

Millennium Dreams: Arts, Culture, and Heritage in the Life of Communities

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Abstract: *Our Millennium* was a special project of the Community Foundations of Canada to mark the new century. It used the occasion of the millennium to invite Canadians to make lasting “gifts” to their communities to make them better places. An assessment of the *Our Millennium* initiative noted the disproportionate number of projects that featured various aspects of arts, culture, and heritage. This study examines the linkages between the cultural capital embedded in the communities and the social capital that it generated. It investigates the nature of both the projects and the participants in them as well as the major social capital themes that the arts, culture, and heritage projects appeared to be supporting. It also explores the concept of “cultural citizenship,” locating it in the social and physical spaces in which civic engagement takes place.

Résumé : *Our Millennium* est le nom d’un projet spécial de la Community Foundations of Canada, initié pour marquer le début d’un nouveau siècle. Profitant de l’avènement du prochain millénaire, ce projet propose à la population canadienne d’améliorer leurs communautés en faisant des dons susceptibles de perdurer. L’analyse de cette initiative souligne un nombre disproportionnel de programmes mettant l’accent sur divers aspects des arts, de la culture, et du patrimoine. Cette étude revoit les liens entre le capital culturel inscrit dans les communautés et le capital social généré. Il examine la nature des projets et des participants ainsi que les principaux thèmes de capital social que les projets en arts, en culture et en patrimoine semblent suggérer. Il explore aussi le concept d’appartenance culturelle, le situant dans les lieux sociaux et physiques de l’implication civique.

Keywords: Arts; Culture; Heritage; Communities; Canadian Cultural Observatory

Introduction

In his book *Towards Cultural Citizenship: Tools for Cultural Policy and Development*, Colin Mercer discusses the need to realign current cultural policy and research to address the centrality of culture to human development. His definition of development goes beyond the economic terminology that often dominates discourse on this subject. In his view, the process of “mapping, auditing and assessment of the true cultural resources of a community becomes part of the task of linking culture *integrally*, rather than marginally, to the development process.” In

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this vein, he stresses “the ongoing and indissoluble connection between culture *and* economy, culture *and* social relations, culture *and* power, culture *and* identity, culture *and* rights, *culture and human development*” (Mercer, 2002, p. 53, italics in original).

The development of a map of cultural activity such as Mercer suggests might help cultural policymakers to answer a number of questions that usually go unanswered. What kind of culture do citizens value? How do they assess what is a cultural activity and how does this activity fit within the everyday life of communities? To what extent is cultural capital linked with the social capital of the community, and what role does this play in its economic and social development? In response to Mercer’s challenge, and to try to answer these questions, this study makes use of a unique resource—the *Our Millennium* database, a special initiative of the Community Foundations of Canada (CFC) to mark the new century.

In 1999 and 2000, the CFC invited Canadians to make lasting millennium “gifts” to their communities to make them better places and to register these gifts on an online database. These gifts could be made under 11 self-selected theme areas: Children and Youth, Arts and Culture, Environment, Heritage, Connections, Recreation, Learning, Safety and Crime Prevention, Care and Support, Global Citizenship, and Other. A total of 6,558 projects, involving more than 4.6 million Canadians,¹ were registered on the *Our Millennium* website by midnight on December 31, 2000. An assessment of the *Our Millennium* initiative by the Caledon Institute of Social Policy remarked upon the disproportionate number of projects that featured various aspects of arts, culture, and heritage—even projects that were formally listed under other categories (Torjman and Levitan, 2001). It appeared that culturally related projects had a special quality that made them the instruments of choice for many ordinary citizens and community groups when planning millennium projects. This article delves more deeply into the Caledon Institute’s conclusion and, using a social- and cultural-capital lens, offers a tentative explanation as to why arts, cultural, and heritage projects were so prominent among the millennium gifts registered on the *Our Millennium* database.² It also describes the types of cultural capital that contributors judged to be significant and worth registering on the database. In general, these priorities were closely tied to the social and economic life of the community, where investments in cultural capital were frequently linked not only to personal self-improvement and advancement, but also to the collective well-being of the citizenry.

Cultural capital and millennial dreams — An overview

The *Our Millennium* database is a self-selected sample. As such, it is essentially a portrait of what citizens themselves considered important and lasting gifts to their communities. Citizens could categorize these gifts under any of the 11 headings provided. The database was not subject to editing or reclassification by its sponsor, the Community Foundations of Canada, so how the gift-givers characterized their gifts was how they were shown. As there were no restrictions on who could post a gift description, all citizens and organizations had an equal opportunity to participate. In short, the database is a *collective memoir* reflecting a partic-

ular social space at a particular moment in history. The distribution of the millennium gifts by theme, as registered on the database, is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of *Our Millennium* gifts by theme

Theme	% of Total
Environment	16.4
Heritage	16.3
Children and Youth	13.3
Care and Support	11.5
Arts and culture	10.8
Connections	9.2
Recreation	6.3
Learning	5.5
Safety and Crime Prevention	4.8
Global citizenship	4.1
Other	1.8

Source: Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

Although the statistics are interesting, they do not tell us what constituted an “Arts and Culture” or a “Heritage” project in the minds of the gift-givers. To determine the nature of the projects registered in the “Arts and Culture” and “Heritage” categories, I decided to analyze each description in both of these categories, which included 1,768 projects, to determine the main type of cultural product or main type of participant. These results are shown below in Table 2 and Table 3.³

