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Museums and social change

Two perspectives on the social role of museums

Gabriela Aidar

Sociomuseology & Sociomuséologie 4

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Ficha Técnica

[**Título**]

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[**Coleção**]

Sociomuseology & Sociomuséologie, 4

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Participants from the Portal do Futuro Homeless Shelter wear masks and interact with the artwork Impassibilidade, first quarter of the 20th century, by Auguste Puttemans, during an educational visit to the Pinacoteca de São Paulo.

Photo: Christina Rufatto, 2016.

[**Capa e Paginação**]

Bel Lavratti

[**ISBN**]

979-8300578312

[**DOI**] :

10.60543/8186-kp26

[**Edição**]

Edições Universitárias Lusófonas
Campo Grande 376, 1700-090 Lisboa
http://loja.ulusofona.pt/

[**Ano de edição**]

2024

[**Contactos**]

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Campo Grande, 376, 1749 - 024 Lisboa

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Sociomuseology & Sociomuséologie vol. 4

Manuelina Maria Duarte Cândido

The collection **Sociomuseology & Sociomuséologie** was released in May 2024 with a first volume entitled La décolonisation du système occidental de musées en Afrique Orientale: état actuel, réflexions et propositions, by Édouard Nzoyihera. Going onto the fourth volume, this collection is now more consolidated and seems to have overcome a persistent line in Museology publications, which generally never goes over the first three volumes or editions. So be it!

In this collection, we publish selected works originally written in English and/or in French or translated into these languages, that dialogue with the insurgent museologies, such as Sociomuseology, Social Museology, *Nouvelle Muséologie*, Popular Museology, Community Museology, Ecomuseology, among others (Duarte Cândido, Cornelis, Nzoyihera, 2019; Duarte Cândido, Pappalardo, 2022). This seems even more timely since the International Council of Museums created the International Committee for Social Museology (SOMUS-ICOM) in 2023.

This collection aims to give broader international visibility to these works and gradually boost the circulation of authors, concepts and experiences linked to these insurgent museologies, particularly in non-Portuguese and non-Spanish speaking countries. Thus, this collection seeks to overcome the language barriers identified in the work Ondas do Pensamento Museológico Brasileiro (Duarte Cândido, 2003) and which persist even two decades after its publication.

The Lusófona University in Lisbon, Portugal, through its Department of Museology, has a long history of contribution to the consolidation of the field. In 1993, it started offering a specialization certificate before creating a master's degree and finally a doctorate in 2007. Also in 1993, the Lusófona launched the well-known publication of the Cadernos de Sociomuseologia (*https://revistas.ulusofona.pt/index.php/*

cadernosociomuseologia). In its first volume, Mário Moutinho sought to construct a definition of Social Museology (Moutinho, 1993). The specificity of this academic environment is the affirmation of Sociomuseology as a school of thought. Far from urging for a cleavage between Social Museology and Sociomuseology, the Department has been a platform "to bridge the South American radically political and engaged concept of Social Museology with the international university field" (Neu, 2024, p. 64). Widely known in the Ibero-American context, this school of thought has actively sought partnerships to expand geopolitical horizons with a historical collaboration with virtually all Brazilian universities in which there is training in Museology, and with non-lusophone universities, such as the Reinwardt Academy in the Netherlands. More recently, partnerships were also extended to universities in Spain, Germany, and Italy. However, there is still a lot of resistance in museum environment and from conservative academics beyond the linguistic barrier already identified. Even for those interested, there is still relatively little material available on Sociomuseology in English, and even rarer in French.

With an objective of increasing accessibility to the thriving production of Sociomuseology to potential allies in the clashes for the transformation of the museal field, I have directed my work as a guest professor at the Lusófona University, Department of Museology with two main goals: to carry out the prospection and curation of material of interest for the publication of books in English and/or French within the scope of Sociomuseology; and also to stimulate new productions in French and English including encouraging PhD candidates to write their theses in French or English (without discarding the thesis orientation in Portuguese). The diffusion of books is mainly online and free, which allows more democratic use of this production, with the possibility of printing volumes using the print-on-demand process.

In this volume, I present Gabriela Aidar's work, which was originally her master's thesis completed in 2001 within the Museum Studies program of the University of Leicester in England. When she returned to Brazil, she was one of the country's pioneers in institutionalizing social inclusion in museums. There are obviously important precedents, such as the work of Waldisa Rússio and Silvia Brasileiro, when the expression of social inclusion was not even used. In the field of accessibility, the work developed by Amanda Tojal and Margarete de Oliveira in the early 1990s at the Museum of Contemporary Art at the University of São Paulo also deserves a mention.

Around 2002, the Pinacoteca of São Paulo, one of the largest art museums in Latin America, was undergoing a significant overhaul. A daring resolution at that time was made by placing the educational action

at the heart of the museum, notably by launching several initiatives such as the Sociocultural Inclusion Program (PISC), led by Gabriela Aidar.

Through the PISC project, Aidar highlighted that audience studies directed towards both spontaneous and non-visitors from the surrounding areas were a key factor in developing adapted educational programs. The first survey results showed indeed that the visitors were highly educated, had a medium to high family income, and came from other neighbourhoods, and not from the central area of São Paulo, where the Pinacoteca is located.

This central area of the city of São Paulo is made up of socially vulnerable groups, many of whom face serious problems such as homelessness, problematic drug use, precarious housing, squatting, etc. Today, around 80% of the public that the PISC works with are now from these disadvantaged people living in the museum's neighbourhood. With them, the PISC developed scheduled and regular visit programs after realizing that for people whose daily life is so far from the world of arts and culture, a one-time visit to the museum could further reinforce their isolation from the museum rather than get them closer to it.

Another innovative program is called the Staff Training Program. It aims to provide ongoing training for the Pinacoteca's staff, seen here as the museum's internal public, which is generally very neglected by the museum and not included in its educational activities. This is a broad, non-formal training focused on the human being as a whole, not just for their intellect. It involves discussions on specific issues in the museum world that better situate the staff in low-ranking positions, who have little chance to understand the institution they are in better. However, the program also includes activities like visits to other cultural institutions or workshops that raise body awareness and well-being in response to complaints of pain among staff who spend a lot of time in the exhibition rooms in the same position. Everything is planned to meet the needs and demands of the staff.

The monographic work that led to the book I am now presenting was, therefore, a precursor in Brazil, a country that, in turn, is a world reference for the issue of social inclusion and the educational work of museums with non-school audiences.

Furthermore, as previously shown, these reflections continue to underpin innovative practices made at this important art museum that is the Pinacoteca de São Paulo, from which the author, together with a whole team with very high professional standards, continue to put them into practice, reflect on them and publish about them. The educational work

of the Pinacoteca has been featured throughout Latin America and by the *International Committee* for Education and Cultural Action (CECA-ICOM).

In a lecture entitled Le musée inclusif et la muséologie mondialisée, given at the 2012 ICOFOM LAM meeting in Petrópolis (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), François Mairesse recalled the English origin of the term inclusion and criticized his then recently launched own Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie. He pointed out that it was not a truly international project[1], but a francophone one, which would explain the absence of the term inclusion. If the dictionary were an anglophone project, this term would have been undoubtedly present, and even more so, I would say, if it was Latin American. These cultural nuances and emphasis permeated by linguistic differences mark the social and human sciences, and it couldn't be any different in Museology.

With the publication of this work written initially at the University of Leicester, I reaffirm the centrality of inclusion issues in educational action in museums in Brazil and the consistent work Gabriela Aidar has been doing for more than 20 years at the Pinacoteca de São Paulo. Looking back at Aidar's master's thesis, it shows that the basis of her work was already present in 2001. As a way to bring readers an update on the subject, we also chose to publish in the same volume an article as yet unpublished in English, which the author prepared for a special issue on Museum Education of the journal Revista Docência e Cibercultura and originally published in 2019.

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[1] He then addressed this lack by undertaking the project of the Dictionary of Museology in 2022.

La collection Sociomuseology & Sociomuséologie est sortie en mai 2024 avec un premier volume intitulé La décolonisation du système occidental de musées en Afrique Orientale : état actuel, réflexions et propositions, d'Édouard Nzoyihera. Avec ce quatrième volume, cette collection est désormais plus consolidée et semble avoir surmonté une ligne persistante dans les publications de muséologie, qui ne vont généralement jamais au-delà des trois premiers volumes ou éditions. Qu'il en soit ainsi !

Dans cette collection, nous publions des travaux sélectionnés, écrits à l'origine en anglais ou bien en français, ou traduits dans ces langues, qui dialoguent avec les muséologies insurgées, telles que la Sociomuséologie, la Muséologie Sociale, la Nouvelle Muséologie, la Muséologie Populaire, la Muséologie Communautaire, l'Écomuséologie, entre autres (Duarte Cândido, Cornelis, Nzoyihera, 2019; Duarte Cândido, Pappalardo, 2022). Cela semble d'autant plus opportun que le Conseil International des Musées a créé le Comité International de Muséologie Sociale (SOMUS-ICOM) en 2023.

Cette collection vise à donner une plus grande visibilité internationale à cette production et à favoriser progressivement une plus grande circulation des auteurs, des concepts et des expériences liés à ces muséologies insurgées, en particulier dans les pays non-lusophones ou non-hispanophones. Ainsi, cette collection cherche à surmonter les barrières linguistiques identifiées dans l'œuvre Ondas do Pensamento Museológico Brasileiro (Duarte Cândido, 2003) et qui persistent même deux décennies après sa publication.

L'Université Lusófona à Lisbonne, Portugal, par l'intermédiaire de son Département de Muséologie, contribue depuis longtemps à la consolidation du domaine. En 1993, l'Université a commencé à proposer un cours de spécialisation, avant de créer un master et enfin un doctorat en 2007. C'est également en 1993 que l'Université Lusófona a lancé sa célèbre publication, les Cadernos de Sociomuseologia (*https://revistas.ulusofona.pt/index.php/cadernosociomuseologia*). Dans le premier volume, Mário Moutinho a cherché à construire une définition de la Muséologie Sociale (Moutinho, 1993). La spécificité de ce milieu académique est l'affirmation de la Sociomuséologie comme école de pensée. Loin d'inciter à un clivage entre la Muséologie Sociale et la Sociomuséologie, le Département a été une plateforme « pour jeter un pont entre le concept sud-américain radicalement politique et engagé de Muséologie Sociale et le domaine universitaire international » (Neu, 2024, p. 64, traduction propre). Largement connue dans le contexte ibéro-américain, cette école de pensée a activement recherché des partenariats pour élargir ses horizons géopolitiques, avec une collaboration historique avec la quasi-totalité des universités brésiliennes proposant une formation en

Muséologie, ainsi qu'avec des universités non-lusophones, telles que la Reinwardt Academy aux Pays-Bas. Plus récemment, des partenariats ont été étendus à des universités en Espagne, en Allemagne et en Italie. Cependant, au-delà de la barrière linguistique déjà identifiée, il y a encore beaucoup de résistance dans les milieux muséaux et universitaires conservateurs. Et même pour les personnes qui sont intéressées, il y a relativement peu de matériel en Sociomuséologie disponible en anglais et, plus rarement encore, en français.

Avec l'objectif d'accroître l'accessibilité de la production florissante de la Sociomuséologie à plus d'alliés potentiels dans les affrontements pour la transformation du champ muséal, j'ai dirigé mon travail en tant que professeure invitée au Département de Muséologie de l'Université Lusófona avec deux buts principaux. D'une part, j'avais pour but d'effectuer la prospection et la sélection de matériel d'intérêt pour la publication de livres en Sociomuséologie en langue anglaise ou bien française. Et d'autre part, j'avais pour objectif de stimuler de nouvelles productions en français et en anglais, notamment en cherchant à attirer des doctorants désireux d'écrire leurs thèses dans ces langues (sans écarter l'orientation de thèse en portugais). La diffusion des livres de cette collection se fait principalement en ligne et gratuitement, ce qui permet une utilisation plus démocratique de cette production, avec la possibilité d'imprimer certains volumes en utilisant le processus d'impression à la demande.

Dans ce volume, je présente le travail de Gabriela Adar, qui était à l'origine son mémoire de master achevé en 2001 au sein du Master of Arts in Museum Studies à l'Université de Leicester en Angleterre. À son retour au Brésil, Gabriela Aidar a été l'une des pionnières du pays en matière d'institutionnalisation de l'inclusion sociale dans les musées. Il existe évidemment des précédents importants, tels que les travaux de Waldisa Rússio et Silvia Brasileiro, à une époque où l'expression d'inclusion sociale n'était même pas utilisée. Dans le domaine de l'accessibilité, le travail développé par Amanda Tojal et Margarete de Oliveira au début des années 1990 au musée d'art contemporain de l'université de São Paulo mérite également d'être mentionné.

Vers 2022, la Pinacoteca de São Paulo, l'un des plus grands musées d'art d'Amérique latine, subissait une refonte importante. Une résolution audacieuse avait alors été prise en plaçant l'action éducative au centre des activités du musée, notamment en lançant plusieurs initiatives telles que le Programme d'Inclusion socioculturelle (PISC), guidé par Gabriela Aidar. Grâce au projet PISC, Gabriela Aidar a mis en évidence que les études de publics menées auprès des visiteurs spontanés et des non-visiteurs des zones avoisinantes constituaient un facteur clé dans

l'élaboration de programmes éducatifs adaptés. Les résultats de la première enquête ont en effet montré que les visiteurs avaient un niveau d'éducation élevé, un revenu familial moyen à élevé et venaient d'autres quartiers, et non du centre de São Paulo, où se trouve la Pinacoteca.

Cette zone centrale de la ville de São Paulo est constituée de groupes socialement vulnérables, dont beaucoup sont confrontés à de graves problèmes tels que le sans-abrisme, la consommation problématique de drogues, la précarité des logements, le squat, etc. Aujourd'hui, environ 80% du public avec lequel le PISC travaille est issu de ces groupes défavorisés qui vivent à proximité du musée. Avec eux, le PISC a développé des programmes de visites programmées et régulières après avoir réalisé que, pour des personnes dont la vie quotidienne est si éloignée du monde des arts et de la culture, une visite ponctuelle au musée pourrait renforcer leur isolement par rapport au musée plutôt que de les en rapprocher.

Un autre programme innovant développé par la Pinacoteca est le Programme de formation du personnel. Il vise à offrir une formation continue au personnel du musée, considéré ici comme le public interne du musée, qui est généralement très négligé par les musées et n'est pas inclus dans leurs activités éducatives. Il s'agit d'une formation large, non-formelle, axée sur l'être humain dans son ensemble, et pas seulement sur son intellect. Elle comprend des discussions sur des questions spécifiques au monde des musées qui permettent de mieux situer le personnel occupant des postes subalternes, qui souvent dans d'autres cas a peu de chances de mieux comprendre l'institution dans laquelle il travaille. Mais le programme comprend aussi des activités telles que des visites d'autres institutions culturelles ou des ateliers de sensibilisation santé physique et bien-être, en réponse aux plaintes de douleur du personnel qui passe beaucoup de temps dans les salles d'exposition, dans la même position. Tout est prévu pour répondre aux besoins et aux demandes des employés.

Le travail monographique qui a abouti au livre que je présente aujourd'hui a donc été un précurseur au Brésil, un pays qui, à son tour, est une référence mondiale pour la question de l'inclusion sociale et le travail éducatif des musées avec des publics non scolaires.

