, or perhaps because of it, the Coupe-de-Pierre—the name by which the passage is currently known—was already beginning to attract large amounts of visitors (*Ste-Adèle*, 1891). 100 feet below, the rumbling splendour of the Rivière du Nord was hard to miss (*Le Royaume du Nord*, 1892, p. 135). The derogatorily named mountain would henceforth be known not as the home of “Commander”, but as a site

ready to be visited and admired by settlers. In the 1930s, an observation post would be built atop the Montagne du Sauvage, in the place that had once been once been the home of “Commander”, further cementing settler control over the mountain (Anger, 1930).

Figure 3.2 La passe de la montagne du Sauvage (côté Nord) (1895)



Tiré de Rice, A. J. Sainte-Adèle La passe de la montagne du Sauvage (côté Nord) [Photographie]. (1895, 8 juin). *Le Monde Illustré*. <https://collections.banq.qc.ca/ark:/52327/2075533>

3.2 Officialization of the Site’s Public Character (1957-1960)

In the late 1950s, the municipality began taking steps to acquire, for public purposes, lots surrounding the chutes de la Montagne du Sauvage. In acquiring and developing this already popular site, the municipality hoped to officialize the recreational status of the space, thus affirming its commitment to accessible public space. Petitioning, in Septembre of 1957, the *Ministère* in the name of the municipality, the deputy of

Terrebonne, Jean-Léonard Blanchard requested the cession “de ces lots à la paroisse de Ste-Adèle”, specifying that they would be used “pour l’organisation d’un parc d’amusement public”. Located along a remote and hilly section of the Rivière du nord, the park would be designed in such a way as to encourage its appropriation by picnickers, children, and those looking to take a dip (Blanchard, 1957). In a bid to formalize its request and secure the lots, the municipality assured the *Ministère* that the requested lots “serviraient de parc municipal pour le bénéfice du touriste tant étranger que local anxieux de trouver un endroit organisé dans les Laurentides où il pourra piqueniquer en toute quiétude” (Motion no 824). Concomitantly, the municipality would work towards “l’aménagement d’un terrain de stationnement”, thereby addressing the “stationnement nuisible et dangereux le long de la route no. 11”, the preferred parking spot of those who had already made a habit of patronizing the site (Motion no 824, 1958; Pouliot, 1958b).

While the *Ministère* appeared favourable to the request, Pouliot, Chef du service des Terres, did note, in april of 1958, that due to the sizeable acreage of the lots, the land transfer would have to be “autorisé expressément par arrêté du Lieutenant Gouverneur en Conseil” (Pouliot, 1958a; Pouliot 1958b). Signed approximately a year and a half later, on Novembre 17th 1959, Arrêté en Conseil no. 1324 authorised the cession of “certaines parties des lots 6, 7, 8, 9, et 10, rang XI, canton de Morin” to the municipality for the price of 100\$. This cessation—granted with an eye to the development of “un parc touristique à la disposition de la population locale et du public en général”—would leverage “les beautés naturelles [que ces lots] referment” (Lieutenant-Gouverneur en Conseil, 1959).

Figure 3.3 Arrêté en Conseil No. 1324 (1959)

67

ARRÊTÉ EN CONSEIL
CHAMBRE DU CONSEIL EXÉCUTIF

Numéro 1324

PRÉSENT:

Le Lieutenant-Gouverneur en Conseil

CONCERNANT la vente de certains terrains dans le canton de Morin (Terrebonne).

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ATTENDU QUE la Corporation municipale de la paroisse de Ste-Adèle demande à acquérir certaines parties des lots 6, 7, 8, 9 et 10, rang XI, canton de Morin, formant environ 80 acres en bordure de la Rivière-du-Nord, en vue d'y aménager un parc touristique à la disposition de la population locale et du public en général;

ATTENDU QUE ces terrains enclavés au milieu de lots patentés sont tout désignés pour servir aux fins proposées et mettre ainsi à profit les beautés naturelles qu'ils renferment;

ATTENDU QU'il y a lieu de favoriser cette initiative;

VU les dispositions de l'article 23 de la Loi des Terres et Forêts et celles de l'article 7 de la Loi de la Pêche (chapitres 93 et 154, S.R.Q. 1941).

IL EST ORDONNE, en conséquence, sur la proposition de l'honorable Ministre des Terres et Forêts:

QU'il soit autorisé à concéder pour les fins susdites à la Corporation municipale de la Paroisse de Ste-Adèle certaines parties des lots 6, 7, 8, 9 et 10, rang XI, canton de Morin, formant une superficie de 80 acres, avec et y compris la réserve de trois chaînes où elle existe en bordure de la Rivière-du-Nord, au prix de \$100.00 et sujet aux conditions ci-après énumérées, savoir:

Jamm
②

- a) au retour à la Couronne, avec toutes les améliorations et sans indemnité, des terrains ainsi concédés, s'ils ne servent pas ou cessent de servir directement et uniquement aux dites fins;
- b) à la prohibition pour ladite Corporation Municipale de vendre, céder, louer, donner, échanger, hypothéquer ou autrement aliéner les terrains faisant l'objet de la présente concession sans le consentement préalable du gouvernement.

APPROUVE ce 17^e
jour de novembre, 1959.

[Signature]
LIEUTENANT-GOUVERNEUR

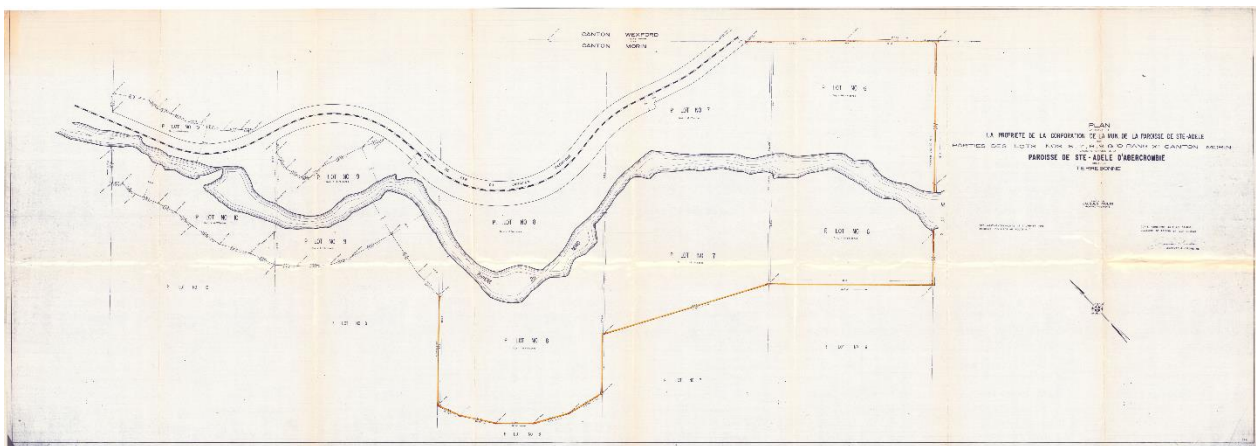
[Signature]

Tiré de Lieutenant-Gouverneur en Conseil. (1959, 17 novembre). Arrêté en Conseil No. 1324. Archives nationales du Québec, Québec. Québec.

To ensure that the ceded lots be used for said public purpose, the *Ministère* introduced a special clause into the Arrêté en conseil. In the event that the municipality were to use the ceded lots for purposes other than the development of a municipal park, the *Ministère* would have the right to take back possession of the lots, “avec toutes les améliorations et sans indemnité” (Lieutenant-Gouverneur en Conseil, 1959). This special clause, also mentioned within the 1960s letters of patent, imposed upon the municipality the obligation to use the lots “pour des fins de parc touristique” (Lettre patentes [Libro 252 Folio 356], 1960).

In December of the same year, the municipality greeted the news of the cession’s approval with great joy (Bastien, 1959). Writing to Pouliot, Hervé Bastien, *secrétaire-trésorier* of the municipality, assured the *Ministère* that “ce parc touristique rendra certainement très heureux bien des gens de modeste aisance qui, depuis si longtemps, cherchent un endroit où ils pourront pique-niquer et se délasser dans le cœur des Laurentides” (Bastien, 1959). The park, Bastien revealed, would go by the name of “Parc de Ste-Adèle” (Bastien, 1959).

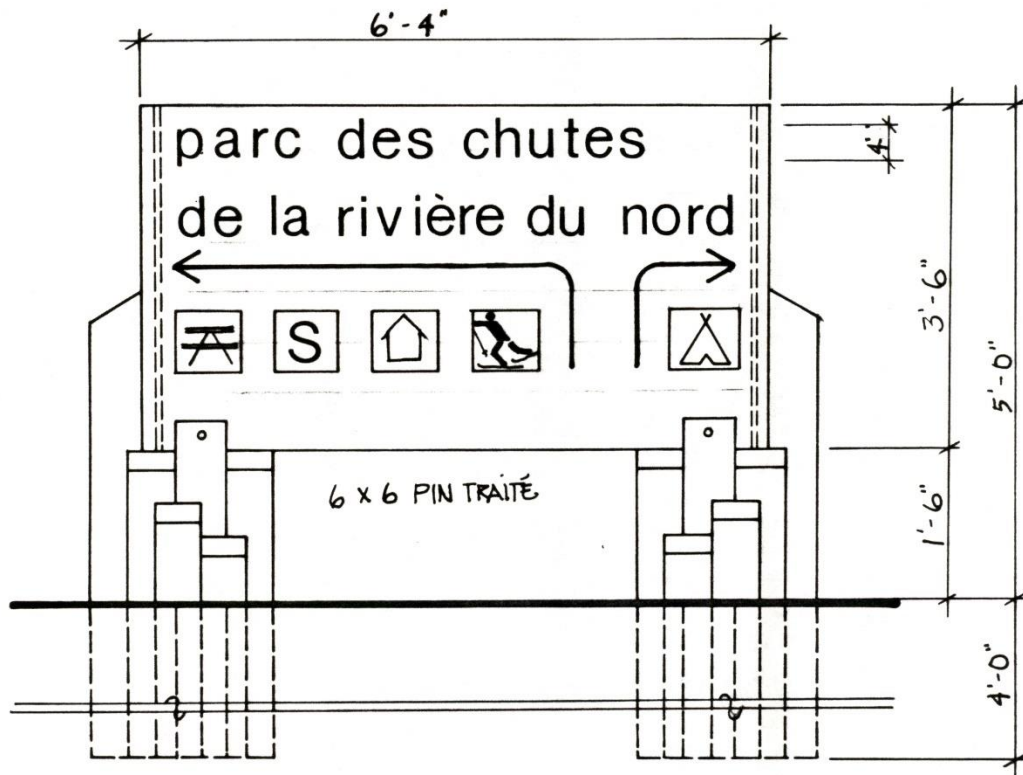
Figure 3.4 Plan montrant la propriété de la corporation de la municipalité de la paroisse de Ste-Adèle sur les lots nos 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 Rang XI Canton Morin (1965)



Tiré de Poulin, J. (1965). *Plan montrant la propriété de la corporation de la municipalité de la paroisse de Ste-Adèle. Sur lots nos 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 Rang XI Canton Morin. Cadastre officiel de la paroisse de Ste-Adèle d'Abercrombie [Plan]. Comté de Terrebonne. Ville de Sainte-Adèle, Sainte-Adèle, Québec.*

3.3 Defensive Democratization and Policing (1975-1981)

Figure 3.5 Pancarte d'information proposée pour le Parc des Chutes de la Rivière du Nord (1981)

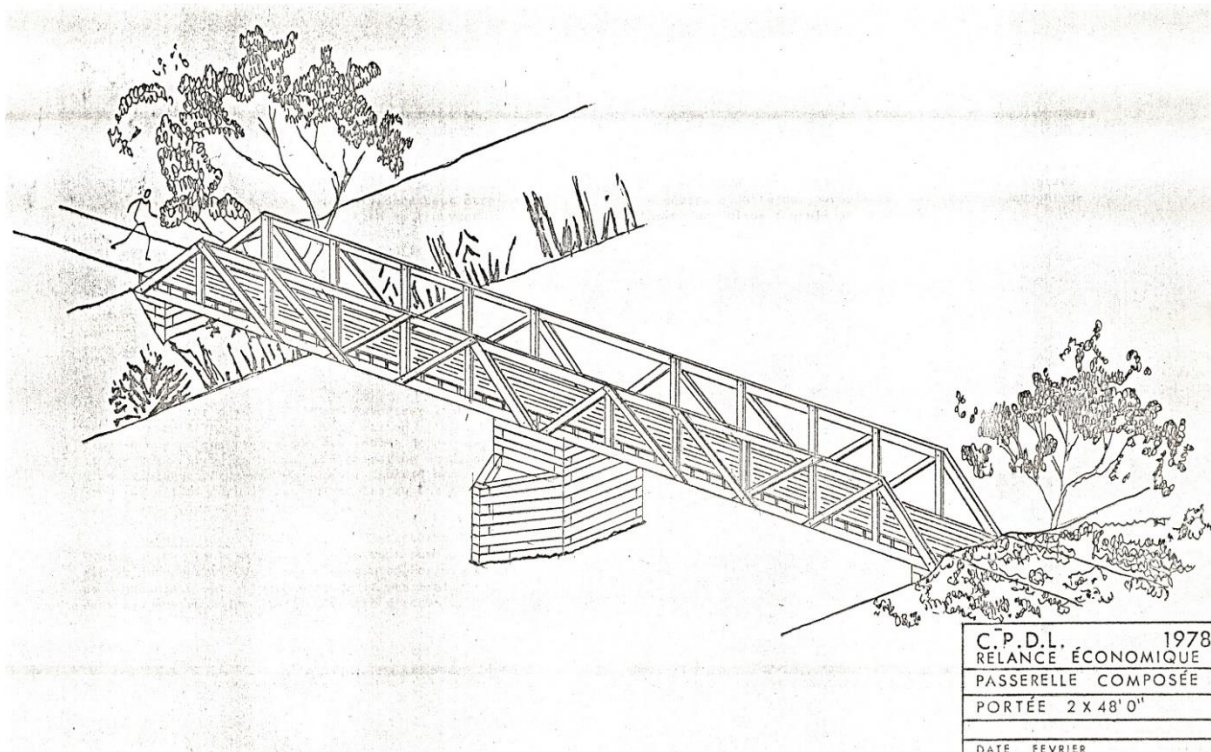


Tiré de Courville, F., et Paquette, D. (1981). *Étude d'analyse et schéma d'aménagement proposés pour le Parc des Chutes de la Rivière du Nord Ste-Adèle, Québec*. Ville de Sainte-Adèle, Sainte-Adèle, Québec.

By 1975, the municipality's desire to "garanti[r] à tous [...] un accès à des espaces verts" would be called into question by the twin forces of privatization and urbanization (Ville de Sainte-Adèle, 1975, p. 2-3). Of equal concern was the dwindling public appreciation of the Parc de Ste-Adèle, now commonly referred to under the moniker "Les Chutes" (Conseil Régional de Développement des Laurentides, 1976). Faced with both the rapid disappearance of public space and a public which no longer seemed to recognize the recreational potential and beauty of the site, the municipality aggressively sought to increase the park's acreage. While the municipality already possessed the "partie la plus stratégique du parc, située de chaque côté de la Rivière du Nord" development of the site required an additional 300 acres of surrounding land (Ville de Sainte-Adèle, 1975, p. 8). To increase the "superficie de terrain public", the municipality urged the *Ministère* to add "les lots 8 et 9 du rang XI du canton Morin" to the lots already in its possession (Conseil Régional de Développement des Laurentides, 1978, p. 4). In addition, the municipality would purchase,

and where necessary, expropriate, lots surrounding the site, allowing it to “conserver définitivement un site naturel exceptionnel” (Conseil Régional de Développement des Laurentides, 1978, p. 6). In addition to increasing the size of the park, the municipality would significantly improve its infrastructure, taking special care to ensure that some trails were accessible to people with physical disabilities (Conseil Régional de Développement des Laurentides, 1978, p. 7).

Figure 3.6 Passerelle composée proposé pour le Parc des Chutes de la Rivière du Nord (1978)

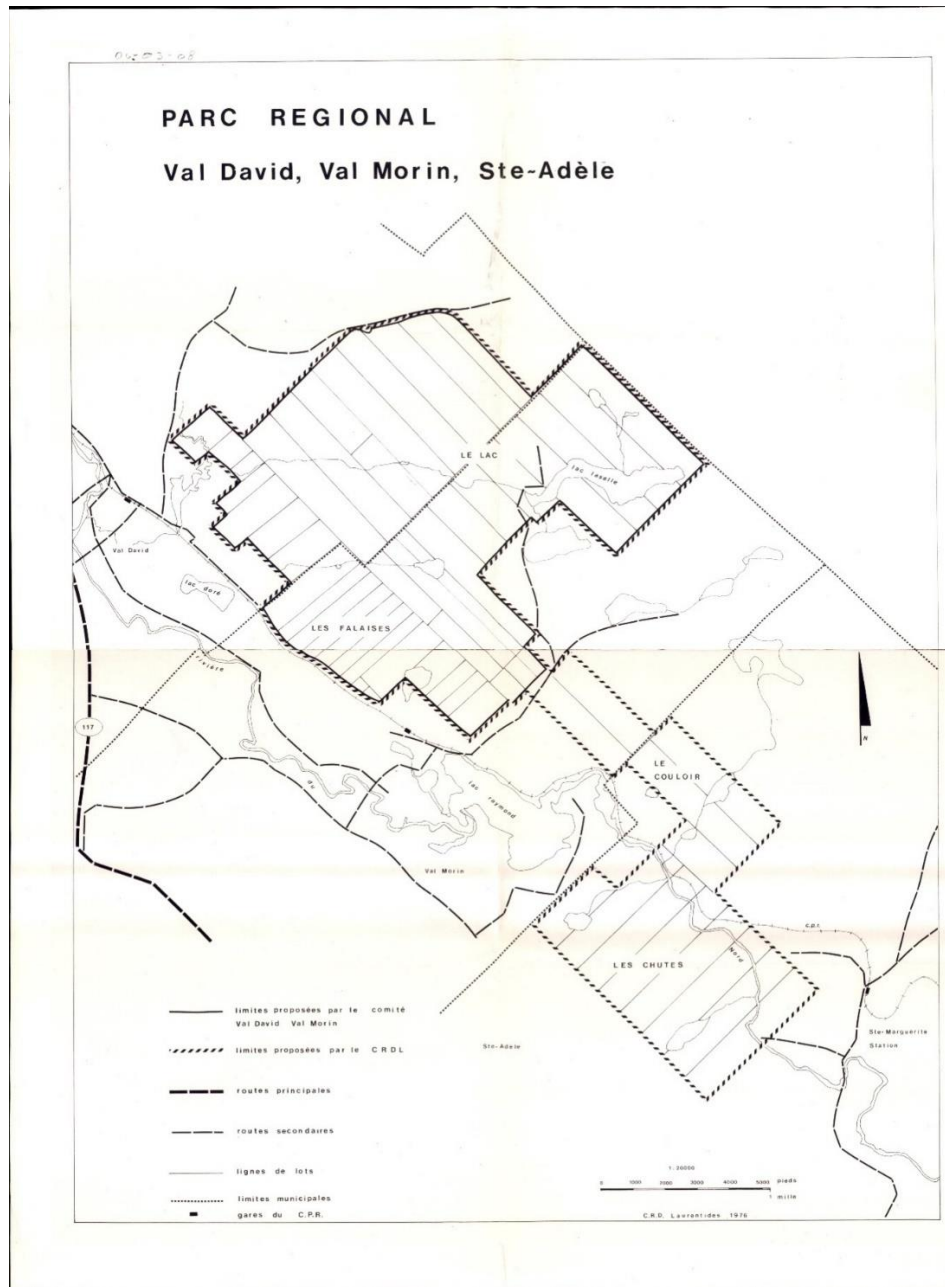


Tiré de Conseil Régional de Développement des Laurentides. (1978). *Parc Ste-Adèle: Dossier de planification et d'aménagement*. Archives de la Ville de Sainte-Adèle, Sainte-Adèle, Québec.