An analysis of the distribution of “Arts and Culture” projects (Table 2) and “Heritage” projects (Table 3) provides a number of insights as to the nature of community perceptions and priorities. First, in terms of perceptions, there is a considerable amount of overlap between the two lists, suggesting that those who engage in cultural and heritage activities may not draw clear distinctions between them. For example, performances and festivals are a feature of both lists, and, in fact, of the 151 performing arts events included in these two categories, 34 of them, or about 23%, are listed as heritage gifts. As well, gifts involving the creation and exhibition of quilts and wall hangings of various types figure prominently in both categories, suggesting that their creators were motivated both by the legacy they were leaving and the artistic aspects of the gift. On the other hand, 16 heritage events and activities are listed as “Arts and Culture” gifts, suggesting that at least some citizens viewed them as creative rather than as legacy undertakings.

Second, in terms of priorities, the largest number of “Arts and Culture” projects, by far, involved children and youth. In fact, if one adds the multicultural youth, youth learning, youth heritage, and youth arts and culture activities included in the “Heritage” category, 262 of the 1,768 projects listed in the two categories were primarily gifts by or for youth (a number which is probably understated, since youth also participated in many of the other types of projects).

Table 2: Distribution of *Our Millennium* “Arts and Culture” projects by type of project or main participants

Type	Number	% of Total
Youth performances/art/cultural events	146	20.7
Amateur performances/festivals	80	11.4
Multicultural/ethnocultural performances/art/events	74	10.5
Millennium artworks/public art	53	7.5
Special exhibitions (professional artists/galleries)	39	5.5
Professional performances/festivals	37	5.3
Quilts/wall hangings/textile art/quilting events	34	4.8
Exhibitions (amateur artists)	27	3.8
Cultural fundraising events for non-cultural purposes	26	3.7
Capital building projects (cultural and heritage)	23	3.3
Special literary works or events	21	3.0
Seniors performances/art/events	19	2.7
Cultural fundraising events for cultural purposes	16	2.3
Heritage events/activities (e.g., development of historic sites or databases)	16	2.3
Disabled persons performances/art/events	15	2.1
Women’s performances/art /events	13	1.8
Multicultural events for youth	12	1.7
Cultural events promoting voluntarism, peace, etc.	9	1.3
Library events or donations	9	1.3
Creation of arts councils/arts directories/endowment funds	9	1.3
Cultural learning events for youth	8	1.1
Cultural events promoting environmental causes	7	1.0
Cultural district revitalization/redevelopment	5	0.7
Aboriginal performances/art/events	3	0.4
Cultural learning events (e.g., conferences, lectures)	3	0.4
TOTAL	704	99.9

Source: *Our Millennium* database

Although some gifts, such as a special exhibition developed by the Hamilton Children’s Museum entitled “Crazy about Canada,” were gifts from professionals to children, many of the instances of gift giving went in the opposite direction. For example, students at A. Y. Jackson Secondary School in Ottawa, Ontario, marked the millennium by holding a gala featuring the art of A. Y. Jackson. Also part of this gala was a play about the Group of Seven and a musical, both of which were staged by students. The purpose of the gala was to raise funds for an arts scholarship program for future students at the school. In Loretteville, Quebec, a group of students organized an evening of song, dance, and musical performances to raise

Table 3: Distribution of *Our Millennium* “Heritage” projects by type of project or main participants

Type	Number	% of Total
Restoration/conversion/improvements of heritage structures and objects	113	10.6
Multicultural/ethnocultural arts and cultural events*	112	10.5
Histories (of communities, organizations, families)	96	9.0
Special heritage events/community celebrations/re-enactments/religious services/parades/tours/rededications	94	8.8
Time capsules	69	6.5
Monuments/cairns/plaques/signage	60	5.8
Youth heritage projects (e.g., photos, yearbooks)	57	5.5
Connections (homecomings, reunions, exchanges)	52	4.9
New museums/special exhibitions	47	4.4
Environmental/recreation activities (e.g., creation/revitalization of parks, trails, gardens)	41	3.9
Youth arts and cultural projects (murals, videos, written histories)	39	3.7
Festivals/concerts/performances	34	3.2
Patriotic activities (e.g., honouring veterans, flying the Canadian flag)	32	3.0
Seniors activities (histories, celebrations, performances)	32	3.0
Quilts/wall hangings/textile art/quilting events	23	2.2
Digitization/archival cataloguing/creating websites	23	2.2
Multicultural heritage events/exhibitions	21	2.0
Fundraising/endowment funds/donations of heritage sites or objects	16	1.5
Photo histories	16	1.5
Aboriginal cultural events	15	1.4
Women’s heritage (histories, commemorations)	13	1.2
Historical murals	10	0.9
Historical calendars/posters	10	0.9
Learning events (conferences, workshops)	9	0.8
Public art	8	0.8
Films/videos	8	0.8
Special editions of periodicals	6	0.6
Literary works	4	0.4
New cultural facilities/arts stabilization programs	2	0.2
TOTAL	1,062	100.2

Source: *Our Millennium* database

* 86 of the entries in this category recorded individual donations for the construction of a statue honouring immigrants in Hamilton, Ontario. Without these entries the number of multicultural projects falls to 26, or 2.4% of the total.

funds for the Fondation canadienne rêves d'enfants. The same group of students also organized another performance of Disney characters and songs to fulfill the wish of a four-year-old patient.

