

“Engaging Millennial Donors:  
Young Philanthropists’ Circles in Montreal Museums”

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## 1. Abstract

The current economical context and the decrease of public funding forces museums in Quebec to increase their fundraising incomes. While cultural institutions have to diversify its philanthropic strategies to renew their donor pool, we assist to the development of a new creative, young targeted and collective kind of giving: donor circles.

In Montreal (Canada), four museums use this philanthropic model since 2011 to actively engage a new and wider audience. For an annual fee of \$250 to \$295, millennial business professionals, aged 20 to 40 (born between 1976 and 1990), can be part of the circle. Inspired by University-*alumni* relationship, Museums’ objectives are to build an empowering relationship between museums and tomorrow’s donors.

If the intention behind the creation of these circles is to involve and educate the next generation of donors in regards to museum’s cultural and social missions, collections and exhibitions, as well as philanthropy, their approach rely on social entertaining events like trendy galas and afterwork events. Comparing the financial needs in the field of culture, the strategies put into practice by four museums and the expectations of the younger donors, this article will question if Montreal museums’ donor circles are used in their full potential to anchor a long-term *habitus* and build strong ties between millennials and museums.

## 2. Main text

An ensemble of social changes, including economic, demographic, cultural, technological and political changes, is asserting itself in the transformation of museums. Individually, each of these changes must determine its role and mission in a society undergoing constant change.<sup>1</sup> In the province of Quebec, a re-evaluation of the government’s support of cultural institutions poses challenges to museums in terms of their financial management.

### 1. *Rethinking cultural philanthropy in Quebec*

At the threshold that separates European and American culture, Quebec occupies a unique place within the North American context. With the onset of the Quiet Revolution, Quebec adopted a socialist political model where the State redistributes the collective wealth within domains designated as worthy of the common good.

#### 1.1. *Government funding: towards a policy of cultural philanthropy*

Since 1961, the domains of arts and patrimony have been overseen by the Ministère des Affaires culturelles. Several arguments justify the State’s responsibility for museums:

- patrimony is crucial to the definition of a national identity (Grenier, 2013:21);
- access to culture contributes to the development of knowledge, expertise and social conscience (Sandell and Janes, 2007:52);

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<sup>1</sup> Graham Black underlines three challenges faced by museums: demographic and generational changes, the rise of new media and financial uncertainty. Black, G., 2012. *Transforming Museums in the Twenty-first Century*. Abingdon: Routledge, p.3.

- support for the arts is an investment that generates profits in museum, tourism and commercial sectors (Côté, 2014).<sup>2</sup>

Nonetheless, the federal government, like the provincial, is partially renouncing their mission to preserve its heritage by delegating a part of its public responsibilities to the private sector (Lefèvre in Grantham, 2013:73). Philanthropy is being vaunted as the right-arm of cultural organizations' financing and development through:

- the current discourse among ministers of culture praising public-private collaborations (“the combined efforts of the public and private sectors create a leverage effect to propel the arts and culture” states Hélène David, former minister of culture and communications)<sup>3</sup>;
- exceptional tax incentives for donors who give to culture (25% supplementary tax credit for the first donation to culture of more than \$5,000)<sup>4</sup>;
- analytic reports on cultural philanthropy (such as *Vivement: pour une culture philanthropique au Québec* in 2013, which “proposes potential solutions that will encourage private donations”) (Bourgie, 2013); and
- mixed public-private funding programs<sup>5</sup>.

The budgetary divestment of the state indicates an upending of the cultural economy. If Quebec museums were historically a responsibility of the State, this model is in the process of liberalizing. The politics of cultural philanthropy is seeing a transfer of the financial burden onto the good will of private persons.

### 1.2. The state of cultural philanthropy in Quebec

The Québécois model relies on solidarity by way of the State (Godbout in Grantham, 2013:19) and, even though a philanthropic tradition exists in the Anglophone (the McConnell and McDonald-Stewart families) and francophone communities (the Desmarais and Chagnon families), statistics show that Quebecers give less in time and money than their fellow Canadians. The comparison between provinces highlights Quebec as the least generous region: in 2013 the average annual donation was \$264 compared to the Canadian average of \$531 (Turcotte, 2015). According to sociologist Yvan Comeau (in Grantham 2013:95), several factors account for the particular case of Quebec:

- solicitation opportunities are reduced as Quebec has relatively few non-profit organizations (20.2 for every 10,000 residents, compared to 25 per 10,000 inhabitants in Canada)<sup>6</sup>;
- the population relies on government action, Quebec being the most taxed region of Canada;
- the mechanisms of solidarity take singular forms in Quebec, resulting in more cooperatives and unions compare to other provinces and territories of Canada.

