

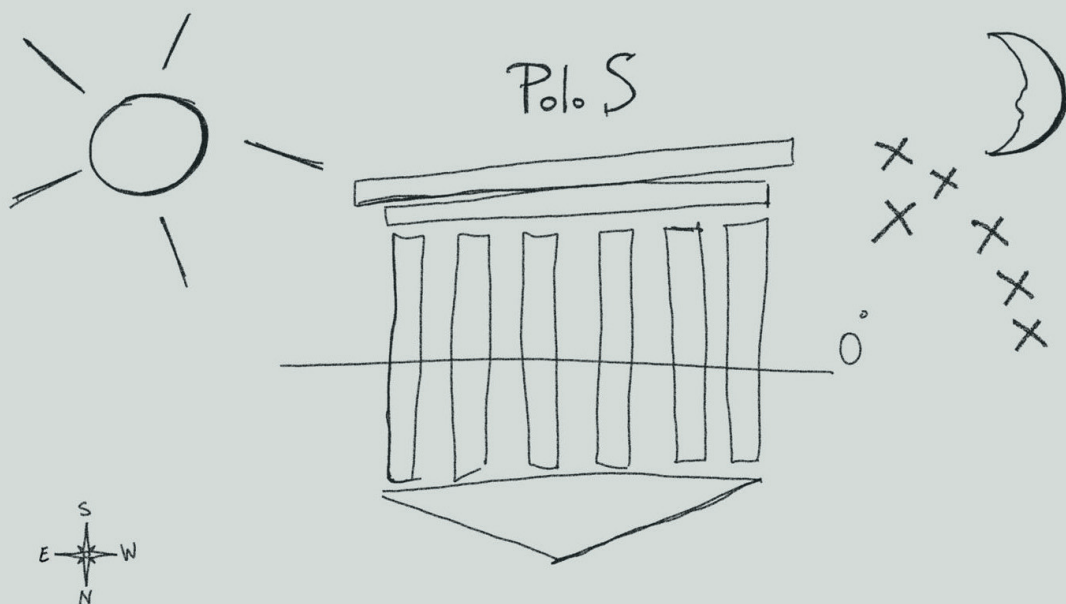
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A guide through Sociomuseology

Roots and Practices



Maria Magdalena Neu





Sociomuseology & Sociomuséologie 2

**A guide through Sociomuseology:
roots and practices**

Maria Magdalena Neu

Departamento de Museologia
Universidade Lusófona

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Sociomuseology & Sociomuséologie vol. 2

Manuelina Maria Duarte Cândido

The collection called Sociomuseology & Sociomuséologie publishes selected works originally written in English and/or in French, or translated into these languages, which create 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).

The goal is to give broader international visibility to this body of work and gradually boost a greater circulation of authors, concepts and experiences linked to these insurgent museologies, particularly in non-Portuguese and non-Spanish speaking countries. Thus, the collection seeks to overcome the language barriers identified in the work *Ondas do Pensamento Museológico Brasileiro* (Duarte Cândido, 2003), which persists even after two decades.

The Universidade Lusófona in Lisbon, Portugal, through its Department of Museology, has a long history of contribution to the consolidation of the field, offering a specialization certificate since 1993, before creating a master's and a doctorate in 2007. In the same year in 1993, Lusófona launched the well-known publication of *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 the Reinwardt Academy in the Netherlands, for instance. More recently, partnerships were also extended to universities in Spain, Germany, and Italy. There is, however, still a lot of resistance in museum environments 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 the objective of increasing accessibility to the thriving production of Sociomuseology to potential allies in the clashes for the transformation of the museum field, I have directed my work as a guest professor at the Universidade Lusófona, 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 willing to write their thesis in French or English (without discarding the thesis orientation in Portuguese) in the Museology Department. The diffusion of books is mainly online and free, which allows more democratic use of this production, with the possibility of printing volumes in the paper back system.

The second volume of the Sociomuseology & Sociomuséologie collection presents the master's thesis of Maria Magdalena Neu, defended in 2022 at the Universidade Lusófona under the direction of Prof. Dr. Mário Moutinho. In addition to being a guide able to introduce the theme of Sociomuseology to interested English readers, the author makes an important discussion on the specificities that differentiate, in her opinion, the Sociomuseology of Social Museology, treated as synonyms in much of the available literature.

Maria Magdalena also contributed to the process of rapprochement between the Universidade Lusófona and the University of Würzburg, Germany, where I initiated in 2014 as a visiting professor. During her master's degree, Maria Magdalena Neu made an exchange through the European Erasmus programme at the University of Würzburg. In turn, she also approached the Universidade Lusófona and the Sociomuseology of other German students with ongoing research.

The University of Würzburg, notably through the Chair of Museology Guido Fackler, has shown great interest in opening up dialogue with the Social Museology and Sociomuseology, which have been the subject of workshops, debates and publications. Members of the Department of Museology such as postdoctoral researcher Nevine Nizar Zacharia, of Egyptian origin, actively supported the creation of the International Committee of Social Museology (SOMUS-ICOM).

The interest is greater than the availability in German or English of texts dealing with topics related to Sociomuseology. Aware of this, and dedicated to building bridges between different cultures and university traditions, Maria Magdalena Neu made an irrefutable contribution with her master thesis, now a book, that we hope, will be continued in a doctorate as well as by other agents in the field of Museology.

This collection is plural in many ways and we chose not to require authors a new complete formatting of bibliographic references, although the Lusófona Editions work especially with the APA standards. In this way, we admit works that originally used other standards systems such as ABNT, MLA, Chicago, AFNOR, etc. We also use other particularities not existing in the standards, when it is the intention of the author to put female authors' first names in full or to mark with colours indigenous, African, LGBTQIA+ authorship, etc.



La collection appelée Sociomuseology & Sociomuséologie publie des œuvres sélectionnées, écrites à l'origine en anglais et/ou en français, ou traduites dans ces langues, qui dialoguent avec les muséologies insurgées, telles que Sociomuséologie, Muséologie sociale, Nouvelle Muséologie, Muséologie populaire, muséologie communautaire, écomuséologie, entre autres (Duarte Cândido, Cornelis, Nzoyihera, 2019 ; Duarte Cândido, Pappalardo, 2022).

L'objectif est de donner une plus large visibilité internationale à cette production et de favoriser progressivement une plus grande circulation des auteurs, des concepts et des expériences liés à ces muséologies insurgées dans les pays ne parlant ni le portugais ni l'espagnol. Ainsi, la publication cherche à surmonter les barrières linguistiques identifiées dans l'œuvre *Ondas do Pensamento Museológico Brasileiro* (Duarte Cândido, 2003), qui persistent même après deux décennies.

L'Universidade Lusófona à Lisbonne, Portugal, à travers son Département de Muséologie, possède une longue histoire de contribution à la consolidation du domaine, offrant un cours de spécialisation depuis 1993, et plus tard, un master et un doctorat en 2007. Dans la même année, la Lusófona a lancé la publication bien connue *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 cet environnement académique est l'affirmation de la Sociomuséologie comme école de pensée. Loin de préconiser 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 l'expansion des horizons géopolitiques. Cette dernière s'est réalisée notamment par une collaboration historique avec pratiquement toutes les universités brésiliennes dans lesquelles une formation en Muséologie est proposée, et la Reinwardt Academy aux Pays-Bas, par exemple. Plus récemment, les partenariats ont été étendus également à des universités en Espagne, en Allemagne et en Italie. Néanmoins, la résistance des milieux muséaux et universitaires conservateurs, est encore perceptible au-delà de la barrière linguistique déjà soulignée. En effet, même pour ceux qui nourrissent un intérêt, peu de matériel est encore disponible sur la Sociomuséologie 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'Universidade Lusófona avec deux buts principaux : effectuer la prospection et la sélection de matériel d'intérêt pour la publication de livres en anglais et / ou en français dans le cadre de la Sociomuséologie; et aussi de stimuler de nouvelles productions en français et en anglais, notamment en cherchant à attirer des doctorants désireux d'écrire leurs thèses en français ou en anglais (sans écarter l'orientation de thèse en portugais) au Département de Muséologie. La diffusion des livres de cette collection est principalement en ligne et gratuite, ce qui permet une utilisation plus démocratique de cette production, avec la possibilité d'imprimer certains volumes.

Le deuxième volume de la collection Sociomuseology & Sociomuséologie présente le mémoire de master de Maria Magdalena Neu, défendu en 2022 à l'Universidade Lusófona sous la direction du Prof. Dr. Mário Moutinho. En plus d'être un guide capable d'introduire le thème de la Sociomuséologie pour les lecteurs anglophones intéressés, l'autrice réalise une discussion importante sur les spécificités qui différencient, selon elle, la Sociomuséologie de la

Muséologie Sociale, considérées comme synonymes dans une bonne partie de la littérature disponible.

Maria Magdalena a également contribué au processus de rapprochement entre l'Universidade Lusófona et l'Université de Wurtzbourg, que j'ai initié en 2014 en tant que professeure visiteuse en Allemagne. Au cours de son master, Maria Magdalena Neu a effectué un échange par le biais du programme européen Erasmus à l'Université de Wurtzbourg. À son tour, elle a également introduit l'Universidade Lusófona et la Sociomuséologie à d'autres étudiant.e.s allemand.e.s avec des recherches en cours.

L'Université de Wurtzbourg, notamment par le biais Professeur en Muséologie Guido Fackler, a montré un grand intérêt pour l'ouverture au dialogue avec la Muséologie Sociale et la Sociomuséologie, qui ont fait l'objet d'ateliers, de débats et de publications. Des membres du Département de Muséologie comme la postdoctorante Nevine Nizar Zacharia, d'origine égyptienne, ont activement soutenu la création du Comité International de Muséologie Sociale (SOMUS-ICOM).

Cet intérêt se montre plus présent que la disponibilité en allemand, voire en anglais, de textes traitant des thèmes liés à la Sociomuséologie. Consciente de cela, et vouée à la construction de ponts entre différentes cultures et traditions universitaires, Maria Magdalena Neu a apporté avec son mémoire, maintenant livre, une contribution irréfutable qui, nous l'espérons, sera poursuivie dans un doctorat ainsi que par d'autres agents du domaine de la Muséologie.

Cette collection est plurielle à bien des égards et nous avons choisi de ne pas exiger des auteurs un nouveau formatage complet des références bibliographiques, bien que les Éditions Lusófona travaillent particulièrement avec les normes APA. De cette façon, nous acceptons les travaux qui ont utilisé à l'origine d'autres systèmes de normes comme ABNT, MLA, Chicago, AFNOR, etc. Nous avons également des particularités inexistantes dans les normes, lorsque l'intention de l'auteur/autrice est de mettre des prénoms d'auteurs féminins en toutes lettres ou de signaler avec des couleurs d'auteurs/autrices autochtones, africaines, LGBTQIA+, etc.

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**A guide through Sociomuseology:
roots and practices**

Maria Magdalena Neu

For a museum to make sense for life, it must extrapolate the old notions of museum. A museum that doesn't serve life is of no use.

Mario Chagas

Acknowledgments

I'd like to thank the wonderful professors I had on my way – Ana Abreu at the University in Brasília, Mario Chagas at the University in Rio de Janeiro, Guido Fackler at the University in Würzburg & Mário Moutinho at the University in Lisbon.

The knowledge and passion about Museums that can effectively change something in our societies was not only passed on to me – but sparked a flame that has been raging for nine years now.

I'd also like to thank my family, my mother Manoela and my father Gregor for supporting my studies and encouraging me to continue, always. A special thank you to my aunt Maria Paula who introduced me to the subject of Museology and suggested I try that for my Bachelors – you had a good feeling there.

Last but not least a big thank you to my partner Robert Alan and to my friend Violetta Grümpel who have been with me through the last years and have accompanied this process closely – and patiently.

Without all these people I would not have made it.

Thank you.

Abstract

The present book serves as a first contact for all those who guard curiosity towards Sociomuseology and Social Museology. As both topics are strongly bound to the Portuguese language, this is an effort to open up new connections and discover synchronicities between museal practice with social focus around the world.

It focuses on the emergence of the concepts of Sociomuseology and Social Museology, on their position inside of the international museums field and on case studies in Brazil and some punctual international examples.

Reading this book will provide you with an understanding of Sociomuseology, Social Museology and its position regarding New Museology and Ecomuseology, as well as the ideas and values these social museologies represent and analyze.

Key words:

Social Museums, Sociomuseology, Ecomuseology, Decolonial Museums, Social Change.

Abbreviations

- ALAM: Latin American Association of Museology.
CESM: Study Center for Sociomuseology.
ICOFOM: International Committee for Museology.
ICOM: International Council of Museums.
ICTs: Information and Communication Technologies.
IBRAM: Instituto Brasileiro de Museus.
IPHAN: Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico Nacional.
ISMAG: Instituto Superior de Matemática e Gestão.
MDPP: Standing Committee for Museum Definition, Prospects and Potentials.
MEK: Museum Europaischer Kulturen.
MINOM: Movimiento Internacional para uma nova Museologia.
[International Movement for a New Museology].
MNES: Muséologie nouvelle et expérimentation sociale.
MUF: Museu de favela.
SEGIB: Iberoamerican General Secretariat.
SESC: Serviço Social de Comercio.
UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNB: Universidade de Brasília.
UFBA: Universidade Federal da Bahia.
UFG: Universidade Federal de Goiás.
UFOP: Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto.
UFRGS: Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul.
UNIRIO: Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro.
ULHT: Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias, Lisbon –
currently Universidade Lusófona.
USP: Universidade de São Paulo.

Table of Contents

Introduction	23
Chapter 1. Roots of Sociomuseology	35
1.1. Events	39
1.1.1.Recommendation of Grenoble, 1971.....	42
1.1.2. Roundtable of Santiago, 1972?	46
1.1.3. Quebec Declaration, 1984	49
1.1.4. Consolidation of New Museology	53
1.1.5. MINOM, 1985	56
1.1.6. Creation of the School of Thought of Sociomuseology Lisbon, 1993	61
1.1.7. 23rd General Conference ICOM, Rio de Janeiro, 2013	71
1.1.8. 38th General Conference UNESCO, Paris, 2015	74
1.1.9. 25th General Conference ICOM, Kyoto, 2019	82
1.2. Practices that gave reason for Sociomuseology to emerge	89
1.2.1. Sociomuseologies perspective on Ecomuseology, New Museology and Social Museology.....	93
1.2.2. Ecomuseology	93
1.2.3. New Museology	99
1.2.4. Social Museums, focusing on Favela Museums in Brazil.....	103
Chapter 2. Sociomuseology - Central ideas	111
Chapter 3. Are Sociomuseology and Social Museology synonyms?	121
Chapter 4. Conclusion	125
Bibliography	131
About the Author	139

Introduction

This master thesis was officially conferred by the Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias¹ in Lisbon, taking its place within the distinguished Faculty of Social Sciences, Education, and Administration, within the Department of Museology². While the body of the text remains unaltered, this introductory paragraph stands as an exception, rendering its timestamp to August of 2022.

Reflections of Sociomuseology, mostly in Portuguese and Spanish, work from a southern and decolonial perspective³. In that sense, South America plays a significant role in our history of emergence. We work from the southern perspective and use southern theories – *built* on northern or western concepts of museum, history, and identity. We question such concepts and produce decolonial knowledge in museum studies, reflecting on the potentials the field holds in the prospect of socio-economic development of areas and the inherent communities.

Often ignored or reduced to exoticist, judged too alternative to be applied in northern contexts, the perspective on museums produced by those who are not part of the Eurocentric canon is not only legitimate in Sociomuseology – it serves as the major inspiration.

This book is an invitation sent out to the rest of the English-speaking Museology world in the aim to increase the necessary international recognition for the field. An opportunity for southern reflections, discussions and produced knowledge to get a broader recognition worldwide. It has been written with the objective to open the door to those interested to get into the arena of our discussions, expanding the group of museologists aware of Sociomuseology as a school of thought and the socio-political transformative potential of museal actions which embody Sociomuseology's field of study.

For that reason, I opted to offer information about the roots of Sociomuseology, exploring the history of the movement that culminated in creating a specialized university course in Lisbon, Portugal, that forms Masters and Doctors in Sociomuseology.

As a half German and half Brazilian woman, I lived the cultural exchange, also called alterity, since I was born. Having started my Bachelor in Museology at the

¹ Currently Universidade Lusófona.

² A guide through Sociomuseology: roots and practices was presented as a master's thesis at the Universidade Lusófona, at the faculty for Social Sciences, Education & Administration, at the Department of Museology, in Lisbon, in 2022 under the orientation of Prof. Dr. Mário Caneva de Magalhães Moutinho

³ Linguistic approaches and aforementioned perspectives will be explained in detail in chapter 2. Roots of Sociomuseology.

Universidade de Brasília and finished it at the Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg⁴, it became clear that there is a huge difference in approach to the museum world. The encountered contrast inspired me to generate material in English that gives interested people the opportunity to get closer to Sociomuseology and the possibilities of museums related to social development. Having spent two thirds of my life in Germany and one in Brazil, I have had contact with museums and Museum-Studies in both countries and now in Portugal.

As you might have noticed, I write in my own perspective – using the personal pronoun ‘I’. Hence the importance of context information about my perspective. When I use the words ‘we’, ‘our’, or ‘us’, I refer to the school of thought of Sociomuseology. I perceive myself as a bridge between the Portuguese-rooted Sociomuseology and the English and German-speaking community. Regarding citation styles, this book is written according to the APA rules.

When working with heritage, identity, and politics, one must be aware of their own place of speech. In my case, I notice my privilege and feel obliged to work towards a conscientization of museum people, helping those as privileged as me to understand their position in society and the potentials of museums. This way we can fight with, and not for, groups under processes of oppression to live in a world where basic human rights are granted for all. Lynch (2020, p. 17) spoke out of my soul when she wrote:

You don't have to be the leader of a global movement or a household name. It can be as small scale as chipping away the warped power relationships in your workplace. It can be passing on knowledge and skills to those who wouldn't access them otherwise. It can be creative. It can be informal. It can be your job. It doesn't matter what it is, as long as you are doing something.

When reflecting on contemporary museums and Museology, we are faced with a complex reality. Just as Mário Moutinho (2014, p. 3) well expressed it on how peaceful those days were when we knew exactly what a museum was and what it was not; when museums served only to show or glorify the history of any given thing, or when they only displayed their collections and archives that were inherited, collected, bought, looted, or given to them. Museums were peaceful, facing only the problems of storage, preservation, and eventually documentation. When the narrative was only an elementary discourse supported by the official ideology.⁵

⁴ With a double degree in Museology and European Ethnology.

⁵ Translated by the author. Original: “Como eram tranquilos os dias, em que sabíamos exatamente o que era um museu e aquilo que não era. Quando os museus serviam apenas para mostrar ou glorificar a história de qualquer coisa, ou quando só mostravam as suas coleções e arquivos, herdados, coletados, comprados, saqueados ou oferecidos. Os Museus eram tranquilos enfrentando apenas os problemas de armazenamento, preservação e eventualmente de documentação. Quando existia uma narrativa essa era apenas um discurso elementar sustentado na ideologia oficial”.

We, museologists, are constantly targeted with questions about what we study and if it is necessary. On this regard, Judite Primo (2019, p. 9) synthesized if Museology is or not a disciplinary field; if Museology is a science or not; if we have a specific method to investigate Museology or not; if research in the field of human and social sciences is valid or not; if the socialization of cultural goods and memory, by Sociomuseology, is or not an assistentialist process.⁶

Moreover, in the same text, she affirms that it is essential to understand that this incomprehension, mistrust, and discredit towards research in the field of Museology has been a marked reality among researchers of the social and human sciences, which can be seen in the corridors of our Academies and Museum Institutions.⁷

Museum studies are often underestimated by people who do not understand the importance of the field of study, reducing it to a technical approach in museum making. The distrust towards Museology is enhanced when the concept is amplified to Sociomuseology.

Sociomuseology fortifies democratic and dialogical museums, providing analyses, theories, and discussion arenas. Its focus lies on institutions that are alive⁸ and strive toward socio-political development. Museums and actions that put their efforts towards the transformation of local communities to the better, working with the concepts of collective memory, identity, and political organization are part of its field of study.

To begin the discussion about what we, the school of thought of Sociomuseology, believe museums can accomplish in our societies, I would like to ask you, the reader, to take some time to reflect on the following questions: are museums political? Or are they neutral institutions that hold heritage for all people? Is it a privilege to have information about one's history, ancestors, and prospects available in museums? Is there such a thing as a right to memory? Who gets to feel represented by the official narrative of history? Who is guaranteed this right? Can or should we consider memory as a basic human right?

These questions should prompt the reader to think about the museums visited so far. What narratives did these museums embody? Are they neutral bearers of heritage for all people, or do they represent the interests and intentions of local elites?

⁶ Translated by the author. Original: “(?) se a museologia é ou não um campo disciplinar; (?) se museologia é ou não uma ciência, (?) se temos ou não um método específico para investigar e museologia, (?) se a investigação no campo das ciências humanas e sociais é ou não válida, (?) se a socialização dos bens culturais e da memória, pela Sociomuseologia, é ou não um processo de assistencialismo”.

⁷ Translated by the author. Original: “No entanto é fundamental entendermos que essa incompreensão, desconfiança e desprestígio em relação a investigação no campo da museologia, tem sido uma realidade vincada entre investigadores das ciências sociais e humanas, que se verifica nos corredores das nossas Academias e Instituições Museológicas.

⁸ Museums that understand the context they are in and are continuously adapting to it - in opposition to those that focus on safeguarding inanimate objects”.

We live in a world full of inequality, injustice, and unjust distribution of wealth and rights. The capitalist system, neoliberalism, and fake news produce an inhumane environment for all those who are not part of the unhealthily privileged (primarily white, male, third age, and Western) elite.

Museums are keepers of heritage, history, and cultural assets. In the western majority society, the concept of a museum is closely associated with a valuable material collection. Ethnological and historical museums are carriers and exhibitors of memories, histories, identities, and narratives that impact how visitors and participants see the world in which they live.

I do not think it is necessary to discuss the problematic provenance of some objects in big traditional museums, as this is not in my scope of research for this book. However, it is important to remember that many of them were taken from their original countries in the contexts of colonization and war, and since most of these museum institutions were opened by the elite and therefore represent their ideals, they have failed to represent the many groups of people who suffer from the effects of subalternation or who are simply not part of the ascendant class of society: non-white, non-cisgender, unfamiliar with Western values.

Museums can be a tool to strengthen identities, provide a sense of belonging, and improve overall mental health in many situations. Karen Brown (2019, p 4) describes how museums can benefit people in a wide variety of ways: "Recent studies demonstrate how public engagement with museums can bring about significant health benefits to people, and ... [can lead] to impacts such as reduced social isolation, positive emotions, increased self-esteem and sense of identity".

Museums have the potential to impact communities profoundly. This topic will be explored in detail in this publication. In preparation for this, it is important to consider the issues faced by global civilization in our time. Acknowledging these issues is the first step in changing them.

At this point it is fundamental to clarify that a new museum definition was agreed on the 24th of August of 2022 in Prague. This book was written and approved as a master's thesis until the 5th of August of 2022. That's why there is no chapter dedicated to it. At the end of chapter 2.1.9. (Kyoto), there's the mention to this new definition and a short dedication about how it is closer to Sociomuseology than the valid one until then.

According to the International Council of Museums Statutes⁹, (ICOM, 2007), adopted by the 22nd General Assembly in Vienna, Austria:

A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public,

⁹ Created in 1946, ICOM is a non-governmental organization maintaining formal relations with UNESCO and having a consultative status with the United Nations' Economic and Social Council. As a non-profit organization, ICOM is financed primarily by membership fees and supported by various governmental and other bodies.

which acquires, conserves, researches communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.

There are several problems within this definition dated August 2007. It is not representative of all museums, nor does it show the full potential that museums can have to influence the community and work towards the development of society. As it will be seen in Chapter 1.1.9, a newer museum definition, not agreed in Kyoto 2019, and which, according to Sandahl (2019, p. 7), remarkably does not go hand in hand with Sociomuseology:

Museums cannot be defined or understood outside the realms of societies. A new museum definition needs to acknowledge and critically reflect the legacies and continuous presence of societal inequalities and the asymmetries of power and wealth marring the geopolitical relationship between continents as well as the national, regional and local societal contexts. Equally, it cannot ignore the alarming crisis of the destruction of nature and the unsustainable relationship between people and the rest of nature. There is, furthermore, a related and intensifying critical concern about the accountability and transparency under which museums acquire and use the material, financial, intellectual, and social resources at their disposal.

The claim that museums preserve, research, communicate, and exhibit the heritage of all humanity is not valid. It is easy to observe that the official discourse is a history written by those who won and is often a whitewashed and unreal version of actual events. In this sense, museums, as caretakers of that official history, unfortunately, tend to be, as Kamel¹⁰ affirms: "white, bourgeois, classist, racist, ableist and heteronormative institutions, with a museum workforce that is always cloning itself". (Museum Europaischer Kulturen -MEK, 2021)

In this sense, the change proposed, researched, and demonstrated by Sociomuseology seems to be a light at the end of the tunnel. The last 50 years have been crucial and illustrate the need to adapt the museum to the current world situation.