Third—again in terms of priorities—the increased diversity of Canadian society is reflected in the number and variety of multicultural and ethnocultural events included in the arts, cultural, and heritage gifts (even if one excludes the 86 entries recording individual donations toward a statue honouring immigrants in Hamilton). These events were almost all celebratory, and once again, many of the heritage projects involved performing or visual arts. For example, the Navrati Festival of Hindu dance in Hamilton was recorded as a “Heritage” event, as was the Haitian Soirée hommage aux Potomitans in Montréal, an evening of Haitian dance, theatre, and music performances intended to transmit the culture from elders to younger people.

Fourth, the relative balance of the projects that contributors considered to be special enough to register as cultural or heritage gifts heavily favour amateur activities. The majority of the approximately 220 items listed as “Youth” and “Multicultural/ethnocultural” performances, art, and cultural events (in addition to the approximately 100 items in the “Amateur performances” and “Amateur exhibitions” categories) involved non-professional forms of cultural expression. This compares to about 75 professional performances and exhibitions (although many of the 79 or so items under “Capital building projects,” “Cultural fundraising events,” “Creation of arts councils,” and “Cultural district revitalization” might be added to this total). This tendency was even more evident in the “Heritage” category, where most of the restoration projects involved improvements to historic community buildings, most of the histories written were of local organizations or small communities, and most of the events were community celebrations or commemorations of various types.

A final general observation to be drawn from Table 2 and Table 3 is the extent to which cultural and heritage activities are linked to other purposes or ends. Many of the events and initiatives for youth, seniors, the disabled, and other demographic groups were clearly intended to celebrate the group as much as the expression. The large number of projects aimed at raising funds for non-cultural purposes, promoting learning among young people, or advancing environmental causes also fall into this category.

Cultural capital and millennial dreams – Case studies

A portrait of the full variety of projects offered as gifts is well beyond the scope of this short paper. As an alternative, case studies of three communities of differing sizes, with differing demographic profiles and from different parts of Canada, are presented. They are Dieppe, New Brunswick; Kingston, Ontario; and Revelstoke, British Columbia. They represent communities that registered a moderate number of “Arts and Culture” and “Heritage” projects—in other words, that were neither very active nor very inactive in this particular area—and that appeared to be “typical” in terms of their gift registration on the database. Although the inclusion of a large metropolitan area, such as Toronto or Montréal, might have been desirable,

the numerous projects in those cities would have added considerably to the length of this article and would not likely have added enough new information to the analysis to warrant the additional effort.

Dieppe, New Brunswick

The town of Dieppe had a population of 14,951 in 2001, an increase of close to 20% since 1996.⁴ The median age of the population was 35.8 years, somewhat younger than the provincial median age of 38.6. More than 75% of the population listed their mother tongue as French, while 23% indicated that English was their mother tongue. In 2001, less than 1% of the population had a mother tongue other than English or French. Only 2% of the population was foreign-born, about 1% was Aboriginal, and less than 1% (about 0.4%) were visible minorities. The median income of those 15 years of age and over was \$24,486, as compared to the provincial median income of \$18,257.

Of the seven “Arts and Culture” gifts recorded by the community, five involved community celebrations, and two focused on youth. In addition, two projects classified in the “Children and Youth” category and two in the “Learning” category also had cultural elements. The community celebrations tended to be annual events that were given special millennial themes. During the Fête du Canada on July 1, a specially designed community “tattoo” was distributed to the first 2,000 participants. At the Fête des acadiens on August 15, in addition to the usual musical performances and family activities, the organizing committee distributed 2,000 Acadian flags. At the annual Carnaval d’amitié, a special outdoor “tintamarre” (noisemaking) session was organized so citizens could welcome the new millennium with their own music. For the annual outdoor “Mercredi Show”—a series of performances by professional artists during July and August—area schoolchildren were invited to design special millennium art that was then used on all advertising for the event. The community organized a special Fête du 1er janvier 2000 on New Year’s Eve, which featured two musical performances and an exhibition of historical photos of the town, along with family events such as skating, tobogganing, and sleigh rides.

L’École Anna-Malenfant organized a special millennium performance focused on the theme of peace. The school also held a couple of events, classified in the “Children and Youth” and “Learning” categories, which involved special book purchases and a challenge to students to read 2,000 books and make presentations to the rest of the school on what they had learned. This project was specifically designed to promote French language and culture as well as a love of reading among the young. In the “Arts and Culture” category, young people at a summer camp were asked to paint an image reflecting their vision for the year 2000. These paintings were later exhibited at a local hotel. During the year, Dieppe hosted a Forum jeunesse where 500 young people from all parts of the world participated in cultural events (classified as a “Children and Youth” project). In addition, an educational forum held by La federation des Comités de Parents du Nouveau-Brunswick in Dieppe featured a “volet culturelle” of performance art. This, however, was classified as a “Learning” event.

All three projects registered in the “Heritage” category were intended to leave permanent legacies to the community. A time capsule, containing objects representative of the town in 2000, was buried in the park with a plaque indicating its location and the date it should be opened. The town council installed a “millennium clock” in a central location as a permanent gift to the community. A town history covering the years between 1730 and 2000 was written to ensure that citizens remained aware and proud of their past.