If giving does not come naturally to Quebecers, Charles Fleury and Luc Belleau (2013) contend that those between the ages of 35 and 54 are proportionally more likely to give (90% of them give, compared to 75% of persons under 35 and 85% of persons 55 and older), and that the size of their gifts augments with age (the 55-and-over group gives an average of \$292 compared to \$216 for the 35 to 54 group and \$101 for the under 35 group). Yet, important demographic and generational changes stand to transform the world of philanthropy:

- with 12.6% of the Quebec population consisting of recent immigrants, cosmopolitanism will diversify the pool of potential donors (Yana, 2017);
- over the next 20 years, the death of those over the age of 75 will generate a transfer of wealth evaluated at several hundred billion dollars (Tal, 2016);

<sup>2</sup> In 2007-2008, government cultural expenditures in Québec represented \$2.5-billion (\$180.8-million directly affected to museums, patrimonial institutions and archives), whereas the economical impact of the arts and culture sector was estimated at \$4-billion in 2009. Observatoire de la culture et des communications du Québec, 2010. *2010 Dix ans d'observation de la culture*, Québec: Institut de la statistique, p.18. Ministère de la culture et des communications du Québec (MCCQ), 2012. “Impact économique du secteur de la culture et des communications au Québec pour l’année 2009”, *Survot Bulletin de la recherche et de la statistique* 20, p.3.

<sup>3</sup> MCCQ, 2015. “Campagne de financement du Diamant”, Québec: MCCQ [Online] [www.mcc.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.mcc.gouv.qc.ca) (Page visited June 10, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> MCCQ, 2014. “Mesures fiscales pour divers produits culturels”, *Programmes et services*, Québec: MCCQ [Online] <https://mcc.gouv.qc.ca> (Page visited June 10, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> MCCQ, 2017. *Mécénat Placement Culture*, Québec: Government of Québec [Online] [www.mcc.gouv.qc.ca/mpc](http://www.mcc.gouv.qc.ca/mpc) (Page visited June 10, 2017).

<sup>6</sup> Comeau, Y., Macé, C., 2014. *Les organisations philanthropiques québécoises enregistrées à l'Agence du revenu du Canada (2000-2010)*, Québec: Université Laval [Online] <http://www.fss.ulaval.ca> (Page visited June 10, 2017).

- the aging population entails the transformation of foundation targets, which must address groups with varied tastes and behaviours<sup>7</sup>.

While Quebec is the province providing the most funding for culture, financing for the arts from the private sector is not keeping pace. In 2013, gifts in the culture sector represented only 3.2% of the province's total private giving (\$46,833,000) (Institut de la statistique, 2017). Faced with competing causes like religion and health, museums must be innovative if they are going to attract private financing and be a contender in the market for goodwill donations.<sup>8</sup> Competition between not-for-profits requires museums to reappraise their role in the community and to rethink their fundraising strategy.

### 1.3. Private financing, a challenge for museums

As part of a leisure market that is increasingly eclectic, museums have had to rethink their offers in order to remain attractive in the leisure and entertainment markets. Since the 1970s, blockbuster exhibitions, family workshops and themed soirées have generated a total increase in visits - 14 million visitors in 2015 (Routhier, 2016:3). This increase has augmented operating costs, is economically fragile, with operating budgets struggling to keep pace.

To consolidate their operations, museums must multiply sources of revenue (public, private and the museum's autonomous revenue). In the last few years, we have witnessed the emergence of foundations mandated by their parent museum to collect funds and renew the pool of donors. If annual campaigns and benefit events generate revenue, these mechanisms are not the most disposed towards renewing the donor pool. Cultural philanthropy faces three major problems according to Yvan Comeau (2013:108):

- over-solicitation of a stagnant donor pool;
- absence of representation of certain social groups;
- lack of implication of the succeeding generation of donors.

Arts philanthropy suffers from an absence of a succession plan. As the typical donor in Quebec ages, it is essential to contribute to the development of the younger generation's philanthropic solidarity to ensure the future of museum financing. Danielle Champagne, director of the foundation of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts recognizes the importance of "planning for the future, to have a clientele of patrons and philanthropists who will succeed the current clientele."<sup>9</sup> It is in this context, that four philanthropic programs in the Montreal museum scene are targeting young professionals in an effort to cultivate the donors and patrons of tomorrow.