As Judite Primo and Mário Moutinho wrote in "Theoretical References for Sociomuseology" (2020, p. 1, 2), a consensus on the concept and nature of the museum has existed peacefully for a long time. Museology was [understood as] a

¹⁰ Kamel, S. (2020), Our Heymat! Your Museum? – Towards a More Diverse Museum Culture in Museum Europaischer Kulturen- MEK (2021), What's Missing? Collecting and Exhibiting Europe, Publication series of the Museum Europaischer Kulturen, volume 24. P.132-133.

technique applied to the work developed in the Museums, encompassing several skills regarding the collection, conservation, and restoration of the museological objects that were part of their holdings. The Museum was essentially a, more or less, sumptuous building where the collections of objects were kept, whose destination was their exhibition in the different rooms, corridors, staircases, gardens. Objects marked by some form of symbolic or real value, meaning in most cases rarity, beauty, authenticity. These Museums and this Museology are sufficiently described, and we cannot naturally exclude its relevance as an essential element in the construction of the memory(s), in the preservation of material cutouts of different social realities, in the construction of local, national, and transnational identities.¹¹

This *traditional and normative* concept of the museum is by no means less valid or important than what we understand under Sociomuseology and is very well described and researched. We, the representatives of Sociomuseology, aim to create the space for discussion, research, and establishment of concepts regarding new and different types of museums that share the focus on the social potential, which will be further described in chapter 2.2.

We feed on any museum experience that focuses on people and their relationship to the natural, social, economic, and political environment to create engagement towards general development to a better and fairer reality.¹² Sociomuseology does not aim to delegitimize the traditional Museology but to push it to widen the horizons of perception of a museum's responsibilities.

When I first had contact with *Museus Sociais*¹³ (Chapter 2.2.4.), and later with Sociomuseology, I did not know that Europe was aware of these potentials and cases of institutions actively working in the same direction as ours. I was pleasantly surprised to have been ignorant to the subject, discovering museological work focused on societal change and the usage of the immaterial culture here¹⁴, too!

¹¹ Translated by the author, Original: “Durante muito tempo o conceito de museologia e a natureza material dos Museus era relativamente consensual. A Museologia era uma técnica aplicada ao trabalho desenvolvido nos Museus englobando várias competências aplicadas à recolha, conservação e restauro dos objectos museológicos que compunham os seus acervos. O Museu era no essencial um edifício mais ou menos sumptuoso onde se guardavam as colecções de objectos, cujo destino era a sua apresentação nas diferentes salas, corredores, escadarias, jardins. Objetos marcados por alguma forma de valor simbólico ou real, significando na maioria das vezes raridade, beleza, autenticidade. Estes Museus e esta Museologia estão suficientemente descritos, e não podemos excluir naturalmente a sua relevância como elemento essencial na construção da(s) memória(s), na preservação de recortes materiais de diferentes realidades sociais, na construção de identidades locais, nacionais e transnacionais. Todos os Louvres e British Museums, Hermitages, pequenos e grandes de todas as cidades e países estão aí para demonstrar sem dúvida o seu lugar no quotidiano e no imaginário de gerações”.

¹² Meant is development in the social, political and economic sense. It is the striving towards the construction of better living conditions for those less privileged in our systems of power.

¹³ A Brazilian genus of museum, that is a radical example of ‘New Museology’s’ principles.

¹⁴ In Europe.

Susan Kamel¹⁵ (in an Interview with Iris Edenheiser), a professor at the HTW University in Berlin, explained the paradox in which she finds herself to clarify her position as speaker as follows:

As a professor, she prefers to teach unlearning, catching the students before they have even begun their own educational demands, to familiarize them with techniques of resistance and activism against this knowledge. Disciplined, white knowledge is too comfortable for her and only stabilizes a status quo that she considers dangerous. Museum objects and thus collections have always been rather unimportant for her personally. She is interested in people, their stories, especially those that tell of resistance. She added she is increasingly angry with museums. Criticism have already been directed at museums and their collection logics from so many sides - including hers: Museums are in the tradition of white, male, educated bourgeois, disenchanted, classicist, heteronormative institutions. But of course, she also knows that white knowledge is indispensable for advancing into positions with more room for maneuver - that is why it is also taught in their program, but in awareness of precisely these mechanisms of exclusion and epistemic violence. An important part of her teaching is therefore to at least hold out the prospect of an organizational development that is sensitive to diversity and critical of discrimination". (Griesser-Stermscheg, Et al., 2020, p. 133)¹⁶

We work in the same line in Sociomuseology knowing that we need the mentioned white knowledge to acquire enough power to change something in elitist education institutions as universities and museums.

It is comforting to know that there are museum-people all around the world that share this perception. Sociomuseology offers a place where the focus stays put on this kind of reflections and discussions – at present times almost exclusively in Portuguese and Spanish but hopefully, in a near future, in English too. The prospects of a network and mutual support, dialogical learning and better understanding of

¹⁵ Kamel, Susan : Gegen die Wand? Was es heißt, sich mit Sammlungen anzulegen. In: Martina Griesser, Nora Sternfeld, Luisa Ziaja, Sich mit Sammlungen anlegen. Gemeinsame Dinge und alternative Archive, S. 131-137, De Gruyter, Berlin, 2020, ISBN 978-3-11-070044-2.

¹⁶ Translated by the author. Original: "Susan: Bevor ich anfangen, mit euch über die Situation von Museen und ihren Sammlungen nachzudenken, würde ich gern noch ein Paradox ansprechen, in dem ich mich als Autorin dieser Zeilen befinde, um so meine Sprecherinposition zu verdeutlichen: Ich als Lehrende würde am liebsten das Verlernen lehren, die Studierenden noch vor ihrem eigenen Bildungsanspruch abfangen, um sie mit Techniken des Widerstands, des Aktivismus gegen dieses Wissen vertraut zu machen. Diszipliniertes, weißes Wissen ist mir zu bequem und stabilisiert nur einen Status quo, den ich für gefährlich halte. Museumsobjekte und somit auch Sammlungen waren mir persönlich schon immer ziemlich egal. Mich interessieren die Menschen, ihre Geschichten, insbesondere die, die vom Widerstand erzählen. Gegen Museen hege ich immer mehr eine große Wut. Die Kritik ist schon von so vielen Seiten – auch von mir – an Museen und ihre Sammlungslogiken herangetragen worden: Museen stehen in der Tradition weißer, männlicher, bildungsbürgerlicher, ableistischer, klassistischer, heteronormierender Institutionen. Aber natürlich weiß ich auch, dass weißes Wissen für das Vorankommen in Positionen mit mehr Handlungsraum unumgänglich ist – es wird darum bei uns im Studiengang auch vermittelt, aber im Bewusstsein ebendieser Ausschlussmechanismen und der epistemischen Gewalt. Ein wichtiger Bestandteil meiner Lehre ist darum, eine diversitätssensible und diskriminierungskritische Organisationsentwicklung zumindest in Aussicht zu stellen".

the museal actions around the work that work on bettering the social and natural environment are more than welcome.

Considering the current movements in the museum world, explicitly illustrated by the many online¹⁷ conferences and symposiums that took place at the beginning of 2021¹⁸, it becomes graspable that there is an effort towards building a conscious group of museum-people¹⁹ that work towards a change to the better, not only in the museums' field but on a global scale. We perceive these events as a movement in international Museology showing the opening of museum-studies to the challenges faced by humanity in current times. It becomes clear that museums and Museology are starting to see the necessity in being active, participating, and fighting towards a fairer world.²⁰

As will be shown in the following chapters, there is an international interest in changing the relationship museums have with the society around them. Especially, when giving space to marginal parts of the society, museums can play a crucial role. As Bernadette Lynch puts it, (2020, p.19) (...) [this way the] museum broadens and deepens its societal impact, powerfully led by the marginalized themselves who consistently develop capabilities, including ... contributions to public debates and the training of social workers and teachers.

It is essential not to do that spending your “energies on being sorry for the poor, disaffected, marginalized”. (Lynch, 2020, p.14). As Lynch points out in her explanation about the therapeutic model of museums, which announces social justice, humanitarian, and human rights commitments while undoing democratic practice, making use of pity and avoiding conflict, turning itself fundamentally unhelpful. (Lynch, 2020, p.13)

The role of museums in communities, the potentials they hold, and the many different possible forms of action have been analyzed, theorized, and methodized by Sociomuseology for around 30 years. The rich productions of Sociomuseology will benefit these international discussions enormously when the linguistic barrier is lifted.

¹⁷ Due to the pandemic.

¹⁸ Some of these events were:

- Babel Tower museum people in dialogue 12.2.21 – 26.04.2021. Published in Pappalardo & Duarte Cândido, 2022 [Babel Tower: museum people in dialogue. Paris: ICOFOM/ICOM, 2022. 218 p. <http://hdl.handle.net/2268/267933>] and on the Youtube channel <https://www.youtube.com/@museologieuliege759/videos>

- Webinar Epistemology of Museologies by Linköpin Universities and ICOFOM 10.03.2021

- Decolonising Museology: Museums, Mixing, and Myths of Origin 44th annual ICOFOM symposium — 15 to 18 March 2021

¹⁹ Those who work with or in museums, those who research museums, those who teach subjects related to museums etc.

²⁰ These happenings drove me to question if all this could be called a Sociomuseological turn in Museum-Science.

In the Museums that go under Sociomuseology, either people open their own museums, with their own and original narrative, or they actively participate in all or some of the museum's actions, collecting, researching, documenting, preserving, exhibiting, and communicating. We actively dissociate ourselves from assistance-offering Museology, which keeps people stuck inside invisible boxes.

Approximating the reader to the foundations of Sociomuseology and its history of emergence, the second chapter of this publication excavates the roots of the school of thought in events, practices, and documents. It is divided into events and practices. In 2.1, "Events", nine official milestones that paved the way and represent some of our core values are reflected on, emphasizing the happenings that created documents that demonstrate the reality of our subject of study. Subchapter 2.2. thematizes museal practices which exist since decades before the creation of the concept of Sociomuseology and of which some continue to strive until today.

The museum processes that will be portrayed here carry a binding factor: they do not present harmonic, pleasant narratives that conceal sensitive matters. Very much contrary to that, we are talking about museums that comprehend that a subtly coerced consensuality can suffocate debates that should take place. There will never be one narrative that makes every visitor satisfied. Therefore, the museum must, for us, choose to acknowledge *anger, frustration and unhappiness with complex social problems in the immediate surroundings* instead of presenting a false, injustice-concealing, fictional idea of the sociopolitical environment the museum stands in.

Chapters 2.2.1. – 2.2.4. focus explicitly on Sociomuseologies perspective on itself and the concepts of Ecomuseology, New Museology and Social Museology, demonstrating Sociomuseology's awareness of similar practices and directions inside of Museology.

The third chapter consists of the effort to define Sociomuseology, what it stands for, its ideological principles and its field of study. Demonstrating how we are organized and what prospects the subordination under the term Sociomuseology gives to those who are researching in the field.

The fourth chapter focuses on the heated discussion inside of our school of thought regarding the definitions of Social Museology and Sociomuseology, which are sometimes used as synonyms.

In the conclusion, I will try to answer the questions: is Sociomuseology effectively still bound to the Portuguese speaking countries? Or is it already spreading? Is it possible to call all this movement in Museology – characterized by transferring the focus of museums from objects to the people, human rights, social justice, equality, etc. a Sociomuseological turn in Museology, even if museum-people are still not aware that they are doing Sociomuseology in some of the cases? What is the relation between the terms Ecomuseology, Social Museology and New Museology?

The literature used for this publication is not only the production of our school of thought but an attempt to include as many inputs as possible from around

the world to illustrate the international nature of this topic. Many sources worldwide portray museums' work that try to change society for the better, fighting prejudice, racism, sexism, and many other forms of unfairness. The used sources are analyzed under a sociomuseological perspective, not to claim them as our sources but to facilitate the understanding of the sociomuseological canon.

The hope is that my work can contribute to people realizing the potential museal institutions have inside of politics, inspiring public policies focused on cultural and identity integration. It is a fact that there are many integrational policies focused on housing, work, and education, but not enough on the before mentioned dimensions of culture and identity of minorities.

Enough introductory writing. Do you believe museums are responsible for bringing awareness and information to most of the society about problems they do not face? We, as a school of thought, do. And hopefully, more people, especially those working in and studying the museum field, will be convinced after having had contact with Sociomuseological theory, practice, and consequences in the territories.

Without wanting to shoot all my powder initially, I sincerely wish you pleasure reading this book and hope that more and more change-seeking museologists will join our movement.

1.
Roots of
Sociomuseology

In this chapter I invite the reader to reflect on significant events for the emergence of Sociomuseology and the official documentation that accompanied that process in the first subchapter. The second subchapters focus lies on showcasing practices that gave a solid foundation for our school of thought to build on. It is noticeable that the first significant wave of events carrying some of our core principles took place in the 1970s and 80s – as will be presented in detail in the next subchapters.

This period was decisive as many transformations and questionings were happening in the field of Social Studies. Chagas and Gouveia (2014, p. 9) gave an interesting perspective on the period, deepening the reflexion about the Latin American space, affirming that “many social movements were concomitantly gaining force vibrating towards a broader understanding of human rights, equality, and actively criticizing war, neoliberalism and fascism.” They demonstrate how the carnation revolution happened in Portugal, the manifestations against the Vietnamese war especially in the US, most of South America’s countries were immersed in far-right dictatorships and many African countries were fighting for their decolonization and independence. The social movements were fighting the imagery of destruction and social sciences were logically influenced by all these contextual happenings.

Considering Museology as a science field closely related to cultural and social studies, it can only make sense that the reflexive turn in the 1980s is also part of the context we are talking about. In Human Sciences, especially History and Anthropology, there were major discussions that reverberated in museums. Coincidentally, as put by Schreiner (2012, p.17), the period was of importance because: “the existence of a theory of Museology was already confirmed and a place of speech was defined for it in the academic universe”.

ICOM was searching for definitions that explain and define Museology. Hence, as Bulat (2016, p. 16) emphasizes “museums were analyzed and questioned in relation to their history, development, social role, different definitions of museum typologies, specific research methods, conservation, education and administration/organization, and the relationship between them and their sociopolitical and physical environment”.

It is possible to claim that the cited period was characterized by defining what ow who Museology is in the academic world, how new concepts and methods were being used (or should be used), and how professionals should be prepared. In this context, in 1976, the International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM) was created to develop research and studies about Museology as an independent academic discipline.

When introducing Sociomuseology – there is one publication that is always cited. The book *Os Museus no Mundo* – [the museums in the world] featuring an interview with the French museologist Hugues de Varine and was published in 1979 in Portuguese, Spanish and French. The publication influenced Museology immensely since then. The topics treated in this book are the museums and society, new experiences, the pedagogic dimension of the museum, the social projection of the museum, the formal efforts of rupture, the relationships between the public and the museum, and the analyses of an administration model: the anthropologic museum in Mexico and scope of the innovations.

The book also treated the Smithsonian Neighborhood Museum that will be mentioned in chapter 2.2. and the Anthropological Museum in Mexico, showing that there were different museologies happening in different places at the time.

The interview with Hugues de Varine is often cited in Brazilian museum studies. Mario Chagas embeds it perfectly in his input for *Serviço Social de Comércio's* (SESC) event Memory as a right in 2019. According to Chagas²¹ (SESC, 2019), in the interview Varine says that from the beginning of the 19th century the development of museums in the world is an exclusively colonialist phenomenon. The perspective, the classification and the concept came from Europe to the rest of the world and represented the colonialist ideology.

The French museologist (1979 p. p.12-13). critically reflects on countries that were once colonized in the following manner:

The decolonization that took place later was political, but not cultural; therefore, one can say, that the world of museums, as an institution and as a method of conservation and communication of the cultural heritage of humanity is a European phenomenon that spread because Europe produced the dominant culture and museums are one of the institutions derived from this culture.

Varine defends the construction of new museological ethics and policies. He also raised attention towards the production of new knowledge and new museological practices. The book raises the questions: Is it possible to think of a Museology outside colonial frameworks? If so, where to start? And it presents cues as to where to start. It discusses a new historiographical approach to museums. A new historiographical construction and a new theoretical concept. A new museographic configuration. It is about the challenge of not only dealing with objects but dealing with people.

What I deem interesting to add here is that the seventies and eighties were not the first moment where there the effort to think about the social role of museums

²¹ Chagas (2019) Memória e espaços de poder museologia social e práticas afins in SESC (2019). Memory as a right. São Paulo [Vídeo] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7KZhEq2sZFU&t=28s>

was made. For instance, Alma Wittlin, (1970, p. 204-211), already wrote about the unmet needs of people in museums. Her book was first published in 1949²². Some experiences were already taking place – as in Brazil in 1953 with the creation of the Museum of Indigenous people. Therefore, it becomes clear that it is impossible to define the end of the 20th century as the definitive point in time that triggered the emergence of Sociomuseology. We can affirm that this period determines the context of solidifying some of our ideas and fields of action.

The whole two next subchapters (Events & Practices) will demonstrate that Sociomuseology is not a new, revolutionary idea, but a school of thought that stands firmly on more than 50 years of history, with a community of smart minds working together to understand the full potential of museums and their actions.

1.1. Events

It is hard to affirm a certain tree of life for Sociomuseology. The following subchapters are set up to outline important events and practices that carry in them the seeds that allowed this tree grow steadily.

A series of declarations and conferences happened in the end of the 20th century, that had a big influence on the international museum scenery. Established museums began to adapt to unmet needs of the communities in and around them and new museal institutions began to sprout. Both the established Museums that changed some conducts to produce a change in their sociopolitical environment and the new institutions created with this intent are subjects of study of Sociomuseology.

Judite Primo condensed it well when she wrote that Museology, throughout the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, has been shaping itself based on society's demands for the adoption of new museum models, new processes and practices that take on a more inclusive character, models and processes that take into account cultural, thematic, ethnic, and gender diversity. This change has been built in different territories and social contexts and is taking place all over the world. These changes, which in general were also influenced by UNESCO²³ documents, were not always essentially transformative, but they revealed

²² The Museum. Its history and its tasks in education. Reihe: International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction. Hrg. Karl Mannheim. Routledge & Paul Kegan, London 1949.

²³ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

the possibility of expanding the boundaries of action and the level of commitment of Museology with society. (Primo, 2019, p. 5)²⁴

The events presented in the next nine subchapters, gave a certain legitimacy to some practices that were already taking place and inspired new institutions to be opened, focusing on the new paradigms that were discussed then – and are still being discussed today.

Some institutions had been practicing what is currently understood as Sociomuseology before the term, and the school of thought, even existed. In Chapter 2.1 events will be presented which are often mentioned when tracing the history of our school of thought. I inserted translations from sources in Portuguese and German, and a reflection on how these events contributed to our school of thought. Chapter 2.2. is exclusively dedicated to the practices that had the creation of our school of thought consequently. During the dismantling of these events and practices, always putting them in relation to Sociomuseology, my best effort to delimit the New Museology movement is presented.

There is no way of finding the first official event that shows signs of Sociomuseology in the past, but many happenings²⁵ as mentioned per United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO (2016, p.12) did pave the way. For instance, the Recommendation concerning the Most Effective Means of Rendering Museums Accessible to Everyone, which was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its 11th session in Paris, 1960, declares that “Museums can contribute to accomplish the tasks of intercultural dialogue among peoples, social cohesion and sustainable development”. (UNESCO, 1967, p. p.124-125).

Our school of thought is constantly evolving. We do not want to be static and reduce our reflections to static terms. In social sciences, unlike mathematics, the understanding of terms is ever evolving. We do not conceive this as a deficit, but as a positive aspect, as it allows us to adapt and be flexible and useful. Different opinions provoke dialogue, and dialogue is the way we communicate.

²⁴ Translated by the author. Original: “A Museologia, ao longo da segunda metade do século XX e início do século XXI, foi se moldando a luz das exigências da sociedade em prol da assunção de novos modelos museais, novos processos e práticas que assumissem um caráter mais inclusivo, modelos e processos que dessem conta da diversidade cultural, temática, étnica e de gênero. Essa mudança foi sendo construída em diferentes territórios e contextos sociais e se verificam um pouco por todo o mundo. Estas mudanças, que em sua generalidade foram também influenciadas pelos documentos da UNESCO, nem sempre foram essencialmente transformadoras, mas permitiram revelar a possibilidade de ampliar as fronteiras de atuação e o nível de compromisso da Museologia com a sociedade.

²⁵ A list of the international instruments directly and indirectly relating to museums and collections is provided at the end of this section.

List of the international instruments directly and indirectly relating to museums and collections:

- The Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954), and its two Protocols (1954 and 1999).
- The Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property 1970.
- The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)
- The Convention on Biological Diversity (1992).
- The UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (1995).The Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001)
- The Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003).
- The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005).
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)
- The Recommendation on International Principles Applicable to Archaeological Excavations (UNESCO, 1956); The Recommendation concerning the Most Effective Means of Rendering Museums Accessible to Everyone (UNESCO, 1960).
- The Recommendation on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Export, Import and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (UNESCO, 1964).
- The Recommendation concerning the Protection, at National Level, of the Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO, 1972).
- The Recommendation concerning the International Exchange of Cultural Property (UNESCO, 1976).
- The Recommendation for the Protection of Movable Cultural Property (UNESCO, 1978).
- The Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore (UNESCO, 1989).
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1949).
- The UNESCO Declaration of Principles of International Cultural Cooperation (1966).
- The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity 2001;
- The UNESCO Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage (2003);
- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)
- The 38th General Conference of UNESCO, 2015, Paris (chapter 2.1.8)

1.1.1. Recommendation of Grenoble, 1971

The ICOM meeting in Grenoble which resulted in the production of the Recommendation was significant for portraying the need to renew the understanding of what a museum is.

The document produced at this meeting consists of 8 resolutions which already show signs of dissatisfaction with the then-current museums' world. This event was strongly influenced and rooted in the UNESCO Convention in 1970 on the means of prohibiting and preventing the illicit import, export and transfer of ownership of cultural property. The Grenoble event is more holistic, questioning the acquisition of the objects in museums.

The document was not inserted in its totality, only those citations that resonate most with our school of thought. I selected the following quotes from the resolution.

1. The Museum in Service of the Man” because they show an analysis of the then-current museums' world. (...)

2. That the traditional concept of the museum which perpetuates values concerned with the preservation of man’s cultural and natural heritage, not as a manifestation of all that is significant in man’s development, but merely as the possession of objects, is questionable.

3. That each individual museum must accept that it has a duty to evolve means of action specifically designed to serve best the particular social environment within which it operates”. (ICOM, 1971, p. 2)

(...) 7. That museums have not taken advantage of the wide range of expertise and knowledge which exists in other sections of the community. (p. 3)

The seven topics in total in this first resolution requested urgently that all museums:

a. Undertake a continuous and complete reassessment of the needs of the public which they serve.

b. Through the medium of ICOM, undertake a programme of systematic study and research based on the results obtained and

evolve methods of action which will in future more firmly establish their educational and cultural role in the service of mankind. (p. 3)

It is, therefore, possible to notice that in 1971 the dissatisfaction with the unuse of the full potential of museums was already blatant and recognized in the institutional realm of ICOM. Adding to that, we can understand that the request to include the society in the museums' planning is present at this point, and that's logical, as it is the society that consumes the museum and should be in focus in all actions of the museum. It also shows that museums should be in contact with ICOM to best analyze their own institution and develop new ways of action that practically legitimate the museum in that context through its educational and cultural role in the service of society. The permanent self-analysis of a museums actions is a frequently thematized aspect in Sociomuseology to the present day.

The resolution n.2: Ethics of Acquisitions (UNESCO, 2016, p. 3) thematizes the destruction and exploration of many sites of human heritage, the interest of maintaining and contributing to the reconstitution of their cultural heritage and questions the ethic code of acquisitions of museums. It therefore

Recommends to all museum professionals:

1. That they bind themselves to a moral obligation for collective action in establishing and adhering to a professional ethic as regards acquisition of objects the licit quality of which is not sufficiently established;
2. That they adopt within their professional activities a policy which conforms to the ICOM resolutions of 1970 on this subject and strive to encourage the incorporation of this ethical code into the policy of all museums;
3. That they urgently request the governmental authorities in their respective countries to comply with UNESCO's international recommendations on archaeological excavations (1965), and on the illicit transfer of cultural property (1964), and to ratify the International Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, and to conclude bilateral and multilateral agreements aimed at the suppression of illicit traffic in cultural property. (p. 3)

The topic of ethics in acquisitions is also totally connected to people, human rights, mutual respect, and interdependence. That demonstrates the fundamentality of this event and how it paves the way for institutions that resonate with our school of thought.

Additionally, the Resolution No 3, in relation to *Documentation of Collections and Field Missions* advocated:

2. That all large museums holding important collections of foreign origin in their reserves, help, by all the means in their power (gifts, loans, deposits, exchanges, research scholarships, training of personnel, etc.), the countries of origin of these collections, so as to allow them to establish and develop modern museums which are truly representative of their specific cultures.

3. That these same museums deposit in the museums of the countries of origin of their collections, the most comprehensive documentation possible on the objects in their collections.

4. That scientific institutions and researchers deposit in museums the products of their research, i.e. the objects and the documents and publications related to these objects, after such reasonable delay (determined by law or contract) as is necessary for study and the scientific use of the resultant research by its authors; it being understood that the museums of the countries where the research was undertaken have the right to receive all or part of the objects collected, together with duplicates or reproductions of the principal documents issuing from such research. (p. 4)

What stands out here, resonating with Sociomuseology, is the conscience about the historical mistreating of objects and people, not giving the populations access to their own heritage. The knowledge about this is the first step to allow museums and museum-people to pay this historical debt doing anything in their power to change the power relation towards these dispossessed objects, attributing the historical owners the power and sharing the produced knowledge, as it is expressed in point 4.

The resolution n. 4: *Training of Personnel*, refers to the 7th and 8th ICOM General Conferences “Recognizing the appreciable progress made in the last few years, particularly the increased number of Museology courses in numerous countries”. (UNESCO. 2016, p. 4) It also asks governments to recognize Museology “as a scientific discipline of university level” (UNESCO. 2016, p. 4) that therefore should be encouraged to research and financed to publish their findings.

I would like to highlight the collective effort to fortify Museology as a science in this period and how this battle is still on.