Kingston, Ontario

The population of the City of Kingston in 2001 was 146,838, an increase of 1.6% since 1996. The median age of 38.1 years was slightly above the provincial median of 37.1 years. More than 88% of the population spoke English as their mother tongue, with only 3% speaking French and 9% other languages. About 12% of the population was foreign-born, while less than 2% cited Aboriginal origins. Visible minorities accounted for just under 5% of the total population. Median income of persons over 15 years of age was \$23,538, as compared to the provincial median of \$24,816.

Kingston citizens registered 24 projects in the “Arts and Culture” category and 70 projects in the “Heritage” category, with another three projects in the “Environment” group having heritage elements. The “Arts and Culture” project distribution was as follows: youth = 3; amateur performances = 4; ethnocultural performance = 1; public art = 2; professional performances = 3; professional exhibitions = 2; quilts = 3; amateur exhibitions = 2; special literary works = 3; environmental art = 1. Youth arts and culture projects included the production of a musical and a mural as well as the selling of calendars depicting local artwork to raise funds for the school and develop entrepreneurial skills. Two of the amateur performances involved original music by local composers. Another was a musical written by a member of the Kingston Symphony and a local opera singer, directed by a local theatre professional and performed by 46 special-needs youth. One of the public-art gifts registered was actually the final piece in a series of 45 environmental art sculptures installed by the Kingston Artists’ Association over 10 years. Both the Kingston Symphony and Queen’s University registered special professional performances, and Theatre 5’s gift was a benefit performance for the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. Kingston Heirloom Quilters donated a series of slides to the Queen’s University Archives recording all quilts made by the group since its founding. An annual outdoor art show initiated an award for a local high-school student showing artistic skill. A writers’ collective produced a millennium book of prose and poetry from writers across Canada.

The distribution of the “Heritage” projects was as follows: restoration = 6; histories = 10; time capsules = 14; monuments/commemorative objects = 3; youth heritage = 10; youth arts and culture = 10 (+1 project labelled as “Environment”); ethnocultural = 2 (+1 labelled “Environment”); seniors = 1; quilts = 1; digitization = 1 (+1 labelled as “Environment”); photo histories = 3; women’s heritage = 2; special editions = 2; historical murals = 1; special exhibitions = 1 (but labelled as “Connections”). Restoration projects in Kingston included a historic train station,

a historic steamship, the women's institute building, and a military monument as well as expansion of the marine museum and the revitalization of a downtown square. A history was written of the local area for use in schools. Written histories were also produced of 190 local monuments, the local construction association, a now-defunct locomotive manufacturing company, the skating club, Wolfe Island (near Kingston), the physics classes at a local college and the archaeology of the area. The majority of the time capsules were assembled by schoolchildren, but the chamber of commerce also registered one, as did a school of dance, and a local church. A commemorative drinking fountain was erected in memory of workers who died building the Rideau Canal. Most of the youth heritage projects involved special photographs or yearbooks, but one group of students produced websites featuring historical overviews of the village of Sydenham and a local cemetery (including links to information about the occupants of the graves). Another group of students produced family heritage videos. Although most of the Kingston youth arts and culture projects registered in the "Heritage" category consisted of quilts and murals, one school group produced an original play and another held a millennium writing contest. The most original of the ethnocultural projects involved the construction of a Scandinavian log home using traditional materials and heritage techniques. A seniors group created CD-ROMs depicting the history of the village of Odessa and donated them to every school, library, and archive in the county. Photo histories of local schools and community architecture were registered, as were two histories of women at Queen's University. Both the *Kingston Whig-Standard* and *Profile Kingston* magazine produced special millennium issues, and 12 local artists painted 55 historical murals on the walls of a parking garage.

Revelstoke, British Columbia

In 2001, the population of the community of Revelstoke was 7,500, a decrease of 6.8% from 1996. The median age was 38.5, almost identical to the provincial median of 38.4 years. More than 88% of the population spoke English as their mother tongue, about 10% spoke a language other than English or French, and only about 1% spoke French. About 10% of the population was foreign-born, but only about 3% were visible minorities and 5% Aboriginal. Median income was \$20,793, below the provincial average of \$22,095.

A total of nine Revelstoke "Arts and Culture" projects were registered, along with two in the "Environment" category, one in "Connections," and one in "Learning" that included cultural elements. Eleven "Heritage" projects were registered as well as one "Children and Youth" project with a heritage dimension.

The distribution of "Arts and Culture" projects was as follows: youth = 1 (registered as a "Learning" event); amateur performances = 2; millennial art = 1; professional performances = 2 (+2 registered in the "Environment" category); capital building = 1; literary events = 1 (+1 product listed in the "Connections" category); women = 1; arts directory = 1. The local library registered a summer club to encourage children to read (registered as a "Learning" event). The local choir put on two special performances, and an East Coast fiddler put on another. A millen-

nium blues festival was organized. As well, two performances registered under the “Environment” category included an original play celebrating human connections to natural waterways and a children’s performance teaching environmental stewardship. The town administration invited clubs, businesses, and individuals to paint 100 millennial banners, which were displayed throughout the community. A former ski chalet was renovated and converted into a playhouse for the local theatre company, and the local arts council produced a directory of more than 50 artists living in the community. A regional author gave an evening of readings at the local library, and a CD-ROM was produced, providing a virtual tour of the community (registered as a “Connections” activity). A local women’s writing group held a two-day workshop with a professional writer.