## 2. The Montreal model of young philanthropists' circles

Aware of the incapacity of current philanthropists to respond to their exponential needs, museums are attempting to adapt their offers to the new generation, while continuing to cultivate connections with major donors.

### 2.1. From a "paternalist" to a "mutualist" philanthropy

Until the 1990s, arts philanthropy was a practice reserved for an elite class of art collectors and intellectuals seeking to affirm their social status (Paquette, 2011:140). These "paternalist" philanthropists have been criticized by the philanthrocapitalists for giving money without personal implication regarding the museum and foundation's management (Seghers, 2013). As the need to

<sup>7</sup> For example, people aged 55 and over primarily tend to give by postal services (48% compared to 18% of people under 55), whereas the younger philanthropists would rather give during charity events (28% of people under 55 do, compared to 18% above). Fleury C., Belleau, L., 2013. "Les dons de charité au Québec entre 2004 et 2010", *Coup d'œil sociodémographique*, Québec: Institut de la statistique 12, p.6.

<sup>8</sup> Edward H. Able, former President of the American Association of Museums addressed the issue in 2003: « You won't just be competing against other museums or cultural institutions; you'll be competing against the day-care center and the homeless shelter down the street. (...) How will you justify why a funder should support your institution rather than something else? » Able, E.-H., 2003. *Slaying the Financial Dragon: Strategies for Museums*, Washington: American Association of Museums, p.10.

<sup>9</sup> Champagne, D. in Peinchina, L., 2013. "Jeunes philanthropes : nouvelle manne pour les institutions culturelles?", *Huffington Post*, November 20, 2013, [Online] <http://quebec.huffingtonpost.ca> (Page visited May 5, 2017).

diversify sources of financing increases, an elitist conception of cultural action continues to wane. With venture philanthropy, crowdfunding and giving circles, the philanthropic act is both democratizing and individualizing: as the donor pool expands, so does the need to measure the tangible effects of their support, and the classic annual gift to one institution is overthrown by occasional donations targeting specific projects.

In this context, giving circles offer a participative philanthropic model, permitting members of a peer group to collectively support a cause by pooling their donated time and money in a common fund. In the 1980s, the first circles were founded by women for women (Shaw-Hardy, 2009:5), but the practice has since popularized and diversified.<sup>10</sup> Contrary to venture philanthropy, this model attracts non-traditional donors such as women and the under 50 year-old group. In Montreal, more than 15 cultural organizations have created young philanthropists' circles to cultivate relationships with the next generations of donors.<sup>11</sup> In museums, this formula federates donors who don't yet have enough personal income to make a gift that will have notable impact. Furthermore, the group engenders positive emulation among members (to develop projects, raise money and attract new recruits), under the wing of the beneficiary organization.

Table 1. Comparative data on Museum audience, Montreal, 2014-2015

	<b>Museum Visitors</b>	<b>Museum Members</b>	<b>Young Circle Members<sup>12</sup></b>	<b>Facebook Followers Museum</b>	<b>Facebook Followers Circle</b>
<b>McCord</b>	130 000	2 000	≈20	10 553	s/o
<b>MBAM</b>	1 015 022	93 000	400	80 688	2 663
<b>MPAC</b>	351 000	3 000	≈10	19 692	361
<b>MAC</b>	2 590	5 942	85	6 455	1 451

Table 2. Comparative data on Museum audience, Montreal, 2015-2016

	<b>Museum Visitors</b>	<b>Museum Members</b>	<b>Young Circle Members<sup>13</sup></b>	<b>Facebook Followers Museum</b>	<b>Facebook Followers Circle</b>
<b>McCord</b>	155 000	≈ 2 000	17	18 000	s/o
<b>MBAM</b>	956 170	107 150	500	122 600	3 640
<b>MPAC</b>	400 000	<i>undisclosed</i>	<i>undisclosed</i>	32 300	506
<b>MAC</b>	240 000	10 000	≈100	76 200	2 200

## 2.2. Cultivating relationships with young philanthropists

Four Montreal museums have created giving circles targeting millennials aged 20 to 40 years old (born between 1975 and 1995). For a relatively small contribution (\$250 to \$295), young professionals join a club, giving them access to social activities that combine culture, networking and entertainment. The circles play on the notion of exclusivity and distinction. Annual membership grants access to

<sup>10</sup> “In 2004, the Forum (of Regional Associations of Grantmakers)’s first study of giving circles in the United States identified approximately 200 circles (...). By 2006, the database had grown to more than 400 giving circles.” Bearman, J.E., 2007. *More Giving Together*, Washington: Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers, p.5.