En outre, comme on l'a vu précédemment, ces réflexions continuent de sous-tendre les pratiques innovantes de cet important musée d'art qu'est la Pinacoteca de São Paulo, à partir duquel l'autrice, avec toute une équipe de professionnels de très haut niveau, continue de les concrétiser, d'y réfléchir et de publier à leur sujet. Le travail éducatif de la Pinacoteca a été mis en avant dans toute l'Amérique latine et par le

Comité international pour l'éducation et l'action culturelle (CECA-ICOM).

Dans une conférence intitulée Le musée inclusif et la muséologie mondialisée, donnée lors de la réunion de l'ICOFOM LAM 2012 à Petrópolis (Rio de Janeiro, Brésil), François Mairesse a rappelé l'origine anglaise du terme inclusion et a critiqué son propre Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie, qui avait été publié récemment. Il a souligné qu'il ne s'agissait pas d'un projet véritablement international[2], mais d'un travail francophone, ce qui expliquerait l'absence du terme inclusion. Si le dictionnaire était un projet anglophone, ce terme aurait sans doute été présent, et encore plus, dirais-je, s'il était latino-américain. Ces nuances et accents culturels imprégnés de différences linguistiques marquent les sciences sociales et humaines, et il ne pourrait en être autrement en Muséologie.

Avec la publication de ce travail écrit à l'origine à l'Université de Leicester, je réaffirme la centralité des questions d'inclusion dans l'action éducative des musées brésiliens et le travail cohérent que Gabriela Aidar réalise depuis plus de 20 ans à la Pinacoteca de São Paulo. Le mémoire de master de Gabriela Aidar montre que les bases de son travail étaient déjà présentes en 2001. Afin d'apporter aux lecteurs et lectrices une mise à jour sur le sujet, nous avons également choisi de publier dans le même volume un article encore inédit en anglais, que l'autrice a préparé pour un numéro spécial sur l'Éducation muséale de la revue Docência e Cibercultura et publié à l'origine en 2019.

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[2] Il a ensuite remédié à cette lacune en entreprenant le projet du Dictionnaire de muséologie en 2022.

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Museums and social change: two perspectives on the social role of museums

Gabriela Aidar

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Part 1.
Museums and social change: two perspectives on the social role of museums

Foreword

This research was carried out at the beginning of the 21st century, within the scope of the Museum Studies program at Leicester University, in the United Kingdom, to obtain a Master of Arts's degree, from 2001 to 2002 (later revalidated in Brazil by the Master's degree of Museology at the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro - Unirio).[3] The research was aimed at the comparative analysis of the social role of museums as agents that produce positive social changes within the British and Brazilian context of that time.

Accordingly, the research is dated, as it focuses on the practices and reflections promoted in the two museological realities of the period. Its interest was to promote debates about how museums can relate to and approach social demands.

Still, the issues this research approaches remain relevant, especially after the new definition of museums adopted by the International Council of Museums - ICOM, in 2022.[4] We see in this definition the use of terms such as inclusion, accessibility, diversity, sustainability and participation, in an explicitly socially committed position. The process of developing the new definition, conducted by two Latin American professionals, makes us speculate how much the discussions in the region about the social role of museums are reflected in it.[5]

Since the beginning of the 2000s, when the concept of social inclusion began to be applied to museum practice, it has been used by different authors and in museological contexts in different ways, that is, since its origins, social inclusion in museums has not been a consensual proposition. With regard to the Brazilian case, and we can also generalize it for the Latin American case, the term "inclusion" has been attached to the term "accessibility", thus becoming almost indistinguishable one from the other, which the following research will indicate is a limited perception.

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[3] The only change made to this version compared to the original dissertation was to update the references to the book Sandell, Richard (ed.). (2002). *Museums, Society, Inequality, London and New York: Routledge*, published after it. The rest of the content remained unchanged, as it was written in 2001.

[4] A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing. Available at: *<https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/>* Accessed in: May 2024.

[5] Bruno Brulon and Lauran Bonilla-Merchav, from Brazil and Costa Rica, respectively, served as co-chairs of ICOM Define, a committee focused on developing the new ICOM definition of museums. Brulon recently organized a tome on the Santiago Round Table, a reference document to understand the social role of museums in Latin America and beyond. Brulon, Bruno Soares; Mellado, Leonardo (eds). (2022). *50 años de la Mesa Redonda de Santiago de Chile: lecturas en clave actual*. ICOFOM STUDY SERIES, 50 (1). Available at: **2022_ISS_50_1.pdf (icom.museum)*. Accessed in: August 2023.

Even more,

> In the Brazilian museum context, as well as internationally, the use of the term "accessibility" is initially understood as a synonym for actions aimed at people with disabilities. The close relationship between museums and schools and the use of the term by formal education – longer than by cultural institutions, in fact – are perhaps responsible for this association. (AIDAR, 2019, p. 156).

In this way, the discussion about sociocultural inclusion in museums was reduced to work (educational one, in most cases) with people with disabilities, as if socially excluded audiences or those with difficulties accessing museums in Brazil were limited to these groups, which is far from reality.

Several surveys of museum audiences carried out at institutional, regional and national levels indicate that the main elements that limit access to institutions are the income and education levels of individuals (AIDAR, 2019, p. 166), that is, their socioeconomic class and consequently, its cultural capital. Cultural attendance in the country is thus conditioned by social inequalities, an inescapable element of Brazilian reality. As Chagas and Storino state,

> Just as it is essential to overcome the physical, sensory and cognitive barriers that prevent full access to museums and heritage, it is also necessary to overcome economic, social and cultural barriers and face the challenge of radically expanding access to their services and products. In other words: it is necessary to overcome the immaterial barriers that frame museums in a lifestyle of the elites that are beyond the reach of the popular classes. (CHAGAS and STORINO, 2012, p. XIV)

With regard to some of the perceptions raised by my research carried out 20 years ago, including the prominence of educational actions in the social practice of Brazilian museums, the passage of time has reinforced this finding. The fact that my professional practice, since then, has been in the educational area of a museum in São Paulo, developing inclusive education processes with groups with difficulties accessing official cultural institutions, speaks for itself.

The relationship between socially engaged museum practice and museum education is not new, especially in the Latin American context. As Primo and Soto (2022) state in an editorial in a journal that focuses on the contributions of the Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire's thought to Sociomuseology,

> The approach between Museology and Education is long-lasting, but throughout the 20th century these two areas became interconnected in favor of emancipatory processes that were ratified by the renewal movements in museology throughout the second half of the 20th century. Both more normative museum institutions and community-based museum processes followed the full assumption of education as an inalienable presupposition of museological practice. Gradually, social commitment museology began adopting popular education practices in its processes that reinforced its dialogical, critical and emancipatory vocation. (PRIMO and SOTO, 2022, p. 9)

In this sense, the influence of the document resulting from the Santiago Round Table of 1972 is revisited for the consolidation of the New Museology, Social Museology and Sociomuseology. Paulo Freire was invited to participate in the round table but was unable to attend for political reasons.

> However, I emphasize that, despite of his absence, the most striking themes of his work, that is: awareness and change, which lead the educator and every professional to engage socially and politically, committed to a different society project, were present, and they are still present, or rather, they are at the core of Santiago's propositions. (SANTOS, 2022, p. 43)

As the same author states, what such museological trends and the professionals linked to them seek is a museum committed to human beings and intended to improve their living conditions. (SANTOS, 2022, p. 47)

Over the last two decades, it has been possible to act and observe the strengthening (and also precariousness) of educational actions in Brazilian museums, the consolidation of public policies in the area and the dissemination of the need to work with audiences other than

schoolchildren, especially those in more socially vulnerable conditions, outside the traditional schooling age groups.[6]

The expectation is that current indications on the social role of museums can disseminate responsibility for promoting positive social changes to all areas of institutions, not just educational ones, but at the same time, these areas are not weakened as a result and that their accumulated experience is duly valued.

The effort for socially relevant and committed museums remains more current than ever, whether they are traditional or not, of any type, and it is in this sense that I hope the following reflections can contribute.

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[6] In the case of public policies at the national level, we can mention the establishment of the National Museum Education Policy (PNEM), in 2017. Available at: *https://pnem.museus.gov.br/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Pol%C3%ADtica-Nacional-de-Educa%C3%A7%C3%A3o-Museal.pdf* Accessed in: September 2023. With regard to the consolidation of educational work with audiences with access difficulties in State museums in São Paulo, access: Aidar, Gabriela. (2020). Educação museal inclusiva: a experiência da Pinacoteca de São Paulo. *Lugar Comum – Estudos de mídia, cultura e democracia, 56*, 150-167. Available at: *https://revistas.ufrj.br/index.php/lc/issue/view/1675* Accessed in: September 2023.

Introduction

The present study was born from an interest in the theories and practices that propose, explore and analyse the idea of the social relevance of museums. It is commonplace that museums, since their modern origins in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, were conceived as public institutions devoted to perform a social role[7]. Bearing this in mind, the aim of this work was not to underline the various social uses the museum has had during its history. Although the analysis developed here is self-conscious about its historical character, and the different faces museums acquired concerning their public uses, the main objective of this work is to understand and discuss some contemporary ideas and their applications to the social role of museums.

In this sense, the development of the concept of 'social inclusion', as applied to museum practice in the British scenario, appeared to be worthy of study as a contemporary paradigm. In addition to this, there was also a will to understand how the social role of museums is theorised and applied in another socio-economic, politic and museological reality, in this case, in a country like Brazil. Hence, the aim of this work is to bring these two issues together. First, by considering the social role of the museum within the British context, as seen by the social inclusion framework, and second, by analysing the social role of museums as understood and practised in contemporary Brazil. From the encounter of these two museological practices, a dialogue can be established, something that will be discussed in the final part of this dissertation.

To reach the above proposed, the study was structured in a sequence that could inform and prepare for reflection upon the variables of the two practices. The first part will deal with the notion of social inclusion as a concept grounded outside the museum field, in the spheres of social and economic policies and within the realm of international development studies, produced mainly in Western Europe since the 1980s. In this section the characteristics of the concept in general will be delineated, and its applicability within the museum field will begin to be explored. The second section will deal with the concept of social inclusion as it is applied to museum practice, and there, most of the reflections will be based on the British perspective for several reasons like the availability of bibliography - since Britain is where most of the research in this field

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[7] The social role of museums was then conceived to the performing of an educational resource for the masses. Though, as Tony Bennett affirms, 'while the nineteenth-century museums were thus intended *for* the people, they were certainly not *of* the people in the sense of displaying any interest in the lives, habits, and customs of either the contemporary working classes or the labouring classes of pre-industrial societies. If museums were regarded as providing object lessons in things, their central message was to materialize the power of the ruling classes...' *The Birth of the Museum*, London and New York: Routledge, 1995, (p. 109).

has been conducted - and central Government interest and commitment to the subject.

The third and fourth parts of this reflection will initially analyse what is called here the 'conceptual sources' for the idea of the social role of museums in Brazil, and how they relate to the practice as the three case studies chosen for this can elucidate. The analysis of the case studies is intended to draw a picture of the social role of museums in Brazil. From the conclusions of this section, elements for a dialogue between the two theories and practices can be proposed.

In methodological terms, this work will have two diverse approaches. The first one, which will deal with the social role of museums in Britain through the understanding of the social inclusion paradigm, will be based on specific literature produced about the subject and on previous analysis of the practices. On the other hand, the section on the social role of museums in Brazil will follow the opposite path, reaching conclusions on the subject through the analysis of contemporary practices.

From a British perspective, this study aims to be a contribution towards the illustration of diverse museological practices, particularly within the debate about the social role of museums. From a Brazilian perspective, there is the will to highlight how the idea of the social role of museums has been worked out in the country and to stimulate the debate around the subject, also presenting the concepts and practices developed by the social inclusion concept applied to museums inside the United Kingdom. Imported and adapted, as many other institutions, from Europe, museums in Brazil are not generally seen, outside the museum profession, as devices that can positively affect people's lives. But in a society whose historical roots are grounded in deeply unequal relationships, as a result, among other reasons, from centuries of slave work, every effort towards more inclusive practices is necessary and must

be given attention.[8] If, consequently, this work can provoke reflections and discussions on how museums can relate and deal with social demands, then its purpose will be fulfilled.

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[8] As results from structural inequalities inside the Brazilian society, some data can be used as illustrations of the social problems faced. In a report made by the United Nations, measuring rates of human development (such as life hope, education and income), amongst 162 countries, Brazil was ranked as 69th. While the minimum wage necessary to survive in the country in August 2000 was calculated as R$963, the actual minimum wage in April 2000 was R$151 (numbers in national currency). In 1998, the difference between the incomes of the 10% richer was about twelve times higher than that of the 10% poorer sectors of the population. In 1992, 2.8% of the rural properties represented 56.7% of the rural land of the country, what means land concentration and large estates, and as a result there were 1,140,000 people involved in land conflicts in 1998 and 47 murders from them. Another result is the swelling of the cities, with around 78% of the country's population living in urban areas, and 22% in rural areas. The country's biggest city, São Paulo, with around 16 million inhabitants, had in May 2001, 7.1% of its population unemployed. From the unemployed people in the country, 50% are from African origins. Child labour is common, with 54% of child workers in São Paulo receiving less than half minimum wage. In 1995, 26,047 cases of slave work were reported around the country. In poorer regions, like the North East, illiteracy rates reached 25% in 1999. Data gathered from the United Nations website in Portuguese, *www.undp.org.br* , and from *The Workers Yearbook*, 2000/2001, Dieese (Inter-Union Department for Socio-Economic Studies and Statistics) website, *www.dieese.org.br*

Chapter 1
The concept of social exclusion

The concept of social exclusion

Most of the reflections that analyse the concept and the practices of social inclusion deal initially with the characterisation of social *exclusion*. The idea of inclusion cannot be considered separately, since it can only occur when some exclusionary process takes place. Therefore, understanding the mechanisms of exclusion is a starting point to develop the policies that would implement social inclusion.

Characterizing social exclusion

The concept of social exclusion refers to the processes by which an individual, or a group of individuals, find themselves with limited access to the devices that constitute social life and are, because of this, alienated from full participation in the society in which they live. The core areas where the alienation occurs are those related to the exclusion from political systems, resulting in loss of *rights*, exclusion from markets and welfare state provisions, whose result is lack of *resources*, and exclusion from family and community links, leading to the deterioration of personal *relationships*[9]. In practice, these instances will tend to overlap, and exclusion from one of them can provoke the others. Therefore, exclusion from livelihood and labour markets can cause exclusion from political participation, as well as exclusion from civil rights can lead to lack of social participation and basic needs such as health or education. The various combinations and plurality of manifestations of social exclusion can also be understood as multiple deprivation. For authors who analyse the social exclusion approach like de Haan, one of the main advantages of this approach is its emphasis on the multi-dimensional character of deprivation. The broadening of issues to consider when focusing on deprivation tends to the adoption of a holistic view of the problem, and the consideration of elements unconcerned before in the study of deprivation, such as how political and cultural participation (or the lack of it) can work to exclude or include segments of the society. A point of originality of the concept is its focus on the processes and on the mechanisms and institutions that exclude people. As

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[9] de Haan, Arjan and Maxwell, Simon (eds.) 'Poverty and social exclusion in North and South', *IDS Bulletin*, vol. 29, n. 1, 1998, (p. 03).

de Haan states, the social exclusion approach 'may take us beyond static descriptions of situations of deprivation, and focus on the causes and mechanisms that lead to these situations'[10]. Therefore, the place museums have inside this logic is that of being part of a chain of institutions that participate in the process of exclusion or inclusion.