These developments would allow the municipality to spotlight the site’s distinctive geological formations, impressive falls, and 100 year old trees (Ville de Sainte-Adèle, 1975, p. 8; Conseil Régional de Développement des Laurentides, 1976, p. 26). Meanwhile, the railroad would continue to serve as a privileged “voie d’accès” to the park, and the Sainte-Marguerite-Station parking lot would remain the park’s designated parking lot (Conseil Régional de Développement des Laurentides, 1978, p. 7). Thus began an aggressive municipal campaign to expand, develop, and safeguard access to “une des sections les plus intéressantes de la haute vallée de la Rivière du Nord”, a site whose “potentiel récréatif” and “beauté”

had been “oublié par tous” (Conseil Régional de Développement des Laurentides, 1976, p. 8 ; Ville de Sainte-Adèle, 1975, p. 8).

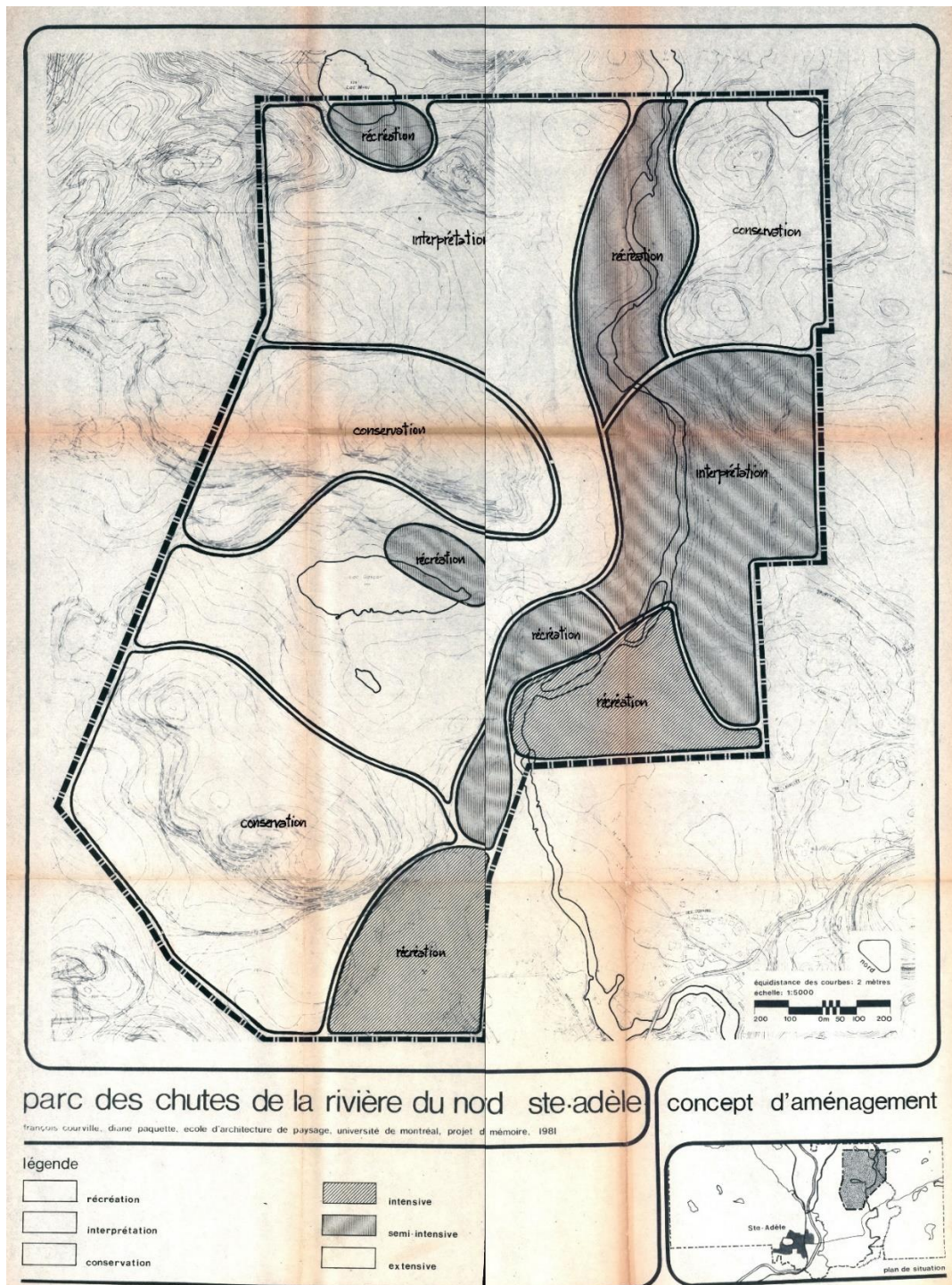
Figure 3.7 Plan du futur parc régional Val-David, Val-Morin, Sainte-Adèle (1976). Le Parc des Chutes de la Rivière du Nord y figure en bas à droite



Tiré de Conseil régional des loisirs des Laurentides. (1976). *Parc régional Val David, Val Morin, Ste. Adèle*. [Plan]. Ville de Sainte-Adèle, Sainte-Adèle, Québec.

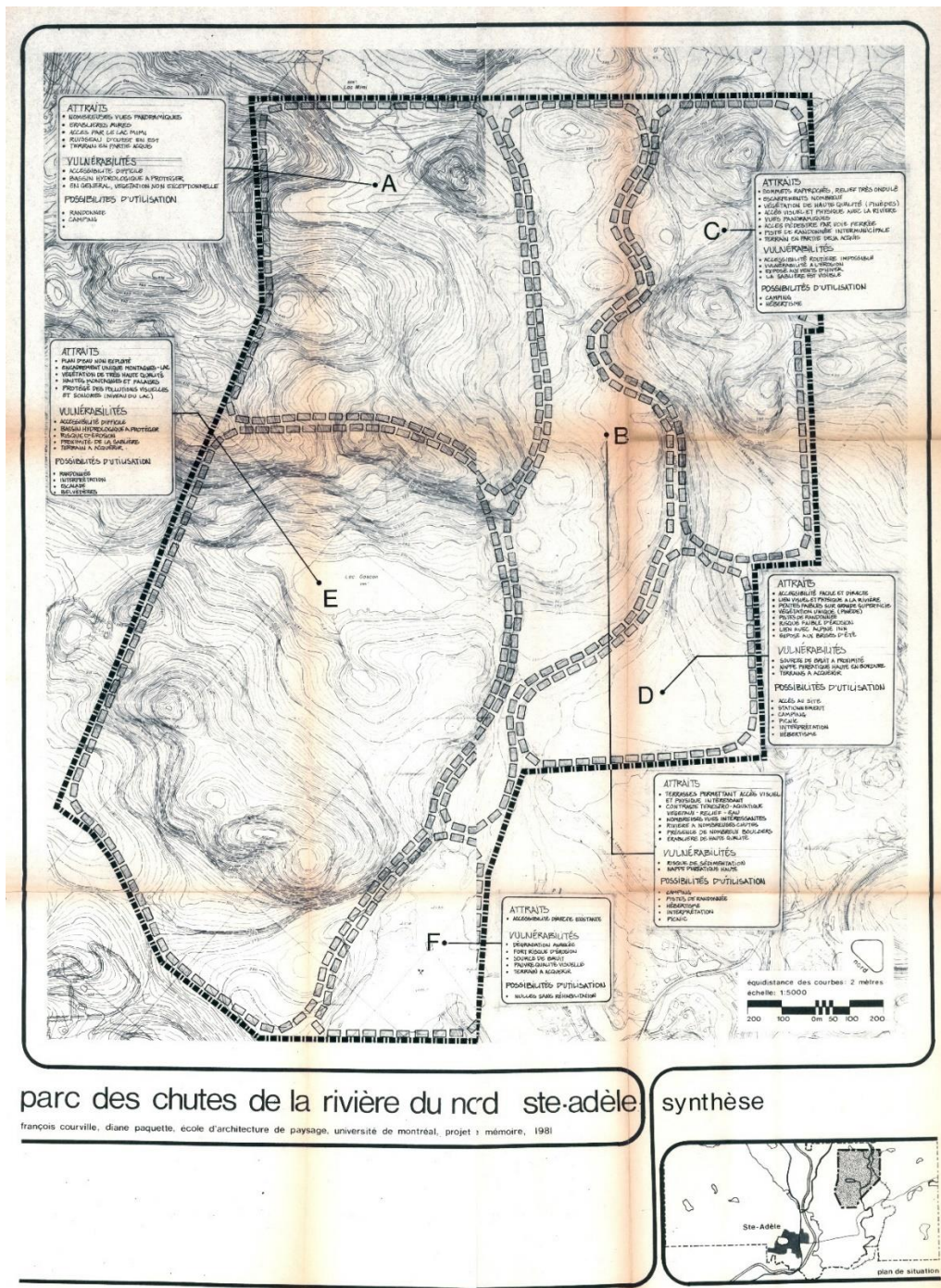
While the municipality was committed to developing, expanding, and safeguarding access to the park, it was just as concerned with establishing the “rôle sociale du futur parc des Chutes” and regulating its use (Koch et al., 1975, Le besoin). The park had to be designed in such a way as to ensure and encourage both ‘proper’ and environmentally friendly uses. The municipality hoped that the expansion of the park would stem the appearance “des utilisations non recherchées”, thus ensuring the “conservation écologique” and “quiétude” of the park (Koch et al., 1975, Les ressources du site). Properly installed signage would ensure a “bonne utilisation des sentiers” and the construction of wider access roads would allow for the “circulation [...] des véhicules de la municipalité”, and facilitate “le maintien de l’ordre” (Conseil Régional de Développement des Laurentides, 1978, p. 15 ; Koch et al., 1975, p. 3). Of particular concern to the municipality was user-induced ecological deterioration (Conseil Régional de Développement des Laurentides, 1978, p.3). Park planners directly attributed this deterioration to the municipality’s failure to ensure that the park was properly developed, regulated, and policed: “À cause d’un accès difficile pour les autorités policières de Ste-Adèle et de l’absence de règlements et d’équipements de base (accès routier, centre d’accueil avec gardien permanent, toilettes, sentiers avec ponceaux, etc.”, “les nombreux arbres, dont certain pins plus que centenaires, sont endommagées de façon irrémédiable” (Conseil Régional de Développement des Laurentides, 1976, p. 26). “[A]fin d’éviter une surutilisation du milieu”, park planners believed that it would be necessary “d’exercer un contrôle” (Conseil Régional de Développement Laurentides, 1978, p. 2). The municipality would make use of a “barrière afin d’interdire l’accès au public à la tombée du jour” in addition to hiring a “service de sécurité” composed of patrollers “[qui] verraient au bon fonctionnement du Parc à tous les niveaux (respect des normes de sécurité, protections des utilisateurs, etc.” (Conseil Régional de Développement des Laurentides, 1978, p. 34 ; Courville et Paquette, 1981, p. 63). If the “rétention du caractère naturel du site” was to be achieved, uses of the site had to be regulated and users policed (Courville et Paquette, 1981, p. 2). Despite recognizing the structural forces responsible for the disappearance of accessible outdoor space, it was individual park users rather than private industry or wealthy landowners who would henceforth have to bear the regulatory consequences wrought by urbanization and privatization. The unwillingness or inability of park planners to address the root economic causes of ecological deterioration (urbanization and privatization) and stated desire to address ecological deterioration by pursuing, through police means, a public which now struggled to find accessible green space, suggests that courts are not the only sites within which harmful structural practices, and the actors behind them, are given a free pass (see Black, 2015).

Figure 3.8 Concept d'aménagement proposé pour le Parc des Chutes de la Rivière du Nord (1981). Ce plan a été recomposé. Certains éléments en son centre ont été coupés.



Tiré de Courville, F., et Paquette, D. (1981). *Étude d'analyse et schéma d'aménagement proposés pour le Parc des Chutes de la Rivière du Nord Ste-Adèle, Québec* [Concept d'aménagement]. Ville de Sainte-Adèle, Sainte-Adèle, Québec.

Figure 3.9 Synthèse d'aménagement proposée pour le Parc des Chutes de la Rivière du Nord (1981). Ce plan a été recomposé. Certains éléments en son centre ont été coupés.



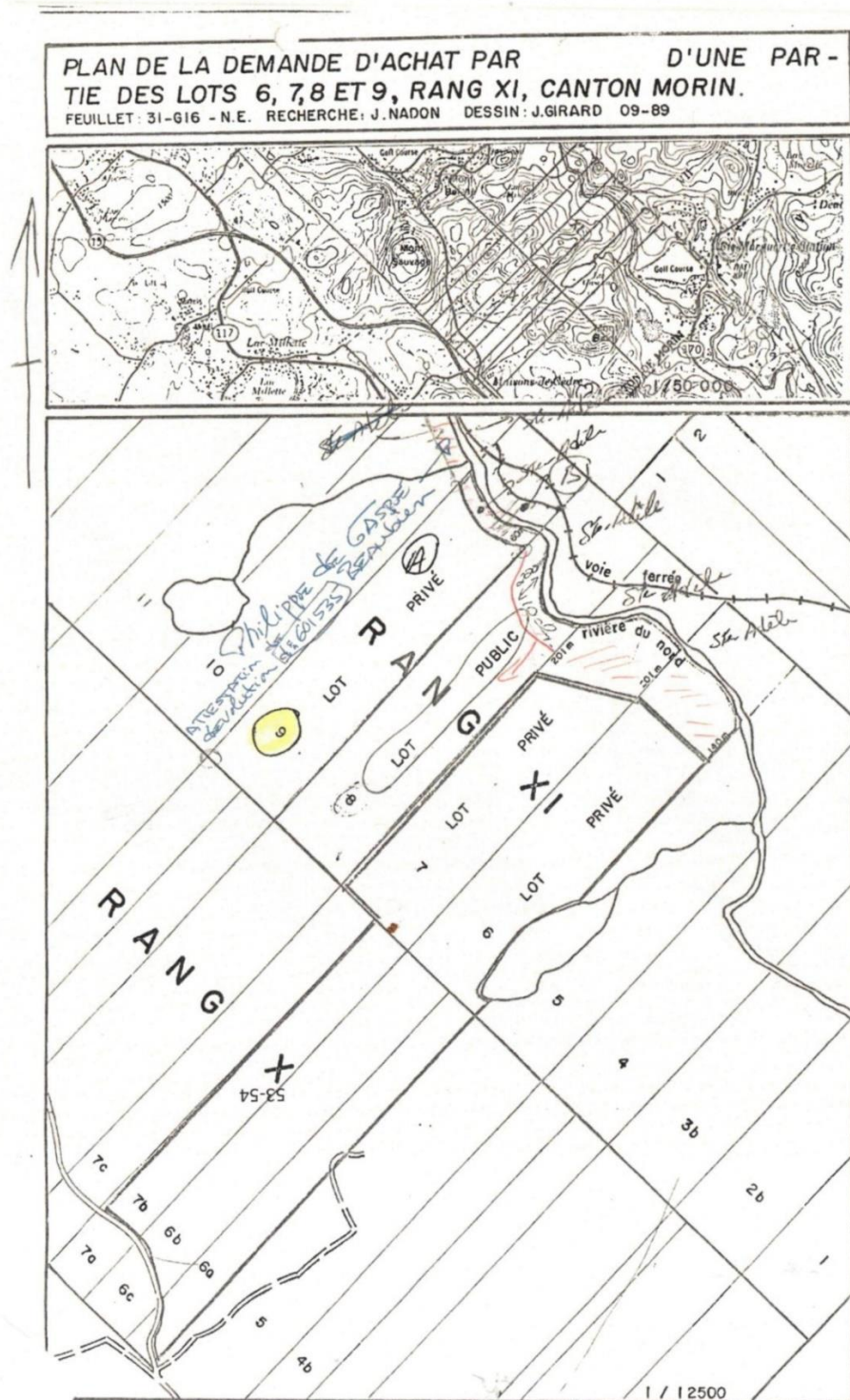
Tiré de Courville, F., et Paquette, D. (1981). *Étude d'analyse et schéma d'aménagement proposés pour le Parc des Chutes de la Rivière du Nord Ste-Adèle, Québec* [Synthèse]. Ville de Sainte-Adèle, Sainte-Adèle, Québec.