<sup>11</sup> These include Brigade Arts Affaires de Montréal, Cercle des jeunes mélomanes de l’Orchestre baroque Arion, Cercle des jeunes philanthropes du Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal, Club des ambassadeurs de l’Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, Comité des jeunes mécènes de la fondation de la Place des Arts, Comité Gestion et Culture du Réseau HEC Montréal, GénérationsCité at the Musée Pointe-à-Callière, Jeune Chambre de commerce de Montréal, Jeune McCord, Jeunes associés de l’Opéra de Montréal, Jeunes gouverneurs des Grands Ballets canadiens, Jeunes leaders du Centre Segal des arts de la scène, Jeunes Mécènes pour les Arts, Jeunes Premiers du Théâtre du Nouveau Monde and Cercle des Printemps du Mac.

<sup>12</sup> The numbers presented are not mentioned in the museums’ annual reports, the four foundation managers were asked to disclose them during interviews conducted in 2015, two of the answers were vague.




<sup>13</sup> Again, the numbers presented are not mentioned in the museums’ annual reports, the four foundation managers were contacted by phone to update them.

private events, the benefits of a privileged relationship with the institution and the option to join organizing committees.

At the McCord Museum, a circle was created in 2011 with the goal of developing the institution’s appeal. If the circle started with five members in the first year, there were more than 20 in 2015. Since the beginning, activities and special initiatives for the members have been put in place by a board composed of 15 members overseen by the foundation. In 2015, the board launched its first participative financing campaign in order to permit two 9-12 year-old classes to follow a one-week educational program at the museum. In 2015, the group raised \$185,000 for the foundation: \$165,000 from the Sugar Ball benefit gala and \$20,000 from the crowdfunding campaign.<sup>14</sup>

The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA)’s circle was launched in 2012 to replenish its pool of volunteers and philanthropists. The 25 volunteers on the committee manage the activities for 400 members under the supervision of the foundation. Each administrator sits for one renewable year and engages in finding sponsors or recruiting new members. The MMFA fundraising model rests on its popularity and a system of differential benefits. The circle has generated \$158,000 in net profits in 2016 and permits the acquisition of one to two works of contemporary art every year since 2015. To develop a culture of philanthropy, the foundation places the circle’s logo on the wall labels for works acquired by the Circle, as well as in all the promotional materials for the museum’s contemporary art exhibitions.<sup>15</sup>

Table 3. Young Philanthropists Circles subscription costs, benefits and arguments, Montreal, 2017

	 <p><b>MAC</b></p>	 <p><b>MBAM</b></p>	 <p><b>MPAC</b></p>	<p><b>McCord</b></p>
<b>Subscription</b>	295\$	265\$	250\$	250\$
<b>Benefits</b>	1 Annual membership 3 x 1 Entrance for exclusive activities 1 Family Day Pass 4 x 1 Entrance to “Les Nocturnes” event 1 Entrance for “Les Printemps du MAC” (annual benefit event) Access to all exhibition openings	1 Annual membership 4 x 1 Art Series Entrance (exclusive activities) 3 x 1 D-Vernissages Entrance 3 x 1 Clair Obscur Entrance Option to purchase 1 of the 100 entrance for the “After Ball” (\$100 for the annual benefit event) Access to the contemporary art exhibitions Subscription to the museum’s magazine	1 Annual membership 5 x 1 Entrance for exclusive activities Preferential rate for the “Bal ADN_MTL” (\$75 instead of \$150 for the annual benefit event) Access to all exhibition openings	1 Annual membership 4 x 2 Entrance for the “After Hours” 1 x 2 Entrance to the “Curators’ Cocktail” (exclusive activity) 1 Entrance for “Sugar Ball” (annual benefit event) Access to all exhibition openings
<b>Recruiting arguments</b>	“A community of young philanthropists who care about the MAC’s development” “Opportunities to meet young professionals who are also lovers of contemporary art”	“Grow your business network” “Consult our museum experts” “Participate in unplugged events”	“Expand your circle of friends and acquaintances” “Get to know more about the world of philanthropy” “Attend exclusive cocktail parties”	“Join other young philanthropists who love their city and care about our stories”