The resolution n. 5: *Museums and Environment*, shines light on pollution of air, earth, and water, and the destruction that comes with it, not only the destruction of humanity, but the destruction of life in general.

This fragment of the document affirms that “(...) all museums in the world are concerned with the gathering of documentation on the basic conditions of human existence and the preservation of the natural and cultural environment”. (UNESCO. 2016, p.5) and highlights “the importance of the museum as one of the most effective vehicles for the transmission of information and cultural environment”. (UNESCO. 2016, p.5)

Consequently, it recommends:

1. That all national and international organizations and in particular the United Nations, UNESCO and all governments should recognize and fully employ the resources of museums and of ICOM in the furtherance of research and education in all measures designed to protect man’s wellbeing and continued existence,
2. That all museums should create special displays on the theme «Man and His Environment» and prepare comprehensive documentation on this subject as an information base for government agencies and industry. (UNESCO. 2016, p.5)

This part is the most significant in my opinion, because it demonstrates the potential and the responsibility museums should take to develop communities’ consciousness about themselves in their environment, thus showing the mistakes and planning a better relationship with our planet.

Karen Brown, (2019) thematizes this often-ignored character of museums, in the following citation:

Transforming our understanding of museums in all their diversity – from large national museums in multicultural urban settings to small community museums in native or indigenous settings – and seeing them as places where we humans can seek balance between our well-being and the health of planet Earth. (Brown, 2019, p.3)

The resolution N. 6 concerns *Safety of Exhibitions During Transport* and begins noting the importance that travelling objects have for educational purposes and that they need to be even more protected when moving around the globe. The “damage caused to objects by poor packing, clumsy handling, shock and vibration in transit, violent variations in climate and lack of accompanying professional personnel,” (UNESCO. 2016, p.5) should be minimized. As a solution for this matter, the resolution proposes that ICOM should undertake “the detailed study of all the desirable administrative and technical control factors significant for the improvement of the care and preservation of works of art and museum objects entrusted to international loan exhibitions”. (UNESCO. 2016, p.5)

The resolution N. 7: *Exchanges of Personnel*, reflects on the interest of sharing experiences made by museums in different countries. Therefore it “Recommends that exchanges of museum professionals between different countries be systematically encouraged and organized, particularly through the intermediary of ICOM”. (UNESCO. 2016, p. 6)

We completely agree with this resolution, as Sociomuseology is an international concept that embraces as many different case-studies as possible, to learn about the heterogeneous possibilities that museal institutions share.

The last resolution, N. 8: *Review of ICOM Structures* indicates a need for questioning and modernization of the existing ICOM structures to

Improve its ability to respond to the needs of the general membership”. This should be done by reviewing the “the structure, statutes, rules, programs and services of ICOM” through a committee appointed by the president to conduct a review and “that the recommendations of such a committee be forwarded thereafter to the Secretariat for submission to the Executive Council and be distributed to all members in the following six months. (UNESCO. 2016, p. 6)

The last resolution resonates with the aforementioned necessary constant self-analysis. This applies for ICOM and for every museum.

1.1.2. Roundtable of Santiago, 1972

One year after Grenoble, and after a succession of similar regional seminars occurred in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1958); Jos, Nigeria, (1964); and New Delhi, India (1966), ICOM and UNESCO organized the Roundtable of Santiago de Chile.

A memorable factor: it was the first Roundtable in a *developing country* to gather local specialists, not focusing on the European or North American perspective as the holders of the museal truth. Here, instead of disseminating their (traditional and western) Museology and the way it is practiced in these rich countries, local leaders were heard. The exchange here did not happen in English as usual, but in Spanish. The ICOM events held prior to the Santiago Roundtable followed a format in which European or North American intellectuals were invited to speak to local audiences. The organizers of the 1972 edition sought to reverse this logic, asserting

the need to value local Latin American knowledge and museum experiences”. (Portilho, 2016, p. 58- 59)²⁶

This fundamental change in the organization of the event probably is what made it so significant. The Roundtable and the Quebec declaration from 1984 are, in my personal experience, the most cited events when talking about Sociomuseologies roots²⁷. The round table should have been hosted by Paulo Freire who was initially entrusted with the direction of the Round Table to be held in Chile, then under the Popular Unity government. However, Brazil was under a military dictatorship, and the Brazilian delegate to UNESCO vetoed this representation, leaving it to the Argentine urbanist Jorge Enrique Hardoy who lead the discussions. When it finally took place, on May 1972, the Round Table on the Role of Museums in Latin America presented a great new contribution: the reflection on the social function of museums, their insertion in cities in a context of demographic explosion, and the idea of an integral (or integrated) museum, in tune with the problems of society and capable of acting as an instrument of development”. (International council of Museums, ICOM, Brasil., 2012).²⁸

The Roundtable of Santiago is better known than the before cited event in Grenoble because of the “holistic approach towards local development” (Brown, 2019, p. 4) with the intention of “Bringing together a range of actors from the worlds of museums, agriculture and development at a time of socio-political unrest and movements such as liberation theology and pedagogy of the oppressed”. (De Varine, 2017, p. 147)

This meeting introduced the term *integral museum*, in the sense of searching for a model of museum that is involved in the development of the local community, uniting people from different areas of knowledge with the focus on social studies: museologists, archeologists, agriculturists, sociologists, etc. This interdisciplinarity in its approach is a factor that is strong in Sociomuseology until the present day.

Regarding the terminologies *Social Museum* and *Integral Museum*, Luciana Christina Cruz e Souza wrote the following:

²⁶ Translated by the author. Original: “Os eventos realizados pelo ICOM anteriormente à Mesa Redonda de Santiago seguiram um formato em que intelectuais europeus ou americanos eram convidados a falar para plateias locais. Os organizadores da edição de 1972 buscavam inverter essa lógica, afirmando a necessidade de valorizar os saberes locais da América Latina, bem como suas experiências museológicas”.

²⁷ Cf.: Definição evolutiva de Sociomuseologia, Referências teóricas da Sociomuseologia Mário Moutinho & Judite Primo.

²⁸ Translated by the author. Original: “Ao educador brasileiro Paulo Freire foi confiada inicialmente a direção da Mesa-Redonda a ser realizada no Chile, então sob o governo da Unidade Popular. Entretanto, o Brasil vivia uma ditadura militar, e nosso delegado na UNESCO vetou esta representação, cabendo ao urbanista argentino Jorge Enrique Hardoy conduzir as discussões. Quando finalmente se realizou, em dias de maio de 1972, a Mesa-Redonda sobre o Papel dos Museus na América Latina apresentou uma grande e nova contribuição: a reflexão sobre a função social dos museus, sua inserção nas cidades em contexto de explosão demográfica, e a Ideia de museu integral (ou integrado), sintonizado com os problemas da sociedade e capaz de atuar como instrumento do desenvolvimento”.

The participants formulated the suggestion of a new kind of museum, where the human being would be approached in his relationship the environment, and urban and rural problems would be addressed in an inseparable and multidisciplinary way. This museum would initially be called the "Social Museum", but throughout the debates, the expressions "Integral Museum" and "Integrated Museum" became more prominent. (Cruz e Souza, 2020, p. 13)

The imbalance caused by capitalism, as well as the problems of uncontrolled urbanization in developing countries²⁹, were initially pointed out as issues demonstrating the need for a change in the museum institutions in South America and the world. This is a calling of the museum to start acting and actively participating in the society it stands in. Therefore, it was stated:

The museum is an institution in the service of society of which it forms an inseparable part and, of its very nature, contains the elements which enable it to help in the moulding the consciousness of the communities it serves, through which it can stimulate those communities to take action by projecting forward its historical activities so that they culminate in the presentation of contemporary problems; that is to say, by linking together past and present, identifying itself with indispensable structural changes and calling forth others appropriate to its particular national context. (Instituto Brasileiro de Museus - IBRAM³⁰, 2012 p. 208)

Thus, the museum is called upon to play a significant role in shaping the mentality of the inhabitants of a territory. The museum, unlike in traditional Museology, is responsible not only for education, but also for historical and political education and, beyond that, for raising the awareness of the inhabitants in their context. However:

This approach does not deny the value of existing museums, nor does it imply abandoning the principle of specialized museums; it is put forward as the most rational and logical course of development for museums, so that they may best serve society's needs. (IBRAM, 2012 p. 208)

²⁹ Which manifests in social inequality – very rich people and very poor people. In this context this is described as the consequence of capitalism.

³⁰ Instituto Brasileiro de Museus

Adapting to the contemporary society is seen here as a fundamental step for the museum to fulfill its duty. Ideas such as the opening of a Latin American Association of Museology, ALAM, or the recovery of cultural heritage from abroad were also addressed. *Museu Social* [Social Museum] was mentioned as a small sub-item, proposed by Dr. Mario Teruggi from Argentina, as an institution where the human being should be communicated in his cultural and natural environment. Museologia Social and Sociomuseology are deeply connected through a not ceasing discussion that will be thematized in chapter 4. The following citation of Karen Brown gives a good overview about the significance of the Santiago Roundtable:

[it] recommended that museums focus on their social role. As Hugues de Varine, one of the organizers, observed, the event offered ‘a great opportunity to bring together the two categories of specialists, experts in museums and in economic and social development to solve one problem: integrating museums into development’. (Do Nascimento Junior et al. 2012, p. 206; Hennelly 1990; Assunção 2010, p. 5) As is well documented, the Round Table of Santiago gave birth to the so-called ‘Latin’ nouvelle Muséologie, which challenged existing structures in society and worked towards cultural decolonization through its anti-elitist ideas and practices. (Brown, 2019, p. 3,4)

Here, for the first time, a New Museology was officially proclaimed as a solution to the problems of museums (which were not adapted to society). Museums have the potential to explain their sociopolitical environment to people and to educate and give them enough input for locals to understand their actual condition and their cultural heritage in a socio-political way.

1.1.3. Quebec Declaration, 1984

Twelve years later, in 1984³¹, the Quebec Declaration was published. The declaration resulted of the workshop that focused on New Museology and presented new proposals based on the documents emanating from Santiago. For the Quebec Workshop museologists from 15 countries met to discuss Ecomuseology and New Museology. Different to the Roundtable of Santiago, it was not organized by ICOM. This workshop took place because people involved in museums that were not understood by ICOM decided to reunite to discuss how things worked in each museum. At that time ICOM was not really open to the then New Museology. The

³¹ The Oaxtepec Declaration took place in the same year. Cf. Declaratoria de Oaxtepec – 1984. Ecomuseos – Territorio – Patrimonio – Comunidad, Online: <http://www.ibermuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/declaracao-de-oaxtepec.pdf> [opened at the 07.08.2018]

Declaration produced at the workshop is a very simple, objective, and radical document, which would become internationally known as the Quebec Declaration and would give rise to the International Movement for a New Museology that, strictly speaking, contributed to the production of a watershed in the museum field. In a short time, especially in the 1980s and 1990s, the themes and problems listed by the so-called New Museology spread around the world”. (Chagas & Gouveia, 2014, p. 12)³²

The workshop intended to encourage exchanges between experiences of the so-called New Museology, clarifying its relations with established Museology in general (Portilho, 2016, p. 37). Whilst the round table in Santiago called upon the museum to start being engaged in its context, to start acting, the Quebec declaration follows up suggesting involving *the (local) population in the actions* of the museum. The discussion about the integral museum (meaning it is interdisciplinary and has universal characteristics) was resumed and this time they concluded that interdisciplinarity is only achievable with the presence of the people and their distinct knowledges in the museum.

Therefore, the museums must communicate with current methods, in contemporary ways (which must be understandable to the population and the administration). I decided to insert the whole text as it is not too long as reformulating it seemed useless. I highlighted those parts that I see as most meaningful for Sociomuseology in bold letters.

Introduction

A movement of **new museology** has its first and international public expression in 1972 at the ‘Round table of Santiago (Chile)’ organized by ICOM. This movement claims the social function of the museum and its interventions` global character.

Proposal

Consideration of universal order

In a contemporary world which attempts to integrate all means of development, Museology should strive to broaden its traditional attributions and functions of identification, preservation and education to encompass wider practices than these objectives to better include in its action those related to the human and physical environment. In order to achieve this goal

³² Translated by the author. Original: “um documento muito simples, objetivo e radical, que ficaria internacionalmente conhecido como a Declaração de Quebec e que daria origem ao Movimento Internacional para uma Nova Museologia que, a rigor, contribuiu para a produção de um divisor de águas no campo museal. Em pouco tempo, especialmente nas décadas de 1980 e 1990, o temário e os problemas elencados pela denominada nova museologia espalharam-se pelo mundo”.

and incorporate the populations in its action, museology is increasingly using its interdisciplinarity, contemporary methods of communication common to cultural intervention as a whole, and the means of modern management which integrate their users.

At the same time that it preserves the material fruit of past civilizations, and that it protects those that bear witness to present day aspirations and technologies, the new museology – Ecomuseology, community museology as well as all other forms of active museology – is first and foremost concerned with the development of populations, reflecting the modern principles that have driven its evolution while simultaneously associating them to projects for the future.

This new movement has unquestionably put itself at the service of creative imagination, constructive realism and the humanitarian principles upheld by the international community. It has to some extent become one of the possible forms of bringing peoples closer together, for their own and their mutual knowledge, for their cyclic development and their desire for the fraternal creation of a world that respects its intrinsic wealth. In this sense, this movement, which aims at manifesting itself globally, has concerns of scientific, cultural, social and economic order.

Among other means, this movement uses all the resources of museology (collection, conservation, scientific research, restitution, diffusion, creation), which it transforms into tools suitable to each specific social context and projects.

2. Making a stand

Considering that over fifteen years of experiments in new museology – Ecomuseology, community museology and all forms of active museology – throughout the world have been a critical factor in the development of the communities that have adopted this way of managing their future.

Considering the need, unanimously felt by the participants in the various reflection panels and by the consulted contributors, to accentuate the means to render this movement more widely recognized.

Considering the will to create the organizational basis of a common reflection and of experiments lived in various continents.

Considering the interest in providing itself with a framework aimed at fostering the workings of these new museologies and consequently at articulating principles and means of action.

Considering that the theory on Ecomuseums and community museums (neighborhood museums, local museums...) was born of experiments conducted in various environments for over 15 years.

The following is adopted:

That the international museum community be invited to acknowledge this movement, to adopt and accept all forms of active museology in museum typology.

That everything be done to ensure that public powers acknowledge and foster local initiatives which implement these principles.

That in this spirit and with a view to allowing the development of the effectiveness of these museologies, the following permanent structures be created in close cooperation:

An international committee 'Ecomuseums/Community Museums', within the scope of ICOM (International Council of Museums).

An international federation of the new museology, which may be associated to ICOM and to ICOMOS (International Council of Monuments and Sites), with provisional headquarters in Canada.

That a provisional work group be formed whose first initiatives will be: organizing the proposed structures, setting objectives, applying a three-year plan of meetings and international cooperation.

(Movimiento Internacional para una nova Museologia - MINOM, 2010; p .23-25)³³

³³ Movimiento Internacional para una nova Museologia. [International Movement for a New Museology].

Some of the principles of this *New Museology*, as seen in the Declaration of Quebec, existed for around 15 years before – in the many practices as Ecomuseology, neighborhood museums and others but had their first official appearance in documents in Santiago in 1972 and then in Quebec in 1984. The *officialization* and therefore recognition the movement of *New Museology* gets through these events is significant, as these new museums (that were not named as new museums because the term did not exist in official documents until these events) were now looked at not only as legitimate museums, but as part of a revolutionary movement focused on local sociopolitical an economic development through the instrumentalization of human heritage and identity.

Elisa Bulat wrote that the above-mentioned strand [of New Museology] has distinguished itself in the history of the discipline by extending the museum concept [institution] reflecting on the interaction between man and heritage in an integral sense, and by seeing the public as an actor in conservation and patrimonial communication”. (Bulat, 2016, p. 16)³⁴

At the official website of MINOM³⁵, it can be read that: “The Quebec Declaration is a reference point for the movement [of New Museology]. Its ideological origins are found in the Santiago Declaration adopted in 1972 in Chile”. (MINOM, n.d.)

1.1.4. Consolidation of New Museology

The last three subchapters demonstrated that he events of the 70s and 80s were decisive, culminating in what we now call *New Museology*. This museological paradigm was organized parting from the French context. Apart from the before-mentioned events, according to Soares (2019), another fundamental mark for New Museology happened in 1982 with the presentation, in Marseille, of the statute of a new association which would receive the name of *Muséologie nouvelle et expérimentation sociale*³⁶.

It was based on ideas already presented by some critics of traditional museology at the time, and especially on the thoughts of Georges Henri Rivière, Hugues de Varine and André Desvallées. It was, in fact, the reflection of the ruptures and

³⁴ Translated by the author. Original: “A referida vertente se destacou na trajetória histórica da disciplina por ampliar o conceito de museu (instituição) e pensar a interação entre homem e patrimônio em sentido integral, entendendo o público como agente das ações de preservação e comunicação patrimonial”..

³⁵ International movement for a New Museology [MINOM], n.d.

³⁶ *Muséologie nouvelle et expérimentation sociale* (MNES).

transformations of the established museum logic, perceived by some French professionals working in the ecomuseum scenario. (Brulon, 2019, p. 215)

It can look like New Museology is a French concept, but when you look deeper into the subject, you get confronted with the international nature of it. This association, based on the thinking of museologists who worked within ICOM and were in direct contact with international experiences of a consecratory nature, can be seen as the first concrete formulation of a 'new' discourse based on experimentation to conceive social change through the museum device. Although it originated in the French context, its genealogy can be found in the thinking of professionals and theoreticians who looked at irruptive practices in the former colonies. Museologists such as the already mentioned Mario Vázquez, from Mexico, or Marta Arjona, from Cuba, and Waldisa Rússio, from Brazil, had already been, since the 1970s, producing critical reflections on the museum practice in force, and theoretical propositions based on museological experimentation. (Brulon, 2019, p. 216)³⁷

Brulon relies on Desvallées 1992 when he affirms that New Museology emerged with the intention of rupture with the traditional museum concept and proposed a radical revision of the notions of public and the relation between society and patrimony. It was not a matter, in fact, of thinking of the museum merely as an institution open to the public, but of considering, even in traditional museums, the diversity of the public's experiences in its broadest understanding, and the means of appropriation of heritage by this same public. (Brulon, 2019, p. 209, 210)³⁸

New Museology was, more than anything, a movement that recognized new and different approaches to what the responsibilities of a museum can be, extrapolating from the old object-focused theory.

There was therefore a move away from a singular focus on collections research towards a focus on relations with people, and in particular, on the educational role of the museum. (Lynch, 2020, p. 7)

The museum had, through the establishment of New Museology, not only acquired new responsibilities. New Museology introduced new potentials to the museum world. From this point forward, museums began to connect with their

³⁷ Translated by the author. Original: “Esta se baseava em ideias já apresentadas por alguns críticos da museologia tradicional na época, e, sobretudo, nos pensamentos de Georges-Henri Rivière, Hugues de Varine e André Desvallées. Ela foi, de fato, o reflexo das rupturas e transformações da lógica museal instaurada, percebidas por alguns profissionais franceses atuantes no cenário dos ecomuseus.

³⁸ Translated by the author. Original: “Não se tratava, com efeito, de pensar o museu meramente como uma instituição aberta ao público, mas de considerar, mesmo nos museus tradicionais, a diversidade das experiências do público em seu entendimento mais amplo, e os meios de apropriação do patrimônio por esse mesmo público

surrounding territory and the inherent community in a much deeper way, involving people in various museum practices and changing the accepted foundations of the museum—its building, collection, and public. As the building ceased to be fundamental, the collection did not necessarily need to be palpable (material), and the public was no longer separated from the museum. In fact, the public played a fundamental role in the museum's activities. This shift could be described as the *participatory turn*.

Besides the pedagogical turn, the participatory turn in museum that dates from the 1970 was thus very much influenced by shared curatorship and use of collections with indigenous stakeholders in archeological and anthropological museums. (Lynch, 2020, p. 8)

Mario Chagas, a well-known professor and activist on the changes on these core factors of museal theory wrote that from the 1970s onwards, the classical concept of the museum, which is based on the notion of building, collection and public, was confronted with new concepts that strictly expanded and problematized the concepts cited, working with the categories of territory (socially practiced), heritage (socially constructed) and community (constructed by bonds of belonging)³⁹ (Chagas, 2013, p. 3)

Ruth Phillip (2001) also wrote on the subject, identifying that museums had long been a tool of colonial and imperialist ideology and were in the process of becoming a broker and mediator of renegotiated postcolonial relationships. In that way, the museum could act as a sponsor of changing government attitudes towards indigenous peoples.

I see New Museology as a Movement within Social Sciences that has its roots in criticizing the stiffness of traditional Museology. New Museology evokes a stronger commitment of museums to local development as its primary guideline. It is important to keep in mind that the practice of New Museology cannot be dissociated from past experiences. In this sense Maria Célia Teixeira Moura Santos considers that reflections on the social role of museums, and more specifically on their pedagogical role and their relationship with the public, have been happening, in a gradual process, provoked by changes in society as a whole, reflecting inside

³⁹ Translated by the author. Original: “A partir dos anos 70 do século XX, o conceito clássico de museu, que opera com as noções de edifício, coleção e público foi confrontado com novos conceitos que, a rigor, ampliavam e problematizavam as noções citadas e operavam com as categorias de território (socialmente praticado), patrimônio (socialmente construído) e comunidade (construída por laços de pertencimento)”.

institutions, such as UNESCO and ICOM.⁴⁰ (Santos, 2020, p. 98), which ultimately culminated in the international acknowledgment of New Museology.

1.1.5. MINOM, 1985

Now that we discussed New Museology, we can progress to talk about the emergence of MINOM, which stands for International Movement for a New Museology.

Mário Caneva Moutinho⁴¹, one of the founders of MINOM, illuminates the context of advent and disillusioned with the segregating attitude of ICOM and in particular of ICOFOM, clearly manifested at the 1983 London meeting, rejecting outright the very existence of museological practices not conforming to the strict framework of established Museology, a group of museologists proposed to bring together, in an autonomous way, representatives of ongoing museological practices, to evaluate, conceptualize and shape an alternative organization for a museology that presented itself equally as an alternative museology”.⁴² (Araújo & Bruno, 1995, p. 1)

It becomes clear that Moutinho and other enthusiasts of New Museology did not feel welcome to discuss the then-new forms of Museology in 1983 in London. With the creation of MINOM in 1985, a division inside of ICOM took place. Aline Portilho recognizes the tension inside of ICOM expressing that on the one hand, there were those who, organized around ICOFOM, sought to delimit a more specific field of action of Museology. On the other, there were those who, around MINOM, mobilized the category museum to name new undertakings and

⁴⁰ Translated by the author. Original: “Nesse sentido, considero que as reflexões em torno do papel social dos museus, e, mais especificamente, do seu papel pedagógico e da sua relação com o público, foram acontecendo, em um processo gradual, provocadas pelas mudanças na sociedade como um todo, refletindo no interior das instituições, como a UNESCO, e o ICOM”.

⁴¹ Moutinho, M. (1995) Simpósio Internacional, São Paulo: SNI in Araújo, M. M., & Bruno, M. C. O. (1995). A memória do pensamento museológico contemporâneo: documentos e depoimentos. São Paulo: Comitê Brasileiro do ICOM.

⁴² Translated by the author. Original: “Desiludidos com a atitude segregadora do ICOM e em particular do ICOFOM, claramente manifestada na reunião de Londres de 1983, rejeitando liminarmente a própria existência de práticas museológicas não conformes ao quadro estrito da museologia instituída, um grupo de museólogos propôs a reunir, de forma autônoma, representantes de práticas museológicas então em curso, para avaliar, conceitualizar e dar forma a uma organização alternativa para uma museologia que se apresentava igualmente como uma museologia alternativa”.

positioned themselves as an ‘alternative’ to a so-called ‘established’ museum practice”⁴³. (Portilho, 2016, p. 38)

MINOM presents itself the following way on its homepage:

“MINOM brings together on a vast platform of trends and organisations, individuals dedicated to an active, interactive museology, concerned with social and cultural change. It promotes cooperation between museum users and professionals. It advocates a museology open to all perspectives which may contribute to making museums and exhibitions an instrument for the development of the personality of communities and a laboratory for building their future. Therefore, MINOM advocates intercultural approximation and the creation of solidarities at local, national and international levels. Its path is linked to concepts such as Social Museology and more recently Sociomuseology”.⁴⁴ (MINOM, 2022)

Pedro Pereira Leite (2015, p. 2) affirms that MINOM finds its genesis in the Declaration of Santiago de Chile in 1972, which defends the idea of a museum at the service of the community for the resolution of its problems⁴⁵. He explains the advent of MINOM through the following steps: It started with the Round Table in Chile, in 1972, with the cited Declaration. This Declaration focused on South American problems and questions, as read in chapter 2.1.2., but echoed in community-based museum processes in Europe, America, and Africa⁴⁶. From there on, the subject of the social function of the museum had an international character. Following that, the Quebec workshop took place in 1984, as mentioned in chapter

⁴³ Translated by the author. Original: “De um lado, havia os que, organizados em torno do ICOFOM, buscavam delimitar um campo mais específico de atuação da museologia. De outro, havia os que, em torno do MINOM, mobilizavam a categoria museu para nomear novos empreendimentos e se colocavam como ‘alternativa’ a uma prática museológica dita ‘instituída”.