3.4 Failed Privatization and De-democratization (1989-1994)

Close to thirty years after the park's creation, the restrictive clause protecting the site's public character would come close to being partially expunged following coordinated attempts by *Corporation Première Équité* (2632-6900 Québec Inc.) and *Compagnie 141941 Canada Inc.* to transform "certains terrains en bordure et à l'Ouest de la Rivière du Nord appartenant à la Ville de Sainte-Adèle, ayant été cédé par le Ministère d'Énergie et Ressource au début des années 60 pour en faire un parc" into a "terrain de Golf [...] privé et des plus exclusif avec des frais d'inscription allant de 20,000.00\$ à 30,000.00\$" (Rickli, 1989).¹⁰ Fortunately for Georges R. Rickli, vice-president of *Corporation Première Équité*, and for Philippe de Gaspé Beaubien, president of and *Compagnie 141941 Canada Inc.*, the municipality was willing to ask the *Ministère Énergie et des Ressources naturelles* to "élargir les termes de sa clause restrictive accordés à la Ville de Ste-Adèle [...] pour permettre l'aménagement d'un terrain de golf" (Nielly, 1989). The *Ministère* agreed to partially strike out the restrictive clause, on condition that *Compagnie 141941 Canada Inc.* cough up 121 000 dollars (Duplessis, 1991). Furthermore, the *Ministère* would sell to *Compagnie 141941 Canada Inc.*, for the price of 88 000 dollars, a significant portion of lot 8—a lot situated adjacent those already being negotiated between *Corporation Première Équité* and the municipality (Duplessis, 1991).

¹⁰ *Corporation Première Équité* (2632-6900 Québec Inc.) and *Compagnie 141941 Canada Inc.* worked together to secure the lots, with *Compagnie 141941 Canada Inc.* eventually taking over negotiations. See: Duplessis, N. (1990). *Pties lots 6 à 9. Rang XI, canton de Morin* [Correspondance entre Normand Duplessis, a.-g., Service régional des terres, et Georges R. Rickli, Vice-Président, Corporation Première Équité]. Ville de Sainte-Adèle, Sainte-Adèle, Québec.

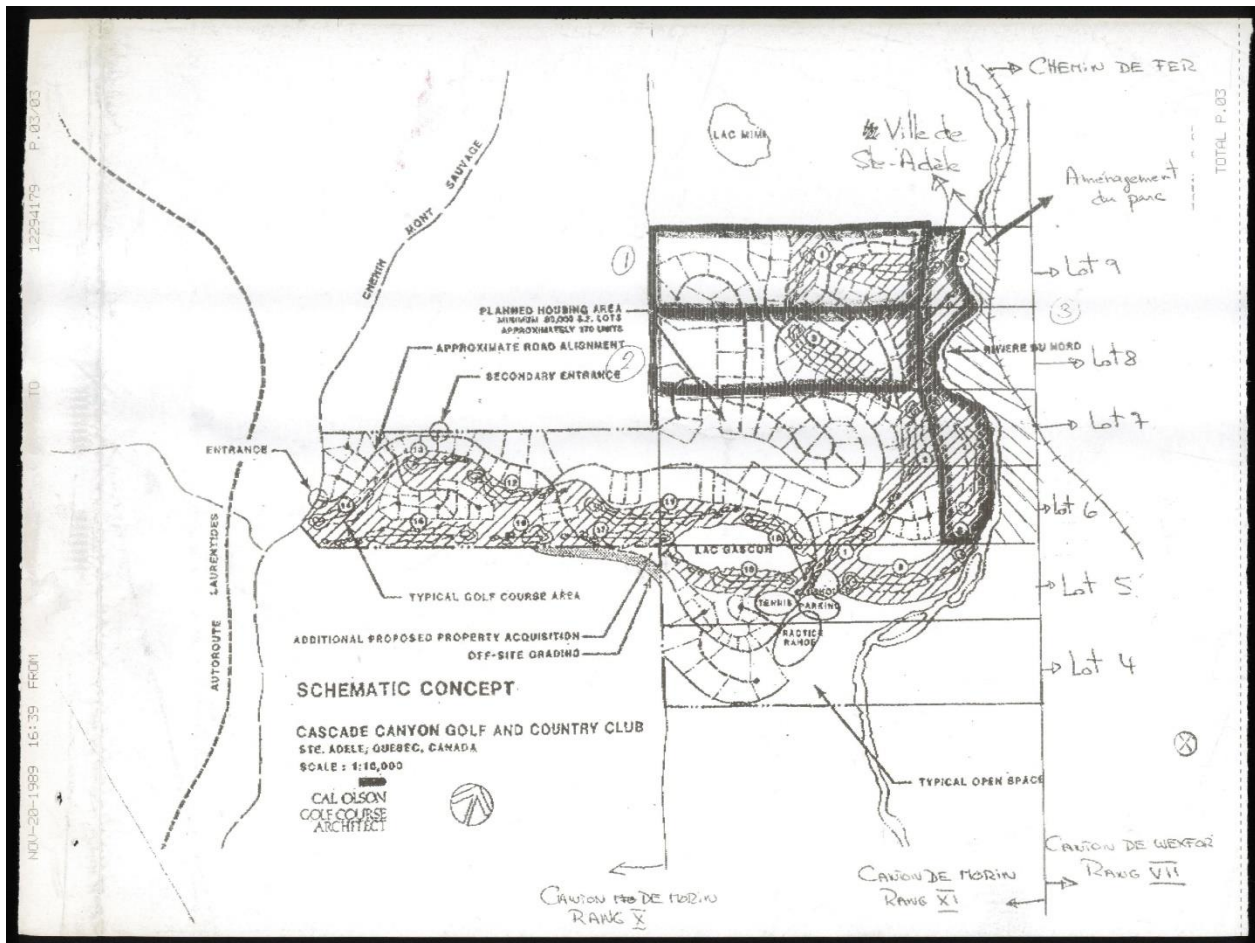
Figure 3.10 Plan de la demande d'achat d'une partie des lots 6,7, 8, et 9, Rang XI, Canton Morin (s.d.)



Tiré de Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources. (s.d.). *Plan de la demande d'achat d'une partie des lots 6,7,8, et 9, Rang XI, Canton Morin.* Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources Naturelles, Québec, Québec.

Given the potential that such a project had to “rehausser la qualité du produit récréo-touristique qu’offre Ste-Adèle à ses visiteurs” the municipality welcomed *Corporation Première Équité’s* plans for a “new exclusive private country club” (Nielly, 1990 ; Becker-Jones, 1989).

Figure 3.11 Concept schématique du futur Cascade Canyon Golf and Country Club (1989)



Tiré de Olson, C. (1989). Cascade Canyon Golf and Country Club [Schematic Concept]. Ville de Sainte-Adèle, Québec, Québec.

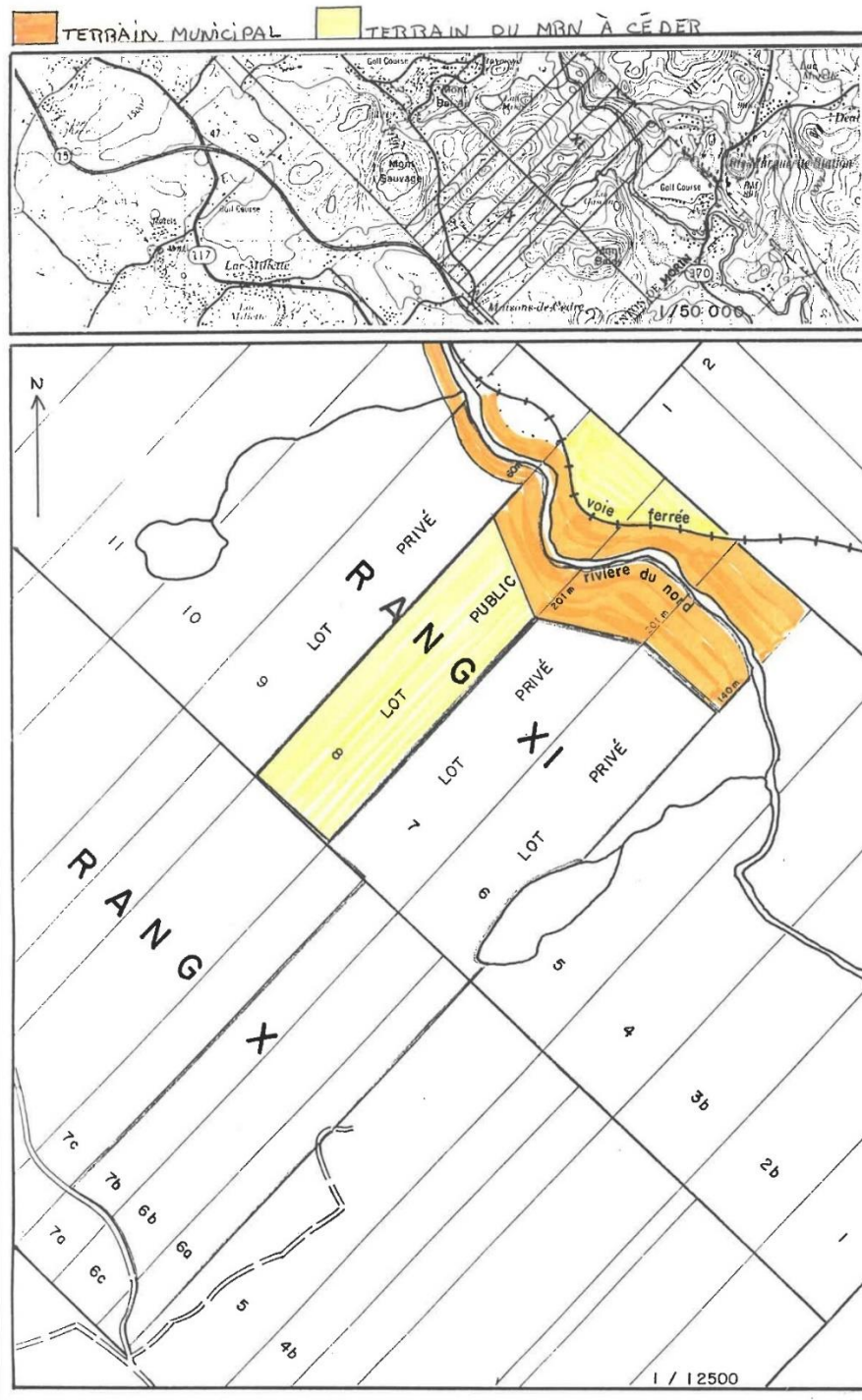
Corporation Première Équité never accepted the *Ministère’s* March 1991 offer relating to the cession of land and the renunciation of the restrictive clause affecting the south-west parts of lots 6 through 10. As a result, the *Ministère* subsequently closed *Corporation Première Équité’s* file on October 18th 1993 (Ministère de l’Énergie et des Ressources, 2003). In March of 1994 that *Friedman & Friedman Inc.*, a trustee in bankruptcy, would inform the municipality that “la Corporation Première Équité à fait l’objet d’une pétition en faillite par un créancier le 8 novembre 1993” (Bisson, 1994).

While Rickli and Beaubien failed in their attempts to privatize the site, their efforts did succeed in abating the municipality's tolerance towards the conditions imposed by the restrictive clause. When the municipality first passed resolution No. 90-396 authorizing the sale of a portion of the site and asking the *Ministère* to partially expunge the restrictive clause protecting the public character of the lots that the municipality was planning to sell to Rickli and Beaubien, they granted these two businessmen 3 years to complete the development of their golf course. In the event that the golf course failed to materialize, Rickli and Beaubien would be obliged to hand the purchased lots back to the municipality and the partial expungement of the restrictive clause would be reversed, reinstating the protections prescribed by the clause (Résolution No. 90-396). In a sad turn of events, the municipality reversed this decision shortly thereafter, amending resolution No. 90-396 so that it no longer contained any mention of the restrictive clause coming back into effect (Résolution No. 90-426). While still requiring the return of the lots sold in the event that plans for the golf course went up in smoke, the municipality made clear that it was no longer willing to safeguard the site's public status should it regain ownership of said lots.

3.5 Municipal Commodification (1994-2012)

Rickli and Beaubien's failed attempts to privatize portions of the site did little to temper the *Ministère's* desire to transfer ownership of lot 8. On April 28th 1994, following article 8 of decree 231-89, which gives "priorité à une municipalité lorsque la terre est requise pour un usage d'utilité publique", Normand Duplessis of the *Ministère* wrote to the municipality, informing it of its intention to "vendre prochainement, par appel d'offres, aux propriétaires adjacents la partie sud-ouest de la partie au sud-ouest du chemin de fer du lot 8, rang XI, du canton de Morin", and asking the municipality whether it had any need for this lot, "pour un usage d'utilité publique" (Moisan, 1996 ; Duplessis, 1994a). In May of the same year, the municipality responded to Duplessis's invitation by passing resolution no. 94-270, in which it formally expressed its desire to acquire said lot and put it to public use. When asked whether it might want to put the lot to public use, the *MRC des Pays-d'en-Haut* (hereafter, *MRC*) indicated that it supported the municipality's efforts to acquire the lot (Résolution CM 82-94-05).

Figure 3.12 Plan montrant les lots supplémentaires à céder à la Ville de Sainte-Adèle (1996)



Tiré de Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources (1996). [Plan montrant les lots à céder à la Ville de Sainte-Adèle. Figurent également les lots appartenant déjà à la municipalité]. Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources Naturelles, Québec, Québec.

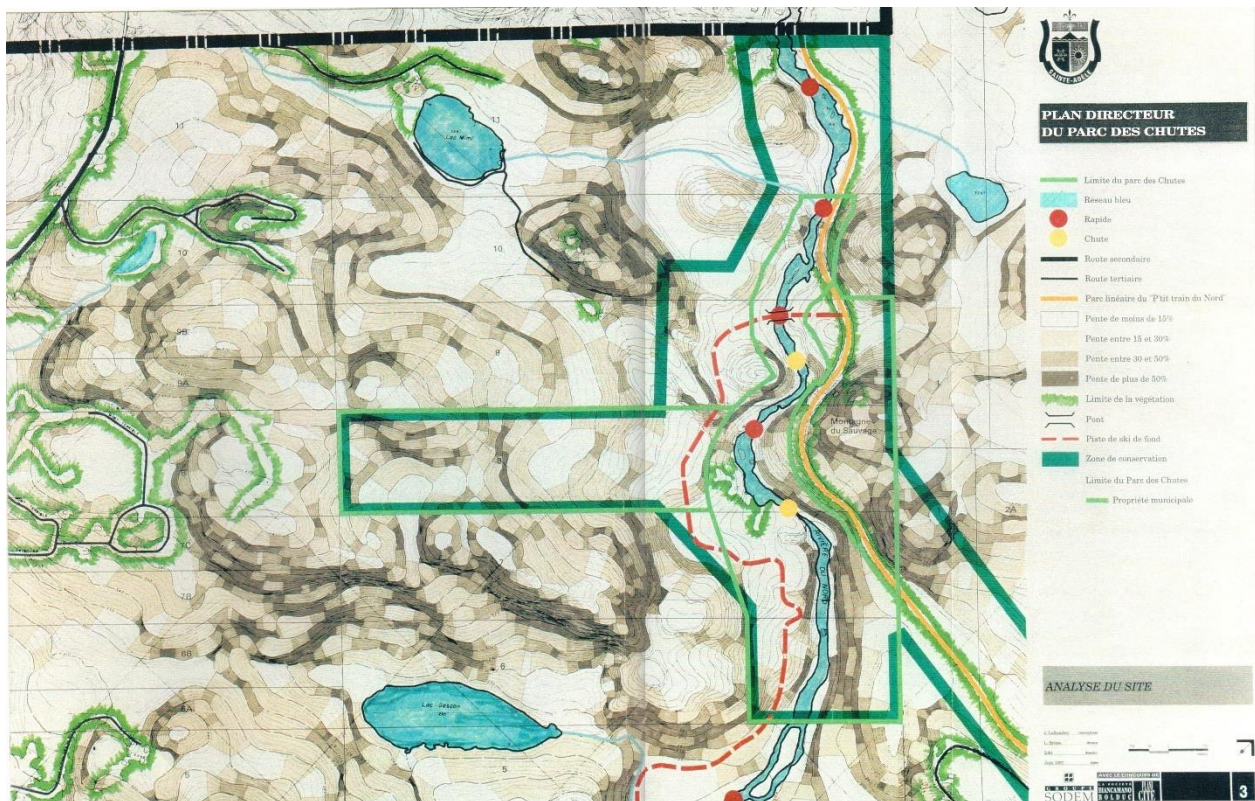
Following the reception of this resolution, Duplessis wrote, in June of 1994, to the municipality, asking it to clarify and elaborate upon its “projets et intentions de développement ou aménagement en regard de cette terre” (Duplessis, 1994b). Two months later, the municipality responded to Duplessis’ request with “un document sommaire des intentions de notre municipalité quant à la vocation que nous donnerons au lot P8, Rang XI, Canton Morin, que nous acquerrons de votre Ministère” (Biard, 1994). The municipality argued that the lot would make a welcome addition to the lots ceded to the municipality by the *Ministère* in 1960. Since their cession in 1960, these lots, accessible only via “la voie ferré (parc linéaire)” had become “très achalandé, surtout l’été”, with significant numbers of people going to swim and sunbathe “à l’endroit que l’on appelle le Parc des Chutes” (Goyer, 1994). Given the popularity of the park, the cession of a lot adjacent to it “[pourrait] s’avérer intéressant pour le future” (Goyer, 1994). The cession would allow the municipality to reevaluate “un vieux projet, soit l’aménagement d’un camping sauvage”, “en bordure de la rivière du nord”—a site which it described as being “enchanteur” (Goyer, 1994). This project, the municipality went on to note, would potentially include the “aménagement d’un chalet quatre saisons (incluant toilettes sèches)” (Goyer, 1994).

In a final push to secure a favourable response, Ronald Biard, the director general of the municipality assured the *Ministère* that his municipality was willing to accept “une clause dans l’acte de cession par laquelle nous nous engagerons à utiliser ce lot à des fins de verdure et de loisirs comme j’imagine, le souhaitent les autorités de votre ministère” (Biard, 1994). Anticipating a favourable response, the municipality passed, in December of 1995, resolution no. 95-701 authorizing the purchase, from the *Club Motoneige des Pays-d’en-Haut*, of the “pont enjambant la rivière du nord, lequel est situé entre le Mont Alouette et le parc linéaire” (Résolution no. 95-701). The following year, the *Ministère* agreed to cede the additional lot to the municipality, opening up the possibility of expanding the park (Moisan, 1996). While it was willing to hand over these additional lots for free, the *Ministère* nonetheless imposed upon the municipality the obligation to use the lots “à des fins non-lucratives de loisirs”, much like it had done during its first cession of lots in the 1960s (Moisan, 1996). Unlike the restriction imposed during the first cession of lots however, this restriction would only remain in force for a set period—that is, 30 years (Moisan, 1996).