The distribution of “Heritage” projects in Revelstoke was as follows: history = 1; special events = 3; youth = 1 (+1 under “Children and Youth”); special exhibition = 1; environment = 2; performance = 1; women = 1; film/video = 1. A 92-year-old local historian produced a history of the town. Two special heritage events—a presentation of Victoriana and carriage tours—took place, along with an antique car show. The local museum organized a children’s event to teach local history and a summer program of activities to explore the community and its heritage. The town hosted a major travelling exhibition on the history of British Columbia. Two projects were linked to the community’s environmental history—a hike commemorating the designation of Mount Revelstoke as a national park, and the development of a park surrounding the local railway museum. The local theatre company presented a play based on local history, and museum personnel gave a lecture on women’s history in Revelstoke. Finally, the History Channel featured the area in an episode on the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway through Rogers Pass.

Cultural capital in the social landscape of everyday life

To what extent do citizens link cultural capital to social capital? The “millennial dreams” of Canadians in the year 2000 frequently involved the creation of material and symbolic cultural landscapes. Many of the projects registered in the *Our Millennium* database, however, illustrate the extent to which citizens merged the social and cultural capital within these landscapes. To understand why, it may be useful to review, very briefly, the “standard” definitions of social and cultural capital and then to assess whether recent conceptual research might give us new insight into what was happening in the *Our Millennium* communities.

The work of Pierre Bourdieu has shaped contemporary thinking on the subject of cultural capital. He defined cultural capital as “the disposal of taste” or “consumption of specific cultural forms that mark people as members of specific classes” (Bourdieu, 1984, n.p.). Bourdieu’s conceptualization of cultural capital, in its simplest terms, consists of three elements: (1) *embodied capital* (or habitus), the system of lasting dispositions that form an individual’s character and guide his or her actions and tastes; (2) *objectified capital*, the means of cultural expression, such as painting, writing, and dance, that are symbolically transmissible to others; and (3) *institutionalized capital*, the academic qualifications that establish the

value of the holder of a given qualification (Bourdieu, 1986). In keeping with his emphasis on both forms of capital—cultural and social—as being personal resources as opposed to collective resources, Bourdieu characterizes social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—in other words, to membership in a group” (1986, p. 248). For Bourdieu, both social and cultural capital function, along with economic capital, to reinforce class distinctions and hierarchies.

More recent work on the subject of social capital has moved away from viewing it simply as an instrument for personal enrichment, to something more akin to a group resource—a resource that “greases the wheels” of both social and economic exchange. The definition of social capital that is now most often used is the one made popular by Robert Putnam—“social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (2000, p. 19). Putnam has characterized *bonding social capital* as social networks that reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups, and *bridging social capital* as networks that are outward looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages—forging so-called weak ties, as opposed to the strong ones that characterize bonding social capital.

Although the investment yields from cultural capital, as defined by Bourdieu, have been viewed as primarily personal, some commentators working in the field of cultural-development theory have also begun to define cultural capital in collective terms. Helen Gould has observed that “when a community comes together to share cultural life, through celebration, rites and intercultural dialogue, it is enhancing its relationships, partnerships and networks—in other words, developing social capital” (2001, p. 87). In an earlier piece on the relationship between social and cultural capital (Jeannotte, 2003a), I have suggested that while cultural capital has traditionally been thought to contribute to “bonding” social capital by reinforcing ideologies, values, and social differences and by strengthening ties between intimates, it may also play a role in “bridging” social capital by promoting social solidarity (commitment to a larger whole), social integration (linkages between functional elements), and sustainable communities (patterns of social and spatial interaction distinguishing a collective).

In his contribution to this discourse, David Throsby has refined Bourdieu’s concept of objectified cultural capital by distinguishing between tangible and intangible cultural capital. In his view, *tangible* cultural capital is “an asset that embodies a store of cultural value, separable from whatever economic value it might possess; the asset gives rise to a flow of goods and services over time which may also have cultural value.” He places most heritage buildings and artifacts in this category of cultural capital. *Intangible* cultural capital, in his view, consists of “ideas, traditions, beliefs, and customs shared by a group of people, and it also includes intellectual capital, which exists as language, literature, music and so on” (2002, p. 103). Throsby has also drawn parallels between environmental and cultural sustainability. He suggests that while complex natural ecosystems function

to maintain and support balance in the natural environment, equally complex cultural ecosystems are required to maintain the cultural life and vitality of human societies.

This research, along with Colin Mercer's work on the subject of cultural citizenship, challenges the traditional reading of Bourdieu's theory that the effects of cultural capital investment are primarily felt at a personal level. With the suggestion by Gould and others (see Bourdeau, 2002; Stolle & Rochon, 1998) that investments in cultural capital are linked to the reinforcement of altruistic behaviour and cultural development, it struck me that an expanded map of the cultural capital domain was needed. This led me to identify four overall cultural capital research themes flowing from these various works (Jeannotte, 2003b, p. 6):

Theme 1: Personal empowerment (personal benefits derived from investments in cultural capital)

Theme 2: Cultural participation (linkages between cultural participation and altruistic behaviour, such as volunteering and civic engagement)

Theme 3: Cultural development and quality of life (linkages between cultural capital and economic and social development)