⁴⁴ Translated by the author. Original: “O MINOM agrupa, numa vasta plataforma de tendências e de organismos, indivíduos dedicados a uma museologia activa, interactiva, preocupados com a mudança social e cultural. Favorece a cooperação entre os utentes e os profissionais dos museus. Defende uma museologia aberta a todas as perspectivas que possam contribuir para fazer do museu e da exposição um instrumento de desenvolvimento da personalidade das comunidades e um laboratório de construção do seu futuro. Por isso, o MINOM defende a aproximação intercultural e a criação de solidariedades a nível local, nacional e internacional. O seu percurso está ligado a conceitos como a Museologia Social e mais recentemente a Sociomuseologia”.

⁴⁵ Translated by the author. Original: “O movimento que conduz à criação do MINOM encontra a sua génese na Declaração de Santiago do Chile em 1972, onde se defende uma conceção dum museu ao serviço da comunidade para a resolução dos seus problemas”.

⁴⁶ Translated by the author. Original: “vai encontrar um amplo eco nas comunidades envolvidas em processos museológicos de base comunitária, na Europa, na América e em África”.

2.1.3. There the constitution of MINOM was approved, concretizing “the museologists” will to become involved in their contemporary social processes.⁴⁷

Aline dos Santos Portilho wrote about MINOM: "With the emergence of this new organism [MINOM], the museological field gained a space that would compete with ICOFOM for the production of definitions and reflections on museological practices".⁴⁸ (Portilho, 2016, p. 37)

MINOM is, since its beginning, a institutionalized movement that works towards the establishment of the science of Museology, but with a particular focus on new museological practices that were non-conforming with the norm. These practices had something in common: the focus on the community and the social function of museal institutions – more than on the objects.

MINOM reveals itself as an institution that brings together *Favela museums* in Brazil, other museums created in disadvantaged neighborhoods, museums of various social movements, so-called Points of Memory, as well as more traditional museums", which "all make up MINOM's network today". (Chagas, et al., 2012. p. 100) It is noticeable that New Museology is a change in thinking of the museum and a movement that also wants to encourage and inspire traditional museums to take a closer look at the territory in which they are located so that they can participate in local development.

Karen Brown resumes the importance of the MINOM network in the following citation:

What often characterizes these small grassroots community heritage initiatives is that they lie outside the official ICOM definition of a museum (2007) and consequently suffer from a lack of access to national, regional and international advice, financial support and attention (Brown and Mairesse 2018; Brown, Brulon and Nazor 2018). In order to become more sustainable and to strengthen each other, these kinds of initiatives work best when they network both within their own territories and with each other across national boundaries and regions. The manifold benefits of these efforts are evidenced in the international movement for a new Museology (MINOM) founded in 1985, La Red de Museos Comunitarios de América formed in 2000 (Camerena Ocampo and Morales Lersch 2016), the Italian Ecomuseum platform launched in 2016 and, the Balkan Museum Network, and a new Saskatchewan

⁴⁷ Translated by the author. Original: “Que concretiza a vontade de implicação dos museólogos com os processos sociais seus contemporâneos”.

⁴⁸ Translated by the author. Original: “Com o surgimento deste novo organismo, o campo museológico ganhava um espaço que concorreria com o ICOFOM pela produção de definições e reflexões sobre práticas museológicas”.

Ecomuseum Network. A new grassroots community heritage network for Scotland is also being scoped at present (Community Heritage Scotland 2019). (Brown, 2018, p. 6)

To have an institution backed by ICOM that focuses exclusively on alternative museums, which were not yet included in the official museum definition, had its consequences. Karen Browns citation demonstrates the international transformative process that was instigated by MINOM.

Mario Chagas, Paula dos Santos and Tamara Glas wrote that MINOM had been a prime network of people working in community museums, ecomuseums, local museums and other types of museums that used methodologies with a strong grassroots and community emphasis, often referred to as New Museology. (Chagas, et al. 2012, p. 99)

In 2013 the 23rd International Conference of MINOM/ICOM with the theme Museums (memory + creativity) = social change took place in Rio de Janeiro. In a video on YouTube, Dr. Dell Delambre interviewed the Vice-Presidents Prof. Dr. Mario Chagas (from Brazil) and Prof. Dr. Mário Moutinho (from Portugal). The intervention between minutes 2:00 to 3:30 is a perfect source for understanding the importance and the poetic character of the event⁴⁹.

In this video, Chagas says that the New Museology, or Museologia Social, is fundamentally committed to the human being, to improving the quality of life, increasing social justice and reducing social inequalities. It is thus a Museology that sees the museum as the starting point for a clear, very specific goal. It fights for social dignity and social development. In this sense, the theme of this conference is very appropriate; we could say it bears the 'face' of MINOM: it articulates Museum memory plus creativity equals social change. It is a theme where the museum is seen as a space of coming together, as an element of connection between the self and the other, yesterday, and today, present and future, the museum as a place of connection⁵⁰. (golparaoplaneta, 2013).

Here I would also like to add Mário Moutinho's response to the question of what a museum is that celebrates life and not death. He explained that it is exactly the (Museology) we are all looking for. It is the Museology that comes from another

⁴⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PZI0TM0KtM>

⁵⁰ Translated by the author. Original: "Mario Chagas "A nova museologia, ou museologia social, ela parte de um princípio que é o comprometimento com o ser humano. Ela está fundamentalmente comprometida com o ser humano, com a melhoria da qualidade de vida, com a ampliação das justiças sociais com a redução das desigualdades sociais, portanto é uma museologia que tomando o museu como ponto de partida tem um objetivo muito claro, muito específico que é lutar a favor da dignidade social, das melhorias sociais. Nesse sentido esse tema que nós temos aqui na vigésima terceira conferencia nacional do ICOM, é um tema muito adequado que nós podemos dizer que tem a cara do Minom. Porque o tema faz uma articulação entre museu vezes memória mais criatividade igual a mudança social. Ou seja, é um tema que assim pensa o museu como espaço de convivência, um museu como espaço de relação, um museu como elemento de conexão entre o eu e o outro, entre o ontem e o hoje e entre o presente e o future".

world, that has nothing to do with this world of neoliberalism, the great world of finance and imperial museums. It is a new story that we must tell now. I just think it is a pity that in 50 years I will not be here to see what has become of it. What we see today in the 2013 Declaration is an approach that has a much deeper meaning than the others (events had it), it (the Declaration) has a human dimension that the others had, but because it took place in a much too elaborate way, it lost its soul. And that is a complete revolution. [...] We can call this dimension a poetic dimension, it is in the middle of all this, but this poetry has to do exactly with life, with the deeper life and the search for all that is denied us in the present world.⁵¹ (golparaoplaneta, 2013).

To conclude the summary of the cited video, I also want to mention the way the moderator, Dr. Dell Delambre, refers to the appreciation of the work of memory that these groups (some call them communitarian museologists, some do not like this name, some will call them museological practices of a certain periphery, some do not like this name either) have for their work. The truth is that there is a production of memory outside the traditional way in which museums exhibit their objects, and the registration of memory revolves around these objects. In these new museologies, this is not the case: space is an object, territory is an object, immaterial memory is an object, and of course, there are also the objects that society creates, selects, and sees as important for telling its own narratives consisting of collective memory. (golparaoplaneta, 2013)".

In a text presented in 2015, Mário Moutinho marks the thirtieth birthday of MINOM and illuminates the dimension of the institution's importance. He affirms that the last 30 years made it possible to understand the "manifestation of a progressive awareness of the social dimension of Museology, of its place as a carrier of social inclusion, of its social responsibility towards the challenges of humanity". (Moutinho, 2017, p. 187) Another point I find relevant is that he proceeds to affirm that the last 30 years were years of affirmation of a Museology in the Portuguese language that is innovative, responsible, and honorable. When he shines light on the fact that this work has been done predominantly in Portuguese, I personally perceive again the reason of why I wrote this publication in English.

⁵¹ Translated by the author. Original: "Mário Moutinho: É aquela que estamos todos a procura. É aquela que é de um outro mundo, que não tem nada a ver com este mundo do neoliberalismo, da grande finança, dos museus imperiais. É outra história que é preciso contar novamente. E eu só tenho pena que eu não esteja aca daqui a 50 anos pra ver no q isso deu. O que há na declaração de hoje, de 2013, é que é uma abordagem que tem um sentido bem mais profundo que as outras, de uma dimensão humana que as outras tinham, mas era muito pensada, muito elaborada, muito construído. Entoa tinha perdido de uma maneira a alma. É desta que é de 2013 que ela tem essa dimensão de uma alma, de uma humanidade, que as outras não tinham. E isso é uma revolução completa. E queremos repensar se não é preciso repensar inteiramente o próprio mino

Essa dimensão podemos dizer poética que esta no meio disso tudo, mas que essa poesia tem exatamente a ver com uma vida e uma vida mais profunda e uma busca de tudo aquilo que neste momento o mundo nos nega".

1.1.6. Creation of the School of Thought of Sociomuseology Lisbon, 1993

The end of the twentieth century is explicitly marked by the will to bring non-traditional museal processes into academia, officially establishing the existence of museologies that focus on its transformative social functions. The wish to understand different approaches to community-focused and dialogical Museology is propelled by creating an academic subject, also known as Sociomuseology.

Mário Moutinho affirms that the opening of the museum to the environment and its organic relationship with the social context that gives it life has led to the need to elaborate and clarify relationships, notions and concepts that can account for this process. The expansion of the notion of heritage, the consequent redefinition of the "museological object", the idea of community participation in the definition and management of museological practices, Museology as a development factor, the issues of interdisciplinarity, the use of "new technologies" of information and museography as an autonomous means of communication, are examples of issues arising from contemporary museological practices and are part of a growing specialized bibliography.⁵² (Moutinho, 1993, p. 8)

Moutinho precisely words the reason behind the establishment of the school of thought of Sociomuseology. The changes in museal discussions that have been taking place since the second half and especially the last quarter of the 20th century have contributed to the growth and transformation of fundamental concepts in Museology. Heritage now includes immaterial heritage, and the collection can be represented by territory in its totality, including the people and their identities, knowledge, and habits. Notions as participation, inclusion, interdisciplinarity, human rights, social development, decoloniality, and many others have been included in museological reflections and discussions.

Before establishing the school of thought of Sociomuseology, museum people who worked in community and dialogue-based museum practices used to reunite under the MINOM since its opening in 1985.

⁵² Translated by the author. Original: "A abertura do museu ao meio e a sua relação orgânica com o contexto social que lhe dá vida tem provocado a necessidade de elaborar e esclarecer relações, noções e conceitos que podem dar conta deste processo. O alargamento da noção de património, é a consequente redefinição de "objecto museológico", a ideia de participação da comunidade na definição e gestão das práticas museológicas, a museologia como factor de desenvolvimento, as questões de interdisciplinaridade, a utilização das "novas tecnologias" de informação e a museografia como meio autónomo de comunicação, são exemplo das questões decorrentes das práticas museológicas contemporâneas e fazem parte de uma crescente bibliografia especializada.

There might be the question: isn't MINOM, the international Movement for New Museology, already working towards establishing concepts and notions of practices that are in line with New Museology? Of course, it is! Nevertheless, according to Mário Moutinho, we cannot give MINOM more significant responsibilities than it has. MINOM reunites people of many countries every two years to share news about the practices of New Museology that are taking place in the different parts of the world. It participates in international conferences and is responsible in ICOM for bringing about very much-needed discussions about diversity and inclusion.

It organizes discussions about these practices, problems, similarities, differences and creates declarations formalizing what took place at the meetings. MINOM does not have editorial politics, a magazine or journal, or any other regular publication apart from the declarations. MINOM carries a part of the responsibility for the transformations that are taking place inside of ICOM and keeps the right to difference (regarding museal practices studied) alive inside of ICOM.

Judite Primo affirms that the effort to understand the episteme of Museology has been happening for a long time, and she defines three different approaches to this question. It is possible to identify several authors and researchers who have done this exercise [defining the object of study of Museology] and, consequently, have defended different approaches. One of these currents points out that the object of study is the museum itself, it is the case, for example, of G.- Henri Rivière and the International Council of Museums (ICOM/UNESCO); but there is also, within ICOFOM - the International Committee for Museology - , the claim that the disciplinary and epistemological object of Museology is the study of the relationship of the human being with reality; there is still another current, which can be identified as the approach of MINOM - International Movement for a New Museology - which assumes that the disciplinary and epistemological object of Museology is the patrimony which generates heritage and collective memory.⁵³ (Primo, 2019, pp 12,13)

Clovis Britto is a researcher in Sociomuseology that has a strong epistemological and philosophical approach. He considers that Sociomuseology would thus be the school of thought that brings together academic and non-

⁵³ Translated by the author. Original: “Esse exercício em prol de compreender a episteme da Museologia não é uma novidade no contexto acadêmico e do associativismo profissional. A problemática aqui apresentada, passa por voltarmos a algumas questões fundamentais que ajudem a delimitar o objeto disciplinar e epistemológico da Museologia. É possível identificar vários autores e pesquisadores que fizeram esse exercício e em consequência passaram a defenderem abordagens diferentes. Uma dessas corrente nos aponta que este objeto é o próprio Museu, é o caso p.ex.: de G.- Henri Rivière e do próprio Conselho Internacional de Museus (ICOM/UNESCO); mas há também, no seio do ICOFOM - International Committee for Museology - , a defesa feita de que o objeto disciplinar e epistemológico da Museologia é o estudo da relação do ser humano com a realidade; há ainda uma outra corrente, que pode-se identificar como a abordagem do MINOM – Movimento Internacional para uma Nova Museologia – que assume que o objeto disciplinar e epistemológico da Museologia é o Patrimônio que gera herança e memória coletiva”.

academic researchers whose 'constellation of commitments' addresses the paradigmatic transformations promoted by Social Museology. Sociomuseology would be distinguished from Social Museology by its emphasis on epistemological production, which does not mean to exclude its practical dimension, just as Social Museology consists of one of the main laboratories of knowledge that provide it with feedback". (Britto, 2019, p. 104, 105)

Mario Chagas and Inês Gouveia affirmed that the first time the word *Sociomuseology* was used in an official document was in the Service order no. 27/93⁵⁴, from the Instituto Superior de Matemática e Gestão (ISMAG)⁵⁵, in Lisbon, Portugal, in 1993. Fernando Santos Neves signed this document to create a Study Center for Sociomuseology (CESM).

The first paragraph of this document is of big relevance to us because it describes an effect and cause of the true theoretical and practical revolution that, in those times, had been taking place in Heritage Sciences and Museology. The Specialization Course in Social Museology, which had been structured and guided for several years by Professor Doctor Mário Caneva Moutinho, both because of its substantive quality and even because of the quantity of people already trained, had made a decisive contribution to the consolidation of the new museological views and experiences, which have sought to be synthesized in the terminological and epistemologically innovative designation of "Social Museology or "Sociomuseology".

We can read that opening a specialization course in Social Museology is necessary due to the transformations in the museological field. In the same year of the publication of the service order paving the way to the institutionalization of Sociomuseology, the first *Caderno de Sociomuseologia* (Journal or Booklet of Sociomuseology) was published. Representing, therefore, the beginning of empirical production with the focus on transformational Social Museology. The first volume gathers 15 authors and brings as its first article is a short essay by Mário Moutinho, dedicated to reflecting on 'On the Concept of Social Museology'.⁵⁶

Judite Primo is a fundamentally important researcher in Sociomuseology. From 2007 to 2019 she was the director of the Postgraduate Programs of Museology in ULHT⁵⁷. In addition, she is the holder of the UNESCO Chair "Education, Citizenship and Cultural Diversity". In her article about the contemporary challenges when investigating Sociomuseology she makes an important affirmation.

⁵⁴ Service Order n.º 27/93, ISMAG , Lisbon, Portugal, 1993.

⁵⁵ Higher Institute of Mathematics and Management. It was this Institute that brought about the creation of the universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias.

⁵⁶ Translated by the author. Original: "No mesmo ano (1993) teve início a publicação dos Cadernos de Sociomuseologia. O primeiro volume reúne 15 autores e traz como primeiro artigo um breve ensaio assinado por Mário Moutinho, dedicado a refletir "Sobre o conceito de Museologia social". In: Gouveia, I. Chagas, M. (2014). *Museologia social: reflexões e práticas* (à guisa de apresentação). *Revista Cadernos do Ceom*, 27(41), 9-22. Pg. 15.

⁵⁷ Universidade Lusófona, Lisbon, the current only place in the world where Sociomuseology is taught.

She explains that whether it is a classic museological understanding or a sociomuseological understanding, in most of these investigations, we will find the ideas of patrimonialization, of scenarization, of theatricalization of memory, of the public exhibition of cultural assets and of more or less formal educational processes. However, alongside this, we also find these ideas and notions associated with the processes of socialization of the references of these heritages and collective memories, in the context of territory and of determined social groups, which can even support or lead us to understand different museological practices and processes.⁵⁸ (Primo, 2019, p. 3, 4)

The mentioned article focuses on Sociomuseology but, as Primo reinforces, it does not ignore the existence of the reflections and practices, particularly in Anglophone and Francophone Museology, but it deems that an approach centered on a space⁵⁹ that has been playing a central role in the transformation movements of Museology is relevant [and necessary].⁶⁰ (Primo, 2019, p. 4)

There is a very present and heated discussion inside of Sociomuseology as Social Museology is used as a synonym to Sociomuseology by very influential representatives of our school of thought – especially in Brazil. Mario Chagas and Inês Gouveia go as far as confirming that separating the theory from the praxis would be a colonialist action. (Chagas & Gouveia, 2014, p. 9-22) Especially considering that, if Sociomuseology and its representatives would affirm that the practical part was to be in South America and the theoretical part in Europe, this argument is reasonable and the unease very understandable. I would think that is colonialist too. To counterargument here, I would like to bring to light that Sociomuseology does not, in any way, want to appropriate the knowledge and ideas of South American practices and sell them as theirs, but to reunite people that study – or work in – not only Social Museology institutions but in any form of communitary, dialogical, public Museology establishment.

Sociomuseology also wants to bridge the South American radically political and engaged concept of Social Museology with the international University field. Social Museology is empirically reflected on in Brazilian Universities too. There is no course for Bachelors, Masters or PHD in Social Museology but there are subjects

⁵⁸ Translated by the author. Original: “quer se trate de uma compreensão museológica clássica ou se trate de uma compreensão Sociomuseológicas, encontraremos presente na generalidade destas investigações as ideia de patrimonialização, de cenarização, de teatralização da memória, de apresentação pública de bens culturais e de processos educativos mais ou menos formais. Mas a par disso, também encontramos estas ideias e noções associadas aos processos de socialização das referências destes patrimónios e das memórias coletivas, no contexto de território e de grupos sociais determinados, podendo mesmo alicerçar ou nos conduzir a compreender diferentes práticas e processos museológicos”.

⁵⁹ This space would be Sociomuseology and its reflections which are centered in South America, Portugal and Spain.

⁶⁰ Translated by the author. Original: “Esta abordagem não ignora a existência das reflexões e das práticas, em particular, da Museologia anglófona e francófona, mas considera relevante uma abordagem centrada num espaço que tem vindo a ter papel central nos movimentos de transformação da Museologia contemporânea”.

treating Social Museology with a bigger focus at (at least) 7 universities: *Universidade Federal da Bahia* (UFBA), *Universidade de São Paulo* (USP), *Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto* (UFOP), *Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul* (UFRGS), *Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro* (UNIRIO), *Universidade Federal de Goiás* (UFG) and the *Universidade de Brasília* (UNB).⁶¹

The question arises: why do we need a university based in Europe, to work as a messenger between Social Museology and the rest of the world? The punctual exchange from Social Museums workers with other countries does take place, for example, when people of the *Museu da Maré* went to South-Africa and London to talk about their museums. What differs is that the Sociomuseology course in Lisbon is the only of its kind, explicitly forming Masters and Doctors in Sociomuseology. We are talking about a school of thought that limits itself to analyzing and executing these practices of Museology that are deeply compromised to its social function. We discuss the actions of the museum (research, collection, preservation, communication, exhibition) in the perspective of practices that focus not on the objects but on the people and the social, political, and economic development of the community the museum stands in.

We need to also consider that Sociomuseology is not solemnly focused on minorities. Some of the practices, as Ecomuseology for example, work along the guidelines of Sociomuseology with participative processes and interdisciplinarity and are not focused on the weakened parts of society. (Neu, 2020, p. 118)

Another point that needs to be considered is that most of the students and professors at ULHT are, indeed, Brazilian. Therefore, it becomes clear that we are not talking about an exclusively Portuguese community reflecting on Brazilian museal activities. Sociomuseology is strongly influenced by Brazilian people that talk about their experiences in Museums, working towards an analysis where one can find common characteristics of practices that focus on social development. Sociomuseology also supports the realization of new actions that go in line with their principles.

⁶¹ Information acquired in exchange with Museology Professionals around Brazil.

UFBA - Social Museology research line

USP - In the Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in Museology at USP, where they work, these perspectives are present in several disciplines and reverberate in the academic orientations

UFOP - In the fifth period, the subject "Ecomuseums and Community Museums" is offered. Taught by professor Dr. Yara Mattos

UFRGS - They have an elective discipline at UFRGS called Special Topics in Social Museology, but it is also implicit in other disciplines.

UNIRIO - They learn about Social Museology in the subjects Museology 2 and 3, and in 5 as well.

UFG - especially in Museology 3

UNB - the idea was that it was worked on transversally in almost all subjects, such as documentation, conservation, epigraphy, educational-cultural action, etc.

The practices Sociomuseology reflects on are all those that hold in its stem the principles of dialogue, democracy, and human rights. South American influence is strong, but we would never limit us to studying only South American museal experiences. Ecomuseums, neighborhood museums, every kind of museal practice that focuses on the people and the environment more than on old objects is part of our field of study.

Sociomuseology and Social Museology are two sides of the same coin. Social Museums can be seen as the most extreme example of sociomuseologies principles materialized. Sociomuseology does use literature from Brazilian universities, and Mário Moutinho consistently affirms in the classroom that without the Brazilian and South American Social Museology, Sociomuseology would not exist. What makes the post-graduation course in Sociomuseology in Lisbon so significant is that the focus lies exclusively on dialogical museal practices, leaving behind the traditional discussions of Museology that focus on objects.

Now to what has been published in Sociomuseology since 1993. I would like to insert the results of Angelo Biléssimo's article. (2019, p. 21-42) His work helps us grasp which general topics have been discussed in Sociomuseology in the mentioned timeframe, and he also brings attention to the fact that only two doctoral dissertations were written in Spanish, all the others in Portuguese. In his article, he based his arguments on a similar source published in 2016 by Gabriela Figurelli and Mário Moutinho (2016), in which the authors analyzed the publications of *Cadernos de Sociomuseologia*, the Journal of Sociomuseology so to say, published between 1996 and 2012.

Biléssimo created a diagram showing the findings of Figurelli and Moutinho in 2016, defining which the themes of the publications were. I opted to translate the topics of content cited by Biléssimo using Figurelli and Moutinho's work and maintained the percentage presented. Those were: New Museology/Sociomuseology (17,41%), Community/Participation (16,19%), Education (13,77%), Local Museums (12,15%), Formation in Museology (12,15%), Development/Change (11,34%), Participation and social responsibility (8,50%), the role of Museums (8,50%). (Biléssimo, 2019, p. 29)

Regarding the Ph.D.' dissertations defended in Sociomuseology between 2008 and 2020, Biléssimo created different categories to organize them by content. The categories and percentage of the Ph.D.'s were: Museological administration and case studies (28%), Infrastructure, architecture and relations with the territory (17%), Theory and History of Museology (17%), Patrimony, human rights and public policies (20%), Education (9%), Museography, expography and applied technologies (9%). (Biléssimo, 2019, p.37)

He defined each category on page 36, but I am only mentioning the categories here to give the reader a broad impression of what Sociomuseology has been working on in the last 30 years. The effort to theorize, firm, and legitimize Sociomuseology has been present since the beginning.

I could not finish this chapter without mentioning some of the great thinkers that are fundamental for Sociomuseology. Every list holds the problem of mentioning some but never all of the names that should be. This is my best effort in choosing thinkers that we mention a lot in the classroom.

Waldisa Rùssio⁶² (1935 – 1990), from Brazil, perceives museologists as social workers and Museology as a process. She is described as innovative, daring, and inspiring of a popular Museology, politically engaged, and committed to social transformation processes. (Ministério da Cultura. IPHAN, 2007, p. 87)

She emphasized mediators/educators as the most important roles there are in the museum. Teachers and mediators receive little prestige for their work, but they are essential elements in the school and museum environment, respectively. They are far more than guides. They are iterative educators and researchers in the sense that they act and react permanently (ideally), self-evaluate, and adapt all the time to allow the best diffusion of the knowledge in question.

Waldisa also talks about how in normative museums, the educational actions are created after the creation of the museum. Let's say: a theme is decided for a museum. The collection is made, researched, documented, and selected for exhibition, and based on the exhibition, educational actions are considered. Sociomuseology thinks of educational actions already at the first moment of the museum's creation, so that the museum can achieve its desire to develop the territory. She argues that the school and the museum should not be integrated into the museum but should interact as autonomous spaces. She sees a problem in mediated/guided visits that end up being just another class. The museum visit should be a different experience for the children or youth. The museum should be understood as an instrument to perceive the heritage.

Paulo Freire (1921 – 1997), from Brazil, created a very rich theoretical foundation that speaks to, underlies, and drives our school of thought, Sociomuseology. Paulo Freire was an educator and leading advocate of critical pedagogy. His work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, from 1968, is the third most cited book in Social Sciences in the whole world. He defended that every person of every age can learn new things and that for a learning process to prosper, you need to adapt to your public.

He thinks of education as a tool that transforms people from *object* person into *subject* person. The dichotomy of object and subject is the following: the object is inactive, passive to its environment, and the subject contains capacities and needs autonomy to stop being an object and become a subject. The transformation from object person to subject person must happen through an education that gives autonomy and freedom.