Origins

Its origins go back to 1974, when the term 'social exclusion' was first used by the then Secrétaire d'État à l'Action Sociale of the French government, René Lenoir, in his book *Les Exclus: Un Français sur Dix*. In his book, Lenoir categorizes the *exclus* as those excluded from employment-based social security systems, including the disabled, suicidal people, aged, substance abusers, etc[11]. Since the 1980s the concept has been broadened to refer to different types of social disadvantage, and spread rapidly throughout Western Europe, to an extent that it has been used as a substitute for the concept of poverty in the social policies of the European Union since the early 1990s[12]. 'In sum, exclusion became a new way to describe the difficulty of establishing solidarities between individuals and groups and the larger society', or the rupture of the social and symbolic bonds that attach individuals to society[13].

The development of the concept of social exclusion is considered to be related to the emergence of the 'new poverty' in industrialized European countries, associated with economic restructuring and technological change leading to long-term unemployment[14], and also with the increasing international migration, and the dismantling of traditional welfare states[15]. Other authors believe that its development is related to a contemporary need for new models of social order and justice, as a result of the vacuum created by the discrediting of collectivist models (after the collapse of the Soviet Union), and the discrediting of liberal market

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[10] Arjan de Haan, "Social exclusion', an alternative concept for the study of deprivation?', in Haan, Arjan de and Maxwell, Simon (eds.), 1998, pp. 10-19 (p. 10).

[11] Idem, (p.11).

[12] Martin Evans, 'Behind the rhetoric: the institutional basis of social exclusion and poverty', in Haan, Arjan de and Maxwell, Simon (eds.), 1998, pp. 42-49 (p.42).

[13] Hilary Silver, 'Reconceptualizing social disadvantage: three paradigms of social exclusion', in Rodgers, Gerry; Gore, Charles and Figueiredo, José B. (eds.) *Social Exclusion: Rhetoric, Reality, Responses*, Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies, 1995, pp. 57-80 (p. 64).

[14] Charles Gore, 'Markets, citizenship and social exclusion', in Rodgers, Gerry; Gore, Charles and Figueiredo, José B. (eds.), 1995, pp. 01-37 (p. 01).

[15] Idem, (p. 03).

models, 'given the relentless erosion of stable social contexts by the advance of a global economy'[16]. Other still see it as a response to social exploitation in our time, when class-based movements and organizations have weakened.[17]

Given its non-rigid character, the use of the concept in different contexts will vary according to political and intellectual traditions.[18] Thus, it is important, when local policies are conceived, to define clearly at least the group and the reason for the processes of exclusion that take place, as well as the social institutions that take part in that process, which means that whatever the definition used, it must be context-based and made explicit[19]. Although different concepts of deprivation will influence the policies to tackle it, there are two variables common to the projects that involve the concept of social exclusion in theory and practice. These projects can either seek to ameliorate the consequences of the crisis of employment, creating alternatives to welfare systems, or they can seek more structural changes in social organizations and social relationships[20], through mechanisms such as improvements in education and in a longer-term basis. As will be seen in the following chapters, where the practice developed in Britain and the analysis of the Brazilian case studies will be pointed out, in both cases these trends can be attested. Even though it is not possible to apply the social exclusion concept rigorously to the policies to tackle disadvantage in the Brazilian context, the practices resulting from them, probably by dealing with similar social demands, will have equal characteristics of either alleviating punctual problems or trying to promote broader changes.

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[16] See Angus Stewart, 'Social inclusion: an introduction', in Askonas, Peter and Stewart, Angus (eds.) *Social Inclusion – Possibilities and Tensions*, London: MacMillan Press, 2000, pp. 01-13 (p. 01).

[17] Hilary Silver, 1995, (p. 65).

[18] According to the characterization proposed by Silver, there are three paradigms of social exclusion that reflect diverse traditions: the solidarity paradigm, dominant in France, where exclusion is the rupture of a social bond between the individual and the society; the specialization paradigm, predominant in the United States and based on economic division of labour and social differentiation, where exclusion refers to discrimination; and finally, the monopoly paradigm, influential among the European left, which sees exclusion as a consequence of the formation of group monopoly. Hilary Silver, 1995, (pp. 66-70).

[19] Martin Evans, 1998, (p. 45).

[20] Idem, (p. 02).

Differences between the concepts of social exclusion and poverty

The advantage of being a fluid term is given by the multi-dimensional vision of deprivation that the concept brings, providing a potential for different countries in different contexts to develop particular policies according to their institutions and processes of exclusion. However, in order to draw a common ground in which the concept can be manipulated, we can stress the possibilities it offers, as several authors do, by contrasting it with the notion of poverty.

There are similarities between the two notions, like the fact that both are concerned with issues of deprivation and inequality in the social fabric. But while the concept of poverty is related mainly to income and expenditure, the social exclusion approach sees deprivation in a more multi-dimensional way. Therefore, the notions of poverty focus on *distributional* issues, whereas social exclusion focuses on *relational* issues, such as inadequate social participation, lack of social integration and lack of power.[21] Such participatory attributes constitute citizenship and, as stated by Gore, 'one of the crucial advantages of a social exclusion approach is that it inserts the condition of citizenship directly into development policy analysis.'[22] Within this framework social exclusion can be seen as incomplete citizenship.[23] In the same direction, we can understand the concept as the articulation between the spheres of human rights and welfare.[24]

As in the study of poverty, long-term unemployment is at the centre of the debate over exclusion. Income poverty in industrialized countries is associated strongly with multiple deprivation and with lack of participation. Level of participation is usually correlated with socio-economic status.[25] To take part in the labour market provides not only income, but also social legitimacy and social identity, given the socializing function and value of labour. Therefore, most commonly, those who lose

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[21] Charles Gore, 1995, (p. 09).

[22] Idem, (p. 19).

[23] The definition of citizenship used here is taken by Marshall, T.H. and Bottomore, T. in *Citizenship and Social Class*, London: Pluto Press, 1992, quoted by Gore, 1995, where citizenship rights are divided into civil rights (liberty of the person and of speech, the right to justice, etc); political rights (the right to participate in the exercise of State power), and social rights (the right to basic services that would provide well being), (p.19).

[24] Gerry Rodgers, 1995, (p. 48).

[25] de Haan, Arjan and Maxwell, Simon (eds.), 1998, (p. 06).

their jobs enter a 'spiral of cumulative exclusion'[26]. But while the study of poverty will tend to focus on the outcomes of deprivation, social exclusion will focus attention on processes that lead to poverty and deprivation.

If the term social inclusion could be seen as a synonym for social participation, then what this paradigm seeks is not only insertion in the labour market and welfare states, through 'welfarist' social policies that target the disadvantaged as passive recipients of social assistance, but rather to develop a participatory policy, where the excluded can 'own' their exclusion and be active agents in the development of the policies to overcome it. Participation is in itself a form of integration.[27]

In practice, and also given the multi-dimensional nature of exclusion, this will mean that different professionals, agencies and levels of government have to cooperate together with the excluded groups in administering insertion policies. An important policy for achieving participatory approaches is the adoption of measures to improve the associational and organizational skills of individuals and groups[28]. Some of the measures that have so far been targeted to those considered to be socially excluded in Western Europe are: income support tied to social and professional insertion; training programmes for unemployed; territorially-based initiatives to improve physical infrastructure, services and community organization at a local level; establishment of micro-enterprises, and community associations to re-orientate for work the marginalized[29]. Another strategy is to develop actions locally in order to involve specific deprived communities in depth, attending local needs, and to develop cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary approaches (given the multiple nature of exclusion), building partnerships between government agencies and the civil society as well as inside the civil society itself.[30] Finally, working to develop legislation that can fight discrimination represents another important initiative that places the social exclusion issue

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[26] Gerry Rodgers, 'The design of policy against exclusion', in Rodgers, Gerry; Gore, Charles and Figueiredo, José B. (eds.), 1995, pp. 253-282 (p. 254).

[27] Charles Gore, 1995, (p. 34).

[28] Idem, (p. 36).

[29] Ibidem, (p. 33).

[30] An example of a museum initiative that used the strategies of the policies deemed to tackle social exclusion was the one developed by the Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery, with disabled group members. It started as a process of consultation from the museum staff with disabled people to establish their needs inside the museum. From the meetings and the work developed, the Drawbridge Group was created, a group of six disability consultants (one disabled consultant and five disabled members) that later on started offering their services not only to the museum, but also to other institutions seeking to cater for disabled people's needs. Dodd, Jocelyn and Sandell, Richard, *Building Bridges – Guidance for museums and galleries on developing new audiences*, London: Museums and Galleries Commission, 1998, (pp. 23, 37).

in a legal forum.[31] As shown, the routes are as various as the agents, and the initiatives will depend on shares of creativity, opportunity, collective organization, as well as public and political will.

Social exclusion in non-European contexts

Being a concept based and developed mostly in Western Europe, we may wonder what is the applicability of social exclusion to non-European contexts. The flexibility of the term, due to the diverse manifestations of deprivation, opens opportunities, but does it not represent an alien paradigm for developing countries with particular socio-economic realities?[32]

Although the term has been adopted by organizations like the European Union, it is not possible to affirm that the concept and policies related to social exclusion are uniform inside Europe. As mentioned before, even facing similar social problems[33], different political traditions will influence the way initiatives to tackle exclusion will be conceived and even the extent of what is considered to be excluded in different countries. In the case of the United Kingdom the concept acquired significant relevance after the election of the New Labour party to central Government, in 1997. Stewart believes that in the British political discourse, the concept is now replacing discussions of equality with discussions of equality of opportunity.[34] Consequently, the key action areas chosen by that government to combat social exclusion were those of paid work and education, as tools that enhance opportunities for individuals in society.[35]

Whatever the case, the use of the concept should invariably be context-based, according to what society considers as excluding and what kind of inclusion is deemed. As affirmed by Rodgers, 'a central aspect of the analysis of exclusion is the idea that it is embedded in the way societies

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[31]Gerry Rodgers, 1995, (pp. 255-260).

[32] It is important to state that the characterisation of 'developing countries' in opposition to 'developed countries' will be adopted here, as a synonym for Third and First worlds, or poor and rich countries, although the author does not agree with the idea of evolution those terms imply.

[33] According to Rodgers, three types of exclusion are responsible for heightened public awareness in Europe: exclusion from the labour market, exclusion from regular work, and exclusion from decent housing and community services. Gerry Rodgers, 'What is special about a 'social exclusion' approach?', (p. 44).

[34] Angus Stewart, 'Social inclusion: a radical agenda?', in Askonas, Peter and Stewart, Angus (eds.), 2000, pp. 293-296 (p. 293).

[35] Ruth Lister, 2000, (p. 42).

function'[36]. Thus, in areas like Latin America, where poverty and deprivation are structurally part of the way economies and societies are organized, due to specific historical circumstances, the idea of social exclusion has to be re-assessed in a non-Eurocentric way. Faria argues that, although the concept is not used for the analysis of deprivation in Latin America, the literature produced about poverty in the region can provide the means to understand how exclusion takes place there.[37] Based on this literature, he points out the four main determinants for the process of social exclusion occurring in Latin America: transformations in rural structures causing migrations to the cities; employment trends; lack of citizenship rights and fragility of democratic institutions, and lack of adequate education.[38] In the case studies analysed in chapter 4, where the social role of museums in Brazil will be discussed, it will be possible to picture how Brazilian museums are dealing with some of these processes.

Given the characteristics of the social exclusion approach of focusing its analysis on the multi-dimensional character of deprivation and on the actors or institutions involved in it, as well as on the processes that lead to it, there is no fundamental constraint on applying the concept to poorer countries, since a specific understanding of the phenomenon is put into context and made explicit, according to the variables of local particularities.[39]

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[36] Gerry Rodgers, 'What is special about a 'social exclusion' approach?', (p. 49).

[37] Vilmar E. Faria, 'Social exclusion and Latin American analyses of poverty and deprivation', in Rodgers, Gerry; Gore, Charles and Figueiredo, José B. (eds.), 1995, pp. 117-128 (p. 117).

[38] Idem, (pp. 118-119).

[39] Arjan de Haan, "Social exclusion', an alternative concept for the study of deprivation?', (p. 17).

Chapter 2
Social inclusion in the museum practice

Following the definition of social exclusion as both a process and a state by which social dynamics and institutions limit some groups from full participation in society, it can be argued that museums, as cultural institutions, can play a role as a part of a network of exclusionary elements, or by opposition, as a tool for social inclusion. Moreover, given the multi-dimensional character of exclusion, policies towards inclusion will invariably assume an interdisciplinary approach, which can include cultural services as well as social services.

When discussing a current question of why should museums be involved with social demands, two main issues are proposed inside of the social inclusion discourse being developed lately in the United Kingdom. First, there is the contemporary dilemma in which museums are having to prove their relevance to a society with several options of leisure and information consumption, and that in addition, requires constant accountability for the money spent in public services.[40] The response to this has been the focus on its educational potential and on socially inclusive practices which widen the museum's social utility. As a second argument, there is the ideological subject that, as public institutions, museums have a responsibility to the society to which they belong. The range of this responsibility would include to prove its social accountability, and to be agents of positive social change.[41]

Museums as agents of social change

The social changes that museums can provoke, and the spheres in which they act, are considered to fit within three levels: an individual, a community, and a societal.[42] The individual one refers to those initiatives

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[40] Some authors propose a broader historical explanation for the crisis that museums have facing during the last decades. For them, it represents the natural tensions of an institution conceived and maintained in modernist ideals, now placed in a post-modern society with values and expectations different from those of its origins. As affirmed by Sandell: 'Museums' principles and practices are no longer in step with contemporary, dominant value systems and ways of thinking.' Richard Sandell, 'Museums and the combating of social inequality: roles, responsibilities, resistance', in Sandell, Richard (ed.) *Museums, Society, Inequality*, London and New York: Routledge, 2002, pp. 03-23. In the same direction goes Hooper-Greenhill, when she proposes the idea of the 'post-museum', explained as a site of mutuality, opposed to the site of authority that represents the modernist museum. Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 2000, (p. xi).

[41] Dodd, Jocelyn and Sandell, Richard (eds.) *Including Museums: Perspectives on Museums, Galleries and Social Inclusion*, Leicester: Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, 2001.

[42] Here, two texts from the same author are used to build a comprehensive and synthetic approach to the three levels of action museums can deal with. The first one is in Dodd and Sandell (2001), and the second in Richard Sandell, 'Museums and the combating of social inequality: roles, responsibilities, resistance', in Sandell, Richard (ed.), 2002, pp. 03-23.

developed by museums that will bring positive outcomes related to personal, psychological and emotional spheres of a person's life, like the enhancement of self-esteem and personal confidence or a sense of identity and belonging. It can also contribute towards more pragmatic results such as the acquisition of new skills, which can, for instance, extend employment opportunities. As affirmed by Dodd and Sandell when commenting on the contributions museums can make to individuals, 'such outcomes may help to create a virtuous circle enabling people to overcome other forms of disadvantage'.[43]

The community level deals with initiatives that will empower communities, through the learning of competencies and the development of the ability and confidence to change, through increasing community self-determination and participation in decision-making process and democratic structures. These can be achieved through, for instance, regeneration or renewal initiatives in deprived neighbourhoods. As a result, it can occur that, 'the museum often acts as a catalyst for social regeneration which can take on a life of its own, sometimes continuing without further museum support.'[44]

The society level refers to the role museums perform as creators of 'dominant social narratives'[45], through their practices of collection and display. Therefore, 'museums and galleries can help to engender a sense of belonging and affirmation of identity for groups which may be marginalized.'[46] While the individual and community levels will strongly depend on face-to-face engagement and partnerships between the museum and other organizations related to the groups the initiatives are targeting, the societal level is based in a museum's more traditional attribution, which is the institution's interpretive authority.[47] This shows that the spectrum of action museums can reach when searching to provoke social change is not solely based on less traditional initiatives, but rather that an inclusionary practice can permeate the whole range of the museum work.