GénérationCité was created in June 2014 as part of the Pointe-à-Callière Museum’s Administrative Council’s initiative to develop a new source of revenue for the museum. In 2015, if more than 50 young professionals participated in events organized by GénérationCité’s Committee, less than 10

<sup>14</sup> Interview conducted with Adèle Lasne, coordinator at the McCord Foundation, held on November 26, 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Interview conducted with Danielle Champagne, director of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts Foundation, held on April 25, 2017.

individuals were members, which favours the conclusion that the program was not well publicized. The foundation has given a mission to the Committee: financing the installation of an archaeological site for 2017, but the Director, Annie Boisclair underlines the lack of time, resources needed to train, guide and manage the 8 young volunteers on the Committee to raise funds.<sup>16</sup>

At the Musée d'art contemporain (MAC), a circle was created in 2015 to strengthen the relations with the young participants of "Les Printemps du MAC", an annual benefit gala. The group intends to offer implication opportunities, to develop a sense of belonging to the museum and to introduce business people to the world of contemporary art and art collecting as means to attract and sustain these relationships. A committee of 16 members is responsible for the programming of activities offered to 85 members, but the foundation offers much support by way of organizing and supervising the young volunteers. Although the benefit gala raised \$200,000 in 2015, the other activities resulted in little or no profits.<sup>17</sup>

### 2.3. Particularities and challenges of young philanthropist circles

The foundations' objectives are manifold: rejuvenate the donor pool, ensure a succession plan for baby-boomers sitting on the boards of administration, cultivate the next generation's level of philanthropic engagement and, if possible, encourage art collecting. The circles rely on the principle of benefit exchange and are inspired by the methods used by universities with their alumni. Activities and events intend to play a role in the development of the participants' knowledge-bases, the advancement of careers and the building of professional and personal networks. Foundations are betting on this form of attachment to create loyal future donors, hoping the small amounts given at an early stage will engender a habit of giving, the scale of which should augment in tandem with the advancement of the young participants' careers.

Table 4. Details on the costs and benefits of a subscription, Montreal, 2017

<b>Cercle du Jeune McCord</b>		<b>Cercle des jeunes philanthropes - MBAM</b>	
Subscription cost	\$275	Subscription cost	\$265
Tax receipt	\$170	Tax receipt	\$180
1 Sugar Ball Entrance	\$160	4 Art Series Entrances	
4 Entrances for two for the After Hours	\$30/event	3 D-Vernissage Entrances	\$55/event
1 Annual Membership	\$30	Option to purchase 1/100 entrance for the After-Ball	\$100
Access to all exhibition openings		1 Annual Membership	\$70
Invitation to the Curators' Cocktail		Access to the contemporary art exhibitions	
		3 Entrance to "Clair Obscur" events	\$12/event
		Subscription to the M Magazine	\$30

<b>GénérationCité - MPAC</b>		<b>Cercle des Printemps - MAC</b>	
Subscription cost	\$250	Subscription cost	\$295
Tax receipt	\$175	Tax receipt	\$125
1 Annual Membership	\$50	1 "Les Printemps du MAC" Entrance	\$175
5 Entrances for exclusive activities	\$70/soirée	3 Entrances for exclusive activities	
Preferential rate for the Bal ADN_MTL	\$75	1 Family Day Pass	\$28
Access to all exhibition openings		1 Annual Membership	\$40
		4 Entrances to "Les Nocturnes"	\$14/event
		Access to all exhibition openings	\$40

<sup>16</sup> Interview conducted with Annie Boisclair, director of the Pointe-à-Callière Museum Foundation, held on December 8, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Interview conducted with François Dufresne, President of the Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art Foundation, held on October 27, 2015.

The sector of young donors is a competitive market. Annually, foundations re-evaluate their objectives in terms of results and benefits to optimise their programs. Adèle Lasne, coordinator of the foundation at the McCord Museum, underlines the importance of analyzing trends that are developing in other circles: “It’s the market where everyone is getting in line. The foundation looks at how this is evolving here or there. We want to respond to the expectations of young philanthropists.” The four foundations agree that it is not the offers that distinguish their respective programs, but the cultural identity and the mission unique to their museum. The McCord Museum specializes in presenting subjects connected to Montreal’s social history, the MAC sensitizes to contemporary art, the Pointe-à-Callière Museum to archaeological heritage, while the variety of exhibitions distinguishes the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

If the multiplication of counter-donations permits museums to respond to the expectations of a plurality of donors, it could have the consequence of effacing the act of giving. The subscription to the giving circle becomes an act of consumption, which throws into question the philanthropic value of the act. Social events are important, but they cannot be the sole driving force behind affiliation. Foundations must diversify their offers to root their relationship with young professionals, at the risk of losing their support once fashion elects a new social hotspot.