Theme 4: Cultural sustainability (ways in which cultural capital supports human development and maintains the cultural life and vitality of human civilization over time)

In a previous study, I conducted a review of the research literature on cultural capital to see to what extent researchers were exploring these aspects. Not surprisingly, I found that the majority of research tended to focus on Theme 1 (personal benefits derived from investments in cultural capital) and Theme 2 (linkages between cultural participation and altruistic behaviour), although there is a growing interest by both academics and policymakers in the role of cultural capital in both Theme 3 (cultural development—especially economic development) and Theme 4 (cultural sustainability). (See Jeannotte 2003b for a detailed survey of this literature.) I was also curious as to whether the actual behaviour of citizens/consumers would conform to these admittedly notional themes. Drawing from the descriptions of the nearly 1,800 "Arts and Culture" and "Heritage" projects as well as relevant projects registered in the "Children and Youth," "Environment," and "Connections" categories, I was able to find many instances where community investments in cultural capital were linked to a broad range of activities intended to promote *both* individual and collective well-being.

Theme 1 – Contributions to personal development and empowerment

"Habitus" is a term often equated with "cultural capital" when in fact, Bourdieu (1986) only considered it to be a *part* of cultural capital. Because he linked "habitus" (the beliefs and dispositions that form one's character and tastes) to hereditary transmission, his concept has traditionally been linked to class differences. Critics of Bourdieu have even suggested that his conceptualization of "habitus" leads to a kind of cultural predestination, whereby existing inequalities are passed down from generation to generation. Whether or not this is a correct reading of his theory, there is no doubt that we need to understand why individ-

uals, despite being born into a disadvantaged or marginal environment, are able to acquire the other two types of cultural capital described by Bourdieu—the “objectified” and “institutionalized” cultural capital that allows them to improve their situation in life.

Clearly, a portion of the millennial gifts, especially those aimed at youth, had as a goal the development of *habitus* in the traditional Bourdieuan sense. Some were explicit about this. For example, the Greater Victoria Public Library registered a contest “to encourage an interest in writing and reading among teens” and “to provide a vehicle for self-expression and creativity.” The Quest Theatre in Calgary held a summer theatre camp for children to help build “self esteem, group cooperation and balance in the lives of participants.” A survey of the “Children and Youth” category unearthed further proof of this. For example, many scholarship gifts were registered in this category, including the Starbucks Foundation literacy awards, the Manitoba Theatre for Young People’s scholarships, the Manitoba Conservatory of Music bursaries, and the Sawitsky Family Millennium Awards for young fiddlers and step dancers.

Many of the heritage gifts, however, seemed to be motivated by a desire to empower at a *collective* rather than at a personal level. For example, the reunion of the Belanger Family at Mount St. Louis, Ontario, for which a 300-page family cookbook and a 250-page family tree were prepared, was “dedicated to those who came before us. Those who, with nothing created much . . . a life, a family, a feast, a home and a heritage.” Some of the group histories, heritage restoration projects, and special exhibitions were also clearly intended to contribute to the self-esteem of a segment of the population. For example, an exhibition of original artworks organized by the Oshawa Public Library was aimed at celebrating the “True North Strong and Free: Brave Girls in Canadian Children’s Literature.” What is interesting about both the “Arts and Culture” and the “Heritage” gifts is that they represented a collective investment in empowerment. This suggests that the acquisition of cultural capital by individuals in a postmodern (or, indeed, modern) society is not necessarily limited by the “iron chains” of heredity.

Theme 2 – Linkages of cultural participation to various kinds of altruistic behaviour, such as volunteering or civic engagement

The linkage of cultural participation to social participation and engagement was one of the most prominent rationales cited in the *Our Millennium* project descriptions. For example, the District of Ahuntsic-Cartierville in Montréal organized Festiblues de Montréal both to involve youth in a cultural event and to raise funds for youth services in the district. The Alberta Heritage Digitization Project preserved historical resources such as newspapers, local histories, and the folklore collection at the University of Alberta so that the province’s social and cultural heritage would be more easily accessible to students and citizens. The Ecumenical Downtown Ministries of Hamilton, Ontario, with help from a local high school and a youth social-action group, sponsored a concert by Chorale de l’accueil bonneau (Montréal’s homeless men’s choir) to raise money for an emergency social-housing program. The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts hired a team of

Spanish-speaking guides so that public tours could be offered to the Hispanic community. The Canadian Hot Jazz Orchestra of Vancouver donated proceeds from their CD to buy musical instruments and pay for music lessons for underprivileged children.

Typically, “Connections” projects integrated cultural and social capital in a way that made it almost impossible to separate the two. For example, the Maple Ridge Jazz and Blues Festival Society provided free display space in its “Millennium Village” for community non-profit groups. The Celebration Coalition on Saltspring Island, BC, held a three-day event featuring 25 films on subjects such as global warming and social justice, and invited 50 community groups to set up kiosks and make presentations related to the films. Many of the library projects tended to be registered under “Connections” or “Learning,” even if they had a significant cultural element. This was the case for such projects as the Millennium Friendship Award in Hamilton (which honoured an individual who had arranged hundreds of author visits at the Hamilton Public Library), the Fraser Valley Regional Library’s fair (which featured storytelling and multicultural events), and the Kingston Public Library’s display of rare children’s books.