Authors like Scott categorize the impact museums have on long-term social value according to three contributions they can make: towards collective and personal development, economic value, and educational value.[48] For her, the community and individual development are driven by

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[43] Dodd and Sandell, 2001, (p. 26).

[44] Idem, (p. 28).

[45] Richard Sandell, 2002, (p. 08).

[46] Dodd and Sandell, 2001, (p. 32).

[47] Richard Sandell, 2002, (p. 08).

[48] Carol Scott, 'Measuring social value' in Sandell, Richard (ed.), 2002, pp. 41-54, (p. 47).

museums via the provision of a forum for discussion and debate, the provision of reverential and commemorative experiences, and of a collective identity through a shared history and a sense of place.[49] The economic value is connected to this sense of place the museum engenders, resulting in its value as a leisure venue, as a tourist destination, or as part of urban re-development strategies, by which 'museums can enable cities to market themselves as cultural centres which appeal to residents, tourists, professionals and investors.'[50] Finally, the educational contribution of museums is well established as a unique learning experience that involves, in a less formal environment than the school, the construction of knowledge through objects, visual memory and social interaction.[51] The educational value of museums could also be included in the realm of its contributions to personal and collective development, or even in its economic implications, through contributing to the educational improvement of workers. This said, it is possible to emphasize the interconnections among the different levels of action and results a socially committed museum practice engenders. The initiatives tend to overlap, as well as its outcomes, creating a chain of processes that can put social change in motion.[52]

Social inclusion and audience development

There is some confusion about what are the specificities of the social inclusion approach when compared with the concept of audience

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[49] Idem, (p. 47).

[50] Ibidem, (p. 52).

[51] Carol Scott, 2002, (pp. 52-53).

[52] An interesting example of practices are those developed by the MATA (Museums as therapeutic agents) project, a collaborative among 3 museums at Indiana University, in the United States, and some local mental health services, as described by Silverman, Lois, 'The therapeutic potential of museums as pathways to inclusion', in Sandell, 2002, pp. 69-83. The objectives of the project are to develop and study museums pilot programmes with therapeutic goals to groups like those with life-threatening illness, senior adults, and adults with behavioural health issues. In the program developed with the first group, AIDS patients, individual visits to the Wylie House Museum (a family museum) were organized, where there was the opportunity to discuss how that family coped with illness and death. The aim of it was to offer a 'simple opportunity for a leisure outing, and promoting a space in which to reflect on one's illness with regard to history.' (p. 72). To senior adults with behavioural health issues, an outreach kit was created to provoke and collect clients' reminiscences for use in a developing exhibit on community history. As Silverman states, 'the goal of the program was to provide cognitive stimulation to the clients, and to increase their sense of self-esteem through the gathering of, listening to and valuing of their stories.' (p. 73) Finally, the one for people with behavioural health issues was aimed to help them develop their sense of self-worth and their abilities to function independently. For this, a 4-session programme was created at the Hilltop Garden and Nature Centre, teaching them how to work with certain plant materials, and then acting as volunteer interpreters demonstrating crafts to children in a holiday programme. (p. 73).

development. Both are relatively new within museum discourse, have a flexibility that permit different applications, and are interconnected. Audience development is understood here as the identification of different barriers that work to exclude individuals or groups from using museums, and the development of strategies to overcome these barriers, or in other words, the development of access.[53] The obstacles that exclude audiences from museums are broad and can be financial, intellectual, sensory, attitudinal, or physical. The background for this rhetoric is similar to that of the social inclusion approach, that is based on ethical issues of making museums relevant to a wider range of society and democratising the institution, as well as economic and political demands of accountability.

In the audience development approach, the process of targeting a group with whom to develop initiatives, and getting involved with it, via the establishment of partnerships, is crucial. The strategies of partnerships here are established directly with the group or its representatives, or through the contact with agencies and organizations that already have a working knowledge of the group. The aim of the partnerships is to 'bring about a change in the nature of the relationship between the museum and its audience, so that it is no longer based simply on consultation, but on working together and becoming partners in the decision-making process.'[54] That is to say, to establish a two-way exchange, where both partners can be enriched. It is a long-term institutional investment that to be effective will need the maintenance of the links created.[55]

If its conceptualisation is in tune with that of social inclusion processes, what are the boundaries between the two concepts? Dodd and Sandell explain it in a very objective way when they affirm: 'understandably most museums and galleries have interpreted their role in relation to social inclusion as synonymous with cultural inclusion by seeking to widen access to their services.'[56] 'With the increasing awareness of, and interest in, the interrelated nature of disadvantage, what is now receiving further attention is the impact which cultural inclusion might have on the other (political, social and economic) dimensions of exclusion.'[57] Therefore, these two authors understand social inclusion in

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[53] Dodd and Sandell, 1998, (p. 05).

[54] Idem, (p. 10).

[55] Ibidem, (p. 28).

[56] The cultural dimensions of exclusion are considered to be related to: *representation* issues, *participation*, and *accessibility* issues. The first deals with the extent to which an individual or group's heritage is represented inside the 'mainstream cultural arena'; the second refers to the opportunities an individual or group have to participate in the processes of cultural production; and the third, to the opportunities offered to have contact with cultural services and devices. Richard Sandell, 'Museums as agents of social inclusion', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, vol. 17, n. 4, pp. 401-418 (p. 410).

[57] Dodd and Sandell, 2001, (p. 12).

museums as taking the audience development work some steps further, broadening museums' attributions and social implications.

Alternative institutions to alternative practices

Having said that adopting a socially inclusive practice will not depend exclusively on new initiatives does not mean that some organizational changes will not be made necessary. Indeed, working towards social inclusion offers the opportunity for museums to reflect upon established practices and procedures.

As affirmed by Dodd and Sandell, 'engaging with ideas around social inclusion requires us to recognise that the cultural is inextricably linked with the social and, more particularly, that collecting, documenting, conserving and interpreting are means to an end'[58], that should be the delivering of social benefits to individuals, communities and societies. For Sandell, what many museums do is to confuse their functions of preservation, documentation and communication as outcomes in their own right.[59] Therefore a change, or a rethinking in philosophy, values, goals and practices is required. In ideological terms, the institutions should move in the direction of the idea that they can contribute towards social equality, empowerment and democratisation within society. In what practices are concerned, a path can be followed by adopting a critical approach permeated by the ideals above, as well as promoting a democratisation of the institution from the inside, avoiding rigid hierarchies of power, and allowing different sectors of the profession and the museum's audience to participate and have a voice in the decision-making processes.

As a result, areas traditionally considered as 'neutral' in the museum work, like collection management, would be open to consultation with diverse stakeholders.[60] Another important initiative, jointly with the development of digital technology and on-line resources, could be the

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[58] Idem, (p. 02).

[59] Richard Sandell, 2002, (p. xvii).

[60] Discussing the apparent neutrality of collection management, Amanda Wallace, Museums Conservation Manager of Nottingham City Museums and Galleries affirms: 'deciding what is 'worthy' of acquisition, what is important about objects, and how that importance is recorded and accessed can never be a neutral or impartial activity. Such decisions are shaped by the agendas of particular individuals and groups within museums and this must be recognised if collection management is to develop a more inclusive way of working.' Amanda Wallace, 'Collections management and inclusion' in Dodd and Sandell, 2001, pp. 82-87 (p. 83).

implementation of a policy of broad virtual access to collections and collections information.

In the conservation field, a visible contradiction appears, since its place in museum practice is to establish protective barriers between the objects and the audiences. The philosophies that underpin conservation in museums are based on the needs of the objects and not of the audiences. For this, alternatives are proposed such as that of swapping the negative ideology of 'don't touch', for developing a controlled and managed use of objects. In pedagogic terms, the conservation practice could work towards the raising of preservationist awareness with the audiences.[61] Inside this logic, even the role of the curator should be challenged, changing its position from definitive authority to facilitator between people and objects, given its knowledge of the collections.[62]

In terms of communication, the possibilities are ample, and museums' educational programs are probably the area where most experimentation towards practices that challenge the institution's authority has been tried out, especially after the adoption of constructivist learning theories by its educational departments. In what interpretive strategies are concerned, opportunities are open when they are intended to question and propose alternative ways of seeing things, with the help of diverse contributors and/or partners. As Sandell states, 'social responsibility requires an acknowledgement of the meaning-making potential of the museum and an imperative to utilise that to positive social ends.'[63] The variable, in this case, will be what each institution considers as positive social benefits they can contribute.

As in any museum practice, the use of evaluation is essential. Its relevance is in order to prove the results of the actions, or to improve them according to the evaluation conclusions. Even more, implementing consistent evaluation of inclusive initiatives would help to consolidate the practices. At a very pragmatic level, Sheppard affirms that 'what matters now is not just good will, but clear evidence of demonstrable impact.' [64]

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[61] Simon Cane, 'Conservation and inclusion', in Dodd and Sandell, 2001, pp. 88-91 (p. 90).

[62] Amanda Wallace, 2001, (p. 87). As an example of this approach we can cite the creation of the post of Interpretation Curator in The New Art Gallery Walsall, whose job is to act as an 'audience's advocate', building a bridge between the art shown, the artists and the audience. Amongst its roles are the contact with community groups that might be interested in participating and contributing to the Gallery's activities, to ensure the Gallery is providing an welcoming and democratic atmosphere for people to participate, and to develop extra optional interpretation to the shows.

[63] Richard Sandell, 2002, (p. 19).

[64] Beverly Sheppard, 'Do museums make a difference? Evaluating programs for social change', *Curator*, vol. 43, n. 1, 2000, pp. 63-74 (p. 73).

Thus the need for the development of an evaluating methodology based on inclusive practices. [65]

Museum's unique contribution towards social processes

With such a variety of possibilities and outcomes museums can deliver when developing inclusive practices, we may wonder what are museums' specific inputs to social practices. As in any social inclusion process, they can contribute to social regeneration at a local level, and/or as catalysts of broad social change. Whatever the results, a museum's potentiality to inform and challenge preconceived ideas through the manipulation of its collections and knowledge is a clue to its uniqueness as an institution. As stated by Scott, 'through objects, museums can provide unique experiences associated with the collective meaning, sharing, discussion and debate that are the foundation of good citizenry. Through objects, museums can reinforce personal identity and belonging. Objects convey a sense of place and can, therefore, introduce outsiders to the significance of a culture through its material heritage. Research on objects can reveal new knowledge. The stories told through objects in a museum setting have educative value.'[66]

In addition to its educative potential, the fact that museums deal intimately with the notion of preservation can represent another distinctiveness. The possibility of combining the informative power of museums with its knowledge of preservation of heritage can also promote positive social outcomes. Those are related to the dissemination of the awareness of preserving heritage as a tool that provides identity and knowledge, and that can lead to the acquisition of new skills and local

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[65] A step towards the evaluation of social inclusion practices in museums was taken by the report *Museums and Social Inclusion – The GLLAM Report*, Group for Large Local Authority Museums/Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, 2000. The report 'focuses on the social outcomes of museum initiatives that have engaged with people at risk of exclusion or have sought to address wider issues of inequality and disadvantage'. For this, seven key areas of impact were highlighted: 1) personal growth and development; 2) community empowerment; 3) the representation of inclusive communities; 4) promoting healthier communities; 5) enhancing educational achievement and promoting lifelong learning; 6) tackling unemployment, and 7) tackling crime. The first three categories were based on impacts museums can have at individual, community or societal level, while for the last four, key indicators of exclusion as identified by the British government were used. (pp. 23-34).

[66] Carol Scott, 2002, (p. 47).

economic development.[67] As will be seen in the next chapter, the articulation between the educational potential of the museum and its preservationist character, are the core areas around which socially committed activities are developed in Brazilian museums.

Even though it is possible to draw the museums' unique contributions to socially inclusive processes, authors like Dodd and Sandell point out that an excessive preoccupation with museums' specificities can deny the value of the benefits museums can deliver which are akin to those delivered by other social institutions and organizations, such as skills training and personal development.[68]

The role of museums within the processes of social change is likely to be a part of a network against social exclusion, jointly with other public and private organizations, and government initiatives.[69]

The official perspective in the United Kingdom

Although most of the ideas described above, as well as some of the author's that explore them, are directly supplying the British government with its programmatic strategies towards the articulation of cultural and social spheres, a separate section was conceived in this study for the official policies. This is explained because of an assumption that, without the present government's interest and support to socially inclusive practices in museums, it is arguable that so many of them would be implemented and research done on the subject.

In the publication *Centres for Social Change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for All,* from 2000, the government states its view of the social role of cultural devices like museums, direct actions towards it, and shows the relevance that the concept of social inclusion gained in the British political

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[67] Although when equating heritage preservation and local economic development the initial idea that comes to mind is that of economically exploring local monuments and traditions through tourism, some other interesting initiatives can be developed. An example was the project undertaken by the Conservation Department of the Museum of the Republic, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where some training on restoration of antique furniture was offered for deprived youths, with the additional reference for future work with private clients or in restoration workshops. (The contact with this project was made through a visit to this museum in 1999, but no further information of its results and continuity can be provided at the moment.)

[68] Dodd and Sandell, 2001, (p. 34).

[69] As affirmed by Sandell, '… the concept of social responsibility does not imply that the combating of inequality becomes the sole aim of all museums, nor that disadvantage and discrimination are problems that museums alone must tackle.' Richard Sandell, 2002, (p. 21).

discourse since the election of the New Labour in 1997[70]. In the foreword of the then Minister of the Department for Culture, Media and Sports, Chris Smith, 'combating social exclusion is one of the Government's highest priorities, and I believe that museums, galleries and archives have a significant role to play helping us doing this.'[71]

As a strategy of action suggested, the document proposes to museums: 'Identify the people who are socially excluded and their distribution. Engage them and establish their needs; assess and review current practice; develop strategic objectives and prioritise resources; develop the services, and train the staff to provide them; implement the services and publicise them; evaluate success, review and improve.'[72] The document affirms its aim is that of presenting elements of good practice, rather than providing a rigid blueprint for the institutions to follow. It points as process stages for inclusionary practices and results, the development of access, broadening of audience, and the action towards social change, and it affirms that for reaching these goals, some institutional change will be necessary, like the training of staff and its broad commitment 'to equal opportunities'.[73] As a main challenge proposed to those cultural institutions, the document affirms that they should balance their traditional services of safeguarding and displaying, with those that will use their resources to support the inclusionary practices.[74]

In another document launched by the same Department in 2001, *Culture and Creativity: The Next Ten Years*, the government gives its version of the relevance of culture in economic and developmental terms. This document supports the idea that 'creative thought', despite all the cultural identity and well-being it can provide, 'lies increasingly at the centre of successful economic life in an advanced knowledge-based economy'.[75] It builds the policies around four key objectives: *excellence*, by supporting the

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[70] David Fleming, current president of the Museums Association and director of the Tyne and Wear Museums, historicizes the initiatives related to social inclusion in museums as a result of the growth in influence of social history curators in Britain since the early 1980s, what had an impact on museums becoming more community-oriented, and focusing on the lives of ordinary people. For him, 'it was a coincidence that growing Government pressure on local authority finances, causing major re-evaluation of their functions, and a drive to secure 'value for money', came at the same time as new attitudes to serving the whole community among social history curators.' David Fleming, 'The politics of social inclusion', in Dodd and Sandell, 2001, pp. 16-19 (p. 18).