### 3. *Millennial giving*

Although there are many donor profiles, ways of giving and motivations behind giving<sup>18</sup>, Montreal millennials’ philanthropic practice displays specific characteristics.<sup>19</sup>

#### 3.1. *Philanthropy as social praxis*

If the act of giving depends on the intention of the individual, the propensity of a person to support a cause is influenced by a plurality of factors. In 2011, René Bekkers and Pamala Wiepking published their study of eight socio-economic variables influencing giving practices: religion, education, age, socialization, gender, marital status, income and financial capital. But more than a social practice, giving is an act of intention. Philippe Chanial (2008:13) notes the existence of a deep-seated relationship between the cause being supported and the identity of the donor: ideas, tastes and circles of influence are strong incitements to give. But if a personal interest in culture motivates giving to museums, it may not be the principal objective of donors.

Philanthropic praxis can be motivated by a desire, conscious or unconscious, for personal gratification<sup>20</sup> and upward social mobility (Mauss, 1924). According to Marcel Mauss, the act of giving, commonly considered as a free, charitable and volunteered gift, is in fact instrumentalized by the giver.<sup>21</sup> Affiliation with a museum grants access to privileges, and associates the donor with a certain elite. Recontextualizing Bourdieu’s theory in the American contemporary context, Francie Ostrower (1998) has demonstrated that culture has always been a tool of social distinction, even if the mechanisms of distinction have evolved. Where Pierre Bourdieu’s theory placed emphasis on art connoisseurship and “good taste” as indicators of social standing, to Francie Ostrower, this distinction is based on an affiliation with the decision-making structures of arts institutions.<sup>22</sup>

Donations are a wager on the potential value of both the donor and the museum (Fournier, 2014). The capacity of a museum to surround itself with generous, young, involved or famous donors contributes

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<sup>18</sup> There are many motives behind charitable giving: to help a cause, to meet a specific need, to give back to the community, to set an example for future generations, to support a successful organization, to network, to be involved in an administrative committee, to have fun during charity events, to gain social recognition, to respond to a demand, to claim a tax deduction, etc.

<sup>19</sup> To have a sense of Montreal’s millennials motivations to give, three interviews were conducted with Stephanie Berthiaume and Oliviana Mingarelli, co-presidents of the Cercle du jeune McCord, held on December 4, 2015 and Noémie La Rue Lapierre, member of GenerationsCité on November 24, 2015.

<sup>20</sup> Ilana Silber mentions the search for ego enhancement, self-esteem, happiness, prestige among peers, social advancement, contacts and business opportunities. Silber, I. in Chanial, P. (dir.), 2008. *La Société vue du don. Manuel de sociologie anti-utilitariste appliquée*, Paris: La découverte, p.371.

<sup>21</sup> Fournier, M., 1995. “Marcel Mauss, l’ethnologie et la politique: le don”, *Anthropologie et société* 19, issue 1, p.22.

<sup>22</sup> “I argue that culture’s importance for upper class cohesion, at least in the American context, is rooted in the social organization of elite participation in the arts” Ostrower, F., 1998. “The arts as cultural capital among elites: Bourdieu’s theory reconsidered”, *Poetics* 26, issue 1, p.44.

to the image and renown of the institution. Meanwhile, for the philanthropist, the affiliation with a museum conveys a positive public image: gift-giving in the form of funds and art works evokes financial power and implication at the board level functions as a symbol of social power.

### 3.2. *Impact of age on giving*

The act of giving is a social practice and also a generational affair. In Quebec, those over the age of 55 represent half of the major donors (individuals who gave an average amount of \$1,732 in 2013) (Crespo, 2017). The increase in the propensity to give with age could be the result of three factors: the evolution of a set of other variables, personal transformations over the course of a lifetime, and the influence of generational cohort.