⁶² Rùssio (n.d.) In Ministério da Cultura. Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico Nacional, (2007). Pathways and constructions of a national museums policy. p. 87.

This process from object to subject is enriching and is never individual or isolated; it happens in the interaction with the physical world (work, for example) and with the social world (in politics). These interactions are what will make a person become a subject. Social Museology works on this idea as well. The interaction of the local inhabitants with the heritage is what will be the educational transforming process.

Freire states that society must offer tools for this transforming process. The process is active, laborious, painful, and it is the subjects' responsibility to remain active in it (once society has offered it). Once the process is established in society, it must be protected! This education does not work to create conformed people in the status quo. It is an education aiming at autonomy and not domestication. At ULHT there is an active Study-Group called: Sociomuseology and Paulo Freire. The meetings are realized in Portuguese and the discussions revolve around Paulo Freire's thoughts and how they reverberate in the heterogenous museal practices around the world.

Hugues de Varine (1935), from France, is a significant influencer and developer of Sociomuseology. He perceives that in the 20th century, museums are managed not by museologists, but by art historians or archeologists. Museology and museography as we know it today was not taught at that time. He joined ICOM in July 1962, after meeting George-Henri Rivière and began participating directly in the ICOM conferences in the Hague and Amsterdam that same year. Varine, always very critical, was able to identify the problems in many museums and suggests, acting from within ICOM, a radical change regarding the museum's knowledge of the context in which it is inserted. (Chagas, 1996, p. 5-18)

He proposes that museums must serve the society that creates them, that they cease to be a mere depository of old things and become instruments for transforming social, political, and economic reality. (Varine et. al. 1979, p. 9-12) Varine was initially an art historian, not a museologist. He started to work along the lines of human development and opened ways to understand Museology as an instrument for human development. His fields of study are *national museologies* and *practices of the New Museology* that are adapted to the contexts. He has always been a friend and admirer of Paulo Freire.

A museum, for Varine and Sociomuseology, should not be a mere depository of objects but a place where one can make use of objects. He sees normative museums as a depository and interprets them as institutions that will die if they do not adapt, putting the objects at the service of the communities' development.

Now I will proceed to talk about *the two Mários* of Sociomuseology. Mario Chagas – based in Brazil and Mário Moutinho – based in Portugal.

Aline Portilho did a fantastic job in her Ph.D. defining the influence of both regarding Sociomuseology. About them, she (utilizing Sociomuseology and Social Museology as synonyms) wrote that the term Museologia Social (or its equivalents 'Sociomuseologia' and 'Sociomuseology') was produced by intellectuals who

articulated themselves in the broader field of New Museology... As will be seen below, there are key figures in this process who, in addition to working on the construction of MINOM, were active in the training of museologists and in museological institutions of various kinds. And it was within some of these institutions that the category gained projection. Two actors in particular, Mário Canova Moutinho and Mario de Souza Chagas, stand out in the articulation of this field, mainly because their production on the subject is considered, by their peers, a reference. It is also from the work of these authors that more precise definitions for Social Museology emerge. (Portilho, 2016, p. 39)

Both are authors of texts that are foundational to Social Museology. Their works establish the statements and norms for Social Museology that were then accepted by those who used them to reflect on museological experiences and, in the future, to define government policies. We noticed, from their texts published in the journal, that the most urgent concern was to define practices and concepts for Museology. The elaboration of Social Museology is, then, a product of the competition of these authors with others for the definition of what should be the object of Museology⁶³. (p. 39)

Mário Moutinho⁶⁴, from Portugal, is a fundamental character not only in Sociomuseology, but in New Museology as well, as he played a big role in the articulation that would lead to the emergence of MINOM. He opened the course for Social Museology at the ULHT in Lisbon and continues to write definitions and represent our School of Thought internationally.

⁶³ Translated by the author. “Original: “ O termo museologia social (ou seus equivalentes “sociomuseologia” e “Sociomuseology”) foi produzido por alguns intelectuais que se articulavam no campo mais amplo da Nova Museologia, porém, produzindo algumas especificidades em relação àquele. Como será visto adiante, há personagens determinantes para este processo que, além de se ocuparem com a construção do MINOM, estavam atuando na formação de museólogos e em instituições museológicas de diversos tipos. E foi no âmbito de algumas destas instituições que a categoria ganhou projeção. Dois atores em especial, Mário Canova Moutinho e Mario de Souza Chagas, se destacam na articulação deste campo, principalmente por sua produção sobre o tema ser considerada, por seus pares, de referência. É também a partir do trabalho destes autores que emergem definições mais precisas para a museologia social”. Ambos são autores de textos que fundam a museologia social. Seus trabalhos estabelecem os enunciados e as normatizações para a museologia social que serão aceitos pelos que dela se utilizam para tecer reflexões sobre experiências museológicas e, futuramente, para definir políticas de governo. Percebemos, por seus textos publicados na revista, que a preocupação mais urgente era definir práticas e conceitos para a museologia. A elaboração da museologia social é, então, um produto da concorrência destes autores com outros pela definição do que deve ser objeto da museologia.

⁶⁴ Mário Caneva Moutinho studied architecture at the Ecole Nationale Supérieur des Beaux Arts, in France, from 1966 to 1972. He specialized in ethnology and took a doctorate in Cultural Anthropology at the University Paris VII from 1972 to 1983. In 1979, he began working as an assistant professor at the University of Lisbon. He worked at the National Museum of History as an advisor from October 1988 to September 2007. His most important professional performance for this reflection, as will be seen ahead, was at the Lusófona University of Humanities and Technology, where he joined as professor in October 1994, and of which he is rector since 2008”. in Portilho, (2016. Pg. 39, 40.)

Mario Chagas⁶⁵, from Brazil, is a poet and academic and has a unique approach to understanding museum studies, potentials, and forms. Now, he is president of MINOM and director of the Museum of the Republic in Rio de Janeiro, where he has been implementing Sociomuseological values and practices since his arrival. For instance, in the context of the pandemic, he transformed the museum into a vaccine center and has surpassed 100.000 vaccinations in February 2021.

Chagas and Moutinho defined and continue to redefine Sociomuseology and Social Museology. Their notions, concepts, and ideas are used not only in our academic context but also in the creation of public policies in Brazil – and could be used all around the world – if we manage to break the linguistic barrier.

The presented list is by no means complete. Judite Primo cites more relevant thinkers and their productions. By including the notions of social function, cultural diversity, cultural hybridization, new communities, planetary safeguarding, accessibility and new territorialities, we [the school of thought Sociomuseology] recognize the perspective of the current production of Museology within the scope of Social Sciences, through the production of Waldisa Rússio (2010), Mário Moutinho (1993), Cristina Bruno (1996), Marcelle Pereira (2018), Judite Primo (2017), Clóvis de Brito, Juliana Siqueira, Vânia Brayner (2018), Katia Filipinni (2015), but it is also necessary to broaden the spectrum of the gaze to focus on productions specific productions of the Social Sciences and Humanities as in Baumam (2003), Appadurai (2004), Homi Bhabha (2005), Castells (1999), Néstor

⁶⁵ Mario de Souza Chagas studied Museology at the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (Unirio) from 1976 to 1979. His professional activities began in 1980, at the Museu do Homem do Nordeste, linked to the institution Fundação Joaquim Nabuco. In 1987, he transferred to the National Pro-memory Foundation, where he remained until it was extinguished in 1990, when he passed to IPHAN. He remained in this institution until 2009, when he moved to the recently created Brazilian Institute of Museums (Ibram), an institution in whose founding process Mario Chagas had an prominent role. His career as museologist in Brazilian institutions of memory preservation ran concurrently with his performance in academia. Since 1988, he has been a professor at Unirio's School of Museology, where he is now also a professor in the Graduate Program in Social Memory. As visiting professor, he worked at the University of São Paulo (USP) from 2000 to 2002 and at the Federal University of Goiás (UFG) in 2001. He has also been a visiting professor at Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias in Lisbon since 1994, where he joined even before completing his master's degree. At this university, he is a professor in the master's degree program in Museology, created that same year by Mario Caneva Coutinho. In Portilho, (2016, p. 40).

Garcia Canclini (1997), Bruno Latour (2012) and Tim Ingold (2015), Gondar and Dodebei (2005)⁶⁶. (Primo, 2019, p. 7)

Sociomuseology, therefore, does not reduce its literary funnel to its own production but works interdisciplinary – considering not only the production of Museology in general but includes theories and methods of Anthropology, History, Sociology, Information Science and so forth. Finally, a quote from my article:

Sociomuseology proposes a shift from ‘mere’ collecting, researching and exhibiting objects; to researching identities, the roots of injustices and offering tools for local populations to become politically and socially aware.¹¹ It is not the purpose of this paper to describe the process of emergence of the concept, but to give examples of how it can be realized. (Neu, 2020, p. 120)

1.1.7. 23rd General Conference ICOM, Rio de Janeiro, 2013

The 23rd General Conference of ICOM was held from the 10th to 17th of August 2013 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The theme was Museums (memory + creativity = social change) and was aborded through presentations and discussions, that planned to develop the theme-equation (memory + creativity = social change)

About it, Mario Chagas, Paula Assunção and Tamara Glas wrote that was not a formula, it was a provocation, a challenge for thought. To understand it only as a formula is to give up on understanding it. It is a kind of ‘poemathematic’, a game, a playful gesture that intends to say that art and science depend on memory and creativity, and that the strength and power of museums can be multiplied by the articulation and association between memory and creativity, and that all of this can culminate in social transformation. Without creativity, memory becomes stagnant; without memory, creativity is impossible. The broad and multiplying articulation

⁶⁶ Translated by the author. Original: “Ao trazer as noções de função social, de diversidade cultural, de hibridação cultural, de novas comunidades, salvaguarda planetária, acessibilidades e de novas territorialidades, reconhecemos a perspectiva da produção atual da Museologia no âmbito das Ciência Sociais, por meio da produção de Waldisa Rússio (2010), Mário Moutinho (1993), Cristina Bruno (1996), Marcelle Pereira (2018), Judite Primo (2017), Clóvis de Brito, Juliana Siqueira, Vânia Brayner (2018), Katia Filipinni (2015), mas também é necessário ampliar o espectro do olhar para foca em produções específicas das Ciência Sociais e Humanas como em Baumam (2003), Appadurai (2004), Homi Bhabha (2005), Castells (1999), Néstor Garcia Canclini (1997), Bruno Latour (2012) e Tim Ingold (2015), Gondar e Dodebei (2005)”.

between Museum, Memory, and Creativity can contribute to social transformation.⁶⁷ (Chagas, et al, 2014, p. 429-430)

Manuelina Maria Duarte Cândido⁶⁸ elaborated a short and sharp text about this conference, already in 2012. She affirmed that behind this equation there are numerous and increasingly empowered subjects: the professionals and particularly the public, which is full of aspirations, acting as engines of this movement. It is the memory activated by creativity in the museum environment that resonates with society and promotes social change. (ICOM, 2013, p. 1)

Duarte Cândido, when talking about the 23rd General Conference of ICOM that was to be held in Rio de Janeiro, makes a statement citing the contributions of the Latin-American continent to the history of ICOM and the international Museology field. She introduces ICOM and proceeds to say that for its this trajectory, [ICOM's trajectory], the American continent gave memorable contributions as evidenced in meetings and documents such as the precursory Regional Seminar of UNESCO held in 1958 also in Rio de Janeiro, in which the educational and transformative role of museums was already being highlighted. In the sequence of seminars organized around the world, came the meeting that has the irrefutable title of the most important Latin American contribution to international Museology: The Round Table of Santiago, Chile. It broke the model adopted until then for the seminars, electing Spanish as the main language and putting the Latin American intellectuals' speeches in a protagonist role. (ICOM, 2013, p. 1)⁶⁹

As of why Brazil was fit for the General Conference to take place there, Manuelina Duarte puts it very well that there has been, therefore, for decades, a body of thought about museums and social change built on the American continent. She adds that Brazil updates this legacy in a very vigorous way:

⁶⁷ Translated by the author. Original: “A equação-tema não é uma fórmula, é uma provocação, é um desafio ao pensamento. Compreendê-la como fórmula é desistir de compreendê-la. Trata-se de uma espécie de “poematemática”, de uma brincadeira, de um gesto lúdico que tem a intenção de dizer que a arte e a ciência dependem da memória e da criatividade e que a força e a potência dos museus podem ser multiplicadas pela articulação e associação entre memória e criatividade, e que tudo isso pode desaguar na transformação social. Sem criatividade a memória fica estagnada, sem memória a criatividade é impossível. A articulação ampla e multiplicadora entre Museu, Memória e Criatividade pode contribuir para a transformação social.”

⁶⁸ Manuelina Maria Duarte Cândido – Universidade Federal de Goiás, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais. Faculty member. She holds a degree in History, a master's degree in Archeology, specialization, doctorate, and post-doctorate in Museology.

⁶⁹ Translated by the author. Original: “Nesta trajetória, o continente americano deu uma contribuição memorável pontuada em reuniões e documentos como o precursor Seminário Regional da UNESCO realizado em 1958 também no Rio de Janeiro, no qual o papel educativo e transformador dos museus já estava em destaque. Na sequência de seminários organizados ao redor do mundo, veio a reunião que tem o título irrefutável de mais importante contribuição da América Latina para a Museologia internacional: a Mesa-Redonda de Santiago do Chile. Nela romperam se o modelo adotado até então para os seminários, elegendo como língua o espanhol e colocando em papel de destaque a fala de intelectuais latino-americanos. Ruptura esta que não é demais esperar que inspire a primeira Conferência Geral do ICOM a ocorrer no Brasil, apenas a 2ª na América do Sul.

- growing numbers of museums and museum audiences, with some of the world's largest visitations in recent exhibitions disproving reductionist views of a Brazilian blindness to culture and museums in particular.
- having a National Museum Policy supported by new legal frameworks, such as the Museum Statute, and by guidelines aimed at a country of continental dimensions, an almost incomparable challenge. We know unique characteristics in our professional training, with more than a dozen undergraduate courses in Museology, as well as graduate and technical courses, and a scientific production that consolidates and expands at a fast pace.
- witnessing the exponential increase of territory museums and community museums, especially favela museums. Our experience allows us to affirm that we share concerns and challenges common to museums around the world, while we have particularities to present and discuss. We are open and very much looking forward to this meeting.

She concludes that looking back, they realize how much the field has gained from the distensions provided in Santiago. With an eye to the future, she hopes that the 23rd General Conference of ICOM observes the specificities of Brazilian cities, people, musealization processes, and museum experiences. May the international committees, aware of this reality, contemplate students, communities and other subjects interested in dialoguing with ICOM in this passage through Brazil, and may the breath of creativity and daring resonate and distinguish this conference from all that has ever happened.⁷⁰ (ICOM, 2013)

⁷⁰ Translated by the author. Original: “Existe, portanto, há décadas, um pensamento sobre museus e mudança social construído no continente americano. O Brasil atualiza este legado de uma maneira muito vigorosa. Vemos números crescentes de museus e de público de museus, com algumas das maiores visitações do mundo em exposições recentes desmentindo visões reducionistas de uma cegueira brasileira para com a cultura e os museus em particular. Temos uma Política Nacional de Museus apoiada em novos marcos legais, como o Estatuto de Museus e em diretrizes voltadas para um país de dimensões continentais, desafio quase incomparável. Conhecemos características singulares em nossa formação profissional com mais de uma dezena de cursos de graduação em Museologia, além de cursos de pós-graduação e técnico, e uma produção científica que se consolida e amplia a passos largos. Presenciamos o aumento exponencial de museus de território e museus comunitários, notadamente os museus de favela. Nossa experiência permite afirmar que partilhamos preocupações e desafios comuns aos museus do mundo todo, ao mesmo tempo em que temos particularidades a apresentar e discutir. Estamos abertos e muito desejosos por este encontro. Olhando para trás, percebemos o quanto o campo ganhou com as distensões proporcionadas em Santiago. Com o olho no futuro, esperamos que a 23ª Conferência Geral do ICOM observe as especificidades de nossas cidades, nossas gentes, nossos processos de musealização, nossas experiências museais. Que os comitês internacionais, sabedores desta realidade, contemplem estudantes, comunidades e outros sujeitos interessados em dialogar com o ICOM nesta passagem pelo Brasil, que nosso sopro de criatividade e ousadia ressoe e distinga esta conferência de tudo que já aconteceu”.

It becomes clear that the realization of the 23rd general conference in Brazil has a stronger meaning that one might seize at first glance. The engaged Museology field in South America was finally getting recognized under international eyesight.

As can be read on ICOM's homepage "In addition to administrative meetings of ICOM's Executive Council, Advisory Committee, and General Assembly, the conference included plenary sessions, technical visits, and specialized sessions hosted by the International Committees". (ICOM, 2013)

The event was not only crucial for ICOM and its members, but for the international museum community. It provided "a platform for museum professionals from different regions and cultures to share and exchange on their expertise and experience". It was the first year that non-members of ICOM were able to participate in a general conference, which broadened the scope for dialogue. (Brandão, 2014, p. 88)

Another important fact to keep in mind is, that the government at that time was a, if not the, deciding factor. President Lula's government created the fertile soil for a public policy for museums to be implemented. The politic, social, and cultural context are what transformed Brazil into this laboratory of alternative museologies, social museologies. Lula governed from 2003-2010 and after him, Dilma Rousseff (2011-2013) continued sustaining public policies that protected these often-excluded identities from the museums world.

One of the most important Lula's public policies was choosing Gilberto Gil (who received his Doctorate degree *Honoris Causa* in 2008 from ULHT) as the culture minister. Gil's visits to cultural institutions inside of favelas, like the *Museu da Maré*, paved the way for the conference to take place in Brazil. This answers the question as to why Brazil plays such a significant role in the emergence of Social Museology and Sociomuseology. How nice were the times when Brazil had a president who cared about the extremely heterogenous Brazilian population, and when Brazil still had a culture minister.

1.1.8. 38th General Conference UNESCO, Paris, 2015

The 38th General Conference of UNESCO took place on 17th November in 2015 in Paris and carries a big significance for Sociomuseology. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization was seeking "to build peace through international cooperation in Education, the Sciences and Culture". (UNESCO, 2016)

As is explained on their official homepage:

...UNESCO develops educational tools to help people live as global citizens free of hate and intolerance. UNESCO works so that each child and citizen has access to quality education. By

promoting cultural heritage and the equal dignity of all cultures, UNESCO strengthens bonds among nations. UNESCO fosters scientific programmes and policies as platforms for development and cooperation. UNESCO stands up for freedom of expression, as a fundamental right and a key condition for democracy and development. Serving as a laboratory of ideas, UNESCO helps countries adopt international standards and manages programmes that foster the free flow of ideas and knowledge sharing. (UNESCO, s.d.)

It is shown that UNESCO works toward social development, world peace and sustainability. In this sense it is an institution of high relevance to our school of thought as it has the same goals and works with heritage, education and social development. UNESCO recognizes that:

...museums share some of the fundamental missions of the Organization, as stipulated in its Constitution, including its contribution to the wide diffusion of culture, and the education of humanity for justice, liberty and peace, the foundation of the intellectual and moral solidarity of humanity, full and equal opportunities for education for all, in the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth, and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge. (UNESCO, s.d.)

Interestingly the attention that UNESCO directed towards the social potential of Museums seems to have its seed in a request formulated by Brazil's institution for museums (IBRAM). In the period from 2003 to 2010, there were many activities performed by IBRAM that were closely related to Museologia Social and therefore Sociomuseology. Midst these processes the IBRAM team noticed a gap in UNESCO's documents that deals "specifically with issues relating to the protection and promotion of museums and collections and their role in society. (Editorial C. , 2017, p. 163)"

Having noticed this deficit, IBRAM got strong support of the Ibermuseos Programme which included this subject as a discussion in two international events⁷¹ in 2011. At these events, the participants decided that the Iberoamerican General Secretariat (SEGIB) should entice UNESCO to elaborate "a normative instrument to protect the museological heritage". At UNESCO's 36th Conference, also in 2011, the idea of a recommendation concerning the protection and promotion of museums and collections was approved. (Editorial C. , 2017, p. 164)

⁷¹ The "V Encontro Iberoamericano de Museus" that took place in June of 2011 in Mexico City, and at the "XIV Conferência Iberoamericana de Cultura" that took place in Asunción, in Paraguay, in August 2011.

Parting from the 36th General Conference a meeting was organized by IBRAM and UNESCO in Rio de Janeiro from the 11th to the 14th of July 2012 where a prototype of this recommendation was written. This document counted with the strong influence of IBRAM and MINOM and was sent to UNESCO, where it had to pass through diverse processes and the approbation of 70 Member States to finally be published in the 38th General Conference of UNESCO.

Now back to the 38th General Conference that took place in Paris, November 2015. This event is highlighted specially because of the chapter dedicated to Museums in annex IV: Recommendation concerning the protection and promotion of museums and collections, their diversity and their role in society. (UNESCO, 2016)

It does state on this document that a “UNESCO recommendation is a non-binding instrument that provides principles and policy guidelines addressing different stakeholders” (UNESCO, 2016, p. 3) i.e. the recommendation is a direction that they wish to give to the member states.

The General Conference recommends that Member States apply the following provisions by taking whatever legislative or other measures may be required to implement, within their respective territories under their jurisdiction, the principles and norms set forth in this Recommendation. (p. 3)

In this document it becomes clear that UNESCO stands behind the idea and affirms that “museums and collections contribute to the enhancement of human rights” (UNESCO), 2016, p. 2) and are therefore instruments that should be used to do so.

UNESCO therefore recognizes the:

Museums’ intrinsic value as custodians of heritage, and that they also play an ever-increasing role in stimulating creativity, providing opportunities for creative and cultural industries, and for enjoyment, thus contributing to the material and spiritual well-being of citizens across the world. (p. 2)

They do consider the sociopolitical happenings and therefore situate the museum in its context, another particularity that represents our school of thought. (p. 3) The passage that refers to “the role of museums and collections in favor of cultural and natural heritage, in its tangible and intangible forms and to related roles and responsibilities,” (p. 3) also demonstrates that the intangible objects are as important as the tangible ones and that they together constitute the museums’ collection.

In the introduction, there is stated that:

1. The protection and promotion of cultural and natural diversity are major challenges of the twenty-first century. In this respect, museums and collections constitute primary means by which tangible and intangible testimonies of nature and human cultures are safeguarded

2. Museums as spaces for cultural transmission, intercultural dialogue, learning, discussion and training, also play an important role in education (formal, informal, and lifelong learning), social cohesion and sustainable development. Museums have great potential to raise public awareness of the value of cultural and natural heritage and of the responsibility of all citizens to contribute to their care and transmission. Museums also support economic development, notably through cultural and creative industries and tourism.

3. This Recommendation draws the attention of Member States to the importance of the protection and promotion of museums and collections, so that they are partners in sustainable development through the preservation and protection of heritage, the protection and promotion of cultural diversity, the transmission of scientific knowledge, the development of educational policy, lifelong learning and social cohesion, and the development of the creative industries and the tourism economy. (p. 3)

Again, it is possible to note the recognition of the sociopolitical context the museum stands in and the recognition of the potential museums do have as actors in education, in social cohesion and development, and in economic development. The museum is also seen as the perfect instrument for the diffusion of information be it scientific or about cultural diversity and its potential is identified in the elaboration of public policies that protect the heritage.

The recommendation identifies a museum accordingly to the actual 2007 ICOM definition but also adds different definitions to their understanding of a museum. In this sense

... Museums are institutions that seek to represent the natural and cultural diversity of humanity, playing an essential role in the protection, preservation and transmission of heritage. (p. 4)

They also define collections as “an assemblage of natural and cultural properties, tangible and intangible, past and present”. They do ask every Member State to define their understanding of collection “in terms of its own legal framework, for the purpose of this Recommendation”. (p. 4)

Following the definition of Museum and Collection, the term Heritage is looked at more precisely. In this sense heritage:

Is defined as a set of tangible and intangible values, and expressions that people select and identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their identities, beliefs, knowledge and traditions, and living environments, deserving of protection and enhancement by contemporary generations and transmission to future generations. The term heritage also refers to the definitions of cultural and natural heritage, tangible and intangible, cultural property and cultural objects. (p. 4)

The next part of the recommendation is destined to identify the *primary functions* of the museum. As those they acknowledged preservation, research, communication, and education. (p. 5)

I chose not to insert extensive citations of each part here, because in my opinion these primary functions are shared by all museum-people, be they more anchored in the traditional school of Museology or part of one of the new movements.

Still, some citations need to be put here: “Research is of utmost importance for museums to provide opportunities to reflect on history in a contemporary context, as well as for the interpretation, representation and presentation of collections” (p. 4) just because we do give the same value to research as depicted in this recommendation. Therefore, the institutions that go along with Sociomuseology’s principles are based on extensive research in the territory.

Related to communication, the recommendation states that

Communication policies should take into account integration, access and social inclusion, and should be conducted in collaboration with the public, including groups that do not normally visit museums. Museum actions should also be strengthened by the actions of the public and communities in their favour. (p. 4, 5)

This passage goes with Sociomuseology, as we think including the local population in the actions of the museum for more intense interaction and bigger approval is fundamental.

When explaining education as one of the primary functions of the museum, the recommendation points out several ideas that are fundamental to comprehend our school of thought. For instance, when talking about *lifelong learning* we are speaking about the constant self-analysis of the museum. The “educational and pedagogical programs in partnership with other educational institutions” (p. 5) thematized in the recommendation is also a topic that is discussed a lot in

Sociomuseology. The end of the isolation of the museum in relation to other societal institutions as schools, libraries, universities and cultural centers helps to raise greater awareness of the importance of preserving heritage. When the heritage is managed by the community the “museums can also provide knowledge and experiences that contribute to the understanding of related societal topics” (p. 5) helping them to network, organize and start to be able to fight structural problems.