[71] *Centres for Social Change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for All – Policy guidance on social inclusion for DCMS funded and local authority museums, galleries and archives in England,* Department for Culture, Media and Sports: May, 2000, (p. 03).

[72] Idem, (p. 05).

[73] Ibidem, (p. 12).

[74] *Centres for Social Change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for All*, (p. 26).

[75] *Culture and Creativity: The Next Ten Years*, Department for Culture, Media and Sports: 2001, (p. 05).

best in arts and culture; *access*, by making culture available to the greatest number of people; education, by ensuring artistic creativity forms through formal and informal services; and *creative economy*, or the support of creativity and creative enterprises that are adding value to the economy. It states the strength of this sector by affirming that over one million people are employed in theatres, music business, broadcasting, design and other creative works, and that the sector generates over a hundred billion pounds per year.[76] In order to increase the sector, the document proposes to upgrade the creative potential of individuals through initiatives such as 'creative partnerships', among schools and cultural institutions, 'freeing excellence', providing support to artists and institutions, and 'free access to national museums and galleries', or the removal of financial barriers to access.[77]

      Amongst the criticisms of these policies there is the one that claims that they propose the homogenisation of the cultural landscape of Britain. One of the statements found in *Centres for Change*, also exemplifies the target of criticism to the policies, when it says that one of the roles of the Department is to 'ensure that funding agreements with the DCMS sponsored museums and galleries reflect these policy objectives.'[78] Some critics see this as a financial pressure and an unacceptable kind of censorship and State intervention, what make them build analogies between the government's policies and those of the totalitarian states of the twentieth century.[79]

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[76] Idem, (p. 07)

[77] Ibidem, (p. 08).

[78] *Centres for Social Change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for All*, (p. 25).

[79] As posed by Mark Ryan, 'the emphasis on The People, or on putting people first, sounds at first like a rehash of Stalinism.' Mark Ryan, 'Manipulation without end', *Art for All? Their Policies and our Culture*, London: Peer, 2001, pp. 16-17 (p. 17).

Chapter 3
The social role of museums in Brazil

As mentioned before, the term 'social inclusion' as analysed in the previous sections cannot be strictly applied when discussing the social role of museums in the Brazilian context, since it represents a paradigm closely aligned with developed countries, and in Brazil, not yet studied with focused attention, even though several similarities in vocabulary and practices are noticeable. In the present section, a general picture of what is considered to be the social role of museums in Brazil will be drawn, as well as how it is put into use in the contemporary museum practice, in order to establish the grounds on which to debate the parallels between the two contexts.

Conceptual sources

One possible way to understand the idea of the social role of museums currently in Brazil, is by referring to two linked events that had a profound impact in the way museums' practices were developed: the 1972 Santiago of Chile Round-Table,[80] and the advent of the New Museology.

According to Hugues de Varine-Bohan[81], resulting from the Santiago meeting there was the formulation of the idea of museums as tools for social development, the notion of their social function, as well as the recognition of the social and consequently political responsibility of the museum profession.[82] This was a meeting organised by UNESCO and ICOM to reflect upon the social role of museums in contemporary Latin America, which intended to break with the Euro-centrism of other international meetings by having as speakers Latin-American specialists only. The document created is considered to be the main contribution of Latin America to the international museological thought.[83] The resolutions adopted by the round-table were based on the prospect of a transformation of the museum in Latin America, which considered the social, economic and cultural changes produced in the world, and the inequalities brought with them, especially for the developing areas. As a response, the educative role of museums should be developed, raising the

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[80] Original document in English available at: <*https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000007600*> Accessed in: June 2024.

[81] The then director of ICOM and participant of the Santiago meeting.

[82] Hugues de Varine-Bohan, 'A respeito da mesa-redonda de Santiago', in Araujo, Marcelo and Bruno, Maria Cristina (eds.) *A Memória do Pensamento Museológico Contemporâneo*, São Paulo: Comitê Brasileiro do ICOM, 1995, pp. 17-19, (p. 19).

[83] According to Peter Van Mensch in a seminar given in São Paulo, November 2000 (Duarte Cândido, 2003, p. 19).

awareness of the communities to their problems.[84] Amongst its resolutions were those of: the adoption of interdisciplinary and participative work, open to society's contributions; the input to the development of a historical consciousness that could subsidise the actions; the adaptation of the traditional institutions to the new roles of museums; the change in mentalities of the museum professionals according to the new practices; the focusing on local initiatives; the preservation of heritage for its social use; the accessibility to the existing collections; the modernization of display techniques, and the evaluation of the community-based actions.[85]

For de Varine-Bohan, the most innovative contributions of the meeting are those that permeate the document, like the notion of the 'integral museum', as an institution concerned with the totality of the problems of society, and the idea of the museum as action, or as an instrument for social change.[86]

Even considering the gap of thirty years between the Santiago Round-Table and the social inclusion concept applied to the museum practice, the similarities of purpose are strongly noticeable. These similarities are perhaps not surprising if we think about the social problems Latin American countries were going through at the beginning of the 1970s, such as the transformations taking place due to rural to urban migration, which might be seen as similar to the international migrations to Western Europe currently in evidence. Another similarity is the inefficiency shown by State provisions to deal with particular social demands, which in Western Europe represented the failure of welfare state systems, and in the case of Latin American realities, it is, somehow, a currency. Interestingly, a statement found in the document of Santiago anticipates the notion of spreading of social services outside the welfare State provisions, when it affirms that: 'particularly in the Latin American region, museums should meet the needs of the broad masses of the population, which is striving to attain a better and more prosperous life through a knowledge of its natural and cultural heritage, past and present, which, in more highly developed countries, are performed by other bodies.'[87]

The initial similarities between the concept of social inclusion and that of the so-called New Museology are that the second is also a fluid term whose interpretation and use will depend on specific intellectual traditions. The focus here will be placed on the notion developed within

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[84] 'Mesa-Redonda de Santiago do Chile – 1972', in Araújo and Bruno, 1995, pp. 20-25, (p. 20).

[85] Idem, (p. 21).

[86] de Varine-Bohan, 1995, (p. 18).

[87] 'The round table of Santiago (Chile)', *Museum*, vol. XXV, Paris: Unesco, 1973, pp. 128-204, (p. 199).

the French museological discourse during the 1970s, as the determinant to its application in the Brazilian context. For Van Mensch, the evolution proposed by the New Museology was due to the rupture it brought with the idea of the collections as a basis from which museums are organized and its initiatives are developed. The organization of museums posed by the New Museology should focus on their functions.[88] For authors like de Varine-Bohan and Desvallées, who later studied the concept, the museum functions should be translated into social experiments, or in processes that could allow the culture to set off developmental initiatives, where the past could provide mechanisms of manipulating and enriching the present.[89] The following methodology was proposed by de Varine-Bohan for the implementation of the new practices: the integration of the institution and its activities with the community where it is placed; the reassessment of the role of the museum professional, which should have a scientific, technical and developmental background; a multidisciplinary approach; partnerships with community representatives; institutional evaluation; orientation towards research and action-diffusion; and the replacement of the typological denominations of museums for one based on the territory where it belongs.[90]

As a result of this thought, there was the development of institutions committed to act culturally, economically and socially in the life of their audience, such as community museums, neighbourhood museums and ecomuseums. The last one broadened museums' horizons, substituting the traditional notions of a museum building for a territory, collection for heritage of an area, and audience for the population of an area.

Moutinho, when commenting the foundations of Minom (International Movement for a New Museology) in 1984, argues that the fundamental change proposed by the New Museology was to oppose a museology based on collections to a social museology, by which the museum's research should be based on the problems of the communities they serve, aiming at their development; the institutions should be understood beyond their buildings; the exhibitions should be developed as spaces for lifelong learning; and the figure of the visitor should be replaced with that of a collaborator, with participatory and empowering objectives.[91]

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[88] Duarte Cândido (2003, p. 35), based on Desvallées, André (ed.), *Vagues: Une anthologie de la Nouvelle Muséologie*, Paris: WM.N.E.S., 1994.

[89] Idem, (pp. 35-38).

[90] Ibidem, (pp. 40-41).

[91] Mário Moutinho, 'A Declaração de Quebec de 1984', in Araújo and Bruno, 1995, pp. 26-29, (pp. 26-27).

Case studies

In this section, three Brazilian academic works will be analysed to serve as case studies in the social role of museums in that country, bearing in mind the conceptual framework described in the previous section. The criteria for selection of the works was based first on their themes, being the three broadly related to the social relevance of museums; second, on the dates of their production, from the mid-1990s on, and finally, on the variety of the institutions studied and their geopolitical location. One of them is from a scientific museum in the Amazon region, another from an art museum in a Southern industrial metropolis, and the last from a community museum in the Northeast of Brazil. The fact that the case studies chosen are academic works (a Master's dissertation and two PhDs), is explained partly because of the reduced number of publications about museums available in Portuguese and their non-periodicity, which makes the academic production the main media for reflection and diffusion of museological thought in Brazil.[92] In addition to this, as extensive texts they could provide a more in-depth view of the issues intended to be discussed here.[93]

Case study 1: Helena Quadros, 'Rediscovering education in museums: an experience in The Zoo botanic park of the Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi', (unpublished Master's dissertation, University of Amazon, 2000).

The author of this dissertation works at the Educative Service of the Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi, a natural history, archaeology and ethnology museum founded in 1866 as one of the first Brazilian museums, in Belém, a city in the Amazon region. The aim of her work is to evaluate one of the educational programmes offered by the museum, particularly the one developed with students in the Zoo botanic park of that institution, and to contribute with its results to a bigger institutional project of revitalization of the museum.

For this, she analysed some of their educational projects, and the relationship between them and the scientific work produced there, as well as how, or if, the scientific work is affecting positively the local community.

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[92] Duarte Cândido, 2003, (p. 50).

[93] As for the selection of the works, I have to thank Maria Cristina Bruno for her contribution and suggestions.

The museum is a very important centre of studies about the rainforest and its people, thus one of the priorities of its communication services is the diffusion of the knowledge produced by the scientific departments, seeking the democratisation of science.[94] Another major intention of the museum is that of providing awareness of the cultural and natural characteristics of the region and its problems. The means adopted for this are those of outreach work, programmes developed with particular groups, and through guided visits to the museum and the park.[95] When discussing the role of educative programmes in museums, Quadros affirms: 'they are one of the most efficient ways to contribute with the citizen to analyse aspects of our cultural heritage, connecting it with present life, and understanding it as result of social and political relations.'[96] For her, the cultural resources made available by museums are access tools to citizenship rights, and she even states that: 'indeed, the museum represents the proper place for people to know and, above all, discuss the cultural goods. Only in this dimension we are able to talk about community participation in our museums.'[97]

In the conclusions of the evaluation she points out the need to establish partnerships with sectors of the audience in order to improve the service, as well as the integration among the different sectors inside the institution to develop an articulated and coherent service. For her these should be a means to improve the museums' pedagogic project. Thus, this work centres the social contribution of the museum within its educative role, which is a recurrent argument in the Brazilian literature when focusing on the social role of museums. Therefore, it seems important to explore the articulation between education and the social role of museums as understood in Brazil.

In the document produced by the first ICOM/Brazil national meeting, in 1995, that had as a theme 'Museums and communities in Brazil – reality and perspectives', there is the recognition of the object of study of Museology as a 'communication phenomenon', that takes place

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[94] Quadros affirms that there was a shift in the museum philosophy from aiming to be a centre of high quality research, to what the new mission statement from 1993 proposes: 'to produce, and to diffuse knowledge and scientific collections about natural and socio-cultural systems related to the Amazon region'. Quadros, 2000, (p. 19).

[95] As examples there is the project 'The museum takes science education to the outskirts', by which, followed by the visit to the museum, activities like workshops of alternative feeding, debates about health, as well as the creation of a local library and a communal vegetable garden were undertaken. Idem, (pp. 09-11). The 'Teaching support project', was developed in collaboration with other educational institutions of the region to provide, via the museum's activities, a complement to the school teaching of sciences and mathematics. Ibidem, (p. 03).

[96] Quadros, 2000, (p. 65).

[97] Idem, (p. 86).

between human beings and the evidences of cultural heritage.[98] The link between the communicative nature of the museological processes and community development is placed on the informative potential of the knowledge stored in the heritage testimonies (objects, traditions, technologies, etc.). As stated in the document: 'Past and history can have the function of a basis for the debate of crucial issues of the communities, providing them with the tools for the exercise of a critical view of the contemporary reality.'[99] Thus, the socio-educative role of the museum is seen as a catalyst for the raising of social consciousness.

Case study 2: Denise Grinspum, 'Education for heritage: art museum and school. Shared responsibility in building audiences', (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of São Paulo, 2000).

This is an applied research about audience development in the Lasar Segall Museum, a modern art museum in São Paulo, where the author is the director of the Education Department. Her objective is to analyse the role of schools in developing museum audiences, or how students' visits stimulate their families to come to the museum. For this, a questionnaire was sent to parents whose children participated in one of the museum's guided visit with their school, and three schools with different socio-economic profiles were chosen. The explanation for the focus on the relationship with schools is given by the fact that students represent the target group of the activities developed by the Education Department and are also the core audience of the museum.[100] For this department, the idea of partnership is at the centre of most of its initiatives, going from what Grinspum calls 'short-time partnerships' with the schools that participate in the punctual guided visits, to more structured and longer-term initiatives, such as the development of projects, started in 2000, where

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[98] *Museus e Comunidades no Brasil – Realidade e Perspectivas*, I Encontro Nacional do ICOM/Brasil, Petrópolis: Museu Imperial, maio, 1995, (p. 09).

[99] Idem, (p. 12).

[100] From 1994 on, the Education Department has developed two parallel projects: the 'Art at school programme', a training programme for arts teachers of basic schools, and the 'Education for heritage programme', which includes educative activities developed for temporary and long-term exhibitions, including the guided visits with students. These visits follow a methodology that prioritises participatory and dialectic activities, where participants not only receive information but also process it and are encouraged to develop a creative response. Grinspum, 2000, (pp. 48-53).

teachers are co-authors of the activities jointly with the educational staff of the museum.[101]

In the first chapter of her thesis, Grinspum focuses her attention on the social role of museums. Basing her thoughts on a report published in 1992 by the American Association of Museums, called 'Excellence and equity. Education and public dimension of museums', she will argue that what should guide the museum practice to a socially committed attitude is the search for excellence in their work and the provision and enhancement of equity through it.[102] For her, being accessible does not mean offering massive services, but rather to develop thorough and focused educative programmes to specific groups. This definition frames museums as institutions devoted to public services through its educative potential.