In aging, individuals do not only gain years, but familial statuses are changed, mortgages are settled and religious involvement tends to increase. Yet, each of these factors (among others) has a positive impact on giving. However, as René Bekkers (2011:349) points out, the correlation between giving and age persists even in studies that account for income. Furthermore, thanks to larger discretionary funds, parents have the tendency to give more regularly once their children achieve financial security (Auten and Joulfaian, 1996). The decrease in anxiety for the future of their progeny and an awareness of life's finitude seem to modify altruistic values in individuals, who then tune in to third party interests.

The impulse to give is also linked to the cohort effect. If, at face value, the concept of generations is a temporal indicator, studies in sociology have pushed its definition beyond that of a simple time-scale (Falardeau, 1990). The sociological thesis developed by Karl Mannheim since 1928 consider a generation as an ensemble of people having approximately the same age who identify with common experiences and historical events. They have therefore fashioned concordant visions of the world. The analysis of intergenerational conflicts of Ronald Inglehart in 1971 demonstrate that cohorts are forged from divergent needs and pursue different moral and social objectives. Each generation acts on a social dynamic with a particular vision. If the aspirations and values like altruism and charity are linked with one generation, the ways of giving change from one cohort to another. On the other hand, Mélodie Mondor, Claire Boily and Yvan Comeau (2014) consider the decline of religious practice, the crisis of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's grand ideals and the disenchantment with the welfare state as having engendered a rupture with the notion of dutiful giving among those between the ages of 20 and 40. Cyclically, the system must transform to adapt and integrate the members of future generations.

### 3.3. *Millennial giving*

Millennials targeted by giving circles are young professionals aged 20 to 40 years, members of generation Y (born between 1976 and 1990) and of the older segment of generation Z (born between 1991 and 2005). Multicultural<sup>23</sup> and connected via new media (Pelletier and Martineau, 2014:20), millennials are marked by their relationship with information and communications technology (Wise Giving Alliance, 2014:4). According to the marketing research firm Nielsen (2014), millennials are coming of age in a troubled economic period, which has the effect of reinforcing their familial, community and social engagements. In Quebec, millennials are more likely to be involved as volunteers (37% of 15-34 year olds have offered their time compared 25% of persons aged 55 and over) (Gravel, 2017). Moreover, the creation of volunteer programs in schools has allowed this generation to develop an engagement with the community.<sup>24</sup>

While there are manifold donor profiles, ways of giving and motives behind gifts, certain trends distinguish millennials from classic donors:

- they value causes that personally touch them before the interests of an organization (Mondor, Boily and Comeau, 2014:33);
- they combine different forms of involvement (Folie-Boivin, 2014);

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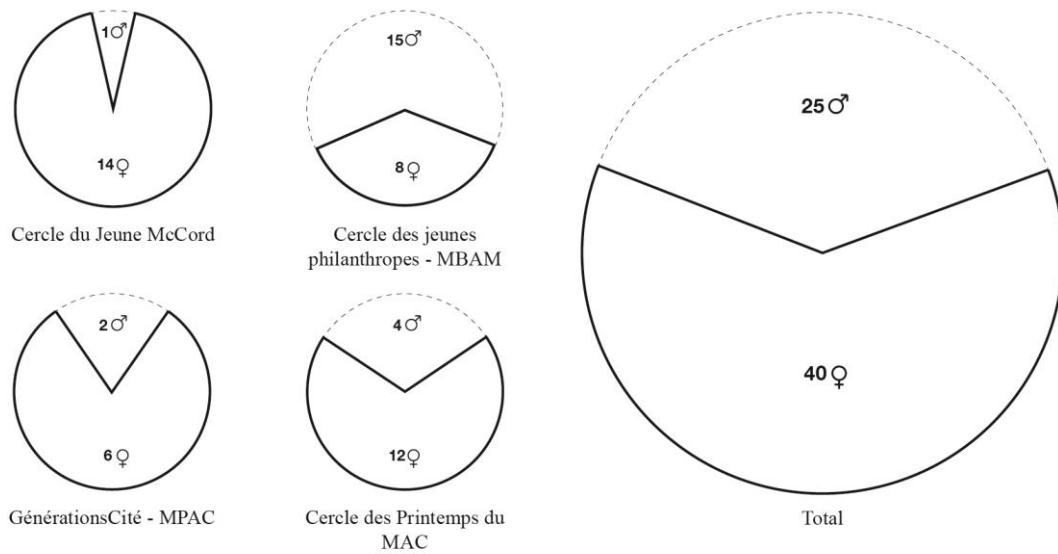
<sup>23</sup> "The fifth challenge is the changing demographics of donors. We should all be aware of the growing diversity of American donors, not just in race and ethnicity, but age, gender, sexual orientation, and a host of other factors" Maehara, P.-V., 2003. "State of Fund Raising: individual giving, trends and forecasting" in Able, E.-H. *Slaying the financial dragon: Strategies for Museums*, Washington: American Association of Museums, p.16.