Eager to begin the development of the park, the municipality commissioned, in May of 1997, the creation of a *Plan directeur du Parc des Chutes* (hereafter, *Plan directeur*). Taking into consideration the demographic, recreational, and touristic context within which the park was embedded, the report—140

pages in length—provided a blueprint that would allow for the “mise en valeur de ce site exceptionnel” (Le Groupe SODEM, 1997, p. 1). Much like the municipality, the report’s authors found the site breathtaking. “Desservi par deux sentiers récréatifs : le parc linéaire du P’tit Train du Nord et l’ancienne piste de motoneige (La Wizard) ” and located “en bordure de la rivière du Nord”, “sur le lot numéro 8 et sur une partie des lots numéros 6, 7,9 et 10”, this ‘T’ shaped park, punctuated “par trois rapides et deux chutes”, offered “une expérience exceptionnelle aux visiteurs” (Le Groupe SODEM, 1997, p. 2 et 33).

Figure 3.13 Analyse du site tirée du Plan directeur d’aménagement du Parc des Chutes (1997)

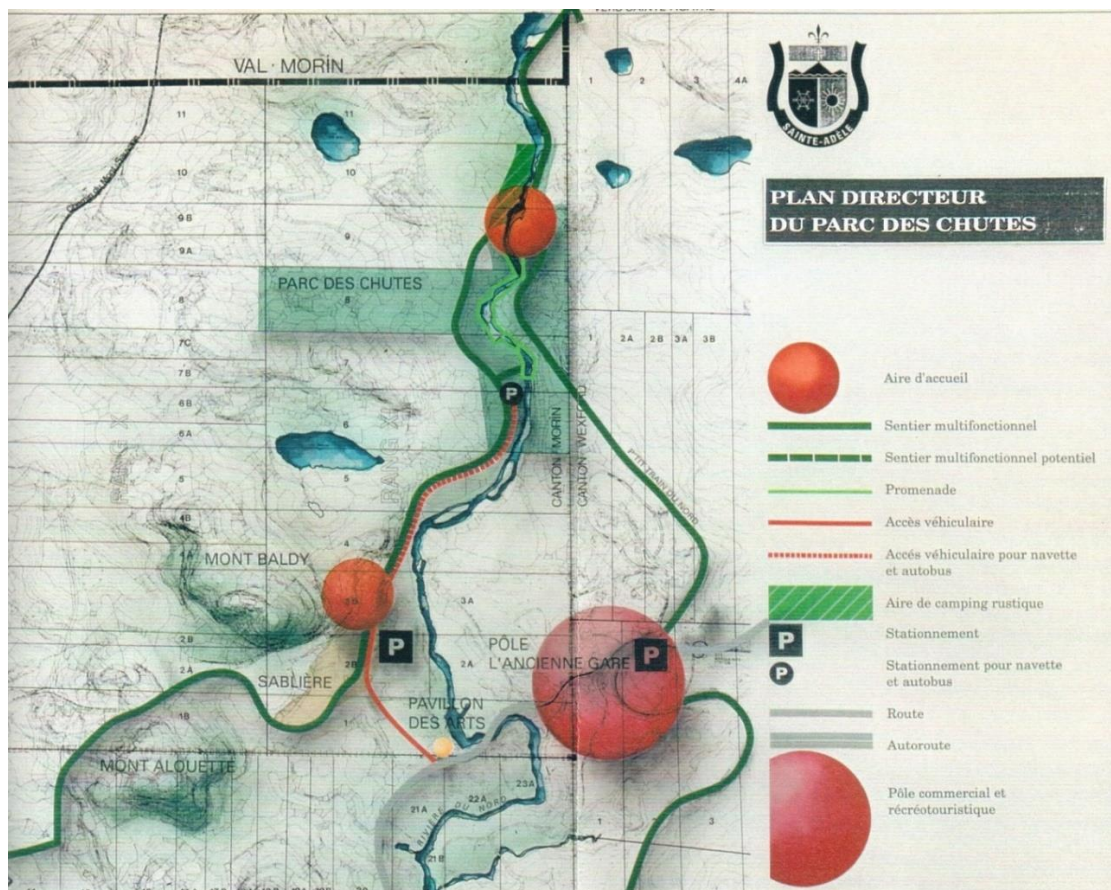


Tiré de Le Groupe SODEM. (1997a). *Plan directeur d’aménagement du Parc des Chutes* [Analyse du site]. Ville de Sainte-Adèle, Sainte-Adèle, Québec.

Of primary concern to the authors of the report was the present and future accessibility of the site. Despite the existence of a small number of “sentiers de randonnée disponibles depuis quelques années”, “les multiples richesses naturelles” contained within the park remained underappreciated due to the site’s relative remoteness (Le Groupe SODEM, 1997, p. 55). Indeed, those wishing to access the site had no choice but to use the Sainte-Marguerite-Station parking lot “aménagé en bordure du chemin Sainte-

Marguerite”, directly adjacent the Parc Linéaire (Le Groupe SODEM, 1997, p. 36). From there, park users would access the park “a pied, en vélo ou en ski de fond”, via the Parc Linéaire (Le Groupe SODEM, 1997, p. 60). In an attempt to increase the popularity of the “plus beau Panorama du Parc linéaire entre Saint-Jérôme et Mont-Laurier”, and to address the “très forte fréquentation du stationnement à Sainte-Marguerite Station”, the municipality tabled a plan to expand the parking lot (Conseil régional des loisirs des Laurentides, 1998, p. 23). Accessibility concerns were, however, offset by security concerns, and, for the first time in the park’s history, authorities began taking an interest in outfitting the park with “un dispositif de contrôle des entrées et sorties du stationnement” (Le Groupe SODEM, 1997, p. 69). Like all other commodities, the park had to be kept out of the ‘wrong’ hands. As such, the proper exploitation of this burgeoning site would require the deployment of a security apparatus capable of regulating the “disorderly, unruly, criminal, indecent, disobedient, disloyal, and lawless” (Neocleous, 2020, p. 11-15).

Figure 3.14 Concept général tiré du Plan directeur d’aménagement du Parc des Chutes (1997)



Tiré de Le Groupe SODEM. (1997b). *Plan directeur d’aménagement du Parc des Chutes* [Concept général]. Ville de Sainte-Adèle, Sainte-Adèle, Québec.

In addition to addressing questions of accessibility and security, the *Plan directeur* provided details regarding the development of the park proper. Given the municipality's desire to promote the park as site of "récréation intensive" the park would require "une infrastructure lourde, appelée à accueillir une forte densité d'utilisateurs" (Le Groupe SODEM, 1997, p. 56). Composed of a kitchen, a terrasse, an infirmary, washrooms, showers, storage lockers, bicycle racks, and an administrative office, the "casse-croute 3 saisons", located "en bordure de la rivière du Nord" would provide all of the "services de support" necessary to the smooth functioning of the park (Le Groupe SODEM, 1997, p. 66 et 72). Featuring "trois ponts ou passerelles", "quatre (4) belvédères", "quelques bancs", and an "air de pique-nique", the boardwalk, access to which would be controlled by two "mécanismes de contrôle pour la tarification" located "à chaque extrémité du parcours", would allow users to take a "promenade en boucle" during which they would be treated to heart-stopping, panoramic views (Le Groupe SODEM, 1997, p. 50, p. 75, et p. 76). Located "dans la zone au nord du pont existant, en bordure de la rivière", the "camping rustique", "boisé et ombragé", would make of the park an "halte de premier ordre dans le parcours du Parc Linéaire du P'tit train du Nord" (Le Groupe SODEM, 1997, p. 66, p. 68, p. 90). Combined, the multipurpose chalet, boardwalk, and backcountry camping would transform the "terres publiques municipales" upon which they were built into "un produit touristique 'd'aventure douce' attrayant et susceptible d'inciter, entre autres, l'usager du parc linéaire, à visiter le site" (Le Groupe SODEM, 1997, p. 57).

This commodified version of the site was scheduled for integration with the Parc régionale éclaté de la MRC des Pays-d'en-Haut, an intermunicipal network of trails and parks "qui, une fois regroupés et aménagés, pourraient devenir un outil de développement économique de grande importance pour la région" (Conseil régional des loisirs des Laurentides, 1998, p. 6). The integration would confer upon the *MRC* a wide-range of police powers over the site, including the right to determine "dans quelle mesure le public est admis", prescribe "les conditions auxquelles doit se conformer une personne qui séjourne, circule, où exerce une activité", determine "les cas où une personne peut être expulsée", and prohibit "certaines activités récréatives" (Conseil régional des loisirs des Laurentides, 1998, p. 67). Such prohibitions would include a prohibition against swimming, an activity practised with noticeable regularity at the falls (Conseil régional des loisirs des Laurentides, 1998, p. 32).¹¹ These new regulatory powers would allow the municipality and the *MRC* to normalize their historically-specific vision of proper park usage and

¹¹ While it recognized that public access to lakes and rivers the Conseil régional des loisirs des Laurentides nonetheless advocated a prohibition against swimming at the Parc des chutes, suggesting instead that a swimming pool be built on the site of the disused Sablière Bouliane, adjacent the planned parking lot.

render enforceable, via legal crystallization, the moral and political commitments of the day (see Proudhon, 2005 [1851], p. 54; Swain, 2018, p. 132; Malatesta, 2020 [1921]; Davis, 2000, p. 64). With regulations and prohibitions about to transform the site into a ‘prison-like trap’ (Caron, 2016, p. 15), the municipality and the MRC would have to ease the administrative burden of caring for the park by delegating surveillance and enforcement duties to private partners or perform these duties conjointly by establishing public-private policing partnerships (Le Groupe SODEM, 1997, p. 102).

John Greyson’s critically acclaimed 1996 film *Lilies*, queer scenes of which were shot on site, would have brought queer uses of the site to the municipality’s attention. While the access to information disclosures that I have in my possession do not allow me to say whether the intended security checkpoint (1997) and expanding regulatory powers (1998) were devised as a response to such queering—it is, after all, the purpose and role of ‘security’ to mask such linkages (Neocleous, 2020)—it is at least conceivable, given a) the MRC’s proposed prohibition against swimming, b) the temporal proximity of these events, and c) the municipality’s forthcoming heterosexist repressive turn, that these regulatory interventions took aim at the increasingly visible and unabashed queer uses of the site.

Figure 3.15 Image tirée du film *Lilies* (1996)



3.6 Heterosexist Regulation and Policing (2012-2022)

On November 2nd 2012, a committee of local residents with close ties to Philippe de Gaspé Beaubien¹² — the rich businessman who had previously attempted to torpedo the park’s protective clause and successfully purchased and put to personal use a lot adjacent the site—met with Pierre Dionne, the director general of the municipality to voice their concerns over the state and use of the pont du Parc des Chutes—the bridge the municipality purchased off of the Club de Motoneigists de la MRC de Pays-d’en-Haut in 1995 and located on lot 9. The residents expressed concern over the poor state of the bridge deck (Lots 8 et 9..., 2012). So concerned were these residents with the deteriorating state of the bridge that they reiterated their offer to help the municipality fulfill “son devoir de protection des citoyens” by inhibiting “l’accès au pont au moyen de clôtures” (Lots 8 et 9..., 2012). Though Philippe de Gaspé Beaubien, proprietor of the land adjacent the site, did not wish to be perceived “comme celui empêchant l’accès”, Beaubien was more than willing, given the state of the bridge, to “soutenir la municipalité dans son devoir de protection des citoyens” (Lots 8 et 9..., 2012). In addition to encouraging the municipality to condemn the bridge, the committee also reiterated Beaubien’s interest in purchasing, and thus privatizing, lots 8 and 9 of the Parc des Chutes: “Comme nous vous le mentionnions lors de notre rencontre, [Philippe de Gaspé Beaubien]¹³ demeure intéressé par l’acquisition du lot 8 et d’une partie du lot 9. Nous vous réitérons sa volonté à s’engager, de façon formelle au sein de l’acte de vente, le cas échéant, à ne pas développer ces terrains” (Lots 8 et 9..., 2012). Three days following the November 2nd meeting, Christian Nadeau, the directeur du Service des Loisirs of the municipality wrote to Dionne, informing him that access to the bridge had been cut off: “voici la photo du pont Glen Wexford sur lequel une intervention a été effectuée

¹² Philippe de Gaspé Beaubien’s name is redacted in the documents released to me via access to information law; however, improper redaction and numerous details surrounding the improperly redacted name have allowed me to infer, with a relatively high degree of certainty, Beaubien’s identity. First, the redacted version of the name is 26 characters in length, which corresponds to the number of characters required to type Beaubien’s full name. Second, an improperly redacted instance of the name ends with the characters ‘ien’. Third, the email message in which the redacted name appears mentions that the person whose name is redacted « demeure intéressé par l’acquisition du lot 8 et d’une partie du lot 9 ». According to the documents released to me via access to information law, Rickli and Beaubien were the only two individuals to have recently expressed interest in acquiring these lots. The length of the redacted name as well as the improperly redacted name allow me to rule Rickli out definitively. With Rickli ruled out, Beaubien is the only person who might therefore have been in a position to express continued interest in acquiring lots 8 and 9. Fourth, the person whose name is redacted is said to have installed a fence installed « près du pont ». Municipal records released via access to information law indicate that Philippe de Gaspé Beaubien was the one responsible for installing the fence (See Annexe B).

¹³ Philippe de Gaspé Beaubien’s name is blacked out in the disclosure. I have re-inserted his name into the passage based on the reasoning I presented in the footnote directly before this one.

ce matin (lundi 5 nov.), dans le but d’interdire l’accès à celui-ci, en barricadant les extrémités” (Nadeau, 2012).

Figure 3.16 Photographie montrant le pont barricadé (2012)

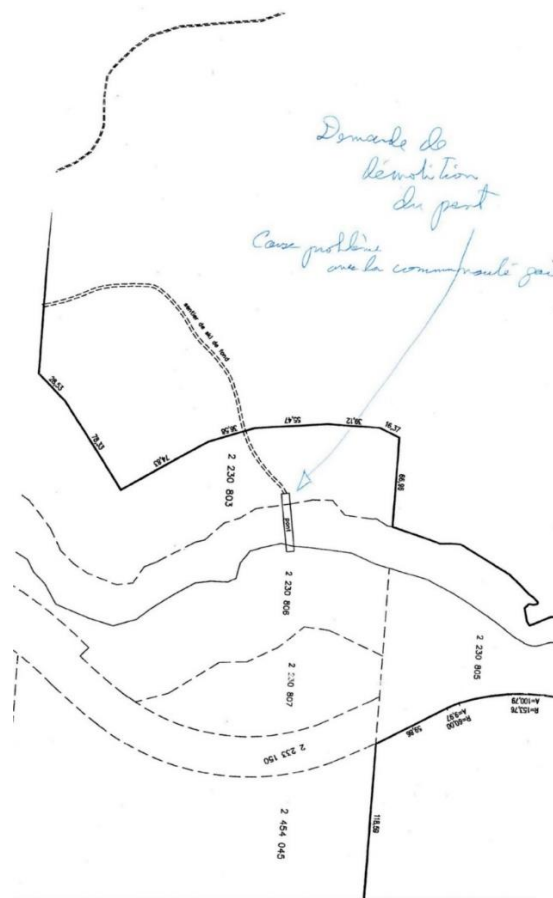


Tiré de Nadeau, C. (2012). *Pont Glen Wexford* [Photographie]. Ville de Sainte-Adèle, Sainte-Adèle, Québec.

While the committee’s claims regarding the deteriorating state of the bridge deck were not hyperbolic— a senior engineer at *Les Consultants S.M. Inc.* would soon confirmed that the bridge’s deck was “en état de détérioration avancé” (Jude, 2013)—a handwritten annotation on the allotment plan submitted to the municipality along with the committee’s demolition request suggests that the committee brought the deteriorating condition of the bridge to the municipality’s attention for another reason. Far from expressing an interest in helping the municipality fulfill its “devoir de protection des citoyens” (Lots 8 et 9..., 2012), the committee members expressed frustration with the queering of the municipal bridge and found in its deteriorating condition, the perfect cover story: “Demande de démolition du pont / Cause problème avec la communauté gaie” (Lots 8 et 9..., 2012).

The site had been used by the community since the early 80s, but this was the first time that queer uses had been problematized in such an open and antagonistic manner (Tanguay et al., 2017). If the demolition request received a favourable response from the municipality, it is likely because this bridge allowed the public to access the densely-forested, west side of the river—a space which, in virtue of its remoteness, was relatively inaccessible to authorities, and therefore ideal for cruising. In acceding to the request, the municipality effectively cut off access to the portion of the site which opened up queer possibilities. In making the site’s critical queer infrastructure the target of their concerted political campaign, the committee betrayed its understanding of the role of local infrastructure in the queering of public space (See Frisch, 2002 for a discussion of heterosexist planning).

Figure 3.17 Demande citoyenne de démolition du pont (2012)



Tiré de Lots 8 et 9... [Plan annoté partagé par courriel entre des propriétaires habitant à proximité des Chutes Glen-Wexford et Pierre Dionne, Director general, Ville de Sainte-Adèle]. (2012). Ville de Sainte-Adèle, Sainte-Adèle, Québec.

By the end of November 2012, a few weeks after the demolition request was submitted, municipal councillor Nadine Brière put together a Plein-Air-Sainte-Adèle (hereafter, PASA) subcommittee to examine the possibility of developing the site (Savard et Chapdelaine, 2012, point 10.3). Though the closure of this bridge dealt a significant blow to the site's recreational appeal, the municipality had not abandoned its plans to develop the site. In fact, the temporal proximity of the demolition request and the formation of Brière's PASA subcommittee suggests that this subcommittee viewed the demolition of the bridge, and the subsequent de-queering of the site, as a prerequisite for the park's development. It also suggests the existence of communication channels between committee of local residents who submitted the heterosexual demolition request and Brière's subcommittee.

Figure 3.18 Photographie du pont prise peu de temps avant sa démolition (2012)



Tiré de Roberge, I. (2012). *Démolition d'un pont - Rivière-du-Nord* [Photographie]. Ville de Sainte-Adèle, Sainte-Adèle, Québec.