As in the dissertation by Quadros, this thesis will highlight the social role of museums directly linked with its educative possibilities. In the conclusions of her research, Grinspum offers some data and reflections that can help to understand the specificity of the relationship between museums and educational institutions in Brazil. Although focusing in an art museum, she concludes by the analysis of the data gathered, that socio-economic condition is a determinant in the way cultural spaces are used in a metropolis like São Paulo.[103] She believes that one of the reasons for this is found in participants' perceptions of museums as alien and divorced from the reality of daily life, especially those from lower social classes.[104] Quoting the 'First diagnosis of the cultural area of the city of Belo Horizonte', another of the country's biggest cities, it is proposed that for poorer segments of society, 'culture becomes a real 'social apartheid' wall. In one side of this wall there is an 'aristocratic circle', mix of luxury and erudition, forever unreachable; on the other side, the worries of survival, the feeling of inferiority, of powerlessness and even of incapacity to frequent the places where it is believed culture is generated.'[105]

In the questionnaire, for the question of frequency of visits to museums within the previous year, 89% of the parents with lower income, represented by one of the schools, answered they did not go even once to a museum, while 49% of the upper class parents' school answered they

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[101] Idem, (pp. 54-55).

[102] Ibidem, (pp. 09-10-11). The first principle found in the plan for action presented by this report recommends: 'Assert that museums place education – in the broadest sense of the word – at the center of their public service role.' *Excellence and Equity – Education and the Public Dimensions of Museums*, Washington: American Association of Museums, 1992, (p. 07).

[103] Grinspum, 2000, (p. 113).

[104] Idem, (p. 113).

[105] Ibidem, (p. 82).

visited a museum once or twice in one year.[106] In the question about favourite leisure spaces, the shopping centres got the higher response from the parents with lower income and middle-class parents, while with the upper-class parents, the highest preference was given to visits to cinema and theatres.[107] However, for the same question, the numbers given for the preference to visits to exhibitions and museums were nil for the lower income parents, and less than 10% for the parents of the other two schools. According to the global results of her analysis, and although a socio-economic pattern can be noticed, Grinspum affirms the museum does not play significant part in the leisure time of the families, regardless of their social class or geographical location.[108]

Therefore, she concludes, if museums are not part of leisure options for families, the schools assume the responsibility for the contact and relationship that some groups have with museums.[109] They represent the first and main possibility of access to museums in Brazil so far.

Case study 3: Maria Célia Teixeira Moura Santos, 'Museological process and education: building a didactic-communitarian museum', Lisbon: *Cadernos de Sociomuseologia*, n.7, 1996.

The author of this thesis is a professor at the undergraduate course of Museology at the Federal University of Bahia, in Salvador, Northeast of Brazil. The work is the result of her PhD research, in which she implemented and coordinated a community museum based in a school of that city. Her preliminary interests were to analyze the relationship between the preservation of heritage and education, and how a practice based on this relationship could positively affect social reality. As a methodology of work, the starting point for the museum's activities would be generated by contemporary demands of the community involved, and

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[106] Grinspum, 2000, (p. 81).

[107] Going to the cinema and theatre also showed to be a preference for the parents of lower incomes and middle-class. Other spaces like fun fairs and sports clubs were given secondary preference. Churches were seen as a main leisure space for the parents with lower incomes (18.97%) and middle-class (17.21%), only loosing for the preference to shopping centres visits, with 37.93% and 20.49% respectively. It seems important to affirm here that visiting a shopping center does not necessarily imply purchases, as to go for a walk and go window-shopping in those spaces are a very common practice in Brazilian big cities. Idem, (p. 92).

[108] Ibidem (p. 117).

[109] Grinspum, 2000, (p. 118).

not by a collection, which should be established as a result of the activities of the museum.[110]

The subject to be articulated by the museum was the neighborhood of the school as a space of social action, and its relations with the city.[111] For this, the school disciplines would be linked with different aspects of the story and life of the neighborhood.[112] To illustrate the process, one example was the activity developed with students from the 5th grade (11 to 12 years old) jointly with the arts teacher, in which the theme was to explore colors and monochrome, one of the first activities developed by the museum. It was developed in the nearby street market, where the students would get involved with the workers of the market, at the same time they would be involving them in the museum's activities, as well as to work subjects such as color contrasts and geometry of the stalls and the market itself. Another aim was for the participants to understand the market as part of the heritage of the area. The students formed teams and were trained how to collect the data. They collected data about the market through interviews with its workers, and asked them about the problems they faced, such as lack of water and electricity and disorganization in the distribution of the space. While doing this, they were oriented by their teacher to observe the occupation of space, the colors and the geometric figures in the composition of the stalls. Each team developed a text with the results of their research, and presented to the rest of the group their findings about the history of the market, also dealing with the contents of geometric figures and monochrome. For the dissemination of the knowledge produced, a one-day exhibition was set in a square near the school and the market, called 'The school in the market'.[113] For the opening of the exhibition students from other grades were involved, collaborating with the invitations, preparing a drama presentation to involve passers-by and organizing a small concert with a band that had some students as members.[114] During this day, video testimonies were recorded, which, together with the results and material produced by the activity and the pictures taken during its process, became part of the museum's collection, being accessioned by the students after receiving training for this.[115] The whole activity counted on the

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[110] Santos, 1996, (p. 14).

[111] Idem, (p. 119).

[112] Ibidem, (p. 128).

[113] Santos, 1996, (p. 210-211).

[114] The dramatization intended to present the problems faced by the market workers, as detected in the interviews. Idem, (p. 215).

[115] As Santos affirms, sometimes the material produced could be considered aesthetically poor, but what was relevant in the context of their work was not the product, but the development of socializing and cooperative attitudes, organization skills, problem solving and creative initiatives. Ibidem, (p. 281).

participation of all its members (the museum staff, teachers, students) who were given equal opportunities to express their opinions and contribute.[116] The intention was not to alienate the participants in any step of the process, empowering them with the acquisition of museological techniques and with the understanding of their possible uses in challenging the issues of daily life. Although in the initial activities of the museum the outcomes were mainly directed to the school participants, there was an intention of spreading the delivery to the community as new projects were consolidating, but still maintaining the philosophy of building partnerships between the school and the community via the museum action.

Santos states that the actions undertaken by the museum were based on beliefs such as that of considering education as responsible for the formation of citizens that should recognize, in its cultural heritage, a reference for citizenship. She understands cultural heritage as 'the real in its totality', material, non-material, natural and cultural, and proposes that they should be used as tools for education and development.[117]

One aspect is essential to the museological process she proposes, and is related to what she calls 'qualifying culture', or the attribution of meanings to the different (and often unvalued) pieces of heritage, a process built through research, preservation and communication. This process should be performed as an interactive educative action, creating knowledge, and at the same time, developing a new social practice. [118] For this author, the relationship between the preservation of heritage and education is based on the 'understanding and use by society of the preserved heritage, so that through this preserved memory, the present reality can be understood and changed.'[119] Therefore, the meanings of memory (and the importance of its preservation) are placed on its informative potential, leading to a posterior qualified thought.

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[116] In the evaluation of the described activity, Santos pointed out the following positive outcomes: increasing self-esteem of the students by acknowledging that they were treated as co-authors of the activity; awareness by them that 'culture is the result of social relations', that can be produced in the daily life; the observation and reflection about shapes, colours and volumes enhanced the student's comprehension of the subjects, as attested by the works they produced; the students experienced the possibilities of interdisciplinary approach, by involving in arts contents the use of other disciplines, like history; the activity was successful in involving the market workers in the initiatives of the museum, with some expressing willing to contribute more; the exhibition marketed the museum work, added value to the work of the market workers within the community, and enable the museum staff to establish contacts with members of the community interested in participating. Santos, 1996, (p. 216-218).

[117] Idem, (p. 120).

[118] Ibidem, (p. 275).

[119] Santos, 1996, (p. 17).

Conclusions

Returning to Faria's determinants for the processes of exclusion occurring in Latin America contemporarily, it is possible to point out how museums in Brazil are positioning themselves to tackle exclusionary practices. This attempt represents one possible way to start applying the social inclusion concept to that museological reality. The determinants stressed by Faria, as quoted in chapter 1, are those of rural migrations, employment trends, lack of citizenship and fragility of democratic institutions, and lack of adequate education. The analysis of the case studies showed that the museum practice in Brazil determined to perform a positive social role, has been focusing its efforts on the promotion of education and, by consequence, on the increasing of citizenship. These are the two vectors of the inclusionary actions. Education, in such perspective, is seen as the tool that enables personal and social development. By no means denying the potential of education to promote such achievements, it is still pertinent to wonder why the theories and practices in that country point to this direction.

Some elements can help to make a hypothesis about this specificity. Although museums historically have been devoted to the deliveries of educational inputs to society, in the Brazilian case, at least until the 1980s, museums were seen as complements to a precarious educational system.[120] The development of this lead to an almost symbiotic relationship between museums and schools in the country, where school visits represent the core audience of the majority of institutions. Consequently, activities will be developed for this audience and the circle will be self-perpetuating, to the extent that, as Grinspum concludes in her research, the only contact several groups have with museums is via the school.

Another important point for the main focus on education by Brazilian museums is that of a concern about the uniqueness of the museum work. The same debate is vivid within the British museological scenario, and the arguments in both countries are centered in the museum's capacity to manipulate a specific knowledge, based on heritage. Knowledge is socially useful when shared and spread, and here lies the relevance of educational activities in museums. In the Brazilian case, another distinctiveness commonly stressed is that of the preservationist character of the museological initiatives. Although apparently contradictory when what is in focus are contributions towards social change, the articulation between preservation and development inside the

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[120] Grinspum affirms that a change occurred from the 1980s on, when the methodology of educational works in history museums and arts museums started becoming more specified and differentiate. Grinspum, 2000, (p. 17).

museum is based on the social use of the preserved and studied heritage, or as Santos proposes, the pieces of 'qualified culture'.

However, as Dodd and Sandell state, an excessive preoccupation with this uniqueness can work to neutralize other benefits that can be delivered by museums and are consonant with what other social institutions and organizations do, like empowering initiatives not based solely on educative programs. The hypothesis proposed here for the Brazilian museum practice to be so deeply based on the museum's unique contributions, is that without having an efficient complementary network of social services in which to take part, the risk of overloading its attributions is eminent. That is probably the reason for the concern of many museum professionals not to confuse their work with that of social assistants.[121] It is obvious to these museum professionals that the museum work is in itself a social work, but that this work alone cannot change social structures, by adopting a sort of a 'quixotesque' attitude.

Therefore, their option is to work with what are the specificities of the institution, and in longer-term projects, related to the development of social consciousness and contributing to the acquisition of citizenship awareness and rights, in a reality where this is not a given fact, but a device that must be conquered and fought to be kept. This indicates that the overall social context is what differentiates the social role of museums as practised in Brazil and in the United Kingdom. In the latter, a support network of social services, with which museums can build partnerships to develop the socially inclusive initiatives, is a reality, and the attention given to the subject from the central government makes a big difference in terms of investments and awareness raising. Where aims are concerned, both the British and the Brazilian perspectives are congruent, since what is sought is to empower underprivileged sectors of society, contributing towards positive social changes. Again what will vary is the context, since the marginalized sectors of British society have a different profile from those of the Brazilian society. In the Brazilian case it is almost an anachronism to refer to what figures as the majority of the population as the 'marginalized'. This proportional difference will imply diversity of strategies to tackle social inequality.

Comparing the two practices, it is also appealing to consider a terminology issue. While in the British perspective some benefits museums can deliver would fit within the realm of empowering initiatives, in the Brazilian perspective the same outcomes could be understood as

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[121] In an informal conversation in 1999, Elizabeth Tamanini, then educator of the Archaeological Museum of Joinville, in the South of the country, expressed her caution when developing community activities not to become, from an educator and museologist, a psychologist or social assistant, given the extreme needs of the people and the lack of specialized professionals and resources to tackle them.

educational benefits. Since the educational work in that country is so intimately connected with the promotion of citizenship, many empowering initiatives delivered by museums can, even indirectly, be considered as educational ones.

After what was explored here, it may be asked, therefore, if the concept of social inclusion is of any relevance to the Brazilian museological reality. Actually, as the social inclusion concept implies, its understanding and application must be context-based in order to be relevant. Thus, identifying exclusionary practices and excluded groups, and implementing initiatives to reverse this, at the same time broadening the institutions' social deliveries, is perfectly possible in a diverse context than the European. Moreover, it opens opportunities to use the concept creatively according to a specific social reality, and to find autonomous alternatives, contributing towards positive social changes inside the Brazilian society and to the debate around the potentialities of the social role of museums in general.

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Part 2

Accessibility in museums: ideas and practices under development[122]

The task of building and sharing a reflection on accessibility in museums, which the organizers of this dossier propose, led me to review my own writings and those of my colleagues on the topic and to look for new references to update this debate. I have been working at the same museum institution - the Pinacoteca de São Paulo - since 2002, always in the Education Department, and even though I have performed different roles, I have constantly worked in developing educational projects and programs that may be defined as accessible ones. In other words, accessibility in museums is something I deal with on a daily basis in my professional career. Therefore, what I intend with this text, in addition to sharing my own experience and reflections, is to problematize some points related to the topic and its use in museum practice.

As with other concepts in the museum field, the term "accessibility in museums" is not consensual. Its definition and use depend on ideological and methodological options, and on particular bibliographical references. In the Brazilian museological context, as well as internationally, the use of the term *accessibility* is at first understood as synonymous with actions for people with disabilities. The close relationship between museums and schools and their use by formal education – longer than by cultural institutions, in fact – are perhaps responsible for this association.

The inclusion of people with disabilities in schools gained strength from the 1960s onwards in European countries, which led formal education institutions to adapt their educational approaches to the needs of children and young people with disabilities (Oliveira, 2015, p. 76). A milestone in this process is the *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education*, of 1994, which recommends that the education of people with special educational needs be part of the regular education system, through the preparation and adaptation of the schools themselves. According to the document, education for these people must consider the learning process adapted to the needs of the student, instead of trying to accommodate children and young people to the school's preconceived logic regarding learning. It is interesting to note how the document understands the so-called special educational needs, arising from disabilities or learning difficulties. Quoting item 3 of "Framework for Action on Special Needs Education",

> The guiding principle of this Framework for Action is that schools must welcome all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic conditions or other conditions. They should welcome children with disabilities and gifted children, children living on the streets and working, children from

remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities, and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized groups or areas. (Unesco, 1994, p. 6)

Thus, it is enlightening to realize that the understanding of excluded groups in a reference document for the area of inclusive education covers different needs and groups, in addition to those with disabilities.

In the common sense of formal education in Brazil, however, the terms *accessibility* and *inclusion* specifically refer to actions aimed at people with disabilities. But how do we deal with these issues in our museum practice? Is this relationship so direct and unambiguous?