<sup>24</sup> "This is a great trend in philanthropy, as several studies show that the earlier a person becomes involved with a charity, the more likely he is to stay involved throughout his lifetime" Maehara, P.-V., *Ibid.*



- they intend to stimulate their professional careers through their social involvements (Philanthropic Foundations Canada, 2014);
- they want their donation to have a direct social impact (Lapointe, 2013:184);
- they expect to receive counterparties in exchange for their gift (Thibault, Albertus and Fortier, 2007);
- they consider gifts of money, time, ideas and the sharing of their network as comparable resources;<sup>25</sup> and
- women are implicated in greater numbers on committees.

**Figure 1.** Millennial involvement on Giving Circle Committee, represented by gender, Montreal, 2017



If, like the classic donors, millennials place significant interest on the benefits received in exchange for their donation (acknowledgements, exclusive benefits, capacity to act on the part of the museum), their engagement is no less limited to their membership contribution. In Montreal, young philanthropists' circle committees are popular to the point that foundations turn away volunteers. Implication permits young professionals to concretize their civic objectives while developing the networks, leadership and professional skills needed to achieve their professional advancement objectives. However, while circle committees plan event programming, only one of the committees in this study had the opportunity to co-ordinate a fundraising campaign (to develop an education program at the McCord Museum). Two foundations gave specific philanthropic objectives to their committees (raising funds for the installation of an archaeological site at the Pointe-à-Callière Museum, acquire contemporary art on behalf of the MMFA), while the MAC foundation precludes the raising of funds for specific projects. Still, the possibility of implication and philanthropic accompaniment are major factors in millennial engagement.

#### 4. Betting on the future

Giving is neither a trend nor an ephemeral practice. Foundations assume the responsibility of accompanying young people on their philanthropic journey to sustain the relation established by their young giving circles. They must analyze their approach and nurture a long-term vision. Their initiation into philanthropy programs should not underestimate the force of culture and the power of civic involvement. If right now they give when solicited, young professionals can develop a strong attachment to the museum they are supporting, and should the opportunity present itself, make a substantial investment in its cause.

<sup>25</sup> Stéphanie Berthiaume, Co-president of the Cercle du jeune McCord gives \$700 + a year to charity, but she underlines that philanthropy cannot be reduced simply to a financial engagement, as for her, it also is a voluntary investment in terms of time and ideas. Interview conducted with Stéphanie Berthiaume, Co-president of the Cercle du jeune McCord, held on December 4, 2015.

At the present time, affiliation depends largely on marketing events that permit the drawing of large number of recruits. But it is not the most efficient tool for creating the ties that bind with future donors. Enlightened awareness of social responsibility must be accompanied with an introduction to the specialized domains of the museum and philanthropy. It is repeated contact with curators, interpreters, and collectors that will inspire donor interest.

Young giving circles demand large investments in terms of time and money, for a potential return on investment. This return will only be seen if foundations are successful at maintaining younger generations' general interest in culture and special interest in the museum. Realistically, not every one of these young philanthropists will have seats on the administrative boards of museums, which continue to target influential persons who are extremely connected and wealthy, as pointed out by the co-president of the council of Young McCord, Stéphanie Berthiaume:

“There is no continuity. After [the young philanthropist circles], it's the void. There are no offers for the 38-55 age group. Because the profiles around the [boardroom] table are very high in standing. [...] As our pay scale rises, causes become more accessible, such as those concerned with health, where the price of entry is higher. [As a young professional] I will eventually be led to diversify my giving. As you enter adulthood, you leave Young McCord. [People] have to keep that in mind.”

It is fundamental for foundations to cultivate relationships with donors they have introduced to the world of philanthropy who wish to continue to be involved past the age of 40. The adoption of a long-term strategy will allow foundations to anticipate the future. Structures have to be created to maintain the relationships with this new category of loyal, if non-traditional, patrons. If they do not react, museums risk losing the support of those who aspire to invest, who will go elsewhere to develop their philanthropic practice.

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