Theme 3 – Promotion of economic development or quality of life

Many of the capital building and renovation projects registered in the *Our Millennium* database were explicitly intended either to promote economic development or to improve quality of life. For example, the proposal to develop a downtown arts district in Calgary was to demonstrate “that Calgary is one of Canada’s greatest cultural centres, and its downtown is a lively and safe place to visit.” The residents of Canoe Cove, Prince Edward Island, in restoring the local schoolhouse and converting it to a museum, hoped that the project would “reverse the trend of rural decay” and “promote prosperity.” The restoration of the Market Square in Kingston, promoters stated, would “produce a revitalized urban civic square of local and national significance, and create an attractive and welcoming venue for public events.” Unlike most of the other types of gifts, this benefit was seen to flow primarily from tangible, rather than intangible, cultural capital investments in the community.

Theme 4 – Promotion of cultural sustainability through such actions as building trust and tolerance or reinforcing local social networks and identities

In terms of traditional notions of sustainability, the environment appeared to be a powerful motivator for a number of creative initiatives. For example, in Toronto the Planet in Focus film festival was intended as a catalyst to promote public discussion of environmental problems. On the other hand, many community projects were clearly intended to go beyond ecological concerns to address broader aspects of sustainability. For example, in the “Heritage” category an eco-tourism project in Bouctouche, New Brunswick, was designed to help visitors understand the historical and cultural, as well as natural, significance of the surrounding countryside and to bear witness to the Acadian, Mi’kmaq, and other peoples who built the community.

Many of the multicultural projects appeared motivated as much by “bridging” as by “bonding” considerations and were clearly aimed at promoting trust and tolerance. For example, some groups, such as the Centre communautaire juif of Montréal, devoted considerable effort to putting together a program of mainly cultural events designed to appeal not only to the Jewish community, but also to the general public. Others, such as the First Nations City Celebration Committee of Toronto, worked with the school board to help students gain an understanding of Aboriginal culture. The African Festival and Presentation Society of Calgary organized a festival to bring about more awareness of African culture in the city. The Central Alberta Diversity Project in Red Deer invited diverse groups across Alberta to submit photo collages, then held a gala and displayed the collages at the public library in order to “build bridges of understanding and friendship across racial, ethnic, cultural and ability boundaries.”

Social networking was another frequently cited rationale for *Our Millennium* arts, cultural, and heritage projects. This often took the form of reaching out to the marginalized, as with the Sommet artistique of Quebec City, a forum of 85 community groups whose goal was to integrate the disabled and the marginalized through the arts. Social networks, mediated through cultural activities, were also often seen as a means of building trust between the generations, as was evident in such projects as the Victoria Intergenerational Festival of the Ages, which “grew from the need of seniors and teens to have a better understanding of each other’s fears and concerns.”

Community sustainability was also frequently linked to issues of community safety and security. For example, in Thunder Bay, Ontario, the Regional Multicultural Youth Council worked with the local police force to host a talent show and a dance and youth festival involving more than 100 young performers as a way of improving communications between youth and police and promoting community safety. In the same vein but from another perspective, the Fondation le silence des armes of Chicoutimi registered a number of projects to combat violence in society, most notably three television programs it produced in collaboration with the CBC, Radio-Canada, and TV Ontario.

Beyond the obvious intent to link cultural and social capital, the majority of the projects inscribed in the *Our Millennium* database appear to have been broadly aimed at reinforcing what Throsby has referred to as the “cultural ecosystem.” (Throsby, p. 106). Whether or not citizens were explicitly attempting to counter the impact of global branding (as described by Chatterton & Hollands, 2003; Hanigan, 1998; and other authors), it is clear that most of the “Arts and Culture” and “Heritage” gifts were deeply embedded in “place” rather than in the cosmopolitan milieu of mainstream cultural and heritage production. Their primary purpose, in short, appeared to be to sustain the life and vitality of that “place,” both socially and culturally, and to reinforce the community’s identity.

Conclusions

This article began with a series of cultural-policy questions that I hoped to answer by pursuing two strands of analysis: a review of the research literature on cultural

and social capital, and a mapping of the cultural and heritage projects registered on the *Our Millennium* database.

As regards the first question—what kind of culture do citizens value?—this study clearly shows that cultural-capital investments, as manifested in the gifts registered on the *Our Millennium* database, are much broader and deeper in scope than those typically characterized in either the academic or the policy literature. In other words, Mercer's argument that "mapping, auditing and assessment of the true cultural resources of a community" (2002, p. 53) is integral to a broader understanding and application of the role of culture in human development appears to be supported by the findings of this study.

The findings also suggest that it is important to consider a wider range of cultural and heritage activities than those normally accounted for in official statistics. Citizens, when asked to classify their projects, included many activities in the "Arts and Culture" and "Heritage" categories (particularly personal and collective heritage gifts, such as time capsules and organizational or family histories) that are totally unrecognized in official statistics. Conversely, there were a number of activities—for example, arts and film festivals linked to causes such as the environment or peace—that were not recognized as "cultural" by those organizing them. What also emerges from these findings is that amateur arts, cultural, and heritage activities seem to carry as much weight as professional ones do in contributing value to communities.