With the accessibility of the site now greatly reduced and the 'problem' of the park's queering partially mitigated, the subcommittee could now move forward with its plan to "aménager un parc municipal le long de la Rivière-du-Nord, sur cette emplacement avec une nouvelle passerelle sur la rivière, des pistes de ski, raquette, vélo, etc", reviving the municipality's unfulfilled plan to transform the site into a hub of revenue-generating outdoor activities (Savard et Chapdelaine, 2012, point 10.3). Echoing the municipality's 1960, 1975, and 1997 characterizations of the site, Brière described, in February of 2013, the site as being "un endroit magnifique qui n'est en aucun point exploité" (Brière, 2013). For this reason, the PASA subcommittee would look into the possibility "de mettre des marches pour se rendre aux chutes" and formally authorized, with the passing of resolution 2013-003, the "aménagement piétonnier" of the site (Brière, 2013; Savard et Chapdelaine, 2013, point 7.14). By constructing this staircase and developing

formal recreational trails, the subcommittee hoped to “faciliter et favoriser l'accessibilité aux cyclistes et aux randonneurs a un magnifique segment de la rivière du Nord, localisé dans le secteur des chutes du Parc Glen Wexford” (Savard, 2013). Ideally located, the staircase would connect the Sainte-Marguerite-Station parking lot to the site via the Parc Linéaire, thereby facilitating “l'appropriation du site” and encouraging “l'ensemble des usagers” to discover a park described as being “d'une beauté inégalée” (Savard, 2013).

Figure 3.19 Photographie de la Coupe-de-Pierre (2011). L'entrée principale du site y figure en bas à gauche.



Tiré de Vallières, M-G. (2011). *L'emprise dans la passe du Mont-Sauvage, entre Sainte-Marguerite et Val-Morin* [Photographie]. Patrimoine-Laurentides.

<http://mgvallieres.com/trains/Images/CPValMorin2011.htm>

While the staircase was built, its existence would be short-lived. Sometime prior to September 1st 2016, Pierre Dionne, the director general of the municipality, indicated to the *Sûreté du Québec* (hereafter, *SQ*) that he “apprécierait grandement une surveillance” of the site (Roberge, 2016). In an email sent by the *SQ* to Dionne, the *SQ* lamented the fact that the park had become a “lieux de rencontre [...] populaire prisé par les gais (sur les sites de rencontre)” and that queers “y passe[nt] du temps¹⁴, se baignent nus, consomment, laissent leurs déchets sur place et y font même du camping” (Roberge, 2016). Approximately two weeks later, the *Corporation du Parc Linéaire le P’tit train du Nord* (hereafter, *Corporation*) began relaying similar complaints to the *Comité de sécurité publique de la MRC des Pays-d’en-Haut* (Williams, 2016, point 4.A). The committee then began escalating these complaints, formulating strategically vague concerns regarding “la problématique particulière que représente la présence d’individus aux chutes Glen Wexford à Sainte-Adèle, aux abords du parc linéaire” (Williams, 2016, point 4.A). In response to this series of complaints, Éric Carle, director general of the *SQ-MRC des Pays-d’en-Haut*, began communicating with “la Cour municipale à ce sujet” and indicated that the judge was verifying “les assises légales afin que les policiers de la *SQ* puissent intervenir adéquatement”. Carle also indicated that a “patrouille cycliste” would be put into place to address the *Corporation’s* concerns (Williams, 2016, point 4.A).

Faced with the queering of the site, but uncertain about which legal tools might legitimately be used in order to dequeer it, police requested that the court prescribe a course of action. Sadly, courts are not subject to provincial access to information law. Like the vast majority of the court's operations, the precise nature of the prosecutor's deliberations remain secret and shielded from public scrutiny (see Black, 2015 for a discussion of courts and accountability). Nonetheless, the problematization and subsequent juridico-legalization of queer social practice on site is instructive. Here, problematization (the identification and foregrounding of a social practice deemed undesirable, offensive, or harmful) *precedes* juridico-legalization (the process by means of which a problematized situation is artificially broken down into a series of punishable or 'criminal' acts and targeted for elimination (or regulated) by the state) (See Carrier et Piché, 2015, for a discussion of problematization). This suggests that juridico-legalization is, first and foremost, a means of adjudicating problematized situations which originate outside the sphere of 'law'. As practices originating within the hotly contested field of social and political relations, queer nudism and cruising are all but foreign to 'law'. Thus, the problematization of these practices is, in the first instance, a matter of social and political choice. Once this is recognized—that is, once the process by means of which

¹⁴ This passage inspired the title of this thesis.

queer social practices are problematized is successfully politicized, once criminalization has been stripped of its ahistoric and legal (i.e. putatively non-normative) character—it becomes possible to impute normative content to the act of problematization (See Seri, 2020 for a discussion of the ‘alegal’ character of policing). It becomes possible, in other words, to problematize the problematization, to call into question the state’s theatrical, yet depressingly violent tendency to make queer erotics a central object of police attention.

While the *Corporation* and the *MRC* had been receiving complaints¹⁵ since at least 2016, it was Brière’s 2017 complaint that would spur the *SQ* to action. On June 6th, 2017, Brière submitted her own nudity complaint after coming across what she would describe as “des hommes en pleine action devant les regards de tous” on site (Brière, 2017). The complaint was submitted to the municipality’s director general, Pierre Dionne—the same person who had twice before received, processed, and escalated heterosexist complaints to police. Attached to the complaint was a photo of naked masculine figures cruising by the riverside (Brière, 2017).¹⁶ On June 7th, the day after Brière had submitted this complaint, the municipality authored a report urging the *SQ* to take action against what it called “l’usage abusif des Chutes Sainte-Marguerite” (Dionne, 2017, point X). The report, written by Anouk Deveault, the municipality’s communications expert, and sent on behalf of the director general of the municipality, denounced the presence of “nudists” and “exhibitionists” engaging in “des gestes déplacés et choquants”, which were, on the municipality’s account, offensive to “les gens qui fréquentent le secteur” (Deveault, 2017a). Following the *SQ*’s reception of Brière’s escalated complaint, the *SQ* sent “deux patrouilleurs afin de valider l’information” contained within the report (Mainville, 2018, Demandes ponctuelles des élus et des citoyens). While carrying out a surveillance operation, these patrollers noticed “plus de 50 personnes [...] nus aux abords de la rivière” some of which they observed having “des relations sexuelles aux abords du site” (Mainville, 2018, Demandes ponctuelles des élus et des citoyens). Having established that “plusieurs personnes [...] se rendent aux chutes Glen-Wexford pour des activités nudistes”, the *SQ* contacted “un procureur afin de l’aviser de la situation et de confirmer [ses] procédure d’intervention et nos motifs d’arrestation pour une éventuelle opération” (Mainville, 2018, Demandes ponctuelles des élus et des

¹⁵ The authors of these complaints remained unnamed in the documents released to be via provincial access to information law.

¹⁶ In order to avoid compounding the oppression of the people who had their picture taken without their consent, I have chosen not to reproduce this image here. The image is nonetheless reproduced in the Annexe B. To avoid further disrespecting those represented in the photograph, I ask that other researchers, journalists, or interested parties be mindful about how they discuss and use the image.

citoyens). The SQ then organized “une équipe de 8 patrouilleurs afin de se présenter sur les lieux et procéder à l’arrestation de plusieurs personnes” (Mainville, 2018, Demandes ponctuelles des élus et des citoyens).

Figure 3.20 Photographie montrant des véhicules de la Sûreté du Québec stationnés le long du Parc Linéaire, à proximité du site (2017)



Tiré de Pineault, É. (2017). [Photographie de véhicules de patrouille de la SQ la fin de semaine du 16 septembre 2017. Les véhicules sont stationnés sur le Parc Linéaire, à proximité des escaliers Coupe-de-Pierre]. Vice. <https://www.vice.com/fr/article/8x8gb3/des-interventions-policieres-aux-chutes-sainte-marguerite-inquietent-la-communaute-lgbtq>

The SQ’s nudity raids happened all throughout the summer of 2017, but it wasn’t until Étienne Pineault started documenting and challenging them that they came to the public’s attention. Enjoying a day out at the falls on September 16th 2017, Pineault’s friend, *who was clothed*, was approached by a police officer

who demanded to know if he was naked, saying: “Toi, la casquette, est tu nu?” (Labbé, 2017). That the police officer should ask whether a clothed person is naked is instructive. First, it suggests that the police’s motivation in raiding the site was not purely to punish of those engaged in nudist activities (if this were the case, the officer would have ignored rather than approached those who were clothed) but instead to harass of all those suspected of being affiliated with or of condoning queer conduct of this sort. Second, it suggests that police “make and remake the law”, problematizing situations and conduct about which law remains silent (here, the simple fact of sitting clothed by the riverside) (Maher, 2021, p. 35; Williams, 2020, p. 23; See Neocleous, 2020, p. 24 for examples of police punishment of mundane acts). His friend was not arrested, but others were. Impatient to know the grounds for the arrests, Pineault asked one of the police officers what all the commotion was about. The police officer in question responded by saying: “C’est le maire de Sainte-Adèle, il veut plus de gens nus ici, les gais viennent depuis longtemps” (Labbé, 2017). Following up on her response, Pineault then asked: “Alors c’est parce qu’on est gai qu’il y a une répression” (Labbé, 2017)? Forced to clarify her previous statement, the police officer immediately backtracked, responding: “Non non non, c’est pas parce que le gens sont gais” (Labbé, 2017).

Pineault made a point of making these interactions public knowledge by posting about them on social media. The story rapidly caught the attention of multiple mass media outlets, putting the municipality on the defensive. Pineault’s public statements characterized the site as

“[...] un espace de liberté pour la communauté LGBTQ, mais aussi des hétérosexuels ouverts d’esprit aimant s’y retrouver afin de profiter de la nature, se baigner, passer du bon temps entre amis et être ce qu’ils sont, loin des regards d’une société parfois moralisatrice et oppressante [...]. Ce bout de rivière, en plein milieu de la forêt, est une oasis, cachée du regard de la masse hétéronormative [...] Ce lieu joue un rôle majeur pour beaucoup de nos citoyens qui n’ont malheureusement pas la possibilité d’être et de vivre ce qu’ils sont dans la majorité des endroits publics de baignade du Québec” (Pineault cited in Noël, 2017).

Pineault’s statement reflects abolitionist understandings of the term ‘queer’. His analysis recognizes and celebrates the protection that this forested bit of riverside provides queer subjects, all the while underscoring the protection that this very same site offers to heterosexual subjects. While Pineault centers queer unfreedom in his analysis, his primary concern rests with *unfreedom itself* (See Dillon, 2018 for a discussion of queerness as a unifying, liberatory force). In his statement, Pineault names what is lost when police turn cruising grounds into state-run punitive playgrounds: possibilities. In foreclosing queer possibilities, police were, on his account, sedimenting existing power asymmetries (See Seri, 2020, p. 41 for a discussion of police and power asymmetries).

Figure 3.21 Le maire de Sainte-Adèle, Robert Milot, pose pour le Journal de Montréal aux Chutes Sainte-Marguerite à la suite des rafles policières de la Sûreté du Québec (2017)



Tiré de Garnier, C. (2017, 20 septembre). Le maire de Sainte-Adèle veut en finir avec le nudisme. Il ne tolère plus que des gens bronzent nus le long des chutes Sainte-Marguerite. Le Journal de Montréal. <https://www.journaldemontreal.com/2017/09/20/le-maire-de-sainte-adele-veut-en-finir-avec-le-nudisme>

The municipality responded to accusations of profiling, including, first and foremost, those made by Pineault, by spreading disinformation. Two days after Pineault's interaction with police on site, on September 18th, the mayor of the municipality, Robert-Milot responded to accusations of profiling by claiming that the nudity raids were triggered by a complaint which he described as being "très très sérieuse" (Labbé, 2017). According to Milot, "une dame qui a passé avec son fils de 10 ans sur la piste cyclable [...] a été témoin d'un film pornographique qui se tenait là... là elle était avec son enfant... puis c'était...son enfant lui disait cossé qu'ils font là mama...t'sé c'était comme...ça avait pas d'allure là" (Labbé, 2017). The

following day, on September 19th, Milot repeated this narrative in an email exchange between himself and an outraged member of the public, claiming that the young woman cycling with her 10-year-old son along the Parc Linéaire witnessed “the making of a pornographic movie ‘Live’” (Milot, 2017). Speaking with the *Journal de Montréal* on September 20th, Milot modified his narrative, claiming that the pornographic shoot happened not on the Parc Linéaire as he first claimed, but rather somewhere within the site, a location not visible from the Parc Linéaire (Garnier, 2017). This narrative strategically omitted the fact that the ‘pornography’ complaint in question was Brière’s July 6th complaint. In addition to tactically masking the identity of this councillor, Milot’s *Radio-Canada* and email narrative falsified a significant element of the complaint—the location. The photograph Brière submitted along with her complaint makes clear that when she came across a few masculine figures who appeared to be cruising, she was on the riverfront—a place that, in 2020, she would hyperbolically describe as being “très très dangereux” (St-Louis, 2020)—hundreds of meters away from the Parc Linéaire and surrounded by dense forest—i.e. nowhere near the Parc Linéaire, and certainly not cycling (Brière, 2017).

Despite the unfavourable media coverage that the nudity raids were beginning to attract (Noël, 2017), the municipality remained steadfast in its efforts to eliminate the presence of queer nudists on site. In response to the alleged pornography complaint—that is, in response to Brière’s complaint—the municipality made public its intention to begin controlling access to the site by means of a security checkpoint (Labbé, 2017). In the days following the September raids, the Coupe-de-Pierre stairs which previously connected the Parc Linéaire with the site and which had been installed at Brière’s request, were barricaded, and on September 17th, the *MRC* passed a resolution authorizing, for ‘security’ reasons, the connection of the Sainte-Marguerite-Station parking lot to the province’s electrical grid, thereby facilitating the installation of surveillance lighting (Résolution CM 227-09-17).

The municipality’s steadfast refusal to change course and avowed intention to escalate heterosexist attacks on the site by controlling access to it in a permanent fashion, fuelled additional queer uproar. Members of the public wrote to the municipality angrily mocking its implausible cover story and accusing it of lacking “d’honnêteté intellectuelle” (*Raffle policière aux chutes Ste Marguerite*, 2017). One member of the public wrote to the municipality saying: “The make-believe story that was reported to Radio-Canada, that a family complained about a pornographic video being made nearby, is simply laughable. Gay men go to these falls because they are beautiful, out of the way, rarely visited by anyone but gay (sic) and lesbians and our allies [...] Like honestly, you people are making stuff up to fit your narrative” (*Chutes Sainte-*

Marguerite, 2017). Unimpressed by the pornography cover story, members of the public repeatedly expressed skepticism towards the municipality's narrative. One member of the public wrote, "il m'est difficile de croire à vos affirmations (ou celle de cette dame avec son enfant)", while another wrote "l'incident que vous évoquez à propos de cette mère et de son fils n'est pas acceptable", angrily pushing back against the the municipality's racketeering (*Raffle policière aux chutes Ste Marguerite*, 2017 ; *Liberté aux chutes Sainte Marguerite*, 2017). Members of the public were more than willing to bet that the municipality had concocted this cover story as "excuse to punish gay men" (*Chutes Sainte-Marguerite*, 2017). Those who wrote to the municipality also took issue with its plan to control access to the site. In a petition addressed to the municipality, the *SQ-MRC des Pays-d'en-Haut*, and the prosecutor of Sainte-Adèle's municipal court, Hugo Vaillancourt expressed concern regarding the municipality's plan to "transformer drastiquement l'accès aux chutes en y faisant installer une guérite" (Vaillancourt, 2017). "Assez de murs et de guérites!", wrote one member of the public, pushing back against the punitive logics which legitimize borders and checkpoints (*Raffle policière aux chutes Ste Marguerite*, 2017; See Harney and Moten, 2013 for a discussion of punitive state logics).

The public did not, however, limit themselves to calling out the municipality's attempts at cover storying or criticizing the shift from intermittent heterosexist repression (police raids) to permanent heterosexist control (security checkpoint). They also expressed anger at the municipality's refusal to recognize the significance of the site to those who queer it. Here, unlike elsewhere,

"on peut coller son compagnon sans regards réprobateurs et sans ressentir une certaine anxiété, d'être sur le qui-vive, comme c'est notamment le cas dans une ville même comme Montréal, une des villes les plus libérales au monde. On ne se sent jamais 100 % en sécurité et tranquille quand on marche main dans la main avec une personne de même sexe, mais si c'est possible de le faire généralement sans trop de problème. Une insulte homophobe ou un regard malaisant ne sont jamais loin" (Offensant, 2017).

Highlighting the significance of the site and pushing back against the intransigence of the municipality, members of the public demanded that the site remain "autogéré et libre d'homophobie et de répression policière", and made clear that they would not tolerate "law enforcement patrolling a secluded natural area" (*Répression policière aux chutes Adéloises*, 2017; *Les Chutes Ste-Marguerite*, 2017). Should the municipality refuse to recognize the significance of the site and continue to send police, the municipality would "have a fight on [its] hands" (*Les Chutes Ste-Marguerite*, 2017).

Faced with an incessant flow of combative emails and hoping to put an end to the unfavourable media attention it was receiving, the municipality eagerly sought to reach some kind of public agreement with the community. “En réponse à vos correspondances et dans le but d’entreprendre une démarche qui nous permettra de régler ce dossier dans l’intérêt de tous”, the mayor of the municipality, Robert Milot met Pineault (his principal queer critic and interlocutor) at the falls and negotiated “un processus d’entente pour rendre les visites au site des chutes sécuritaire, accessible” (Deveault, 2017b). Nonetheless, the municipality distinguished sharply between those who had been arrested—i.e. those who engage in queer activities like nudism and cruising and who, by virtue of practising these activities, were implicitly said to be ‘disrespecting’ the rights of others—and those who abstain from queer activities and who therefore, through their compliance with heteronormative codes of conduct, were said to be “désireux de respecter les droits de tous” (Deveault, 2017b). Far from acknowledging the individual and collective harm caused by the raids, the municipality’s rhetoric relied on a distinction which effectively blamed those who had been arrested for the abuse they suffered at the hands of police. Undergirding this assignation of blameworthiness was a characteristic form of ‘cop think’, one which, unthinkably, reverses the moral status of ‘victim’ and ‘perpetrator’ (Saleh-Hanna, 2017).

Subsequently summarized in a letter sent to the municipality by the *CCLGBTQ+*, the agreement included four points. First, the municipality would recognize “l’importance historique et actuelle du site pour les communautés LGBTQ+” (Tanguay et al., 2017). Second, it would recognize “que les personnes arrêtées pour simple nudité l’ont été de manière cavalière et qu’elles n’étaient pas la bonne cible relative à une plainte d’actes sexuels en public” (Tanguay et al., 2017). Third, it would commit itself to “travailler à la tolérance, comme à la plage d’Oka, et la pérennisation des zones où la pratique du naturisme sur le site est tolérée (zones qui ne sont pas visibles depuis la piste cyclable)” (Tanguay et al., 2017). Fourth, it would work towards preserving “l’accessibilité”, “le caractère naturel”, and the “sécurité” of the park (Tanguay et al., 2017). While the municipality committed to each one of these points, in a communiqué released to the press shortly thereafter, it made clear that “la décision définitive” regarding the site “appartiendra au nouveau Conseil municipal qui sera élu le 5 novembre prochain” (Deveault, 2017b). This caveat, which effectively affirmed the non-binding character of an already conservative agreement, would prove useful to the municipality when, on November 5th, Brière would be elected mayor. Her election as mayor would mark the end of the honeymoon between the municipality and the community.