It becomes severely clear that this recommendation represents our thoughts and ideals. But now to the most valuable part of this document (for Sociomuseology) concerning the issues for museums in society. In this section the subsections are: Globalization, Museums relations with the economy and quality of life, the social role and museums and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). This part is so significant to our school of thought because it analyzes the context and significance of museums in our world. The international museum scenery is deeply influenced by globalization, the capitalist economy, and the communication technologies.

When addressing globalization, the recommendation suggests that “Member States should promote the safeguarding of the diversity and identity that characterize museums and collections without diminishing the museums’ role in the globalized world”. (p. 5) i.e., acknowledging the positive and negative aspects of globalization the individual characteristics of the museal constitutions should be protected.

“The museum should be recognized by the member states as possible economic actors in society, that can contribute to income-generating activities”. (p. 5)

...they participate in the tourism economy and with productive projects contributing to the quality of life of the communities and regions in which they are located. More generally, they can also enhance the social inclusion of vulnerable populations. (UNESCO., 2016, p. 5).

They do emphasize that the Member states should not focus on the income generating functions of the museum in detriment to the primary functions of the museums. “Member States should recognize that those primary functions, while of utmost importance for society, cannot be expressed in purely financial terms”. (p. 5).

I would like to call for the readers’ attention on the following citation, concerning the social role of the museum defended by the Recommendation. I decided to insert all 3 points of the section as it is cited in the same way in *theoretical references of Sociomuseology* written by Judite Primo and Mário Moutinho. I highlighted passages that seem in strongest syntony with Sociomuseology (ULHT, 2020)” .:

Member States are encouraged to support the social role of museums that was highlighted by the 1972 Declaration of Santiago de Chile. **Museums** are increasingly viewed in all

countries as playing a key role in society and as a factor in social integration and cohesion. In this sense, they **can help communities to face profound changes in society**, including those leading to a rise in inequality and the breakdown of social ties.

Museums are vital public spaces that **should address all of society** and can therefore play an important role in the development of social ties and cohesion, building citizenship, and reflecting on collective identities. Museums should be places that are open to all and committed to physical and cultural access to all, including disadvantaged groups. **They can constitute spaces for reflection and debate on historical, social, cultural and scientific issues. Museums should also foster respect for human rights and gender equality.** Member States should encourage museums to fulfil all of these roles.

In instances where the **cultural heritage of indigenous peoples is represented in museum** collections, Member States should take appropriate measures to encourage and facilitate dialogue and the **building of constructive relationships between those museums and indigenous peoples concerning the management of those collections**, and, where appropriate, **return or restitution** in accordance with applicable laws and policies. (p. 5, 6)

The significance of this segment is given for addressing factors that gave the impulse for our school of thought to emerge. The citation of the round table of Santiago is relevant because it shows the rightfulness and accuracy of the South American perspective upon the museums' world. As read before, this event identified the social role and responsibilities that pertain to museums in the modern (post second world war) world.

UNESCO is therefore not only legitimizing our way of thinking about the museums potential [be it in challenging systems of social oppression, questioning the elitist character of the museum that should be conversating with all parts of society, or thinking about more ethical ways to deal with indigenous (or non-white) heritage], but is calling upon the members states to apply changes, question, modernize to their heritage holding institutions.

Following the Social Role, the next segment talks about Museums and Information and Communication Technologies. The ever-evolving technologies are mentioned as they “offer opportunities for museums in terms of the preservation, study, creation and transmission of heritage and related knowledge” (p. 6). Therefore

Member-States are encouraged to support museums in giving them access to those important technologies.

Judite Primo also emphasizes that this third part is highly significant to our school of thought. This amplitude and connection of the Museology area with contemporaneity is expressed in all the Recommendation, but one can look with more attention to point III, called "Issues for museums in society" where, in its clauses 16, 17, 18 and 19, it deals with attention on the "Social Function" recognizing its fundamental role in the promotion and articulation of cohesion and social ties, in the construction of citizenship, in the reflection about collective identities, in fostering reflection and debate in society about historical, cultural, social and scientific issues, as well as in the promotion of human rights and gender equality, and may also help communities to face problems and changes in society.⁷² (Primo, 2019, p. 6, 7)

The last part of the recommendation consists of Policies. They are divided General policies and functional policies. The policies show the concern of UNESCO in protecting museal institutions and encouraging Member States to protect and promote museums under their jurisdictions, as they have been identified as important instruments in socio-political development of society and safeguard information that is relevant for today's and future generations.

In order to finish this chapter, I would like to remark that the recommendation dialogues with themes that are at the core of the actions of an increasing number of museums, in all continents, that recognize themselves as actors of development, social inclusion, gender equality, and respect for diversity, fully assuming principles and values already inscribed in the Declaration of Santiago de Chile of 1972, which the Recommendation itself fully invokes. It is a document that calls, orients, recommends, and encourages action⁷³. (Editorial C. , 2017, p. 165)

⁷² Translated by the author. Original: "Esta amplitude e conexão da área da Museologia com a contemporaneidade estão expressas em toda a Recomendação, mas pode-se olhar com mais atenção o ponto III, designado de «Desafios para os museus na sociedade» onde, nos seus artigos 16, 17, 18 e 19, trata com atenção sobre a «Função Social» reconhecendo papel fundamental na promoção e articulação de coesão e laços sociais, na construção da cidadania, na reflexão sobre as identidades coletivas, no fomento a reflexão e debate na sociedade sobre temas históricos, culturais, sociais e científicos, bem como na promoção de direitos humanos e igualdade de gênero, podendo ainda auxiliar as comunidades a enfrentar problemas e mudanças na sociedade".

⁷³ Translated by the author. Original: "A Recomendação dialoga com temas que estão no centro da atuação de um número cada vez maior de museus, em todos os continentes, que se reconhecem como atores do desenvolvimento, da inclusão social, da igualdade de gênero, do respeito pelas diversidades, assumindo plenamente princípios e valores já inscritos na Declaração de Santiago do Chile, de 1972, que a própria Recomendação invoca de pleno direito. Trata-se de um documento que convoca, orienta, recomenda e encoraja à ação".

1.1.9. 25th General Conference ICOM, Kyoto, 2019

As mentioned in the introduction, ICOM has not been able to actualize their definition of a museum since 2007. This chapter will be treating the 25th General Conference of ICOM that took place in Kyoto, Japan, from 1st to 7th September 2019 which held as one of its intentions agreeing to a new museums' definition.

In the Official Report of the Kyoto General Conference, it states that:

Over recent decades museums have adjusted and re-invented their purpose, policies and practices to the point where the ICOM museum definition no longer seems to reflect our challenges, manifold visions and responsibilities. (ICOM, 2019, p. 30)

Noticing the change that has been happening in museums in the last two decades ICOM was trying to find a definition which would embrace the newly acknowledged sociopolitical potentials museums have, still holding on to the core functions of museums. The old definition was, even being written in 2007 and considering all the events that happened in the 70s and 80s, still not able to describe all the “newer”, non-normative, forms that of Museology that had been existing for decades. There was a consensus towards actualizing the definition.

The movement in ICOM to search for a new definition started in 2016, when ICOM launched a participatory process to reflect on the museum's definition. Thus, in early 2017, the Standing Committee for Museum Definition, Prospects and Potentials (MDPP) was established. ICOM members were invited to suggest alternative museum definitions, following these parameters:

The inclusion of clear values and ethical purposes as well as references to societal, geopolitical and sustainability conflicts;

the importance of retaining the unique characteristics of museum functions;

the need for inventing a new relational language to express the changing relationships between museums and their communities. (ICOM, 2019, p. 41)

In January of 2019 ICOM

(...) invited members and interested parties to submit proposals for a new definition under a set of parameters. MDPP subsequently collected and processed the proposals and selected

five alternative definitions to submit to the ICOM Executive Board. (ICOM, 2019, p. 30)

After MDPP's hard work and two meetings, in which the ICOM Committee representatives presented their arguments for and against the new definition, an open discussion allowed participants to express their views. Both sessions aimed at providing a platform for as many voices as possible to be heard. In July of the same year the Board selected one alternative definition, which was communicated on ICOM's website.

Now to why this is even relevant to Sociomuseology. The definition proposed was the following:

Museums are democratizing, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures. Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present, they hold artefacts and specimens in trust for society, safeguard diverse memories for future generations and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people. Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent, and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing. (ICOM, 2019, p. 30)

When I first read this definition, I was thrilled as it does represent our direction, intentions and perspective on museums very well. It accentuates inclusion and diversity and demonstrates the responsibility of museums related to social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing, giving the museums the task to work together with the communities that live in the territory and to listen to their voices and take part in their fights.

But why wasn't there a consensus regarding the new definition? Why was the vote postponed? What happened in Kyoto was that the discussion about this new definition resulted in the proposition:

To retain all suggestions made during the Assembly and to postpone the decision to a later date. 562 members voted, with 70.4% in favour of postponing the vote. Pursuant to this decision, the ICOM President welcomed the democratic process and thanked the EGA for the healthy discussions that highlighted the need to pursue further dialogue, particularly with the National and International Committees. (ICOM, 2019, p. 15)

There was a lot of criticism towards the new definition. Some wanted it to be a lot clearer, simpler and shorter. Others said that the proposed new definition was too political, escaping the adored and made-up objectivity and neutrality of museums which never were true.

We know that no museum is like the other, and that there is an enormous heterogeneity in museums around the world. Thus, it is hard to write a definition of a museum that will satisfy everybody. Hence this definition was not accepted, as it is more of a utopian approach and impulse to what museums can and should be, but does not reflect on the reality of existing museums in 2019 or now in 2021.

Reflecting Sociomuseology's principles and the point of view⁷⁴, MINOM-ICOM, (2019) produced the Position Paper on the proposal for a new Museum Definition, which brings forward a series of criticisms about the Kyoto definition.

In sequence I will present the quotes which hold the most important points:

The definition must not offer illegitimate comfort for museums who wish to justify their existence by hoarding, by the accumulation of material heritage. Following this path, the definition will fall into inconsistency, for what it says and for what it omits, and will be fated to transmit an idealized image of the museum world, which, strictly speaking, will be far from corresponding to reality. (MINOM-ICOM, 2019, p. 1)

The previous citation shows how unsatisfied MINOM perceives the maintenance of normative museums and their elitist practices in their high position, keeping them safe from harsh criticism. MINOM directly criticizes the conformism inside of ICOM towards these museums that just hoard material heritage. Further on, MINOM points out that the proposed definition just does not speak the truth about the current museums world. Continuing:

The text presented as a definition would reach a better result if, instead of stating what museums are, it indicated what they should be. In this case we would not have a definition, but rather a proposal, which to us seems to be more challenging, contemporary and creative. In this case, ICOM would also be innovating and, instead of a definition, it would present the museological community with a proposition, a becoming-museum. In so being, finally, it would be possible to overcome some gaps and to include other important themes, such as museal education, repatriation of information and of cultural

⁷⁴ How can I affirm that MINOMs statement reflects Sociomuseology? One must only read the list of authors Mario Chagas – President, Marcelle Pereira - Vice-president, Mário Moutinho – Vice-president, Tamara Glass – Secretary, Michelle Stefano – Counselor, Robert Heslip – Counselor, Pedro Pereira Leite – Counselor, Claudia Storino – Counselor.

goods, leisure, museology or museological processes”.
(MINOM- ICOM, 2019, p. 1)

It would be revolutionary if ICOM admitted that it could only create a proposal of what museums can and should be instead of a definition of what they are, opening doors for institutions that are trying to adapt the museum understanding to their needs and instrumentalize it for their contexts, instead of restricting alternative institutions to be active the way they need to get the best social transformation results.

Further on, the Position Paper points out that

All museums have an owner. ... [generally, Museums are] maintained by Ministries and State Secretariats of national, state or city governments, by private and public foundations and by business entities. In their majority they are museums which fit into the previous definition, dating from 2007; ... centered on material heritage collections offered, bought or plundered.
(MINOM- ICOM, 2019)

We do not need a new definition for normative, material heritage hoarding institutions that speak from a Eurocentric perspective, using the categories invented by European scientists which do not represent all the societal groups under processes of subalternation.

Further on, MINOM states:

The museums associated to ICOM do not represent the planet’s museal universe, and, in their majority, are not ‘participatory and transparent’. Their Executive Boards, Curatorial Councils and Scientific Councils tend to take shelter in the intricacies of authoritarian governance models. Even the ‘imperial’ museums, which represent huge investments in terms of building industry, architecture and exhibition design, are works in glory of the established powers without commitment to democratic transparency and social responsibility. **Given this framework, the question is: what is the point in a definition that does not correspond to the daily life of the museums which integrate ICOM itself, and of those which, lacking the financial resources for paying the dues, remain at the door waiting for better days?**
(MINOM- ICOM, 2019, p. 2)

I highlighted the last part of the citation because it really hits the point. The definition proposed in Kyoto does not truthfully represent their currently affiliated museums. Then there are the museums that are trying to get support from ICOM

but keep getting excluded and exotified, but their revolutionary interpretation of the Museum and its functions suddenly appear in a definition by ICOM?

MINOM also emphasizes the importance of the Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society (UNESCO, 2016) which should have been taken into consideration in the process of finding a new museums definition, stating that the 2015 event and the declaration that was published for it is the result of an alternative, critical, democratic, inclusive, polyphonic and insurgent museological practice. (MINOM- ICOM, 2019, p. 2)

Continuing its harsh, but in my opinion very accurate criticism, MINOM affirms that the proposed definition seems

to want to extend to all museums the hard-earned values and concepts which were conquered with much struggle [by alternative, new, non-normative museums]; it also seems to hover in the field of the ideal, uncommitted to concrete reality. It is important to consider that the inescapable **Social Museology** practices keep an extraordinary critical power and shall not serve the production of theoretical accommodations.

The signatories of this Position Paper do not ignore that UNESCO's Recommendation was inspired in museums that assume the designation of inclusive, diverse, citizen and dialogic democratic practices; they do not ignore that museum workers, in different functions, act, many times, in contexts of resistance against discourses of intolerance and theological hatred; the signatories of this Position Paper also do not ignore that an ever-growing number of museums associate museological practices with actions translating some form of social responsibility. (MINOM- ICOM, 2019, p. 1)

Therefore, MINOM is not ignorant to the efforts towards transformation of existing normative museums and their practices from inside out. MINOM also calls for attention to the heterogenous reality of museums in the present times:

It is important to register that the proposed definition contains positivities, although harboring misunderstandings. Example: the proposal's text states that museums 'are participatory and transparent, and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing'. Once more an idealist position reveals itself here, **a definition idealized and uncommitted to**

the concrete museal reality. Studies by MINOM associated researchers indicate that there is museum diversity and that, in speaking of museums, it is always necessary to take historical contexts and concrete realities into consideration. There are museums that continue to reproduce and value colonial processes and others that affirm themselves as decolonial experiences. (MINOM- ICOM, 2019, p. 1)

Another point mentioned by the position paper is that the proposed definition does not use once the word Museology. This seemingly small detail could grant Museology its well-deserved and so often denied space inside of the field of Social Sciences, as an area of knowledge that aims towards the comprehension of museal processes and practices, in its diversity and complexity. With its absence, the proposed definition only appeals to a minority, ignoring the extremely diverse epistemological perspectives of Museology, Sociomuseology and Social Museology, which are vigorous phenomena with universal dimensions.

For all that has been said above, MINOM Directorate considers:

1. The proposed definition in its present form configures an illegitimate and perhaps undesirable reassurance for museums centered on material collections.
2. The proposed definition, however well-intentioned, does not help the universe of normative museology and much less the museal processes and the museums which, through their struggles, their multifaceted insurgence, made Social Museology a growing reality.
3. Abandoning the desire to define and assuming as a proposal the idea of a proposition may constitute an extraordinary breakthrough.

For these reasons, we call for the voting to be postponed and for the enhancement of the current proposal, based on the complex reality of contemporary museology. (MINOM- ICOM, 2019, p. 3)

Sociomuseology and its representatives are very open and accessible and will be eager to contribute to a new museums' definition – or a proposal to what museums can be!

The new Museum definition agreed on in Prague on the 24th of August 2022 sounds as follows:

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. (International Council of Museums, ICOM, 2022)

It is noticeable, that this new definition does approximate itself from the Sociomuseological set of rules. It is a very important step connecting Museology & human rights in an undeniable way. This new definition was approved but will be actively discussed during the next years and months. There'll not be a definition that takes into consideration every kind of museum existing in our world - but the exercise to create guidelines towards a more socially engaged museum is beneficial and motivates the whole museal community to deeply discuss the potential of museums.

1.2. Practices that gave reason for Sociomuseology to emerge

Now that we have gone through the events that created our school of thought and continue influencing it, the time has come to look at the practices that made it impossible to analyze all kinds of museums under one single understanding.

As mentioned in the introduction but important to bring back to the mental eye: how peaceful were the days when we knew exactly what a museum was and what it was not.⁷⁵ The creation of MINOM was due to the lack of acknowledgment of alternative, non-normative museologies inside of ICOM, as we have seen before. With the creation of MINOM the notion of international museologies that go in line with New Museology and Sociomuseology exist in many different countries was underlined, and a collection of knowledge started to form. Creating a course for Sociomuseology in Lisbon demonstrated that there was a will to not only learn about existing practices, but to compare them between each other, compare their contexts of emergence – the lacks that motivated the creation of these institutions. Another thing that Sociomuseology does is create material for new museums, museum professionals or enthusiasts to get inspired and to create new museal experiences – knowing that one does not need museologists, a building or even a physical collection to create a meaningful museum that can achieve societal transformation.

For the reader gasp the idea of ‘the institutions that gave a reason for Sociomuseology to emerge’ this chapter and its subchapters will give a practical and short overview about the heterogenous world of museal practices that can be read as Sociomuseology.

Sociomuseology studies and strengthens museal experiences with the focus located on the social dimension. In almost every country on our planet there are Museums that work the social dimension of the local population in different ways. I will certainly not be able to deduct every single practice that has carried sociomuseological characteristics in it. The ones cited here are the ones I found to be often mentioned in literature and therefore relevant.

We have learned that the term Sociomuseology only appeared at the very end of the 20th century. There were some museal practices that existed long time before that. Judite Primo (2019, p. 5,6) cited institutions as Sociomuseological practices in her article. I used some of the nine museal practices she mentioned as a guide, adding some others to complement.

⁷⁵ Cf. Moutinho, 2014, p. 3.

- *The Community Museum of Anacostia in the United States of America*

The Anacostia Community Museum was founded in 1967 “in the historic Anacostia section of Washington, D.C”. (The Smithsonian Institution, s.f.) There is one exhibition that is often mentioned in Sociomuseological contexts, as mentioned by Chagas and Gouveia (2014, p. 12) making a reference to the book “Os Museus no Mundo” (Varine, et. al. 1979), the museums in the world:

As part of the discussion on "Attempts at formal rupture" the book included a brief account of the Smithsonian-owned Anacostia Museum, located just outside Washington and which developed a memorable experience, especially regarding the famous Rat exhibition.

This museum and its pioneering experiences during John Kinard's management became a fundamental reference for the New Museology. The impact of this publication was extraordinary.⁷⁶

The Rat exhibition educated the local population on the diseases and problems associated to rats in the community, which had a big impact, leading to better sanitary conditions. It happened in 1969 and 1970.

- *Varal de Lembranças*⁷⁷

The Varal de Lembranças was an experience in Rio de Janeiro, that anteceded the later created favela museums. Bruno Brulon explains that in the 1970s, in Rio de Janeiro, the popular memory project called Varal de lembranças, coordinated by Professor Lygia Segala (1983) in the most populous favela in Brazil, Rocinha, represented one of the landmarks of the experimental practice that would influence the creation of ‘favela museums’ a few decades later. The project consisted in the elaboration of a collective memory from the memories shared among a

⁷⁶ Translated by the author. Original: “No âmbito da discussão sobre as “Tentativas de ruptura formal” o livro incluiu um breve relato sobre o Museu de Anacostia, pertencente a Smithsonian, situado nos arredores de Washington e que desenvolveu uma experiência memorável, especialmente no que se refere à famosa exposição sobre o Rato. Este museu e suas experiências pioneiras durante a gestão de John Kinard transformaram-se em referência fundamental para a Nova museologia. O impacto dessa publicação foi extraordinário”.

⁷⁷ Clothesline of memories

heterogeneous group and the experiences lived in Rocinha by the favela inhabitants⁷⁸. (Brulon, 2019, p. 213, 214)

- *National Museum of Niamey, Nige*

Chagas, Primo, Storino and Assunção mentioned the National Museum of Niamey, opened in 1958 (2018, p. 80) as an important example of pioneering sociomuseological practices.

The museum was created by a Catalan in exile, *Boubou Hama*, who had no academic qualifications, who was motivated by the needs and problems of the local community. According to Hugues de Varine⁷⁹, He thus created an Institute of Folklore and Archeology that in a 20 hectare area encompasses a large set of problems: an open-air ethnological museum, a children's garden, a zoological and botanical garden, a place for recreation and walking, for African and European fashion shows, and a center for the promotion of quality craftsmanship that produces useful objects; it is, after all, the largest school for literacy and, when appropriate, a center for the diffusion of musical programs⁸⁰. (Chagas, et al. 2018, p. 80)

The only reason for mentioning these practices is to demonstrate that they do not need us, scholars, to create these institutions that address the needs of the local people. We, the scholars, can learn a lot from their experiences and incorporate it into our field in Social Sciences, Museology.

- *The Local Museums in Portugal*

Often mentioned by Mário Moutinho and Judite Primo, the Local Museums in Portugal are a perfect example of Museums that focus on local needs. The phenomenon of Local Museums can be understood as a process, located throughout the country, which characterizes the museological institutions created since the

⁷⁸ Translated by the author. Original: “Na década de 1970, no Rio de Janeiro, o projeto popular de memória intitulado Varal de lembranças, coordenado pela professora Lygia Regala (1983) na favela mais populosa do Brasil, a Rocinha, representou um dos marcos da prática experimental que viria a influenciar à criação de “museus de favela”, algumas décadas depois. O projeto consistiu na elaboração de uma memória coletiva a partir das lembranças partilhadas entre um grupo heterogêneo e das experiências vividas na Rocinha por parte dos habitantes da favela”.

⁷⁹ Varine-Bohan, et al. (1979, p.73) in Chagas, et al (2018). A museologia e a construção de sua dimensão social: olhares e caminhos. Cadernos de Sociomuseologia, 55(11). p. 80.

⁸⁰ Translated by the author. Original: “Criou assim um Instituto de Folclore e Arqueologia que nuns 20 hectares de superfície abrange um conjunto grande de problemas: museu etnológico ao ar livre, jardim para crianças, jardim zoológico e botânico, lugar para espairer e passear, para os desfiles de moda africana e europeia, e centro para promoção de um artesanato de qualidade que fabrica objetos úteis; constituiu, afinal, a maior escola de alfabetização e, quando é o caso, um centro de difusão de programas musicais”.

mid-1970s in Portugal. As a result of local initiatives within the scope of cultural associations, heritage protection or the municipalities themselves, they defend a new museological perspective based on community participation, the dynamics of heritage and memory and the insertion of the museum within the different communities as a factor of development.⁸¹ (Primo , 2006, p. 42)

- *La Casa del Museo in México*

Another example that marked Museology in Mexico, still in the mid-1970s, was the project *La Casa del Museo*, developed by museographer Mario Vázquez. Based on a critical museographic action, it was a local museum on the outskirts of Mexico City, proposing to the public a change of perception about the colonial past, through the reinterpretation of pre-Columbian collections of the National Museum of Anthropology of Mexico.

In the complex context of the 1970s, in which many Latin American institutions sought to integrate museums "Into the daily life of their community, placing the past in function of the present" as a form of political and social resistance, Vázquez proposed the creation of "an experimental project [...], with the intention of addressing the marginal areas of the metropolitan area of the Federal District. (Antúnez, 2015, p.53)

This experience provided the basis for museological research and application focused on the idea of the museum as a platform for social transformation.⁸²

⁸¹ Translated by the author. Original: "O fenómeno dos Museus Locais pode ser entendido como um processo, localizado um pouco por todo o país, que caracteriza as instituições museológicas criadas desde meados dos anos 70 em Portugal. Fruto de iniciativas locais no âmbito de associações culturais, de defesa do património ou das próprias autarquias, defendem uma nova perspectiva museológica assente na participação comunitária, na dinâmica do património e da memória e na inserção do museu no seio das diferentes comunidades como factor de desenvolvimento".

⁸² Translated by the author. Original: "Outro exemplo que marcou a museologia, no México, ainda em meados dos anos 1970, foi o projeto *La Casa del Museo*, desenvolvido pelo museógrafo Mario Vázquez. A partir de uma ação museográfica crítica, tratava-se de um museu local na periferia da Cidade do México, propondo ao público uma mudança de percepção sobre o passado colonial, por meio da reinterpretação de coleções pré-colombianas do Museu Nacional de Antropologia do México. No contexto complexo dos anos 1970, em que muitas instituições latino-americanas buscavam integrar os museus "na vida cotidiana de sua comunidade, colocando o passado em função do presente" como forma de resistência política e social, Vázquez propunha a criação de "um projeto experimental [...], com intenção de dirigir-se às áreas marginais da zona metropolitana do Distrito Federal" (Antúnez, 2015, p.53). Essa experiência forneceu as bases para a investigação e a aplicação museológicas voltadas para a ideia do museu como plataforma de transformação social".