Accessibility, inclusion and audience development

Even though accessibility in museums is a topic that cuts across the entire institution, I will discuss it in this article mainly from an educational point of view. In this sense, the use of the term is recurrent among professionals in the field, in different ways. In 2015, the Committee for Education and Cultural Action of the International Council of Museums (CECA/ICOM) organized its 46th annual conference with the theme "Museum Education and Accessibility: Bridging the Gaps", in Washington, United States. Museum professionals, mostly educators, from 31 countries participated in the event, which provides us with an interesting overview of the use of the term in different contexts.[123] The event's proceedings hold summaries of the presentations, which cover educational experiences, case studies, research and reflections on accessibility in museums, with the target audience being especially people with disabilities, but also children, young people, people over 60, families, community groups, groups in situations of social vulnerability, immigrants, people deprived of liberty, LGBT+ groups and hospital patients, among others. It is still possible to note the relationship that some professionals from countries in the Northern Hemisphere make between accessibility and participation in museums and new technologies and social media as tools that enable access to different audiences (Monaco, 2016).

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[123] Professionals from the following countries participated: Armenia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Singapore, Croatia, Denmark, Ecuador, Spain, USA, Finland, Georgia, Greece, Netherlands, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Malawi, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, Kenya, United Kingdom, Russia, Sweden, Taiwan, Tanzania, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

The variety of target audiences and approaches shared at this meeting indicates the diversity of use and understanding of the term. In the minutes of the meeting, as well as in recent national and international publications, one can see the presence of other terms and concepts that appear recurrently associated with accessibility, among them *otherness, autonomy, citizenship, diversity, emancipation, equity, identity, mobility, participation* and finally, *inclusion* (Sesc-SP, 2018; Argentina, 2018; AAM, 2019). The latter is the most recurrent, and is often used as a synonym for accessibility – so it is worth focusing on it.

If we base ourselves on the definition of social exclusion as a process and a state through which social dynamics and institutions prevent individuals and groups from broad participation in society, we can argue that museums can play a role in a network of exclusionary elements or, conversely, they can be tools for inclusion. Furthermore, given the multidimensional nature of exclusion (involving issues such as the lack of political, social and cultural participation, and lack of access to labor markets and sociability networks), policies that seek inclusion will invariably take an interdisciplinary approach. This places cultural institutions in the arena of social problems, only apparently unrelated to their duties, as it is not possible to separate cultural action from social action (Aidar, 2002). In this way, the supposed neutrality of cultural institutions falls apart, which leads some authors to assert that any cultural organization that is not working to break down barriers in relation to socially excluded groups is actively maintaining them (O'Neill, 2002, p. 37). According to this author,

> If social inclusion means anything, it means actively seeking out and removing barriers, of acknowledging that people who have been left out for generations need additional support in a whole variety of ways to enable them to exercise their rights to participate in many of the facilities that the better off and better educated take for guaranteed. (O'Neill, 2002, p. 37)

Another issue that raises doubts within the inclusion/accessibility binomial is that of audience development, which is also usually seen either as a synonym for the other two terms, or as complementary to them. The development of audiences can be understood as the identification of different barriers that end up excluding individuals or groups from visiting museums, and the subsequent development of strategies that overcome these barriers, bringing traditionally non-visiting audiences to museums.

Inclusive processes should propose, in addition to greater access to museum institutions, the development of actions that have political, social and economic impact, and that can have both short and long term reach (Aidar, 2002, p. 59-60). Hence the closer relationship between inclusive processes and museum education, as both seek to promote qualitative impacts in the daily lives of their participants. Furthermore, while we can see the development of audiences as something that primarily benefits the institution – by increasing its visitation numbers and diversifying the profile of its users – inclusive actions focus on the benefits that contact with the museum can promote to its public, even regardless of their subsequent audience loyalty, which must be a consequence and not the main objective of the actions.

Having made these remarks, posing this question is relevant: who are those excluded from Brazilian museums? Some audience surveys carried out in the last 15 years in the country help us to outline an answer to this question.[124] According to an investigation into cultural habits carried out in 2017 in 12 Brazilian capitals, with regard to museums, a profile of visitors can be characterized as being made up of young people (more than half aged up to 34), with a slightly greater predominance of men, with high education (57% with higher education) and income (62% in class A, the richest class of the Brazilian population, people whose family income is above 20 minimum wages). The same study highlights the profile of those who said they had never visited a museum in their lives: people with low education – almost half of them with primary education (49%), and most of them, 55% from classes D/E (the poorest class of the Brazilian population, people whose family income is up to 4 minimum wages) (Leiva; Meirelles, 2018). In other words, the profile of museum visitors and non-visitors represents two extremes of the country's social classes, like opposite sides of the same coin.

As the same research also states, classes C and D/E (people whose family income is up to 10 minimum wages) are those that represent the majority of the Brazilian population, so, in the specific case of museums, excluded individuals and groups do not belong to so-called minorities, as it happens in richer countries, at least not to population minorities, but to what we can call political or cultural minorities.

If the data regarding audiences excluded from Brazilian museums is so evident, why do some of their professionals continue to develop

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[124] In addition to the research cited in this text, we can mention: Silva, F. Economia e política cultural: acesso, emprego e financiamento. Brasília: Ministry of Culture, 2007. v. 3 (Coleção Cadernos de Políticas Culturais). Köptcke, L.; Cazelli, S.; Lima, J. Museus e seus visitantes: relatório de pesquisa perfil-opinião 2005. Brasília: Gráf. e Ed. Brasil, 2009; Leiva, J. (org.). Cultura SP: hábitos culturais dos paulistas. São Paulo: Tuva, 2014.

inclusive or accessibility actions exclusively for people with disabilities? This is not a question that has a single or objective answer, but we can raise a hypothesis here. The class system division of Brazilian society, with its upper-class logic and prejudice, can perhaps give us an answer. People with disabilities may have it congenitally or acquired through some health event, and are seen as victims of certain conditions beyond their control, which hides a dose of perversity by taking away their autonomy and the possibility of being subjects of their own lives. People in situations of social vulnerability, in worse socioeconomic conditions, tend to be seen as responsible for their situation, especially in systems in which meritocracy is unquestionable, as if they did not have enough value to face and overcome their adversities. A predictable conclusion is "they are not victims, therefore they do not deserve our assistance", which also implies a welfare conception of what accessibility is, instead of considering it a common right for all. Without absolutely denying the importance of such actions, this understanding makes some accessibility projects more "palatable", such as those developed for children, people aged 60 or over, hospital patients or people with disabilities.

Add to this the fact that museums are institutions historically linked to the dominant classes, and the consequent construction of codes, procedures and symbols that transmit a message of social distinction that ends up alienating people who do not feel like participants in museum's sociocultural universe. Thus, institutions are self-sustaining in a dome of exception in which their actors and interlocutors – employees and visitors – share the same cultural capital. In this way, the processes of exclusion occur in both directions, from the inside to the outside and in reverse.

In my professional practice, I realize that symbolic obstacles to museums are as important or even more important than those of a material nature. In a survey on the perceptions of the Brazilian population regarding culture, carried out by Ipea (Institute of Applied Economic Research) in 2010, 56% of interviewees indicated that social barrier was an obstacle to access to cultural spaces imposed by the profile of the public that already visits these places, that is, the perception that these institutions are not for them and their peers (Ipea, 2010, p. 9). If we compare this perception with data from museum audience profile surveys carried out at institutional, regional and national levels, we see that it is not mistaken.[125]

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[125] In 2007, the Education Department of the Pinacoteca de São Paulo carried out qualitative research called *Expectations and perceptions regarding the Pinacoteca* [unpublished text], in which it interviewed visitors from areas surrounding the museum in order to understand their relationship with the institution. Among the various points raised, it is reiterated the lack of knowledge about the Pinacoteca's assignments and the perception of an alleged distinction and exceptionality, with respondents mentioning that to access the building they were supposed to be members, or imagining that the entrance fee was more expensive than it actually is.

As researcher Maria Vlachou states regarding the development of diverse audiences,

> barriers are not practical; they are mental and psychological, resulting from lack of previous experience, knowledge and practices. [...] Our aim is to create the conditions for them to be able to taste it: raising curiosity, showing its relevance to them, making it somehow tangible, creating comfort and well-being (mainly psychological), building bridges. In many cases, we will have to open the doors; not only for the audiences to come in, but also for us to go out, to leave our comfort zone and meet them. (Vlachou, 2013, p. 84-85)

Different points of view on accessibility in museums

Based on the reflections and questions developed so far, rather than seeking a univocal definition of accessibility in museums, I will now dedicate myself to a survey of different and complementary definitions, based on different approaches, target audiences and authors, seeking to understand the similarities and particularities of versions of the same term.

We will start with references from researchers and professionals who dedicate themselves to the topic from the perspective of access needs to museums for people with disabilities, an aspect that deserves greater attention from authors in Brazil. In this sense, many of the discussions start from issues of physical accessibility, considering obstacles related to mobility. This aspect is based on official documents and legislation itself, as we can see in the definition of accessibility in Federal Decree 5,296, of 2004, which establishes basic standards and criteria for promoting accessibility for people with disabilities, as defined in its article 8:

> Condition for the safe and autonomous use, total or assisted, of spaces, furniture and urban equipment, buildings, transport services and devices, systems and means of communication and information, by a person with a disability or with reduced mobility. (Brazil, 2004)

Or, as defined by *Brazilian Standard for Accessibility to Buildings, Furniture, Spaces and Urban Equipment* of the Brazilian Association of Technical Standards (ABNT), accessibility is "the possibility and condition of outreach, perception and understanding for the safe and autonomous use of buildings, space, furniture, urban equipment and elements" (Cohen; Duarte; Brasileiro, 2012, p. 39). Here we can see reflected the updated concept of disability, in which the responsibility for eliminating and overcoming barriers and obstacles is attributed to society and no longer to people with disabilities themselves. Disability is thus understood as the result of the interaction between people with disabilities and the social barriers imposed by attitudes and the environment that hinder equal opportunities for them (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2007, Preamble). Thus, the proposal of universal design or universal accessibility gains strength, by indicating the design of environments, products and services that can be accessed by everyone, without the need for adaptations (ibid, Definitions).

Another determining aspect for understanding accessibility for people with disabilities, which unfolds from physical accessibility, is sensory access. This is perhaps the element that most distinguishes accessibility for individuals with disabilities. If we list the various obstacles to access to museums, we will see that sensory accessibility, although it can benefit everyone, is essential for people with certain disabilities to get closer to cultural objects.

We can thus characterize access to cultural institutions in their *physical aspect*s (relating to the possibility of mobility and circulation); in their *intellectual aspects* (relating to the understanding of museum objects and discourses, the conceptual organization and language used, institutional rules and spatial orientation); in their *attitudinal or emotional aspects* (related to the feeling of being welcomed by the institution, confidence and pleasure in participating and identifying with cultural production systems); in their cultural aspects (with regard to the recognition of the cultural diversity present in the institution); in their *financial aspects* (with the release of entrance fees) and, finally, in their *sensory aspects* (related to the possibility of accessing cultural objects through other senses besides vision and hearing, for people with visual and hearing impairments) (Mineiro, 2004, p. 28-30; Aidar, 2018, p. 43-44).

As we have already mentioned, all visitors benefit from the different access possibilities listed above, which range from issues of a material and tangible nature (such as physical ones), to others just as important, but of a more immaterial and subjective nature, such as the intellectual, attitudinal/emotional and cultural aspects. Being able to physically enter a museum does not guarantee understanding its

exhibitions and curatorial narratives, just as relating intellectually to what is observed does not guarantee feeling at ease in the museum, nor belonging to its environment and cultural universe (Aidar, 2018). Once again, symbolic and intangible barriers are fundamental to accessibility and have a decisive influence on educational processes, as emotional well-being (or discomfort) directly impacts the quality of learning processes.

It is important to mention that, even if we separate and classify the different instances of access to museums, in practice they tend to overlap, complement each other or be simultaneous, hence there is no hierarchy between them, nor is it possible to imagine that eliminating physical obstacles to our institutions will ensure their accessibility. In other words, ramps, elevators or bathrooms for wheelchair users will not make us truly accessible, not even just to people with disabilities.

Returning to the issue of sensory access, the discussion focuses on the need to explore multisensoriality more intensely in museums, which would also benefit everyone, since our vital experience is synesthetic – it is not limited to the use of one sense at a time, but constantly uses them all in conjunction. The preponderance of vision in museums is impoverishing for everyone's visiting experience. As the authors of the *Cadernos Museológicos* published by Brazilian Institute of Museums (Ibram) regarding accessibility state,

> Making a commitment to the democratization of culture also means thinking about a multidisciplinary approach in which the issue of accessibility must necessarily be included. It is about guaranteeing a right and, in the case of people with disabilities, an environmental perception that involves HAVING ACCESS, WALKING BY, SEEING, HEARING, TOUCHING and FEELING the cultural goods produced by society over time and made available for the entire community. (Cohen; Duarte; Brasileiro, 2012, p. 22)

This can be developed through exhibition or educational resources, such as tactile models, two-dimensional image reliefs available for touch, exhibition sound, olfactory elements to be associated with objects or works of art, original objects available to be touched and

assistive technology resources as audio guides and video guides, among others.[126]

Another aspect common to different definitions of accessibility has to do with its correspondence with the exercise of human or cultural rights, especially those that are based on international documents, such as that developed by the Ministry of Culture of Argentina in its *Guía Práctica de Accesibilidad Cultural*:

> Cultural accessibility implies offering equal conditions for participation to all people in a given society who, for some physical or cognitive reason, are prevented from fully enjoying their rights, taking into account the barriers caused by attitudes and the surrounding environment. (Argentina, 2018, p. 8)

According to the same guide, there are four simultaneous axes to be worked on so that cultural products achieve different types of accessibility for people with disabilities: *infrastructure*, in order to guarantee autonomy in mobility, adaptation in *communication* and in *content* and the *training* of human resources in the cultural area (Argentina, 2018, p. 11-14). Some authors go further, advocating that an institutional accessibility policy should include not only the training of workers and consultancy for people with disabilities in the development of actions, but the hiring of professionals with disabilities in their teams, especially for functions that have a direct interface with the public (Tojal, 2015, p. 201).

Furthermore, when committing to the creation of an institutional accessibility policy, the transversality of actions and the involvement of all professionals and areas are essential, avoiding the so common accountability (internal and external) of certain areas, such as educational ones. According to Tojal,

> the conclusion that must be drawn is that isolated inclusion initiatives and accessibility proposals in exhibition spaces will be of little or no use if there is no real inclusion policy that takes on this concept permanently and that shapes all areas of the institution, covering not only the educational area, but also the areas of research, documentation, conservation and communication, in addition to all

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[126] A number of cultural institutions develop such resources, among which we can mention the multisensory resources developed and used by the Pinacoteca's Educational Program for People with Disabilities, which created resources for approximately 60 works of art in the museum's collection using tactile, sound, olfactory and visual elements and materials.

professionals involved with reception, security and customer service at the museum. (Tojal, 2015, p. 195)

Accessibility in a museum does not depend on the good will and commitment of a particular person or team, but on support from public policies and the desire and commitment of its institutional management.