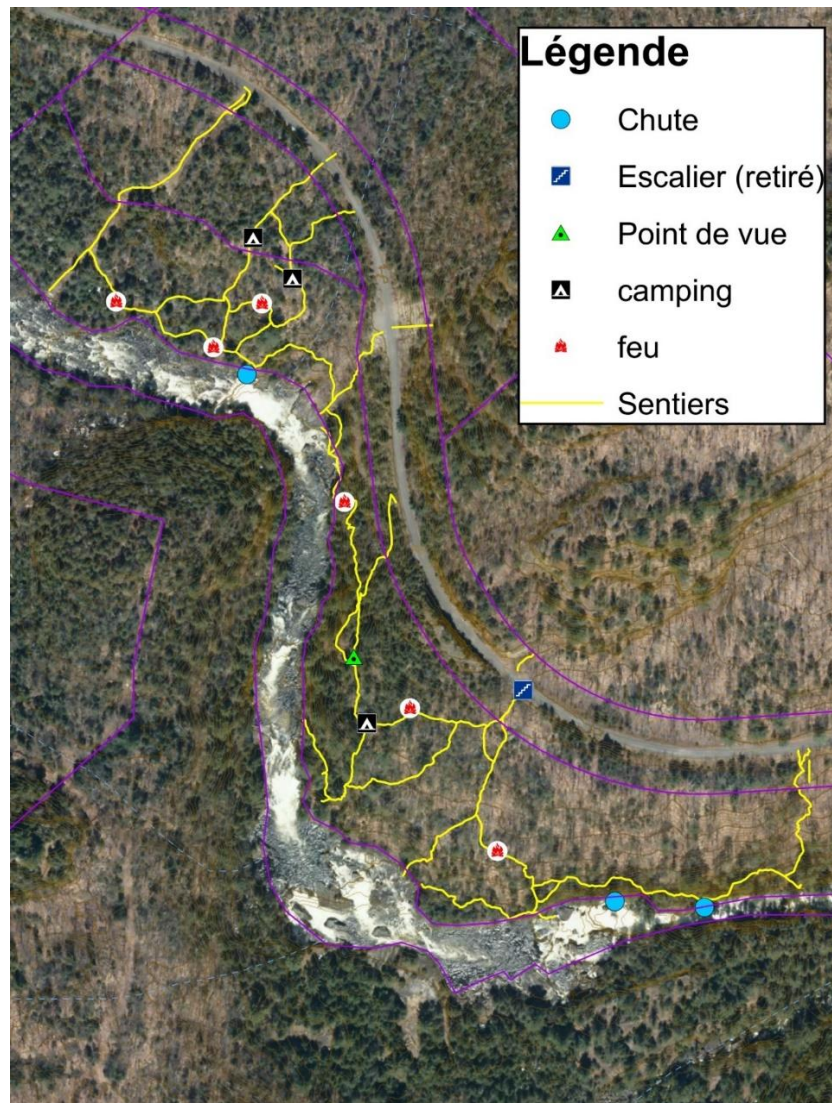
No sooner had Brière arrived in office that the agreement was scrapped. In December of 2017, one short month after Brière's election, the municipality would decide to cease referring to the Chutes as a 'park', signalling its intention to renege on its commitment to keeping the site accessible (Dionne, 2017b, point 2.B). In April of 2018, the municipality picked up where it had left off in 2017 and began taking measures to control access to and use of the site. The *MRC* planned to install a "clôture style de perche [...] sur la longueur des chutes" and would attend to the "sécurité dans le stationnement", while the municipality would take care of installing "interdiction de baignade" signage (Brière, 2018a). The municipality's security service would, for its part, be performing "reconnaissance" tours of the Sainte-Marguerite-Station parking lot, enforcing a newly introduced prohibition against nighttime parking and the *SQ* would start patrolling "les rues avoisinantes pour l'interdiction de stationnement" (Ladouceur, 2018; Brière, 2018a). Despite emphasizing that its "interventions d'aménagement [...] ne visent pas à faciliter l'accès aux chutes", the *MRC* nonetheless claimed that they were working towards "la planification d'un accès public officiel à la rivière au cours de l'été 2018" and suggested that the municipality inform "la communauté LGBTQ ce cette intention lors de ses prochains échanges avec les représentants" (Ladouceur, 2018). In other words, when it came time to interfacing with (unnamed) community representatives, the *MRC* promised to renew and preserve queer access to the site, all the while internally committing to a program of restricted access. "Le terrain de la ville de deviendra jamais un site officiel" wrote Brière in July of 2018, inaccurately¹⁷ arguing that "les utilisateurs ne sont pas des résidents" and dubiously suggesting that access to the site could legally be restricted to 'residents' only (Brière, 2018b). For this reason, the *SQ* and the *Service de sécurité incendie* of the municipality would continue to "faire des interventions ponctuelles" on site (Brière, 2018b).

Until 2019, the site's desire lanes and informal entry points remained, by and large, unmapped, reducing the efficacy of these intermittent visits. In order to facilitate enforcement operations, Brière had the *Service de sécurité incendie* draw up a map of all site's desire lanes (Turcotte, 2019). Significantly, this map was drawn up only two short days after Brière began grumbling about a *Journal de Montréal* article whose female author described site as a safe-space where men could meet: "Il faut aller se baigner dans les chutes à Sainte-Adèle. Je suis allée la première fois, il y a trois ans. Chaque fois, c'est magique. On ne fait que s'installer sur une roche et sauter dans l'eau. Entre nous, on appelait cet endroit secret le *gay waterfalls*,

¹⁷ For evidence suggesting that local residents made (queer) use of the site, see: *Intimidation aux chutes Sainte-Marguerite* [Courriel entre un résident habitant à proximité des Chutes Sainte-Marguerite et Robert Milot, Maire, Ville de Sainte-Adèle]. (2017, 17 septembre). Archives de la Ville de Sainte-Adèle, Sainte-Adèle, Québec.

car les hommes homosexuels s’y rencontraient et pouvaient s’y baigner en Speedo et s’embrasser, sans que personne ne les juge” (anonymous author cited in an undated newspaper clipping in Brière, 2019). Brière emailed a clipping of the article to the municipality’s director general, Pierre Dionne, obliquely commenting: “on parle des chutes” (Brière, 2019). While firefighters and police now had at their disposal a cartographic guide which might make it easier to cut off access to the site, the SQ would, one month later, inform the *Table de Sécurité Publique de la MRC des Pays-d’en-Haut* that there was no legal basis for restricting access to the site (Gariépy et Williams, 2019a, Parcs municipaux).

Figure 3.22 Plan répertoriant les sentiers et les points d’accès du site (2019)



Tiré de Service de sécurité incendie. (2019). [Plan rapproché répertoriant les sentiers et les points d’accès du site]. MRC des Pays-d'en-Haut, Sainte-Adèle, Québec.

Presumably aware of the backlash that they might attract if they were to continue raiding the site and cognizant of the fact that all of the 2017 nudity charges had been withdrawn following the political interventions of the *CCLGBTQ+*, in June of 2019, the Lieutenant Jonathan Voyer, Responsable du poste *SQ-MRC-des-Pays-d'en-Haut*, informed the *Comité de Sécurité Publique de la MRC des Pays-d'en-Haut* that “la Sûreté du Québec n’a pas d’assise légale afin [d’]interdire l’accès” to the site (Gariepy et Williams, 2019a, *Parcs municipaux*). Voyer nonetheless suggested the creation of a committee whose sole purpose would be to “faire de la sensibilisation auprès de la communauté gay” (Gariepy et Williams, 2019b, *Rapport d’intervention – Parc Linéaire le P’tit train du Nord*). This committee allegedly collaborated “avec les groupes LGBT durant l’automne 2019 et hiver 2020, afin de cibler une stratégie partenariale” (Demers, 2019, *Résolution de problèmes*). Unaware of the existence of any such collaboration and suspicious of the *SQ*’s failure to name any one of the “groupes LGBT” with which it had allegedly developed a “stratégie partenariale”, Christian Tanguay, the director general of the *CCLGBTQ+* wrote to Stéphanie Demers, the Responsable intérimaire du Poste *MRC des Pays-d'en-Haut*, requesting that additional details about the alleged partnership and agreements be shared (Tanguay, 2022). Despite having received the written request for information, the *SQ* never acknowledged having received, let alone replied to, the request. Responding to an access to information request I filed in July of 2021, the *SQ* denied having any documents “relativement à une collaboration entre la Sûreté du Québec et des groupes LGBT ni de stratégie partenariale élaborée avec lesdits groupes”. A year and a half after I filed the request, and several months after engaging in informal mediation with *SQ* lawyers, the *SQ* provided me with a signed affidavit confirming that the described strategic partnership had been the product of “[des] rencontres ponctuelles et informelles entre l’unité de police et la Municipalité de Sainte-Adèle” (Grigahcine, 2023). The meetings did not, as the annual report indicated, involve LGBT community partners. The affidavit confirms that the narrative according to which police and LGBT community partners had established a strategic partnership was pure police fabrication. In simulating the consent of those who were once again about to become the targets of police harassment, the fabrication might have shielded police against further claims of ‘discriminatory’ policing—policing which, incidentally, ‘discriminatory’ or not, the *SQ* had already acknowledged to have no legal basis. Absent any legitimate grounds for intervention, police would have to make it seem as though their forthcoming interventions were grounded in the will of their targets’ ‘representatives’. Only then might their extrajudicial use of force be deemed excusable, and their critics be preemptively silenced. Trickery, it seems, was necessary in order to make the envisaged use of force palatable to the public, and in particular, to members of the queer community (See Kropotkin, 2020 [1886], p. 98 for a discussion of state legitimacy-building techniques).

No doubt troubled by the SQ's claim that attempts to limit access to the site had no legal basis, the municipality set about fabricating one by introducing Article 58 into *its Règlement concernant la circulation, le stationnement, la paix et le bon ordre*, with the director general of the municipality, Simon Filiatreault later informing the SQ that the article was created “spécifiquement pour les chutes” (St-Onge, 2020). Article 58 prohibits, *inter alia*, nudity on municipal properties, be they public or private, and reads: “Il est interdit, dans un endroit public ou sur le domaine privé d’une municipalité, d’être nu, d’uriner, de cracher ou de déféquer, sauf dans les cabines de toilettes publiques et les appareils sanitaires prévus à cet effet” (Règlement SQ-2019-01 concernant la circulation, le stationnement, la paix et le bon ordre, 2019, Article 18: Indécence). Article 58 was a response to a set of sexuality-specific ‘problems’ affecting this site in particular. This observation lends credence to Joy James’ (2005) claim according to which “[t]he state does not create legal categories in abstraction”, but rather in response to concrete historical situations (p. xxiv).

The arrival of the global COVID-19 pandemic in the early months of 2020 would provide both public bodies with plausible grounds for intervention, and indeed, both were quick to jump on the rhetorical opportunity the pandemic was beginning to offer. As early as May of 2020, the MRC started claiming that “la situation liée au COVID” had made “plusieurs interventions policières dans le secteur des chutes Glen-Wexford” necessary, including first and foremost, the temporary closure and subsequent partial re-opening of the Sainte-Marguerite-Station parking lot (Ladouceur, 2020a). “Avec l’achalandage observé au cours des derniers jours, nous sommes dans l’incapacité de faire respecter les mesures de distanciation physique exigées par l’État”, wrote Chantal Ladouceur, Coordonnatrice au développement récréatif of the MRC (Ladouceur, 2020b).

Figure 3.23 Affiche dissuasive installée à l'entrée du stationnement Sainte-Marguerite-Station (2020)



Tiré de *Affiche stationnement fermé*. (2020). MRC des Pays-d'en-Haut, Sainte-Adèle, Québec.

While it was true that “situation liée à la pandémie de Covid-19” had significantly increased the patronage of parks throughout the province, with many parks experiencing above average patronage (Ladouceur, 2020a; Nadeau, 2021), the *MRC*’s attempt to cast the newly installed security checkpoint as a public health measure could not have been more misleading. An internal report drafted after the temporarily closing of the parking lot indicates that the *MRC* viewed the security checkpoint exclusively as a way of managing citizen complaints relating to the site (Stationnement Pierre-Péladeau: résumé des faits, 2020). Unlike its public narrative, the *MRC*’s internal reasoning did not raise, let alone focus on, the spectre of contagion. This is not all that surprising because the idea of controlling access to the Sainte-Marguerite-Station parking lot via a security checkpoint antedated the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, the idea had surfaced not within the context of a public health crisis, but rather, in the mid to late 70s as a response to concerns about the site’s ecological health, and then, recently, as a direct response to Brière’s 2017 ‘pornography’ complaint. Providing the *MRC* and the municipality with the justificatory cover required in order to move forward with its longstanding heterosexist project, the COVID-19 pandemic was, in some sense, welcome news to both of these public bodies.

The discretionary fashion in which access to the parking lot would henceforth be controlled lends further credence to this claim. On June 10th, a local resident, panic-stricken by the idea that the parking lot was about to partially re-open on June 12th, wrote to Brière suggesting that the municipality take additional steps to rid the site of undesireables: “Quant à moi, une fois l’accès aux chutes contrôlé et règlementé, les personnes indésirables cesseront en grande partie de circuler sur la piste” (*Fwd: Parc Linéaire/Sainte-Adèle/Glen-Wexford*, 2020). Shortly after its temporary closure, the Sainte-Marguerite-Station parking lot partially reopened on June 12th, 2020. From this date onward and up until the end of fall 2020, access to the parking lot would be controlled by security guards working for the private security firm *Sécurité XGuard Inc.*. Security guards were instructed to stop each vehicle and question passengers about the purpose of their visit (*Sécurité XGuard Inc.*, 2020a). Vehicles whose passenger’s confessed their desire to make their way to the site, internally categorized as “utilisateurs des Chutes”, were to be turned away. Vehicles whose passengers intended to make use of the Parc Linéaire exclusively, internally categorized as “utilisateurs du Petit train du Nord”, were to be admitted (*Sécurité XGuard Inc.*, 2020a).

Differentiating between “utilisateurs du Parc Linéaire”, that is, desirable park users, and “utilisateurs des Chutes”, that is ‘undesirables’, turned out to be more difficult than expected. Indeed, the *MRC* quickly realized that site-goers would not wilfully ‘out’ themselves during questioning. If the *MRC*’s checkpoint

detection procedures were to be successful, security guards would require additional police powers. Fearful that ‘undesirables’ might be slipping through the cracks of their freshly-implemented security measures, John Nenes—the employee responsible for bridging communications between the *MRC* and security guards on site—granted discretionary powers to security guards on site, issuing the following instruction: “nous avons observé jeudi les gens qui arrivent et mentionnent qu’ils s’en viennent marcher sur la piste. Ceci est un refus catégorique à moins [...] leurs but est de prendre une marche de santé. Ceci est à votre discrétion” (Nenes, 2020).

Around the time when this email was drafted, I had the privilege of being subject to such a discretionary security check. When I arrived at the checkpoint in the presence of two other queers, one of whom was trans, we were turned within seconds of pulling up. After being given the one over, and without the slightest interaction, we were turned away by a security guard who informed us that “les chutes sont fermés, les gars”. This same security guard then then insisted we justify our presence, informed us that “marcher c’est illégale”, pointed her phone towards us (presumably to photograph us and our licence plate), informed us that we were being watched by security cameras, and threatened to call the police on us.

Figure 3.24 Affiche dissuasive indiquant la présence de caméras de surveillance dans le stationnement (2023)



In an internal report sent to the *MRC* by *Sécurité XGuard Inc.* not long after we were denied entry to the parking lot, a security guard positioned at the checkpoint bragged about using her ‘sixth sense’ to filter out undesirable users. Describing her work with incredible candour, the agent wrote: “c'est beaucoup du repérage du profilage (sic), mais j'ai un 6e sens” (Pilon, 2020). Further documentary and testimonial evidence suggests that access to the parking lot was contingent on one or more of the following: physical appearance, group composition, presumed intentions, individual and collective purpose, and the visible presence of ‘queer’ accessories including, but not limited to, backpacks (Breger, 2021; O.G., 2021; Reyes, 2021 ; Pilon, 2020 ; Compte-rendu de la fds du 20-21 juin au km 33, 2020). Two years later, after I filed for judicial review of the resolution mandating the implementation of the checkpoint, Axel Fournier, the *MRC*'s defence lawyer, would openly admit that the *MRC* viewed the checkpoint as a means of tackling what he coarsely and disparagingly described as increasingly ‘sexualized’ behaviour on site, single-handedly blowing his client's COVID-19 cover story (Mémoire de la défenderesse, 2021). While it may not have been desirable for the *MRC* to publicly disclose the erotophobic impetus behind the checkpoint, within the relatively private arena of the courtroom, such arguments once again became politically viable. The political viability of such arguments within the courtroom reflects the conservative nature of these sites of social and political adjudication.

On Friday June 19th and Saturday June 20th, 2020, a few weeks after the checkpoint was implemented, a mass eviction, undertaken conjointly by the *SQ*, *Sécurité XGuard Inc.*, and the *Service de sécurité incendie* took place at Brière's request (St-Onge, 2020). While the *SQ* had previously and repeatedly expressed doubts regarding to the legality of such an intervention, with the passage of Article 58, the *SQ* was once again ready and willing to carry out an organized strike on the site. The mere passage of this article had transformed an illegitimate use of police force into a legitimate one, transforming ‘vice’ into ‘virtue’ by bringing within the realm of possibility that which, not long before, had justifiably been ruled out (Muntaqim, 2005 [1996], p. 31; Kropotkin, 2020 [1886]). A few days after the mass eviction took place, on June 22nd, the municipality released a communiqué. Written by none other than Anouk Deveault, the municipal communications expert who drafted the 2017 report requesting police raid the site, the communiqué chaotically listed all of the reasons behind its decision to evict those on site. These reasons included the allegedly private character of the land, the possibility of forest fires, of deaths by drowning, and the spread of COVID-19 (Deveault, 2020). Significantly, the *SQ*'s operational plan for the mass eviction, obtained by filing an access to information request, contains no references to forest fires, drowning, or COVID-19, much less to security concerns (St-Onge, 2020). In fact, it tells quite another story, making clear

that the municipality had urged police to make use of Article 58, the municipality's newly introduced anti-nudity by-law (St-Onge, 2020).