The second question posed at the beginning of this article asked how citizens assess what is a cultural activity and how such activities fit within the everyday life of communities. Evidence emerging from the *Our Millennium* database suggests that the impact of youth and ethnocultural groups on the cultural landscape of communities should be given more attention in future assessments of cultural production (and reproduction). The database figures also suggest that communities place a great deal of emphasis on integrating the young into the life of the community, and that arts, cultural, and heritage activities (broadly defined) appear to be one of the primary vehicles in this process. This form of community cultural-capital investment may, in fact, explain how young people can acquire the *habitus* needed to improve their station in life, even if they come from families that, because of various forms of disadvantage, are unable to provide this benefit. Although many of the gifts registered by ethnocultural groups used arts or heritage activities to reinforce the "bonding" social capital of the group, this was not always the case. "Bridging" behaviour figured prominently in a surprising number of the "Arts and Culture" and "Heritage" projects, as many not only used expressive means to reinforce their identities, but equally to share them.

As for the third question—to what extent is cultural capital linked with the social capital of the community and what role does this play in a community's economic and social development?—no one clear answer emerges from the analysis of the *Our Millennium* database. However, the emphasis placed by ethnocultural groups on reinforcing both bridging and bonding ties through their cultural-capital investments does suggest that the links are closer than are generally

acknowledged. In a similar vein, the contributors to the *Our Millennium* database often cited development outcomes—particularly economic development outcomes—as desired objectives when investing in tangible cultural capital. However, time and resource limitations prevented follow-up with even a limited sample of the 1,768 “Arts and Culture” and “Heritage” project organizers to determine whether the stated aims were accomplished.

In drawing the two strands of this analysis together, it is clear that many of the projects registered in the *Our Millennium* database fall within the four cultural-capital themes derived from a survey of the research literature. This would suggest that the projects’ organizers were motivated by a desire to link cultural-capital investments to one or more types of positive outcomes: personal development, altruistic behaviour, community development, and cultural sustainability. However, on the basis of the information provided in the project descriptions, it was not possible to determine the socioeconomic profiles of the participants in each of the projects, which might provide insight as to what degree class and power (issues that figure so prominently in Bourdieu’s work on cultural capital) were contributory factors in their organization and implementation.

A useful second stage of this research might therefore consist of an evaluation of the outcomes of a sample of the “Arts and Culture” and “Heritage” projects with a view to addressing Mercer’s challenge to map, audit, and assess the cultural resources of communities. Broadly based assessments of the social effects of culture, whether couched in the language of personal development, human development, citizenship, or cultural capital, are essential tools in charting the future course of cultural interventions, and should take advantage of rare resources, such as the *Our Millennium* database, that provide a relatively unfiltered view of the motivations behind cultural practices and the perceived value of these practices in the life of communities.

In the meantime, what the *Our Millennium* initiative clearly demonstrates is the broad range of activities, both amateur and professional, that come under the rubric of culture; the social and economic value of culture to the life of communities; the intrinsic value of culture to individuals; and finally the understanding, on the part of citizens, that cultural activities constitute an important inheritance for generations to come.

Notes

1. Because attendance was a self-reported statistic, it is impossible to verify this figure. As the Caledon Institute of Social Policy observed in its report on the *Our Millennium* project, “The concept of ‘participant’ likely was subject to wide interpretation across the country” (Torjman and Levitan, 2001, p.25). For example, some projects counted only the organizers of an event among the participants, while others counted all those who attended the event. Due to lack of resources, the Community Foundations of Canada found it impossible to check the accuracy of these statistics and opted to post entries as submitted.
2. In May 2001, the *Our Millennium* website was transferred to the National Archives of Canada (now the Library and Archives Canada), where it was accessible at URL: <http://ourmillennium.archives.ca/registry-home2.html> until 2005. Although the entire database was accessible, there were a number of problems with the search engine. The search functions for keywords and

communities on the publicly available website did not work, and limited keyword searching was possible only through a closed URL, accessible only by special arrangement with the archives. Even this search function limited “hits” to 100, including overall descriptive pages and monthly lists of projects. Moreover, each keyword search pulled up both the English and French descriptions for each project, rapidly filling up the 100-hit limit. To ensure that all projects in the “Arts and Culture” and “Heritage” categories were reviewed, the author was obliged to access these categories via the monthly lists, which covered the period from May 1999 to December 2000. To investigate the Caledon Institute’s assertion that arts, culture, and heritage also figured prominently in projects listed under other categories, a separate, less-comprehensive search was done of the “Environment,” “Children and Youth,” and “Connections” categories. The *Our Millennium* is no longer available online. For anyone interested in accessing information on this database, please contact Library and Archives Canada at <http://www.collectionscanada.ca>.

3. The development of these tables involved a certain amount of subjective judgment as to the main purpose of the project, based on the description provided by the gift-giver. For example, many of the youth-oriented projects involved the production of millennium art by schoolchildren or youth groups. However, as the intention was clearly to foster creativity and a sense of historical significance among youth, rather than to produce a “professional” mural or sculpture, these types of projects were placed under the “youth” heading, rather than under the “millennium artworks/public art” one. Similarly, in the case of projects involving demographic groups such as seniors, women, or the disabled, the purpose of most special performances, exhibitions, or artworks was primarily to give special recognition to the accomplishments of these groups over the past century or millennium. As a result, these types of projects were categorized by principal participant group rather than by the nature of the cultural activity.
4. The demographic information for Dieppe and the other two communities is drawn from the Statistics Canada Census website at URL: <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/home/index.cfm>.

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