Even among authors who dedicate themselves more closely to issues of accessibility aimed at people with disabilities, there is a general understanding that this is a concept that must be worked on in a more comprehensive way (or less exclusionary, if we want), recognizing that groups with difficulties in accessing museums are more widespread. Whether because the different and complementary possibilities for promoting access potentially benefit everyone, or because the current understanding of working with people with disabilities presupposes greater integration between these groups and people without disabilities, which within the area of inclusive education is generically called "inclusion" (actions for groups of people with and without disabilities in conjunction), this approach is currently gaining strength (Cohen; Duarte; Brasileiro, 2012, p. 40; Tojal, 2015, p. 197). In this sense, the ideas of equal opportunities and universal accessibility are articulated in a proposition that favors everyone, regardless of their capabilities or skills. As Vlachou states,

> The idea persists that everything can be made accessible because we are available to give a "little help" to those who need to go from here to there in a wheelchair or to those who ask for an "explanation". But that is not the goal. The goal is to provide everyone with equal access conditions, respecting their will and interests, taking into account their capabilities and guaranteeing their autonomy. (Vlachou, 2017, p. 47)

Other definitions of the term embrace this idea even more broadly, by not mentioning specific target audiences. This is the case, for example, of the 'accessibility' entry prepared within the scope of the Education Committee of the Museum Heritage Preservation Unit, of the Secretariat of Culture of the State of São Paulo (UPPM/SEC). This

committee brings together professionals from the educational areas of the 19 state museums, who meet monthly to discuss issues in the area.[127]

Over the years, the committee organized itself into different working groups (WGs) to delve deeper into some topics, including a WG on museum education concepts. Initially created to define concepts that could have a common understanding among the Committee participants, from 2016 onwards the WG proceeded to survey key referential concepts used by the educational areas of each participating museum, in order to identify the most recurring ones. Among them were *heritage*, *identity*, *experience*, *ludicity* and *accessibility*. The collective construction of each entry involved dynamics, writing in groups and a final construction by the WG, validated by the expanded group in October 2018. According to the UPPM/SEC Educational Committee group,

> Accessibility in museums encompasses enabling physical, communicational, intellectual, attitudinal and social access, by considering otherness and valuing diversity, in order to guarantee social and cultural participation. Actions that enable accessibility must respect and encourage the autonomy of individuals and groups, by providing opportunities for enjoyment and creation with independence and equity.

Other definitions have a more poetic and projective character, by including in their scope what is imagined to be the objective of promoting access, as formulated by the educational team at the São Paulo Museum of Modern Art - MAM, when they state that "accessibility, for us at MAM, it is not just about promoting access to what already exists, but rather about thinking and building the reality you want to live in" (Leyton, 2018, p. 25).

We can also mention the tendency to treat the topic from the point of view of social inequalities, particularly those of a socioeconomic nature. This overview at accessibility dialogues directly with the Brazilian reality and research on museums and cultural institutions audiences in the country, which indicate that the main aspect that limits access to institutions is the income and education levels of individuals (Chiovatto;

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[127] The participating institutions are: Museu Afro Brasil, Sacred Art Museum, Casa de Portinari Museum, Casa Brasileira Museum, Catavento Museum, Coffee Museum, Sexual Diversity Museum, Felícia Leirner Museum, Football Museum, Historical and Pedagogical Museum India Vanuíre, Immigration Museum, Image and Sound Museum, Portuguese Language Museum, Pinacoteca de São Paulo, São Paulo Resistance Museum, Casa das Rosas, Casa Guilherme de Almeida, Casa Mário de Andrade and Palace of Arts.

Aidar; Soares; Amaro, 2010, p. 18-19). This is also a transversal perception of accessibility, since other aspects that hinder access, such as age group or the fact of being people with disabilities, can be influenced by family income and cultural capital. In other words, an elderly person or person with a disability from a family with high income and education has a greater chance of accessing cultural institutions and socio-educational opportunities in general.

As Chagas and Storino state,

> Just as it is essential to overcome the physical, sensory and cognitive barriers that prevent full access to museums and heritage, it is also necessary to overcome economic, social and cultural barriers and face the challenge of radically expanding access to their services and products. In other words: it is necessary to overcome the immaterial barriers that frame museums as part of the lifestyle of the elite, beyond the reach of the popular classes. (Chagas; Storino, 2012, p. XIV)

Here, we can resume the discussion previously mentioned about social inclusion in museums and about a latent and unacknowledged class prejudice towards the popular classes on the part of museums, when developing their inclusion and accessibility policies or projects.

Some examples of accessibility in museums

Aware of this problem, several museums have been developing accessibility actions for a variety of audiences, particularly those who are known to be non-goers. As an example, I will mention processes developed in three institutions, one in Brazil and two abroad. The first of them refers to two experiences recently promoted by the Museo Nacional de Colombia, in Bogotá, Colombia. One of them deals with the new curatorial proposal for one of the museum's long-term exhibition centers, called "*Tiempo sin olvido: diálogos desde el mundo prehispánico*" (or "Time without forgetting: dialogues from the pre-colonial world"). The exhibition, despite its theme, does not only focus on archaeological or ethnological objects, but also covers historical and artistic objects, and its curatorial approach develops around ten thematic axes that emphasize particular traits of human behavior: producing, inhabiting, working, weaving, exchanging, representing, controlling, fighting, celebrating and

dying (Museo Nacional de Colombia, sd). For each module of the exhibition, replicas of selected objects on display were created, made from the same materials as the originals, available for the visual and tactile perception of all visitors. These replicas, mostly ceramic objects, are accompanied by labels indicating that they can be touched to explore their shapes and materials. They are also accompanied by questions of an investigative and interpretative nature, as in the case of the module "*Producir: el lugar de los alimentos*" ("Produce: the place of food"), which asks on a label: "Where does the food you eat come from? Which food comes from the most distant place of origin?" An interesting approach to accessibility, by offering all visitors the possibility of sensory access, to an intellectual and cultural one, bringing concepts worked on by the exhibition closer to the public's everyday life, in an attempt to create empathy towards native peoples.

The second example, from the same institution, refers to another exhibition, a temporary exhibition developed collaboratively with a group of socially vulnerable young people in Bogotá. Exhibition "*Historias de la 'L': ensamblando un mundo en un Modelo a Escala*" ("Stories of the 'L': constructing a world in a scale model") was on display during the second half of 2018, and its project was awarded with second place in the 9th Ibermuseos Education Award.

"L" or "Bronx Street", located in the center of Bogotá, was for years the epicenter of the city's drug market, a stigmatized and violent place, but also a meeting place for people of different origins, ages and social backgrounds. In 2016, the city hall evicted the sector as part of a public safety and urban renewal program. After the demolition of the place, several young people who lived there were sent to a social assistance institution. Based on a partnership between the Museo Nacional and this institution, under the coordination of the museum's Ethnography Curatorship team, it was proposed that a group of ten young people assemble a scale model of the "L" in the exhibition space itself, while dialoguing with visitors and experts about their experiences. In addition to the model, the young people also took photographs of the site's rubble, which together with commented labels formed part of the exhibition. Both the definition of the exhibition's objectives and the writing of the texts were prepared by the young people and the museum team, in a participatory curatorial process. Training in mediation for young people and dialogues with the public were mediated by the museum's educational area. At the end of the exhibition, the model was acquired by the museum

and will be taken to one of the new rooms for the long-term exhibitions of the museum collection, which is currently being remodeled.[128]

Figure 1: Model of the "L" street built by young people in the exhibition space of the Museo National de Colombia. Picture: Andrés Góngona.

[128] The project information and photographs were kindly shared by Andrés Góngora, Chief Curator of Ethnography at the Museo Nacional de Colombia.

Figure 2: A young project participant presents the model and talks about his life experiences there to a group of museum visitors. Picture: Museo Nacional de Colombia.

This experience is exemplary for several reasons, including the fact of working with a socially marginalized group; provide creative autonomy to its members and protagonism when expressing their voice and points of view; make their work visible within a national museum, with all the official status that this implies; recognize and value stories considered marginal and incorporate social conflict, by not being intimidated in exposing a politically delicate situation, displaying the arbitrariness of public authorities in evicting an area occupied by vulnerable groups. Furthermore, the two experiences at the Museo Nacional de Colombia are significant because they were proposed and conducted by curatorial teams, with the participation of educational areas. The most common thing when developing accessibility projects in museums is that they be prepared precisely by educational teams, as we will see in the following examples.

The second example deals with educational programs and projects developed by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, in Montreal, Canada. The museum's education area calls itself "Education and Art Therapy", which already indicates another approach to its educational programs, in a close articulation between art, education and health. The area is divided

between what they call *Education*, with actions aimed mainly at students and teachers, and two other centers called *Art therapy and well-being* and *Accessibility and inclusion*, with actions with groups of people with disabilities and their families, with eating disorders, with mental disorders, immigrants, indigenous groups, children and families in situations of social vulnerability, children and young people from multi-ethnic families, intergenerational groups, single mothers, young people from Afro-Canadian and Muslim communities, homeless people, illiterate people or with low levels of education and young people who are victims of violence. Each of these collectives participates in the museum's actions through partnerships and specific projects, without which many of them would hardly have contact with a museum institution.

The last educational department of the Canadian museum is called *Cultural activities* and is organized into actions for groups divided into age groups, such as adults, children and families, the elderly or with museum education actions for other organizations, and what they call EducExpo, with exhibitions of an educational nature, such as the most recent ones, one of which is about the deficit in education for girls in sub-Saharan Africa (titled "When I Grow up, I'm Going to Be... Toward an Inclusive Education for Girls Around the World"), and an art exhibition held with community groups in the city, focusing on artistic creation as a vehicle for social cohesion ("What If…? Diversity, Togetherness, Inclusion and Artistic Expression to Strengthen Social Bonds") (Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, n. d.).

To conclude the examples, I will mention the programs in which I participate in the Education Department of the Pinacoteca de São Paulo, which we call Inclusive Educational Programs, aimed at audiences that do not traditionally visit and for whom we have to develop more proactive approaches. In this case, these are programs that work with people with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities, or with mental disorders; with groups of people in situations of social vulnerability, many from the museum surroundings; with people aged 60 or over, and also with the continued training of museum employees, especially in reception areas and outsourced security and cleaning teams.

The choice to work with these target audiences is partly due to a dialogue with our institutional context, as in the case of the elderly, an age group that is underrepresented in the museum's spontaneous visitor profile research. In the case of socially vulnerable groups, with whom we work through the Sociocultural Inclusion Program, they are mostly from the central region of the city, where the Pinacoteca is located, that is, they are our neighbors. In this case, they are largely made up of groups of homeless adults, as well as people who are drug addicts.

Although we have specific teams and educational approaches in each of these four programs, they have common methodological assumptions. The first of them is the *development of actions based on the profiles, repertoires, experiences, interests and demands of the groups*, that is, it implies the elaboration of unique paths for each group, as opposed to the idea of predetermined educational itineraries, relatively common in museum education. Contact with target audiences takes place through *establishment of partnerships with organizations, projects and collectives with which they are linked*. Partner organizations range from those of a more institutionalized nature, such as non-formal education, social assistance or health organizations, to social movements. It is these partners that will guarantee the *continuity of the educational processes developed*. The programs work primarily on an ongoing basis with participants, which allows for the deepening of strategies and relationships and bonds with and between groups. This allows participants themselves to define what will be interesting in contact with the museum, given their maturity and familiarity with the Pinacoteca and the demands arising from this.

Another common action is *training courses for professionals who work with target audiences,* mostly professionals in social assistance, health or inclusive education. These are training courses with an extensive workload, between 40 and 60 class hours, which aim to share resources so that professionals can use museums and other cultural institution in their socioeducational practices, appropriating the spaces, contents and procedures of the Pinacoteca and the museums in general.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that as in any museum education process, but perhaps more intensely with groups with access difficulties, the results of actions can range from the acquisition of formal knowledge and the expansion of repertoires, to more subjective aspects, such as those related to improving sociability and communication skills; strengthening identities; creating links with the museum, between group members and other visitors; promoting well-being and improving self-perception and self-affirmation of the individuals and groups involved (Chiovatto; Aidar; Soares; Amaro, 2010, p. 20).

Final remarks

To conclude the reflections proposed in this article, which are not intended to be conclusive in any aspect, pointing out some questions and directions for development that the concepts of access and accessibility receive still seem to be relevant when seen from a certain perspective.

The first of these questions has to do with what we are making accessible within our institutions, in a discussion that refers to the idea of democratization of culture, as if developing accessibility policies uncritically were assuming a stance of cultural indoctrination, in which we encourage the cultural consumption of non-attending groups in order to popularize the erudite and dominant culture of museums, seen as necessary for the entire population. Even though in some cases we can recognize accessibility actions that start from this premise, we cannot circumscribe all of them within these parameters and intentions, as we have already seen in some ideas and examples shared here.

According to Vlachou,

> there are also many of us who advocate 'access', but access to what we define as valid culture. Still, what if we tried to get to know better the communities in which we are inserted? What if we opened up our spaces (which are also theirs), involving them, creating comfort (physical, psychological and intellectual) and a feeling of belonging? What if we programmed together with them? What if the artist were them? (Vlachou, 2013, p. 92)

On this point, we approach the issue of cultural democracy, in its sense of not hierarchizing the manifestations of culture and giving access to cultural production rather than its consumption, favoring public participation not only as spectators, but as active agents (Teixeira Lopes, 2009). Still quoting the same author,

> Working with people does not mean "giving people what they want" [...] It means being sensitive to what interests, worries, makes them restless and brings joy to the community that surrounds us, and trying to build a program that allows us to reflect, together, on all of this. (Vlachou, 2017, p. 53)

Other professionals, particularly linked to Social Museology, move their reflections on accessibility towards a complementary perspective.

As Chagas and Storino state,

> democratizing access to museums is fundamental, but
> it is not enough. It is necessary to understand the
> museum as a means, a tool, a machine, a process or a
> social system that must be democratized.
> Furthermore, it is important, from our point of view,
> to encourage and contribute to the direct relationship
> between popular communities and museums,
> understanding that within this relationship there is
> space for the unexpected, the new, to settle in.
> (Chagas; Storino, 2012, p. XIV)

For this line of thought, providing access to traditional museums built on elitist foundations would not be productive or sufficient, but rather, collectives could acquire the "means of production" of museum work, creating renewed institutions based on the outlining and legitimization of other cultural codes, coming from less privileged social groups, through, for example, the creation of community museum experiences.

Although these propositions are quite stimulating for those who believe in the emergence of new museum experiences, they leave us facing an impasse: how can more traditional institutions participate in these processes? Or should they be forgotten and continue to serve only the dominant classes?

Based on my experience, I believe that what traditional museums have to share, even within their institutional and historical limitations, can be potentially relevant to everyone, depending on the approach, the quality of contact with the heritage and the institution, and the resulting relationships. Furthermore, contradiction can be installed from within, through questioning of official discourses.

According to Encarna Lago,

> It is not about acquiring or incorporating audiences,
> previously excluded and now potential, but about
> being places of creation where, as a community, we
> move from spectators to thinkers, creators and
> managers of the initiative. Evidently, this presupposes
> facing risks, dialoguing with others, creating common
> and accessible languages, going out to the streets to
> observe the artistic expression that takes place,
> rethinking the spaces for creative initiatives to be born

and generating a distinct heritage that will later be valued or not, but which exists in its own right. (Lago, s. d., free translation)

In this sense, community-based museums have more freedom and better conditions to experiment with accessible and collaborative management and work processes, but the possibilities for public participation and dialogue with museums are varied, and more traditional institutions can and should undertake them. The renewal of certain museological practices within traditional institutions poses a challenge to be faced, and accessibility processes are part of this effort.

In conclusion, what we can therefore infer from a closer look at the different conceptions of accessibility in museums is that they necessarily imply attention and respect towards others (whether they are visitors, potential audiences or co-managers of our institutions), availability to dialogue and joint construction, establishment of non-hierarchical relationships and sharing of power, be it class, institutional or narrative power.

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