Two days following the 2020 mass-eviction-cum-nudity-raids, Brière received a letter of thanks from a local resident praising her for having cracked down on "les gays". "Il était grandement temps de fermer cet endroit MERCI [...]", wrote the letter's author, bemoaning the fact that "nous avons ici la communauté LGBT qui se pense chez eux". Annexed to the letter were photos "prise le week-end de la fête du travail en 2017 dans le boisée adjacent aux chutes Glen Wexford" (Facebook message, a copy of which can be found in Brière, 2020a). The photos depict safer-sex material distributed by *Le Dispensaire*, an HIV and sexual health community organization based in Sainte-Jérôme. The author of the complaint went on to denounce the « organisme lgbt (sic) » that, they misleadingly claimed, had taken to organizing orgies « les beaux week end (sic) chaud », alleging that local residents no longer made use of the trails located in the vicinity of the site because they feared encountering "des gays en pleine action sans gêne d'être vu" (Brière, 2020a). The letter makes clear that local residents understood the mass eviction to be an expression of heterosexual control over the site. The inclusion of photos taken around the time of the SQ's 2017 nudity raids 2017 also suggests that the SQ's 2020 mass-eviction-cum-nudity raid were continuous with previous anti-queer regulatory interventions.

Anticipating queer backlash in the wake of its mass-eviction-cum-nudity-raid, the SQ decided to put off further raids. According to Brière: "la SQ de son côté craint une sortie médiatique du groupe LGBT, donc le prochain "blitz" (sic) ne sera pas pour le week-end" (Brière, 2020b). Brière would go on to accuse those who qualified as homophobic her punitive measures of strategically and unjustifiably casting the LGBT community as victim ("vouloir mettre de l'avant la communauté LGBT comme victime") and of being insufficiently informed ("avant de dire que c'est une attaque contre la communauté LGBT informez-vous un peu") (Brière, 2020c). If Brière had previously seen bad press coverage as, at worst, an unavoidable and nasty annoyance ("Faut s'attendre à un été mouvementé et encore une fois puisqu'on parle de la communauté LGBT faut s'attendre à faire les manchettes"), she was now increasingly worried that the media might adopt a critical posture towards her desired spin, accusing her of engaging in a "chasse aux sorcières" (Brière, 2020d ; Brière 2020b). To mitigate the personal and political fallout of such an eventuality, Brière wrote to *the Comité des Chutes Glen-Wexford*, asking them to find photos that "démontrent clairement la pollution, les feux, l'achalandage, etc...." (Brière, 2020b).

The following year, on May 5th, 2021, the *MRC* passed resolution CM-110-05-21 renewing the implementation of the checkpoint for another 2 years and delegating security duties to the private security firm *Groupe Sûreté Inc.*. The renewal of a security measure previously touted as temporary signalled the *MRC*'s desire to normalize the profiling practices which had structured security interactions throughout the summer and fall of 2020. No doubt lulled into a false sense of security by the lack of coordinated community backlash in 2021, neither the *MRC des Pays-d'en-Haut* nor *Groupe Sûreté Inc.* would formulate protocols guiding admission into the parking lot (*Mémoire du demandeur, 2022*).

It wasn't until I filed for judicial review of resolution CM-110-05-21 in May of 2022 that Brière's fears regarding bad media coverage would materialize. After filing the by now withdrawn request for judicial review, the site once again became newsworthy, forcing the municipality and the *MRC* to answer publicly for their security checkpoint. Yet again, municipal authorities responded by spreading disinformation. Brière continued to spin the checkpoint as a direct response to COVID-19, and in a terrifying turn of events, went as far as to suggest that access to the site had been cut off "puisque les terrains qui [...] bordent [le site] appartiennent à des propriétaires privés" (*Morin-Martel, 2021*).¹⁸ Brière also claimed that access to the falls had been cut off because the site was located on private municipal property, failing to mention, let alone recognize, that the properties in question had been given to the municipality *on condition that they be used for public purposes*. André Genest, the director general of the *MRC* denied that the checkpoint had anything to do with restricting access to the site, stating in no uncertain terms that the *MRC* "ne veut pas restreindre l'accès" (*Morin-Martel, 2021*). This claim is not consistent with the *MRC*'s internal admission that the checkpoint was designed to prevent fall-goers from making use of the parking lot (*Stationnement Pierre-Péladeau: résumé des faits, 2020*).

3.7 Punitive Park Politics

In 1957, elected officials began taking an interest in the site now commonly referred to under the name « Chutes Sainte-Marguerite ». Unregulated patronage of the site, especially by those who arrived by car, had become 'dangerous,' yet the municipality did not go without recognizing that free entry to green public space was in the public interest. From 1975 to 1981, at a time when urbanization and privatization were beginning to threaten the continued existence of accessible public space, the municipality worked

¹⁸ I consider this statement 'terrifying' because one can easily imagine how much public space would be left if the mere presence private property adjacent a site were sufficient to annul the possibility of the space being or ever becoming public in character.

towards developing, expanding, and safeguarding access to the site. Efforts to safeguard access to the site were, however, accompanied by regulatory efforts aimed at ensuring an ecological and 'orderly' use of the site. From 1989 to 1994, the restrictive clause protecting the site's public character would come close to being de-registered following the attempts by two wealthy businessmen to transform parts of the site into a private country club accessible only to the uberwealthy. In spite of their failure, these efforts did succeed in temporarily tempering the municipality's willingness to continue abiding by the conditions imposed by the clause. In 1994, the municipality would once again warm up to the idea of the restrictive clause, following the *Ministère's* conditional offer to sell to the municipality the lot once coveted by Rickli and Beaubien. With the purchase of this additional lot, the municipality revived its plans to expand and develop the site. Had these rather extensive plans been carried out in full, they would have transformed the site into a revenue-generating touristic product capable, it was said, of contributing significantly to the economic health of the region.

Between 2012 and 2022, as elected officials began filing heterosexist complaints and escalating the heterosexist complaints of local residents, characterizations of the site shifted dramatically. The site would no longer be described as "le plus beau panorama du Parc Linéaire entre Saint-Jérôme et Mont-Laurier" or as a "site exceptionnel", but as a site which was "très très dangereux" and "magnifique mais [...] mortel" (Conseil régional des loisirs des Laurentides, p. 23, 1998; Le Groupe SODEM, 1997, p. 1; St-Louis, 2020; Huggins-Daines, 2022). Municipal determination to develop and safeguard access to this once breathtaking and attractive site waned, with the municipality now consciously refusing to refer to the site as a 'park'. Prior efforts to maintain public access to the site gave way to punitive measures including untrammelled municipal calls for police raids and the undemocratic pouring of tens of thousands of dollars of public funds into private policing contracts. In 2017, as punitive policing practices began to take hold, elected officials and municipal communication specialists worked tirelessly to cast their attempts at enforcing heteronormative conduct as completely legitimate, 'non-discriminatory' exercises of police power. To do so, they relied upon commonly held—and seemingly neutral—distinctions about space and its use. In theory, access to the site would henceforth be contingent upon not who you were or who you were thought to be (gay/straight) but on where you were (public/private) and what you were doing or what you were suspected of wanting to do while you were there or suspected of trying to get there (queer/heteronormative use).

In 2020, the arrival of the global COVID-19 provided municipal authorities with a cover-story plausible enough to justify the implementation of border security practices envisioned in pre-pandemic times as a direct response to Brière’s highly embellished, largely falsified, and escalated complaint. Borrowing from the tactical repertoire of military organizations, private security performed “reconnaissance” tours of the Sainte-Marguerite-Station parking lot and police conducted “blitz” operations on site (Ladouceur, 2018; Brière, 2020b). Once designed to be an integrated pit stop along the sinuous Parc Linéaire, “plus spécialement pour ceux qui n’ont pas la chance de posséder une propriété dans les Laurentides”, the park had now become a site of social exclusion accessible only to local heterosexuals and regulated by a dizzying array of covert, anti-queer prohibitions (Le Groupe SODEM, 1997, P. 1 ; Savard 2013; Motion no 824, 1958).

Figure 3.25 Panneau indiquant les usages permis et non permis sur le Parc Linéaire (2023). Certaines indications ont été biffées au correcteur blanc ou modifiées. Ces modifications témoignant de la fréquence avec laquelle les interdictions évoluaient.



CHAPITRE 4

AN ANARCHO-ABOLITIONIST DECONSTRUCTION OF ANALOGUE DISTINCTIONS, ‘LAW,’ ‘SECURITY,’ AND ‘EQUALITY’ AT THE CHUTES SAINTE-MARGUERITE

In the previous chapter, I gestured towards the role that disinformation and cover storying played in depoliticizing anti-queer violence at the Chutes Sainte-Marguerite. I also discussed, in a cursory manner, the state’s shift away from prohibited distinctions regarding sexual identity (gay/straight) towards distinctions regarding space (public/private) and its use (queer/heteronormative). Here, I elaborate upon this argument, arguing that, in addition to depoliticizing conflict, disinformation and cover storying blurred the passage from prohibited to protected distinctions, making it possible for the state to circumvent, and therefore deactivate, the protections offered to sexual minorities by the *Charte des droits et libertés de la personne* (hereafter, *Charter*). I add to this argument by bringing to light the gender and-sexuality specific nature of gender- and sexuality-neutral notions like ‘law’, ‘security’ and ‘equality’, arguing that these three notions played a key role in sanitizing heterosexist state profiling on site, deactivating *Charter* protections, and punishing queer erotics and intimacy.

4.1 Analogue Distinctions

When the municipal councillor Nadine Brière submitted her first complaint to the director general of the *Ville de Sainte-Adèle* (hereafter, the municipality) in 2017, she did so somewhat obliquely. In it, she complained of seeing “des hommes en plein action devant les regards de tous” (Brière, 2017). While she shied away from naming, in an explicit manner, the sexual orientations of the subjects she was denouncing, she nonetheless took the time to specify their genders and detailed the sexual nature of their activities, leaving us with little doubt as to their sexual orientations. The complaint problematized, in an ever so slightly disguised manner, queer erotic attachment between men, implicitly distinguishing between undesirable queer erotic attachment (deserving of police punishment) and desirable heteronormative erotic attachment (deserving of police protection).

The following day, the municipality escalated Brière’s complaint, contacting the *Sûreté du Québec* (hereafter, *SQ*) and asking police to intervene on site (Deveault, 2017a). Rather than relying upon prohibited distinctions regarding sexual identity as Brière had in her complaint, in its complaint to the *SQ*, the municipality would rely upon perfectly legal distinctions regarding space and its use. To transform a complaint which might possibly have drawn the ire of the courts into a legally palatable complaint which

might, if carefully formulated, escape this very ire, the municipality's communications expert drew upon the powers conferred by the *Criminal Code* and the *Loi sur les compétences municipales*. These distinctions included those created by articles 173(1) Indecent Acts and 174(1) Nudity of the *Criminal Code* and article 7 of the *Loi sur les compétences municipales* which grants municipalities the power to govern "the use of its parks" (*Loi sur les compétences municipales*). In its complaint, the municipality denounced the presence of 'nudists' and 'exhibitionists' who engaged in "des gestes déplacés et choquants", distinguishing sharply between users with a penchant for nudism and an interest in exhibitionistic or 'indecent' (that is to say, queer) sexual activities, and users disinterested in or averse to nudism and exhibitionistic sexual activities and inclined to engage in 'decent' (that is to say, heteronormative) forms of sexual activity (Deveault, 2017a). Relying upon the powers conferred upon it by these two legal frameworks, the municipality sought to rid the site of queer characters, all the while shielding itself against legal claims of discrimination.

On September 16th, 2017, a police officer raiding the site was pressed into divulging the grounds of the arrests. She claimed, in no uncertain terms, that the raids were taking place because the mayor "veut plus de monde nu ici" and because "les gais viennent depuis longtemps" (Labbé, 2017). These comments confirmed that municipality was not merely problematizing how space was being used (legal), but also who was using the space (illegal). As this comment made its way into the public sphere via social media, the municipality faced increasing community and media backlash. In response to the successful politicization of the police officer's comments, the municipality urgently sought to deny the heterosexist underpinnings of its raids. "Je ne vise pas du tout les gens de cette communauté, ce qui pose problème c'est la nudité qui est interdite par la loi et certains excès également [...] Des gens ont des relations sexuelles dans les bois. Une femme qui passait par là est tombée sur le tournage d'un film pornographique, on ne peut pas accepter cela", said the mayor of the municipality, Robert Milot when interviewed by the *Journal de Montréal* (Garnier, 2017). Milot would repeat this largely fabricated account of Brière's original anti-cruising complaint on the radiowaves of *Radio-Canada* (Labbé, 2017). In his comments, Milot relies upon disinformation in a bid to mask the role that sexual orientation—an illegal consideration—played in his decision to send police on site, claiming instead that his decision was motivated by legal considerations—the anti-indecency and anti-nudity prohibitions of the *Criminal Code*. In the days following the September raids, the municipality would barricade the Coupe-de-Pierre stairs leading to the site.

Figure 4.1 Photographie montrant la palissade bloquant l'accès aux escaliers menant au site (2017)



Tiré de Laporte, R. (2017, 21 septembre). *Installées aujourd'hui* [Publication]. Facebook.

Upon the barricades, the municipality installed 'no swimming' signage, relying upon the aforementioned powers granted to it by the *Loi sur les compétences municipales* (Laporte, 2017). Henceforth, disinformation would mask the passage from illegal distinction regarding sexual identity (homo/hetero) to legal distinctions regarding use (indecent/decent, nudist/non-nudist, and later, swimmer/non-swimmer). With the tactical substitution masked, it would be hard for anyone to contest the legal validity of the raids.

Table 4.1 Photographies montrant la palissade défoncée et taguée (2018).



Tiré de Ladouceur, C. (2018). *TR: Fin de semaine du 1 juillet 2018 Sainte-Adèle* [Photographies]. Ville de Sainte-Adèle, Sainte-Adèle, Québec.

Yet this communication campaign would never fully succeed in burying the comments made by the police officer raiding the site in September of 2017. The criminal nudity and indecency charges were eventually dropped in response to community organizing, bad press coverage, and to the direct political interventions of the *CCLGBTQ+*. By foregrounding the illegal distinction upon which the raids were based and cutting

through the municipality's maze of disinformation, the community tactically re-activated the *Charter's* protections, undermining the prosecutor's case, embarrassing her politically, and likely influencing her decision her to withdraw the charges. The battle had been won, but the victory would be short-lived.

Brière was elected mayor of the municipality in the fall of 2017. Over the coming years, she would use her newfound political influence to pursue a heterosexist agenda. In June of 2020, Brière orchestrated a two day police operation aimed at enforcing Article 58 of the municipality's *Règlement concernant la circulation, le stationnement, la paix et le bon ordre*—a 2019 article passed while she was in power and which prohibits, *inter alia*, nudity and 'indecent' behaviour on site (Règlement SQ-2019-01 concernant la circulation, le stationnement, la paix et le bon ordre, 2019, Article 18: Indécence). Conducted with the assistance of the municipality's *Service de sécurité incendie* and *Sécurité XGuard Inc.* personnel, the operation was led by Brière and the SQ (St-Onge, 2020).

Brière would have been cognizant of the risk she was taking in resorting to Article 58 given the pushback that her municipality faced when it first attempted to secure criminal indecency charges in 2017. The community had successfully problematized the legal distinction between 'decent' and 'indecent' conduct, making the distinction politically volatile. It is likely for this reason that, by 2020, both Brière and the municipality avoided mentioning 'indecency' publicly. Yet the municipality did much more than avoid mentioning indecency; it sought also to mask its recourse to municipal indecency law by publicly emphasizing its secondary motivations for intervening punitively on site.

In a communiqué released to the press shortly after the anti-indecency raids, the municipality problematized various uses of the site, including uses not in line with emergency public health directives and uses involving the consumption of illicit substances. The municipality also used the powers granted to it by the *Loi sur les compétences municipales*, resorting to its *Règlement concernant la prévention des incendies* to problematize use of the site as a camping ground and the starting of open-air fires (Deveault, 2020). Uses of the site respectful of emerging public health directives and involving the consumption of illicit substances might, under normal circumstances be tolerable, but promiscuous uses offensive to emergency public health directives, festive uses involving the consumption of illicit substances, or protracted uses of the site would not be tolerated. By grounding the legitimacy of the raids in distinctions far-removed from the politicized and sexualized distinction between 'decent' and 'indecent' behaviour, the municipality successfully stemmed organized community backlash, at least for a short time. The shift

from legal, yet politicized to legal but less politicized distinctions enabled the municipality to temporarily disable the protections offered to sexual minorities by the *Charter*. Attempting to cement the legitimacy of its raids and distance itself further from the politically volatile distinction between ‘decent’ and ‘indecent’ use, the municipality also distinguished between public and private space, falsely claiming that the site is located on private land, using this claim as justification for evicting everyone present in or around the site (including those located the Parc Linéaire, an unambiguously public space), and obviating the need for further justification.

Despite the municipality’s communication strategy, those present on site on the day of the raids refused to accept as true the depoliticized narrative fed to them by firefighters working for the *Service de sécurité incendie* of the municipality, some of whom claimed to be there enforcing COVID-19 social distancing directives. Amongst those who resisted the raid were three queer men in their forties who openly described the firefighters attempts to evict them as a “coup de la mairesse envers les homosexuels” and who confidently invited the firefighters to go fetch the police, knowing full well that their lawyers would be more than happy to contest the tickets on their behalf. Police officers patrolling the Parc Linéaire decided to not go after these three men. Police justified their decision not to intervene by claiming that they were not “habillés pour faire de la marche en forêt, ni de sauter d’une roche à l’autre” (Turcotte, 2020). While the natural features of the site had long acted as an impediment to policing on site, in all likelihood, it was the mens’ political framing of the repression and the successful 2017 politicization of police presence on site that discouraged police from intervening. In verbalizing their opposition to Brière’s repressive operation, these three men put the prohibited hetero/homo distinction back on the table, shedding light on and refusing the state’s tactical shift towards protected distinctions.