1.2.1. Sociomuseologies perspective on Ecomuseology, New Museology and Social Museology

This chapter aims to compile definitions of Ecomuseology, Social Museology, and New Museology, shining a light on what they can mean when adopted, allowing the reader to form an own opinion. It is an offering to all those who want to work within a Sociomuseological perspective and need a document that reunites some of the concepts used in the English language. The effort is made in the author's perspective – being a Master-Student in Sociomuseology – prioritizing, therefore, the production of the school of thought stemming from professors and students.

I'd like to accentuate some papers which were used a lot to write this chapter. The order does not implicate importance. Starting with Judite Primo's article (2019) called "*The contemporary challenges in investigating Sociomuseology*"; Angelo Biléssimos' article (2020) presenting an analysis about the PhDs written in Sociomuseology, their thematic, the advisors to each topic, geographical situation and more. The article "*Social Museology: reflections and practices*" by Inês Gouveia and Mario de Souza Chagas (2014), represents an effort to identify roots and sources of Social Museology and the article "*Social Museology: Historical and Conceptual Notes*" by Atila Bezerra Tolentino (2016). For the present article two of Mário Moutinho's productions were included: "*The evolutive Definition of Sociomuseology*" (2009) and "*About the concept of Social Museology*" (1993). These publications are just a fraction of the production of Sociomuseology, showing the constant underlying effort to create clarity and unity under our school of thought.

During the extension of the the second half of chapter number 2 my effort was to compile citations, translate them, and allow the reader to create their own picture of it all. In the conclusion of the book I will come back to the four concepts: Sociomuseology, Social Museology, New Museology and Ecomuseology.

1.2.2. Ecomuseology

Around the emergence of the term Eco-museum, it appears around a coffee table in Paris, during a conversation between Hugues de Varine and the advisor of the minister of the Environment of France. Varine, who at the time was secretary of ICOM, a disciple of Georges-Henri Rivière who had reformed the Museum of Man

in Paris (1897-1985), expressed this concern with the relationship between man and nature⁸³. (Pereira Leite, 2015)

According to Hillary Porter (2017) the first time the term Eco-museum was used was in 1971, in French. She, as Leite did in 2015, affirms that Varine and Rivière were the two foundational writers of the concept. Leite and Porter recognize that the term was devised for the French Minister for the environment at that time, Robert Poujade. Porter addresses the green movement that was trending in that period. She affirms that the term Eco-museum was selected mostly for political purposes, and Rivière and Varine contributed in their own concentrations to the development of the concept.

The affirmation of Georges-Henri Rivière and Hugues de Varine as the great masters and creators of the concept of Ecomuseology is also done by Mayrand and Kerstedjan (2004, p. 37). Georges-Henri Rivière and Hugues De Varine were “successively directors of the ICOM which they founded and which they wished to direct, each according to his ideological allegiance, towards a social awareness on the part of the museum institution” The same article also affirms that both were present in the formation of the concept, but only G.H. Rivière continued to publish evolutionary definitions about what an Eco-museum is.

Hugues de Varine had Georges-Henri Rivière. We still need to acknowledge that they have different perspectives on Museology in general. About the different interpretations of both Varine and Rivière:

De Varine really championed for the democratization of museums and wanted to promote the role of the community. He typically worked within a more economic and political framework and agenda. In the late 1980s, after there had been considerable discussion of eco-museums, de Varine presented four key objectives of the eco-museum. First to be an object and data bank for the community. Second, serve as an observatory of change and help the community react to changes. Thirdly to be a focal point for gatherings, discussions, innovation, to be a laboratory for the community. Lastly to reveal the community and region to its visitors, be a showcase.

Rivière worked with the Regional Natural Parks of France and was interested in ethnographic work and rural material culture. Rivière published numerous writings on the eco-museum

⁸³ Translated by the author. Original: ““O termo ecomuseu surge à volta duma mesa de café, em Paris, em conversa entre Hugues de Varine e o conselheiro do secretário do ambiente de França. Trabalhava-se na IX Conferência Geral do ICOM, que teve como tema “O Museu a Serviço do Homem, Actualidade e Futuro –o Papel Educativo e Cultural” Varine, que à época era secretário do ICOM, discípulo de Georges-Henri Riviere que havia reformado o Museu do Homem em Paris (1897-1985, manifestavam esta preocupação com a relação do homem com a natureza”.

concept throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Rivière gave three key variations to his ever evolving conceptualization of eco-museum. Rivière's first definition favored the ecological and environmental aspect of the concept. In his second definition, he shifted focus to the experimental nature of an eco-museum and the community's role. The third definition gave attention to the interpretation of local history and culture and the nature of a specific territory that had unconventional boundaries. (Porter, 2017)

Analyzing both perceptions of Ecomuseology, it is noticeable that although similar, there are different weights attributed to each value. Shared values are: the focus on the community, its identity and collection, material and immaterial, the inclusion of the local people regarding the actions of the Museum, and reflections about the social role of the Museum. The emergence of Ecomuseology occurs in the beginnings of the "green trend" referring to sustainability and nature that can be observed until the present day.

On the official homepage of the Ecomusée du Fier-Monde, in Montreal, Canada, the Eco-museum is defined, and its emergence is explained as the following:

The term "eco-museum" was invented in France in 1971. This period was marked by a desire to renew the Museum and redefine its relationship with the public. The eco-museum concept thus reflects a concern to strengthen the link between the museum institution, its social milieu and its environment.

An eco-museum highlights the entirety of the culture and heritage linked to its geographical territory and its field of intervention. This heritage can be material (artefacts, buildings) or immaterial (testimonies, know-how).

Like any museum, an eco-museum ensures, among other things, conservation, research, exhibition, education and dissemination functions, to which is added a social and community role. Consequently, it encourages citizen participation in its activities, is anchored in its environment and contributes to its development. (Ecomusée du fier monde. History and community museum., 2011)

Resuming: Rivière and Varine created the term Eco-museum and continued to define it through the 70s and 80s, a period of immense relevance for Sociomuseology, as was perceived in this book.

Ecomuseums: A sense of Place” written by Peter Davis (2011) has enormous value to all those who want to understand Ecomuseology better. When discussing Rivières definition of Ecomuseums, he recommends the article by Rivère himself, where he defined the evolutive stages of Ecomuseology in French. Davis resumed: “The early definitions (1973) have a bias towards ecology and the environment, and those of 1978, while stressing the experimental nature of the Eco-museum and its evolution within the regional natural parks, make the case for the role of the local community. (Davis, 2011, p. 79)

He proceeds to cite Rivières⁸⁴ final version published in 1985, which is the one that is usually cited. In 1980, Rivère defined an eco-museum as:

An instrument conceived, fashioned, and operated jointly by a public authority, and its local population. The public authority’s involvement is through the experts, facilities and resources it provides; the local population’s involvement depends on its aspirations, knowledge and individual approach. It is a mirror in which the local population views itself to discover its own image, in which it seeks an explanation of the territory to which it is attached and of the populations which have preceded it, seen either as circumscribed in time or in terms of the continuity of generations. It is a mirror that the local population holds up to its visitors so that it may be better understood and so that its industry, customs and identity may command respect. It is an expression of man and nature. It situates man in his natural environment. It portrays nature in its wilderness, but also as adapted by traditional and industrial society in their own image. It is an expression of time, when the explanations it offers reach back before the appearance of man, ascend the course of the prehistoric and historical times in which he lived and arrive finally at man’s present. It also offers a vista of the future, while having no pretensions to decision-making, its function being rather to inform and critically analyse. It is an interpretation of space – of special places in which to stop and stroll. It is a laboratory, insofar as it contributes to the study of the past and present of the population concerned and of its total environment and promotes the training of specialists in these fields, in co-operation with outside research bodies. It is a conservation centre, insofar as it helps to preserve and develop

⁸⁴ Rivière, G. H. (1985). Définition évolutive de l’écumusée 1. Museum International (Edition Française), 37(4), 182-183. In Davis, P. (2011). Ecomuseums: a sense of place, p. 79, 80.

the natural and cultural heritage of the population. It is a school, insofar as it involves the population in its work of study and protection and encourages it to have a clearer grasp of its own future. This laboratory, conservation centre and school are based on common principles. The culture is the name of which they exist is to be understood in its broadest sense, and they are concerned to foster awareness of its dignity and artistic manifestations, from whatever stratum of the population they derive. Its diversity is limitless, so greatly do its elements vary from one specimen to another. This triad is not self-enclosed; it gives and it receives. (Davis, 2011, p. 79, 80)

While reading this definition the countless times Rivière speaks about “the Man” in its environment when he is treating the population of that area – including women, kids, and all diverse genders there are, creates tension. We must recall that when this was written gender studies were not as present as today.

After citing Rivière, Davis questions if this definition is clear enough to provide an understanding of what Ecomuseology truly is. “Perhaps the most important features of Rivière’s definition are the repetition of the word ‘population’ (i.e., the emphasis on community) and the idea that the eco-museum has ‘limitless diversity’; it can be anything local people and museum professionals want it to be”. (Davis, 2011, p. 80)

There were more efforts to define what Ecomuseology and its components are. It is not possible nor valuable to create a complete collection of definitions. The aim here is to unravel some central questions around the concept.

Interestingly the first international encounter of Eco-museums, which took place in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, did not produce a declaration or recommendation or something in that direction. As Inês Gouveia and Mario Chagas wrote: “The I International Encounter of Ecomuseums, [was] held in May 1992, in Rio de Janeiro, [...] [and] did not have the formal concern of producing a letter or a declaration, although it did produce a book that records the memory of the Encounter”. 85 (Chagas & Gouveia, 2014, p. 13)

The first international encounter of Ecomuseums was very relevant not only for Ecomuseology as a concept but also for further exploring community-centered museum practices around the world. In the preface of the produced document written by Carlos Eduardo Novaes, there is description of what himself learned about Ecomuseums.

Novaes explains that an eco-museum is not an ecological museum. An eco-museum may not even be a museum, such is the distance that separates it from the

⁸⁵ Translated by the author. Original: “I Encontro Internacional de Ecomuseus, realizado em maio de 1992, no Rio de Janeiro, que, diga-se de passagem, não teve a preocupação formal de produzir uma carta ou uma declaração, ainda que tenha produzido um livro que registra a memória do Encontro”.

basic foundations of this place destined to store objects. The object of the Museum is the Man, alive, pulsating, in his community circle. It has to do with history and the physical, natural and cultural heritage. More than this, however, the eco-museum is realized in collective memory, its relationship with the territory, its knowledge of daily life. It finally empowers the community for a liberating action, capable of preserving its area from outside pressures and impositions. It was for no other reason that Hugues de Varine, one of the pioneers of the eco-museum 20 years ago, preferred to call it a 'community museum'.⁸⁶ (Prefeitura do Rio de Janeiro, 1992, preface)

There is beauty and problems in this speech. It shows us the broad understanding of Ecomuseology in that time, but also depicts the intellectual limitations of the period, when – again – writing that the Eco-museum is dependent on the community and thus its object is “the Man” as seen before in Rivière. I would like to believe that if he wrote the preface today, he would choose to refer to the object of Eco-museums as “the Human Being” and its environment.

Another idea deemed important to insert in this article in which Varine said that we should think carefully before embarking on a museological adventure of the eco-museum type, the community museum, which can only be supported, in the long term, by a community and is a museum doomed, in time, to disappear. (Prefeitura do Rio de Janeiro, 1992, p. 273)

Varine uses Eco-museum and community-museum as synonyms here. The fluidity of the Eco-museum is a characteristic that should be brought to attention. Eco-museums are so profoundly connected to the community that they should adapt to the context, or vanish, reflecting the communities' development in time.

Interestingly Varine has shown regret towards the establishment of the concept of Ecomuseology. In Davis' book we can read that:

Hugues de Varine (1996) stated that 'I invented the word by chance in 1971. I thought it was just a sort of chance finding. But I must say I regret [it] because too many people have used that word for too many things.'

My personal correspondence with Varine in 1998 reaffirmed this view, when he stated:

⁸⁶ Translated by the author. Original: “Um eco-museu não é um museu ecológico. Um eco-museu pode nem mesmo ser um museu, tal é a distância que o separa dos fundamentos básicos deste lugar destinado a armazenar objetos. O objeto do Museu é o Homem, vivo, pulsante, em seu círculo comunitário. Tem a ver com a história e com o patrimônio físico, natural e cultural. Mais do que isso, porém, o eco-museu é realizado em memória coletiva, sua relação com o território, seu conhecimento da vida cotidiana. Por fim, ele capacita a comunidade para uma ação libertadora, capaz de preservar sua área das pressões e imposições externas. Não foi por outra razão que Hugues de Varine, um dos pioneiros do eco-museu há 20 anos, preferiu chamá-lo de "museu comunitário".

“In France, the term ecomusee covers all kinds of things, from a one-room exhibition of postcards in a small village, to an open-air museum in a Nature Park, and to the big community museum in Le Creusot. We should not use this word anymore . . . some words can create misunderstandings”.

However, Varine’s invented word has not gone away; if anything it has grown in reputation and usage, supported by interest from academics and professionals who admire its philosophical underpinning. (Davis, 2011, p. 78)

Davis also affirms that the Eco-museum became “a focal point for international debate about the purpose of museums. It proposed a strong emphasis on community involvement, meeting demands for action by the community to conserve its own material culture and natural heritage within the boundaries of its geographical area or territory”. (Davis, 2011, p. 50)

My perception of Ecomuseology is that it represents a pioneering genre of museum practices involving the local population in the activities of the museum. While still **dependent on professional museum staff**, it encompasses a broader perception of heritage, encompassing both material and immaterial aspects.

1.2.3. New Museology

New Museology is an answer to traditional Museology. In and before the 1970s, different kinds of museal practices were taking place worldwide: Ecomuseology in France, neighbourhood museums in the USA, the experience of the indigenous Museum in Brazil (Brulon, 2019, p. 213), the “La Casa del Museo” – House of the Museum in Mexico, and many others. All these museal processes have been happening since last quarter of the twentieth century. These – then – new forms of thinking and doing Museology were not being represented in the museum definition by ICOM, and in most cases were fighting alone, without governmental support, for survival and further actions.

In the seventies and eighties, several relevant meetings established New Museology and gave it its own institution: the International Movement for a New Museology (MINOM). The most mentioned events that produced very important declarations and paved the way for the establishment and institutionalization of New Museology were:

- 1971 – ICOMs’ tenth General assembly produced: The Recommendation of Grenoble, France

- 1972 - The Round Table of Santiago, Chile⁸⁷ (Instituto Brasileiro de Museus. BRAM / MinC; Programa Ibermuseos, 2012).
- 1984 - Workshop in Quebec produced: The Quebec Declaration, Canada

These events produced declarations, recommendations, and reflections about the social role of the museum. The workshop in Quebec in 1984 had the creation of MINOM (the International Movement of New Museology) as a direct consequence. On its official page, MINOM identifies itself.

Based broadly on a concern for social and cultural change, MINOM brings together individuals who are dedicated to active and interactive museology. It is open to all approaches which make the museum an instrument for identity building and development within the community. MINOM favors cooperative relationships between users and professionals, as well as intercultural collaboration. MINOM is an international organization affiliated to ICOM (MINOM - ICOM, s. d.)

The before cited practices Ecomuseology, Neighbourhoodmuseums, etc, were already very much alive and functioning in the most heterogeneous ways in many places, as can be read in Andrea Hauenschilds' PhD dissertation (1998). "*Claims and reality of New Museology: Case studies in Canada, the United States and Mexico*" published in 1988, in German and in English by the Smithsonian⁸⁸. MINOM was created with the intent to offer a space for discussion and actualization about the international practices that fall into the scope of New Museology.

The movement of New Museology, according to Inês Gouveia and Mario Chagas, (2014, p. 15) held different museal processes in its core. These were Popular Museology, Active Museology, Ecomuseology, Community Museology, Critical Museology, Dialogical Museology, and others.

Soares defines another date as relevant: the presentation of the statute of a new association with the name "*Muséologie nouvelle et expérimentation sociale*" (MNES) in Marseille, France, in 1982.

It was based on ideas already presented by some critics of traditional museology at the time, and especially on the thoughts of Georges Henri Rivière, Hugues de Varine and André Desvallées. It was, in fact, the reflection of the ruptures and transformations of the established museum logic, perceived by

⁸⁷ Available resume of the event in English: <http://www.iber museos.org/pt/recursos/publicacoes/mesa-redonda-de-santiago-de-chile-1972-vol-2/>

⁸⁸ The Book was recently re-published by the Universidade Lusófona in Lisbon. This shines light on the effort to publish english literature by the university. <https://museologia-portugal.net/apresentacao/livro-2022-claims-and-reality-new-museology-case-studies-canada-united-states-and>

some French professionals working in the eco-museum scenario. (Soares, 2019, p. 215)

It can look like New Museology is a French concept, but taking a deeper look into the subject, one gets confronted with the international nature of it:

This association, based on the thinking of museologists who worked within ICOM and were in direct contact with international experiences of a contestatory nature, can be seen as the first concrete formulation of a ‘new’ discourse based on experimentation to conceive social change through the museum device. Although it originated in the French context, its genealogy can be found in the thinking of professionals and theoreticians who looked at irruptive practices in the former colonies. Museologists such as the already mentioned Mario Vázquez, from Mexico, or Marta Arjona, from Cuba, and Waldisa Rússio, from Brazil, had already been, since the 1970s, producing critical reflections on the museum practice in force, and theoretical propositions based on museological experimentation. (Brulon, 2019, p. 216)

Brulon (2019, p. 215) also relies on Desvallées when he affirms that New Museology emerged with the intention of rupture with the traditional museum concept and proposed a radical revision of the notions of public and the relation between society and patrimony.

New Museology is, more than anything, a movement that recognized new and different approaches to what a museum’s responsibilities can be, extrapolating the old object-focused theory. “There was therefore a move away from a singular focus on collections research towards a focus on relations with people, and, on the educational role of the museum. (Lynch, 2020, p. 8)

According to Mario Chagas, a well-known professor and activist on the changes on these core factors of museal theory:

From the 1970s onwards, the classical concept of the museum, which is based on the notion of building, collection and public, was confronted with new concepts that strictly expanded and problematized the concepts cited, working with the categories of territory (socially practiced), heritage (socially constructed) and community (constructed by bonds of belonging). (Chagas, 2013, p. 3).

I see New Museology as a movement within Museology that has its roots in criticizing the stiffness of traditional Museology. New Museology evokes a more substantial commitment of museums to local development as its primary guideline.

We can see that there is a breakage and a revolutionary spirit associated with New Museology. As Santos expresses, even conservative and classical institutions started to incorporate the jargon and, in some cases, certain practices and methodologies of the so-called New Museology, and the same happened to determined professionals, although this did not represent the adherence to the ethical and political commitments that were the basis of the New Museology. The expression became fashionable and lost potency. And some of those who started to speak on behalf of the New Museology also wanted to establish defining rules of what a new museum is, what an eco-museum is, what a community museum is, what a territory museum is, and with this, they tried to frame the New Museology within the practices and procedures of the normative Museology. In the 1990s, the so-called New Museology underwent a conceptual and practical inflection, although there is no consensus about the directions and orientations of this inflection⁸⁹. (Santos, 2020, p. 98).

Santos also synthesizes the resistance to defined and stiff concepts that is natural in Sociomuseology. There is a certain consensus about the terminology or the concept of New Museology in Sociomuseological perspective: the agreement that the expression “New Museology” is losing its power. Not only the already cited Maria Célia Teixeira Moura Santos affirms that, but Gouveia and Chagas (2014, p.15-16) too. The latter two authors go further and affirm that: “The loss of power of the term New Museology contributed to the strengthening and rise, especially after the 1990s, of the so-called Social Museology or Sociomuseology”.

Chagas and Gouveia defend the idea that the change in nomenclature of these practices because it indicates the creative power, the capacity for invention and reinvention of these experiences and initiatives and shows the willingness to deviate and resist attempts at standardization, normalization, and control perpetrated by certain cultural and academic sectors. These undisciplined museologies grow hand in hand with life, permanently elaborating their knowledge and actions in light of the social transformations they experience as protagonists, and for this very reason [...]

⁸⁹ Translated by the author. Original: “Mesmo instituições conservadoras e clássicas passaram a incorporar o jargão e em certos casos determinadas práticas e metodologias da denominada nova museologia, o mesmo aconteceu com determinados profissionais, sem que isso representasse a adesão aos compromissos éticos e políticos que embasavam a nova museologia. A expressão virou moda e perdeu potência. E alguns daqueles que passaram a falar em nome da nova museologia passaram também a querer estabelecer regras definidoras do que é um novo museu, do que é um ecomuseu, do que é um museu comunitário, do que é um museu de território e com isso tentaram enquadrar a nova museologia no âmbito das práticas e procedimentos da museologia normativa. Nos anos de 1990 a denominada nova museologia passou por uma inflexão conceitual e prática, ainda que não haja consenso sobre os rumos e as orientações dessa inflexão”.

they name and rename, invent and reinvent themselves, permanently⁹⁰ (Gouveia & Chagas, 2014, p. 16).

We can see a critical perspective to New Museology depicted in the citations inserted here. However, there is admiration, gratitude, and honor to it, obviously. New Museology represents the opening to difference and respect to the different ways in doing and thinking Museology. Concluding:

Finally, I think that the New Museology movement has pointed out the ways of respect for difference and plurality, for the construction of a museology that is open to the multiple realities, to the growth of the technique, that starts to recognize its limits and opens itself to the joint growth, from the interaction with the communities, assuming its social commitment, in the search for citizenship and social development. In our view, this is its greatest merit: **its contemporaneity.** (Santos, 2020, p. 130)”

New Museology is very present in the discussions of Sociomuseology. There is the acknowledgment that, like Ecomuseology, the concept has been used for so many different things that it lost a bit of its meaning. That does not take anything from its relevance and presence internationally.

1.2.4. Social Museums, focusing on Favela Museums in Brazil

Social Museums (*Museus Sociais*) in Brazil are, in my perspective and backed by conversations with Mario Chagas and Mário Moutinho, the most radical example of Sociomuseological practice, pioneering the readaptation of the elitist institution “*Museum*” to the individual communities’ needs.

Considering their existence since the beginning of the 21st century, they were and are a wakeup call to us, as scholars, demonstrating life-changing potentials that have not been made use of in traditional Museology until now. Expanding the understanding of what a museum can be, the Brazilian Social Museums have morphed the museum’s concept into active society changing instruments, guided by the locals themselves. Personally, I had most contact with Social Museums in Brazil – so these are the institutions I feel most comfortable writing about.

⁹⁰ Translated by the author. Original: “As múltiplas designações indicam, de algum modo, a potência criativa, a capacidade de invenção e reinvenção dessas experiências e iniciativas, e evidenciam a disposição para driblar e resistir às tentativas de normatização, standardização e controle perpetradas por determinados setores culturais e acadêmicos. Essas museologias indisciplinadas crescem de mãos dadas com a vida, elaboram permanentemente seus saberes e fazeres à luz das transformações sociais que vivenciam como protagonistas, por isso mesmo é no fluxo, no refluxo e no contrafluxo que se nomeiam e renomeiam, se inventam e reinventam, permanentemente”.

Aline Portilho (2016, p. 38) affirmed that the notion of “*museologia social*”, Social Museology, emerged in the 1990s.

Mário Moutinho wrote “*The concept of Social Museology*” in which he affirmed that “the concept of Social Museology translates a considerable part of the effort to adapt museological structures to the constraints of contemporary society” (Moutinho, 1993, p.7)

In the mentioned article, Moutinho cites Frederic Mayer, the former General Director of UNESCO, at the opening of the XV General Conference of ICOM, who thinks that the distant, aristocratic, Olympian institution, obsessed with appropriating objects for taxonomic purposes, has increasingly - and some are concerned about this - given way to an entity open to the environment, aware of its organic relationship with its own social context. The museological revolution of our time - manifested by the appearance of community museums, ‘museums sans murs’, eco-museums, itinerant museums or museums that explore the seemingly infinite possibilities of modern communication - has its roots in this new organic and philosophical awareness.⁹¹ (Moutinho, 1993, p. 7).

Mayer confirms the museological revolution which is deeply linked to New Museology. Considering the New Museology and its definitions and problems thematized in the previous chapter, it becomes clear that calling that Museology a “new” one, may have worked well for decades. However, at the end of the 20th and the start of the 21st century Brazil was home to practices that demanded a more accurate name to describe their processes: Social Museology. In Social Museology the focus in museums was shifted from objects (comparing to normative Museology) to the people and their needs and prospects for a better future. It is a more radical approach than Ecomuseology in terms of autonomy and freedom of speech as will be seen next.

In the mentioned article from 1993, Moutinho proceeds to recall the Santiago Declaration, mentioned in the chapter about New Museology, and cites: 1) That the museum is an institution at the service of the society of which it is an integral part and that it possesses in itself the elements that allow it to participate in the formation of the conscience of the communities it serves; that the museum can contribute to make these communities act, placing its activity in the historical framework that allows for the clarification of current problems. 2) that this new conception does not imply the end of the current museums or the renunciation of specialized museums. On the contrary, this new conception will allow museums to develop and evolve in a more rational and logical way in order to better serve society

⁹¹ Translated by the author. Original: “A instituição distante, aristocrática, olimpiana, obcecada em apropriar-se dos objectos para fins taxonómicos, tem cada vez mais - e alguns disso se inquietam - dado lugar a uma entidade aberta sobre o meio, consciente da sua relação orgânica com o seu próprio contexto social. A revolução museológica do nosso tempo - que se manifesta pela aparição de museus comunitários, museus 'sans murs', ecomuseus, museus itinerantes ou museus que exploram as possibilidades aparentemente infinitas da comunicação moderna - tem as suas raízes nesta nova tomada de consciência orgânica e filosófica”.

and 3) That the transformation of museum activities requires a progressive change in the mentality of museum curators and those in charge of museums as well as of the structures on which they depend.⁹² (Moutinho, 1993, p. 7, 8).