The nudity raids constituted an impressive show of force. Even so, their chilling effect would be temporary at best. Within little time, those responsible for queering the site would be back. Keeping them away permanently would require permanent security measures (Stationnement Pierre-Péladeau: résumé des faits, 2020). For this reason, in the weeks preceding the mass-eviction-cum-nudity raids, the *MRC* began ‘securing’ the entrance to the Sainte-Marguerite-Station parking lot—permanently placing a security guard at the parking lot’s entrance (Potvin, 2020). While the *MRC* and the municipality had ceased recognizing the site’s status as a park in 2017, it could not ignore the Parc Linéaire’s official park status. Over the coming months, the *MRC* struggled to establish an effective border security policy—one which would cut off access to the site all the while preserving access to the Parc Linéaire.

Together, the *MRC* and the municipality elaborated and experimented with various user categories, establishing a ever-changing policy ultimately reliant upon profiling. When the checkpoint began its operations in the June of 2020, users who had the habit of accessing the Parc Linéaire were to be let through, as were the residents of nearby towns and cyclists (*MRC des Pays-d'en-Haut, 2020; Sécurité XGuard Inc., 2020b; St-Louis, 2020*). First-time or occasional users were to be turned away, as were pedestrians. While emerging emergency pandemic measures temporarily empowered the *MRC* to refuse 'outside' users (*Pilon-Larose, 2020*), refusing occasional users and pedestrians meant playing a riskier legal game. Indeed, it is unlikely that the decision to refuse occasional users would find any justification in emerging emergency pandemic measures or withstand judicial review due to the arbitrary nature of the prohibition. The same might be said about the decision to refuse pedestrians given the Park Linéaire's recognized status as a "piste multifonctionnelle" where pedestrians are welcome (*Parc Linéaire Le P'tit train du Nord, 2023*). Yet allowing pedestrians through would seriously undermine the checkpoint's utility since many of those who queer the site set off from the parking lot by foot, rather than by bike. If the checkpoint was to be efficient, security guards would have to distinguish between two categories of pedestrians—those wishing to make exclusive use of the Parc Linéaire, internally described as those wishing to take "une marche de santé", and those wishing to make accessory use of the Parc Linéaire, that is, purely as a way of gaining access to the site (*Nenes, 2020*). The novel distinction would ensure that the *MRC* wasn't denying desirable public access to the Parc Linéaire, but here again the *MRC* ran the risk of running into legal and political trouble. The *MRC* quickly realized the legal untenability of this distinction (*Ladouceur, 2020c*). It could not deny pedestrians access to the Parc Linéaire on the mere basis of their making a solely accessory use of the park. Despite formally scrapping the distinction between users wishing to make exclusive use of the Parc Linéaire (those wishing to take health walks) and users intending to make accessory use of the Parc Linéaire (those wishing to take 'unhealthy,' queer walks), in practice, security guards continued to enforce this distinction, using the discretionary powers conferred upon them by the *MRC* to filter out those wishing to make accessory use of the Parc Linéaire (*Breger, 2021; Lénart, 2021; O.G., 2021 and Reyes, 2021*).

To make matters worst, the *MRC* established two further categories of use. It distinguished between les "utilisateurs du P'tit train du Nord" and les "utilisateurs de chutes" (*Sécurité XGuard Inc., 2020a*). While this distinction corresponds, roughly speaking, to the aforementioned distinction between those who wish to make exclusive or accessory use of the Parc Linéaire, it was, in fact, a much more general distinction—a vague and consequently malleable, catch-all distinction whose content was shaped by unpublicized

criteria which evolved in response to queer circumvention attempts. Unsurprisingly, the distinction established a breeding ground for discretionary policing practices. Testimonial evidence, including my own, suggests that when deciding whether users belonged to the first (admissible) or the second (inadmissible) category of users, security guards took into account the physical appearance of users, group composition, and the absence or presence of queer accessories such as beach towels, coolers, and backpacks (Breger, 2021; Lénart, 2021; O.G., 2021; Reyes, 2021; Compte-rendu de la fds du 20-21 juin au km 33, 2020 and Demers, 2019, Résolution de problèmes).

4.2 'Law'

On the July 15th, 2021, following my application for judicial review, *La Presse* published an article entitled *Chutes Sainte-Marguerite L'accès au « havre de paix » LGBTQ+ compromis*. The article challenged the municipality's carefully concocted COVID-19 and security spins, spotlighting the voices of those subject to the border security practices implemented at the entrance to the Sainte-Marguerite-Station parking lot (Morin-Martel, 2021). Heterosexual backlash to the article was immediate. Three days following the publication of the article, local residents with ties to Brière wrote a private polemic against the *CCLGBTQ+*, whose director general, Christian Tanguay, had been cited in the article. Among these resident's wrangled attempts at reasoning, was the following obtuse, yet telling phrase: "Le fait de faire partie de la communauté LGBTQ+ ne donne pas de super privilèges au-dessus de la loi et de la sécurité" (*Rectifications concernant l'article de Florence Morin-Martel : L'accès au « havre de paix » LGBTQ+ compromis*, 2021). To grasp the violence of this claim, I want to turn my attention to an email written by members of the *Comité des Chutes Glen-Wexford* (hereafter, *Comité des chutes*) and sent to Brière on July 14th, 2020, approximately two years prior.

In their email to Brière, members of the *Comité des Chutes* speak of Brière's "intention d'entreprendre des démarches afin que la Ville se donne le droit d'agir et d'intervenir au site des Chutes par la modification réglementaire du statut de celui-ci afin de pouvoir imposer des amendes aux contrevenants" (Fwd: chutes, 2020). Notice that here, those who make use of the site are categorized as 'offenders' ("contravenants") *prior* to there being any legal grounds for intervention and that when the right to intervene punitively on site is eventually enshrined in law, it remains a right that the municipality *awards itself* ("se donne"). This observation lends weight to Davis's (1998b) claim that 'crime' antecedes 'law'. In this passage, the social category 'offender' poses as an ahistoric and apolitical legal category, thereby acquiring an otherwise unwarranted veneer of incontestability. Since 'law' confers the right to punish, and since, furthermore,

the right to punish is a right that a political class grants itself on the basis of its historically-specific normative commitments, being 'above the law' (being 'super-privileged') simply means according oneself the right to challenge the normative (moral and political) commitments of a class that unilaterally arrogates to itself the right to punish whatever conduct it deems punishable and which traffics its commitments by means of something it has chosen to call 'law'. Within this context, to be 'super-privileged' is to question, and make a mockery of authority — *heterosexual authority*.

4.3 'Security'

When the *Journal Accès* published an article in 2014 reporting on the municipality's 2013 decision to demolish the bridge once referred to as the Pont du Parc des Chutes, it claimed, in no uncertain terms that the bridge had been demolished "pour des raisons de sécurité" (Laberge, 2014). The bridge had, in fact, been demolished because local residents were of the opinion that the bridge was facilitating the queering of the site by sexual minorities (Lots 8 et 9..., 2012). In 2020, the *Journal Accès* published another article about the site, this time reporting on Brière's mass-eviction-cum-nudity-raid and claiming that police and firefighters were conducting a conjoint operation "pour sécuriser les Chutes Sainte-Marguerite" (Rédaction, 2020). Accompanying the article is an image of the Sainte-Marguerite-Station parking lot at the centre of which appear three masculine figures walking side-by-side and making their way to the entrance of the Parc Linéaire. The image brings the gender- and sexuality-specific dynamics of the article's 'security' claim to the fore, visually designating the intended targets of the police's 'securitization' efforts.

Figure 4.2 Photographie du stationnement Sainte-Marguerite Station (2020)



Rédaction. (2020, 22 juin). La Ville demande l'aide de la Sûreté du Québec pour sécuriser les Chutes Sainte-Marguerite. Journal Accès. <https://www.journalaccès.ca/actualite/la-ville-demande-laide-de-la-surete-du-quebec-pour-securiser-les-chutes-sainte-marguerite/>

A few days prior to the publication of this article, the Corporation du P'tit Train du Nord, the non-profit organization tasked with the planning and development of the Parc Linéaire, released a communiqué instructing park users to circulate “à la droite de la piste dans le même sens que les cyclistes” as well as “à la file”. An image published alongside the communiqué shows a heterosexual family¹⁹—mother, father, and child—walking along the Parc Linéaire, side-by-side, in clear violation of the new regulation (Le P'tit train du Nord, 2021).

¹⁹ The image of the family in the background is blurred. While I am of the opinion that the gender presentation of the two adult individuals in the photo is feminine (left) and masculine (right), my reader need not agree with my reading of this image in order to agree with my decision to place these three individuals into a heterosexual matrix. The presence of a child, on its own, justifies inserting these three individuals into a heterosexual matrix. See Edelman, L. (2004). *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Duke University Press. <https://www.dukeupress.edu/No-Future/>

Figure 4.3 Photographie du Parc Linéaire accompagnant le communiqué émis par la Corporation du P'tit Train du Nord (2021)



If, as I suggest, the images accompanying the communiqué are designed as depictions of paragon conduct, then this image stands as a reminder of heterosexuality's privileged political status. Indeed, the ease with which this heterosexual unit flouts the newly publicized regulation suggests that the regulation is in fact, a front through which queerness is problematized, regulated, and contained. Touted as an essential 'security' measure designed to prevent collisions between cyclists and pedestrians, the regulation is nothing more than a mechanism through which queer assemblages are disassembled (See Neocleous, 2008 for a critique of security).

Countering the claim of discrimination that I made in my application for judicial review, the *MRC's* lawyer maintained that the security checkpoint was designed to ensure "la sécurité du stationnement Sainte-Marguerite-Station et de l'accès au Parc linéaire le P'tit Train du Nord" (Exposé sommaire des moyens de défense orales de la défenderesse consignés par écrit, 2022). The questions posed by Natale Screnci—*Groupe Sûreté Inc.'s* lawyer—to the queer affiants during pre-trial examinations provide additional insight into the content of the notion of 'security'. Indeed, Screnci systematically asked affiants whether they had

witnessed queer erotic behaviour on site, making clear that ‘security’ is a notion which ‘problematizes without naming’, slyly gesturing towards the perversion of queer erotics without ever spelling out this anti-queer normative commitment. Such sly gesturing adds weight to Grönfors and Stalström’s 1987 claim that “control of sexuality and sexual behaviour [...] is more often hidden behind other issues, given other names, etc., until it is difficult sometimes even to discover that what is being controlled is sexual behaviour” (p. 54).

4.4 ‘Equality’

As I previously recounted, on May 19th, 2021, I sent a cease-and-desist letter to the municipality, demanding that it cease controlling access to the Sainte-Marguerite-Station parking lot. In its response to my letter on May 21st, the municipality denied all wrongdoing:

“La Ville de Sainte-Adèle n’exerce aucune discrimination quant à l’interdiction d’accès au terrain pour accéder aux chutes Glen-Wexford (chutes Sainte-Marguerite). L’accès est interdit l’accès à toute personne, , (sic) sans distinction, exclusion ou préférence fondée sur la race, la couleur, le sexe, l’identité ou l’expression de genre, la grossesse, l’orientation sexuelle, l’état civil, l’âge, la religion, les convictions politiques, la langue, l’origine ethnique ou nationale, la condition sociale, le handicap ou l’utilisation d’un moyen pour pallier ce handicap. Par conséquent, la Ville va poursuivre l’interdiction d’accès au site à toute les personnes qui se présenteront au site” (Senécal, 2021).

The response contains and implicit argument: the punitive measure is applied in an equal manner, ergo, the punishment is non-discriminatory, and perfectly legal. The argument sidesteps questions of unequal outcome, focusing instead on the application of punitive practices. This shift, from substantive to ‘punitive’ equality, corresponds to a dramatic reconceptualization of ‘equality,’ a narrowing of the field of inquiry. While those concerned with achieving substantive equality would have to take into consideration the social, political, and (sub)cultural impact of cutting off access to the site, those committed to a purely punitive conception of equality need only ensure that punishment is being applied to everyone, equally. This, of course, is misleading. In a world where living queerly means living life precariously, the ability to experiment with queerness openly is both rare and precious. To cut off access to, and thus dismantle, a space that makes queer life bearable is to treat queer life with callous disregard. It is to keep queers in a state of perpetual precarity; to reaffirm the uneven ‘distribution of life chances’ of which Spade (2015) speaks. As it turns out, punishing everyone ‘equally,’ is, in fact, a way of *harming some more than others* (See Conrad, 2014 for a complimentary discussion of the deleterious political consequences of ‘equality’). By shifting attention away from outcomes and focusing exclusively on whether punitive practices are

distributed in a 'non-discriminatory' manner, 'punitive equality' makes a mockery of queer demands for substantive equality and puts forward an absurd, violent, and untenable moral claim, namely that punitive practices are legitimate as long as they are distributed in a 'non-discriminatory' fashion. Punitive equality is both a theory of punishment and a heterosexist political technology. It tells us when punishment is legitimate and acts against the very subjects which it claims not to be discriminating against by deliberately or inadvertently producing situations in which some are disadvantaged more than others. 'Punitive equality' is equality on carefully defined, heterosexual terms. Here, 'equality' is the punishment.

4.5 Heterosexist Political Mutations

Between the years of 2020 and 2022, the state deployed a series of technologies geared towards inconspicuously de-queering the site. The 2017 raids and the discourse surrounding them had been too gender and sexuality specific. Yet the shift away from prohibited distinctions regarding sexual identity (gay/straight) towards distinctions regarding space (public/private) and its use (queer/heteronormative) would not, on its own, allow the state to circumvent the protections offered to sexual minorities by the *Charter*. If its efforts at circumvention and deactivation were to be successful, it would have to blur the passage from prohibited to protected distinctions. Done properly, this 'blurring' would make it impossible for either the public or the courts to identify the substitution. The 'blurring' of this substitution was accomplished with the help of analogue distinctions, disinformation, cover storying, and notions of 'law', 'security' and 'equality'. Under the combined cover of these practices and notions, the gender- and sexuality-specific nature of the state's coercive interventions would be harder to identify, both by the public and by judges tasked with enforcing provincial *Charter* protections.

CONCLUSION

Despite formal legal equality and assurances that queer sexual relations have long been ‘decriminalized,’ in the province of Québec, the state continues to punish and criminalize queer erotics and intimacy. Using provincial access to information law, this thesis shed light on the political practices and notions that make possible this *prima facie* contradictory state of affairs. To better understand how such criminalization continues unabated, I turned my attention to the Chutes Sainte-Marguerite, a popular queer cruising ground and nudist hangout located in Sainte-Adèle, Québec. Using the data contained within a multiplicity of access to information disclosures, I argued that analogue distinctions, disinformation, and cover stories, played a significant role in fostering the seamless co-existence of these two phenomena. In reconstructing the history of this by now infamous site, I argued that this coexistence was made possible via a tactical shift away from legally prohibited grounds of discrimination—those regarding sexual identity (homo/hetero)—and increasing reliance on legally protected grounds of discrimination—those regarding space and its use (queer/heteronormative use). Moreover, I argued that disinformation and cover storying campaigns played an indispensable role in facilitating this shift, masking the substitution, and in so doing, deactivating (temporarily and as far as possible) the aforementioned Charter protections. In the final chapter of this thesis, I paid closer attention to the role of analogue distinctions, tracing gender- and sexuality-neutral distinctions back to their gender and sexuality-specific forebears. I argued, furthermore, that the deactivation of *Charter* protections guaranteeing sexual minorities access to public space was made possible via the obfuscatory operations of notions like ‘law’ and ‘security’, as well as by the deployment of a dramatically watered-down notion of ‘equality’, one which I have come to call ‘punitive equality’. I argued that these notions contributed to deactivating *Charter* protections by misleadingly centring tangential political considerations and by making it possible for the state to not name that which was being problematized—queer erotics and intimacy.

The political history of the site that I reconstructed in the second chapter of this thesis is necessarily incomplete. The access to information disclosures upon which this reconstruction is based provide, at best, partial insight into the site’s muddled past. Oral histories of the site from the late 1950s to the present day are sorely needed. Future research should pay special attention to the experiences of queer women and trans folks who frequent nudist hangouts and cruising grounds. Special attention also needs to be paid to the impact of racial categories on heterosexist policing. Future case histories and comparative studies of cruising grounds are also needed. If the disclosures reproduced in the annexes of this thesis are any

indication, I suspect that there will be important similarities between the regulatory police interventions at the Chutes Sainte-Marguerite and those taking place elsewhere. By the time this thesis is published, heterosexist state interventions on site, and elsewhere, will have evolved. Future research into heterosexist policing should concentrate on emerging techniques of heterosexist repression and control. Urban planners must avoid problematizing cruising by offering 'solutions' aimed at fostering the 'coexistence' of queer and non-queer 'users'. Instead, they should problematize the collective inability of (white, monied) heterosexuals to make space for differential uses of public or liminal space. Research on the topic of cruising should avoid producing knowledge susceptible of contributing to the perfection of heterosexist policing and planning tactics. Instead, it should produce knowledge capable of undermining heterosexist state projects.

In the 1930s, antisemitic posters warning Jewish people to leave town were plastered around Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts, a municipality located in the Laurentians, north of Sainte-Adèle: "AVIS Les Juifs ne sont pas désirés ici, Ste-Agathe est *un village canadien français et nous le gardons ainsi* / NOTICE Jews are not wanted here in Ste Agathe, so scram while the going is good" (emphasis mine). A newspaper article problematizing the presence of Jewish presence in town and published in 1939 suggests that Jewish people imagine themselves to be "maîtres" blocking "les trottoirs et gên(ant) la circulation" (*L'antisémitisme dans les Laurentides, 1939*). In addition to implicitly characterizing Jewish people as a powerful majority ('*maîtres*'), the author of this article described Jewish people as obstacles to free circulation of pedestrians. Such antisemitic discourse bears a striking resemblance to a complaint formulated over half a century later about the presence of queer users along the Parc Linéaire. In this complaint, fall-goers are described as walking "en roi et maître à 4-5 de large sur la piste cyclable" (*Plainte citoyenne reçu par la Corporation du P'tit train du Nord par l'entremise de sa page Facebook, n.d.*). In the Laurentians, it would therefore appear as though the presence of minorities, be they religious or sexual, are a) viewed by the (White) majority as being oppressive majorities, and b) affectively experienced as intolerable disruptions which upset quotidian, White settler rhythms and spatialities. It would appear, furthermore, that these these disruptions are commonly (and erroneously) taken to be sufficient grounds for discrimination and expulsion. Comparative studies of regional discourses justifying discriminatory practices might also, therefore, present an interesting avenue of inquiry.

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