The events that are significant for New Museology are – as we can see – also important for Social Museology and Sociomuseology. All of them share the same history. The Brazilian Authors Ines Gouveia and Mario Chagas define Social Museology expressing that what gives meaning to Social Museology is not the fact that it exists in society, but rather, the social commitments that it assumes and with which it is linked. All Museology and all museums exist in society or in a certain society, but when we talk about Social Museums and Social Museology, we are referring to ethical commitments, especially with regard to their scientific, political, and poetic dimensions; we are radically affirming the difference between a Museology of conservative, bourgeois, neoliberal, capitalist anchoring and a Museology from a libertarian perspective; we recognize that for a long time, at least from the first half of the nineteenth century until the first half of the twentieth century, a practice of memory, heritage, and Museum predominated in the Western world that was entirely committed to the defense of the values of the aristocracies, oligarchies, and dominant and dominating classes and religions.

Social Museology, in the perspective presented here, is committed to the reduction of social injustices and inequalities; to fighting prejudice; to improving the quality of collective life; to strengthening dignity and social cohesion; to using the power of memory, heritage and the Museum in favor of popular communities, of indigenous peoples and quilombolas⁹³, of social movements, including the LGBT movement, the MST⁹⁴ and others. It would be possible to say that all museologies are social if all museologies, without distinction, were committed from the theoretical and practical point of view with the issues presented here; but this does not happen,

⁹² Translated by the author, Original: “Que o museu é uma instituição ao serviço da sociedade da qual é parte integrante e que possui em si os elementos que lhe permitirem participar na formação da consciência das comunidades que serve; que o museu pode contribuir para levar essas comunidades a agir, situando a sua actividade no quadro histórico que permite esclarecer os problemas actuais, [...] Que esta nova concepção não implica que se acabe com os museus actuais nem que se renuncie aos museus especializados mas que pelo contrário esta nova concepção permitirá aos museus de se desenvolver e evoluir de maneira mais racional e mais lógica a fim de se melhor servir a sociedade ... Que a transformação das actividades do museu exige a mudança progressiva da mentalidade dos conservadores e dos responsáveis dos museus assim como das estruturas das quais eles dependem;”

⁹³ Quilombos are social groups formed during the colonial period. They are fugitive enslaved Africans, isolated indigenous people who were expelled from their tribe and people who generally had problems with the government. This conglomeration mostly hid in the forests and there they shared the land and everything was divided. It is a very interesting topic, because until today in many quilombos the land is still shared and some of the African customs and religions survive better in this context than in the majority society. So these groups present themselves as very exciting and full of cultural richness, which is unfortunately ignored in traditional museums. (also applies to favelas and indigenous tribes).

⁹⁴ MST is the Movimento sem Terra in Brazil. Translated it would mean: Landless movement. The movement of those who do not own land, but feel they have the right to do so. It is a mass movement in Brazil that advocates radical land reform and makes social and political demands. The movement received the Right Livelihood Award in 1991.

it is not true, and on this point we should not and cannot be naïve⁹⁵. (Gouveia & Chagas, 2014, p. 17).

Therefore, to understand Social Museology, we need to acknowledge the radical act of distancing itself from traditional Museology (and also from practices that wrongfully called themselves New Museology) which takes part here. We are talking about museums that are opened mainly by oppressed parts of society with a defined political agenda and non to little support from the government. Social Museology goes beyond the practices of New Museology in terms of the intensity of the commitment to the society in which the Museum is inserted. It is not “only” about integrating the community into museum-making, it is not only about valuing perspectives that were not represented in the museum space until that moment. Social Museology wants to improve the lives of individuals belonging to a given society, especially those who are under the effects of social subalternation and exclusion.

Social Museums and Social Museology are phenomena that have a strong standing leg in Brazil. Their existence was made possible by a series of public policies during the government of Gilberto Gil as Brazil Culture Minister. He created legislations that laid the grounds for the creation of points of memory, localities in Brazil on which important historic events took place but were in risk of destruction by abandonment, because of the lack of information people had about them. (Neu, 2020, p. 118)

Some of these points of (collective) memory are now Social Museums. These museums were not created by scholars and their concepts and knowledge have been appropriated and divulged by universities, reflecting on the practices created. I have written an article about the subject and the following paragraphs are a reworked version of: “*Sociomuseology as a school of thought and Museologia Social as a practice. How can Museums help to transform the reality of groups under the effect of marginalization?*” published in August 2020.

⁹⁵ Translated by the author. Original: “O que dá sentido à museologia social não é o fato dela existir em sociedade, mas sim, os compromissos sociais que assume e com os quais se vincula. Toda museologia e todo museu existem em sociedade ou numa determinada sociedade, mas quando falamos em museu social e museologia social, estamos nos referindo a compromissos éticos, especialmente no que dizem respeito às suas dimensões científicas, políticas e poéticas; estamos afirmando, radicalmente, a diferença entre uma museologia de ancoragem conservadora, burguesa, neoliberal, capitalista e uma museologia de perspectiva libertária; estamos reconhecendo que durante muito tempo, pelo menos desde a primeira metade do século XIX até a primeira metade do século XX, predominou no mundo ocidental uma prática de memória, patrimônio e museu inteiramente comprometida com a defesa dos valores das aristocracias, das oligarquias, das classes e religiões dominantes e dominadoras. A museologia social, na perspectiva aqui apresentada, está comprometida com a redução das injustiças e desigualdades sociais; com o combate aos preconceitos; com a melhoria da qualidade de vida coletiva; com o fortalecimento da dignidade e da coesão social; com a utilização do poder da memória, do patrimônio e do museu a favor das comunidades populares, dos povos indígenas e quilombolas, dos movimentos sociais, incluindo aí, o movimento LGBT, o MST e outros. Seria possível dizer que toda museologia é social, se toda museologia, sem distinção, estivesse comprometida do ponto de vista teórico e prático com as questões aqui apresentadas; mas isso não acontece, não é verdade e sobre esse ponto não devemos e não podemos ter ingenuidade”.

Museologia Social as a practice emerged in South America roughly at the beginning of the new millennium. Social Museums engage with the specific needs of local communities. The discussion about the sociopolitical role of the Museum in a community has been vivid since the second half of the 20th century, and different authors like Cury, (2014), MINOM, (2010), Lacouture (1984) and Nascimento, et. al. (2012) have underlined it. The creation of such institutions can be considered a logical step pertaining to a general paradigm shift within Museology, resulting in more social engagement. (Pereira Leite, 2015).

Although Social Museums share properties with other Museology practices from around the world, like the North American Neighborhood Museums and the French Ecomuseology, they are unique in their emphasis on the responsibility towards the sustainable development of the territory they're in. Latin-America has been a pioneer to materialize these long thought ideas. Moreover, minorities in the West could also start to open their own Social Museums to fight the ongoing division and fear of contact between them and the rest of society. (Neu, 2020, p. 119, 120).

The institutions that practice Social Museology are usually created by minorities (or groups of interest and collectives) **with** their peers, for the purpose of coming to terms with one's own history and identity and to put a bright future in sight. While the traditional museum provides documentation of those for the dominant groups, there is no institution executing this task for the marginalized. This means the Social Museums are creations of people traditionally excluded from public representations. For example, the favela-habitants, people with a low income but a rich and diverse identity not yet embodied in Brazilian museums. (Neu, 2020, p. 121).

The need for an alternative narrative in Museums does not come from nowhere. It has its roots in the systematic silencing of all the social groups that are not the white elite. This traditional narrative in museums, a white-washed version of history, gets substituted in Social Museums by a version that is composed of different voices. The difference between the official discourse supported by history books and general knowledge, and the often not even registered alternative perspective on the same events is striking. As demonstrated by Halbwachs, (1967) in all his book *Das kollektive Gedächtnis*. It enriches discourses immensely to include collective memories in form of interviews and field studies into the collections and gives a much more tangible and human feel to the experience of visiting the museums in question. The main target of these institutions is to promote social, economic and especially political development in the territory.

Social Museums do research, create collections, document each part of the collection, take the necessary precautions when preparing exhibits, create exhibitions and protect the favelas cultural legacy against oblivion. In Social Museums the collection consists of material and immaterial (knowledge stored in interviews for

example) objects which always make a reference to their⁹⁶ experience. (Neu, 2020, p. 122).

The focus gets radically shifted from objects – normative and traditional Museology – to the people. To be able to act, the Social Museum has no need for dedicated buildings, nor does it need professional staff, or any financially valuable exhibits. In the Museu de Favela 97 (MUF) for example, the whole territory of three favelas, the people and their knowledge **are** the museums’ objects, the museums’ collection.

Social Museums never focus on profit but on transformation – on enabling people to effectively end structural injustice. The marginalized are exoticized – often even dehumanized – in official narratives offered in schools, universities, politics and museums. In Brazil, the general public associate’s favela-habitants with violence and danger. Moreover, Brazil is the country with the largest number of inhabitants with African forebears outside of Africa. The institutional racism, manifesting itself in the lack of representation in politics, television, universities, and exclusion from every elitist environment, has deeply felt consequences for their everyday life. (Neu, 2020, p. 123).

The motivation that brings these museums to life is to celebrate their cultural heritage, diversity and experience. They can present another perspective of their existence. Simply changing their self-image does not have an effect on their reality, so the museums engage in the task of education, thus offering a thorough overview of the social, economic and political situation. By finding the roots of injustice in archives, history books and communication with the elders of the community – through interviews for example – it becomes possible to develop solutions for deeply rooted problems. Through collaboration with schools, universities and other local institutions willing to participate, this process of enlightenment is widely reinforced.

In 2013, Alice Duarte wrote that the consolidation of the social function of the museum presupposes both the abandonment of its traditional isolation from entities such as schools, libraries or local associations, with which it is important to establish partnerships bearing in mind the interest of the populations, and the redefinition of its organization, which is no longer focused on collections but proceeds to focus on themes and stories that make sense to the respective populations.⁹⁸ (Duarte, 2013, p. 113).

The inhabitants are not supposed to pay entry-fees because they belong to the museum. As mentioned before, the community is part of the museum, sometimes

⁹⁶ The people living in the territory.

⁹⁷ Cf. <https://www.museudefavela.org/>

⁹⁸ Translated by the author. Original: “A consolidação da função social do museu pressupõe, quer o abandono do seu tradicional isolamento em relação a entidades como escolas, bibliotecas ou associações locais, com as quais importa estabelecer parcerias tendo em mente o interesse das populações, quer a redefinição da sua organização, que deixa de estar centrada nas coleções, para passar a focar-se em temáticas e histórias que façam sentido para as respetivas populações”.

even the collection, and therefore paying entrance would not make sense at all. Financially the museums will depend on sporadic support from the government and on regular ticket sales to outsiders. (Neu, 2020, p. 124-125).

Social Museums are a subject I passionately write about. Trying to keep it short I would affirm that Social Museums are a radical way of instrumentalizing the colonialist institution museum to a communities' needs, appropriating and transforming the functions of the museums to best fit their endeavors.

In my article the reader can find a chapter dedicated to how to realize this concept and two detailed case studies, the *Museu de Favela* and the *Museu da Maré*. There are also Indigenous Museums in Brazil, with its first example dating back to 1953.

In the case of Brazil, the creation of the Indigenous Museum in 1953, linked to the National Indigenous Foundation (FUNAI), on the initiative of anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro, is noteworthy. The first indigenous museum in the country was a unique experience in Museology, whose political and educational dimensions, involving indigenous participation in the actions of a traditional museum, were unprecedented in the Latin American museum context. Its thorough contact with society, through constant work with public schools and young people, was prominent in Brazilian culture and politics **long before the French New Museology [or Sociomuseology or Social Museology] was mentioned.**⁹⁹ (Soares, 2019. p. 213).

Today in Brazil there are numerous indigenous and quilombo museums. Social Museology functions as an instrument of combat against prejudice and marginalization of socially and politically oppressed groups, creating public policies defending human rights and dignity and the creation of arenas for debate. Social Museologies are insurgent.

⁹⁹ Translated by the author. Original: “No caso do Brasil, é destacável a criação do Museu do Índio, em 1953, ligado à Fundação Nacional do Índio – FUNAI, por iniciativa do antropólogo Darcy Ribeiro. O primeiro museu indígena do país configurou uma experiência singular de museologia, cujas dimensões políticas e educativas, envolvendo a participação indígena nas ações de um museu tradicional, se mostraram sem precedentes para o contexto museal latino-americano. Seu minucioso contato com a sociedade, por meio de um trabalho constante junto às escolas públicas e aos jovens, teve destaque na cultura e na política brasileiras **muito antes de que se falasse na Nova Museologia francesa.**”

2.
Sociomuseology
Central Ideas

The past chapters gave an impression of where Sociomuseology came from, which events we refer to as part of the history of our school of thought and which practices hold values that reflect our ideologies. The moment to try to define what exactly Sociomuseology is has arrived.

Why does a course in Sociomuseology only exist in one university worldwide? The term Sociomuseology is starting to be included in discussions in many different universities, so it is possible to notice that the interest is growing. How can I affirm that? I had the pleasure to host a workshop about Sociomuseology at the University of Würzburg in December 2020 for example, and in 2021 in November we had another online event called: Sociomuseology – Museums make social politics.¹⁰⁰ It was very well visited, one of the meetings with most visitors of the whole “*Making Museums Matter – Series of Online Discussions*”, as confirmed by Prof. Dr. Fackler. We had interactions with representants of Museology of diverse countries, such as Egypt, Brazil, Belgium, Germany and Portugal, just to mention some.

The term Sociomuseology is starting to be known about in the museum world. In an interview¹⁰¹ with Manuelina Duarte,¹⁰² she confirmed to me that in the beginning she was cautious about using the term Sociomuseology to define actions and practices that go in the direction pointed out in the previous chapters. Her book¹⁰³, which was published by the Universidade Lusófona, goes into more detail about the reasons why she defended the existence of a single Museology with waves

¹⁰⁰ Cf. <https://comcol.mini.icom.museum/comcol-germany/series-of-online-discussions-making-museums-matter/>

¹⁰¹ I had the pleasure to interview Manuelina Duarte on the 27th of March in 2021. I did not publish this interview anywhere.

¹⁰² Manuelina Maria Duarte Cândido has a degree in History from (UECE, 1997), Specialist in Museology (USP, 2000), Master in Archeology (USP, 2004), Doctor in Museology (Lusophone University of Humanities and Technologies, Portugal, 2012) and Post-Doctoral internship in Museology supervised by prof. François Mairesse, at Paris III University, Sorbonne Nouvelle (France). He coordinated the Educational Action Center of the Centro Cultural São Paulo, directed the Museum of Image and Sound of Ceará and the Depto. of Museum Processes at IBRAM. She is an Adjunct Professor at the Federal University of Goiás - Bachelor of Museology (licensed) and Postgraduate Program in Social Anthropology. Invited Professor of Museology at the University of Würzburg, Germany, at the University d'Artois, in France, and at the Lusophone University of Humanities and Technologies, Portugal. Professor and Head of Museology Service at the University of Liège (Belgium), where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses, supervises theses, dissertations and internships. As part of his duties, he coordinates the Embarcadère du Savoir, a network of science museums that belong to the University. He leads the Museology and Interdisciplinary Study and Research Group - GEMINTER. She has published books and articles, works as a teacher, researcher and consultant. He is a member of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and the World Archaeological Congress (WAC). He was a member of the National Cultural Incentive Commission (CNIC), Heritage bench, advising the Ministry of Culture (2017/2018 mandate). Participates in the ICOFOM-LAC Board from 2018-2023. Editor-in-Chief of Les Cahiers de Muséologie since October 2020 (O Escavador, 2022).

¹⁰³ Duarte Cândido, Manuelina Maria. Ondas do Pensamento Museológico Brasileiro. Lisboa: ULHT, 2003. (Cadernos de Sociomuseologia, 20). 259 p. <https://revistas.ulusofona.pt/index.php/cadernosociomuseologia/issue/view/37>

of renewal. Furthermore, in this same book, she was perhaps the first author to point out exactly the problem of the language barrier to a greater international projection of the immense advances and renewals made by Brazilian Museology. Now she sees the importance of using the term to define a place in the academia that unites people who research things in the same direction.

In Germany for example, participation is a frequently discussed subject in the classrooms of Museology at the Würzburg University. Co-Curation has been mentioned in a series of online-events I had the luck to participate in during the covid lockdown in 2020. There is an international movement to create more ethical correct, socially responsible museums around the world, offering representativity in museums for people that haven't had this privilege in the past, dealing with stolen collections, creating narratives that are inclusive and multivocal. The prospect of a school of thought especially created to reunite people that share a set of ideas and values, is not hard to grasp.

Sociomuseology is understood as a school of thought with a strong empirical production that can be checked in the *Cadernos de Sociomuseologia*¹⁰⁴. The linguistic barrier due to most of the production being written in Portuguese, and very rarely translated, is a problem which needs to be fixed in order for us to grow to a globally understood and respected school of thought.

Why do we call ourselves a school of thought? The cited events, practices, and representants of a new, socially and environmentally compromised Museology led to a process that produced the creation of Sociomuseology. A school of thought is a body of people, practices, and reflections that are integrated. It is constituted by various authors in various parts of the world, which report on various practices, present various reflections which demonstrate to have a lot in common. And some drink in the reflections of others, and vice versa. Experiences and thoughts constitute our school of thought.

The school of thought is a way of drawing attention to the fact that all these processes have extreme strong points of contact. They identify themselves as community-based, ideological, local, committed to development, focused on environmental issues. The practices are not new, the school of thought has been existing and producing knowledge for more than 30 years. What is new is the expansion to the non-Latin-language speaking world. Sociomuseology identifies actors, ideological processes within the museum, and practices on this subject.

There are Sociomuseological actions that you can find in almost every normative museum worldwide. Participation is the big word here. In most of these experiences, the actions that carry our values are found in the educative part of the museums. Punctual experiences where *the public* gets to be heard, to have their narrative carried out to the next batch of visitors. If Sociomuseology was treated as a subject in every museum course around the world, museums everywhere could

¹⁰⁴ <https://revistas.ulusofona.pt/index.php/cadernosociomuseologia/about>

benefit from this new perspective on the potentials and responsibilities of museums in their societies.

Actions, that hold our values, would start in the process of research, be present in the process of collection, of curation and exhibition. Museums can be so much more than what they are right now.

We will not accept to be reduced to a trend in Museology. Museums and Museal actions that go in line with Sociomuseology have been present since the second half of the 20th century. 70 years of empirical production and museal actions are a statement that can't be ignored.

Sociomuseology represents the effort of systemizing the theory behind the practices, which often happen without a theoretical academic framework but out of the local needs. The theoretical framework exists in areas as Pedagogy, Sociology, History and Anthropology and is then connected by the scholars to the practices. As mentioned before, public sociology and public archeology are role models for Sociomuseology. They, as we do, aim not only to understand the problems of a given community or area, but to actively participate and change something in there. These public sciences ultra-pass the cabinet of the scholar and they go to the field, not only to collect information, but to intervene.

In a conversation with Mário Moutinho, he told me that maybe it would have been easier to name our school of thought Public Museology instead of Sociomuseology. Sociomuseology works fine anyhow, it just is hard to pronounce for some people and it does not clearly show its connection to the logics behind the other public sciences cited.

Sociomuseology focuses on dialogical experiences, be it in creating museums, exhibitions, or actions or in the classroom. The experience of studying Sociomuseology in Lisbon is different. Having studied in universities in 3 countries, I can affirm that the dialogical dimension in Sociomuseology is present everywhere. The education happens in both directions – from the professors to the students and the other way around. Every question is welcome, and the discussions are the richest part of the classes.

The people who study Sociomuseology mostly have experience in museums and come to Lisbon to study after they heard that what they do goes in line with our principles. For that reason, almost every student brings experience to the classroom, talking about how their actions were planned and how they turn out, what went well, what did not, what should be done differently next time.

We do not reduce studying Museology to the museum institution and the things that happen inside of it. We discuss society, politics, public policies. We directly focus on problems and on how to instrumentalize museums to take care of those.

Judite Primo (2019, p. 7, 8) mentions some worldly concepts and problems we work on, and explains that we should discuss the problematic of the social, the cultural, and of the production of knowledge in postmodernity, seeking to bring up

the different, yet complementary, processes of culture massification, of the duality existing in some contexts of massification of educational and cultural processes, almost always alongside the coexistence of the critical positioning on the paradigm of contemporaneity, of the issues of trans nationalization of cultural goods, of the geopolitical issues of new migratory movements, of the growing and progressively widening gap between east and west, of the issues of preservation of cultural goods, almost always material, and the neglect regarding human life, which generates a dual context of coexistence in the same territory, to see, for example, the drama of refugees and the fact that they have no place in spaces that should be welcoming; of the treatment of local memories and the exclusion of the memory of those considered different (refugees, black people, women, children, foreigners...) and on territorial tensions (right to land, housing, demarcation of native peoples' lands...)¹⁰⁵

You might ask: what does Museology have to do with the demarcation of indigenous lands, for example? Well, a museum can serve as a valuable communicator. Let me invite you to a small excursion to the Maguta Museum, which I was able to report on after reading an article by José Ribamar Bessa Freire (2003) about indigenous people discovering the Museum for themselves.

The Maguta Museum is the first museum opened by indigenous people in Brazil. It was opened in 1991 by Ticuna leaders with the idea of protecting and claiming the culture of the Ticuna. The Indigenous people pertaining to the Ticuna are distributed among 100 tribes. They are about 28,000 people in Brazil, 7,500 people in Colombia and 5,500 in Peru. The language is spoken by all of them and is not related to any other language family. In Brazil 60% of the Ticuna are bilingual and can also speak Portuguese.

The collection was partly created by indigenous artists, partly "reclaimed" from other museums, partly recreated from photographs, videos and interview transcripts. In 1988, the indigenous people began to mobilize to open the museum because they were fighting for their land. Loggers, supported by the local non-indigenous population and the government, wanted to cut wood and make money.

The Brazilian government was about to take away the Ticuna's reserve. The reason for the majority society's approval? The Ticuna are not read as "true indigenous" but as *caboclos* that is, mestizos of white and indigenous. The local non-

¹⁰⁵ Translated by the author. Original “:Devemos discutir a problemática do social, do cultural e da produção de conhecimento na pós-modernidade, procurando evocar os diferentes, porém complementares, processos: de massificação das culturas; da dualidade existente em alguns contextos de massificação dos processos educativos e culturais, quase sempre a par com a coexistência do posicionamento crítico sobre o paradigma da contemporaneidade; das questões de transnacionalização de bens culturais; das problemáticas geopolíticas dos novos movimentos migratórios; do crescente e progressivo fosso entre oriente e ocidente; das questões preservacionistas dos bens culturais, quase sempre materiais e da negligência quanto a vida humana, que gera um contexto dual de coexistência num mesmo território, a ver por exemplo, o drama dos refugiados e do seu não lugar nos espaços que deveriam ser de acolhimento; do tratamento de memórias locais e da exclusão da memória dos considerados diferentes (refugiados, negros, mulheres, crianças, estrangeiros...); das tensões territoriais (direito a terra, a moradia, a demarcação de terras de povos originários...)

indigenous population doubts that they are indeed indigenous. After all, the people wear pants, play guitar, and speak Portuguese, and some even have smartphones. So these are normal Western people in the eye of mainstream society. They did not have enough contact to them to understand that they still cherish their identity, speak the language, feel connected to the land and need it to continue expressing themselves in a true way.

Politicians, loggers and large landowners have often opposed the museum since it opened. The exhibition style is more traditional, objects in exhibition windows made of glass. The exhibition aims to communicate and appreciate the richness and complexity of Ticuna culture.

What has been the result of all this? The museum has clearly had a "conflict-solving" effect. The loggers have lost the support of the local population. The Ticuna culture is reproduced, strengthened and respected. (Freire, 2003).

The traditional museums world, strongly represented by ICOM, did not have space for these kind of institutions until MINOM was created. And Sociomuseology follows in here, as a school of thought analyzing all sorts of museal practices that do have an impact on the communities in which they are situated. The theoretical models created in Sociomuseology stem from actual practices, they are not invented in the cabinet to be applied in the field. In Sociomuseology we mostly learn from experience and try to recreate them in different contexts, optimizing and reviewing our conducts constantly.

Sociomuseology institutions and practices aim on actively influencing and transforming the society, not just focusing on neutral education, but on stimulating people to be active subjects, that take organized action in their context, understand the roots of their problems, understand where their strength comes from, what their ancestors endured, and how their community came to be what it is in the present times. We focus on a more human and less neoliberalism perspective of educational work.

We are very aware that there has been movement in the whole field of Social Studies toward bigger responsibilities with the real world, with problems humanity is facing.

In recent years, the field of Heritage Studies has been increasingly prescient about sustainability issues, and this has opened up a wide range of debates about the impact of climate change, the ethics of tourism development, loss of biodiversity, the heritage of war and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, amongst others [Gegner and Ziino 2012; Cameron and Neilson 2014; Akagawa and Smith 2019]. (Brown, 2019, p. 3).

Sociomuseology does not consider itself a lone warrior in this panoramic picture. We know that:

Over the past decade or so, the field of Museum Studies has begun to look more closely at the relationship between museums and communities (Crooke 2007; Watson 2007; Golding and Modest 2013), with a number of scholars focusing specifically on the responsibility of museums towards social inclusion, participation and activism [GLAMM Report 2000; Sandell 2002; 2007; 2011; Black 2012; Janes and Sandell 2019]. (Brown, 2019, p. 6).

We are a school of thought that reunites people focusing on what museums can do in this context, that has been existing for +30 years and is sadly not accessible for more people due to its so often mentioned linguistic barrier. We do not want to oblige anyone to subordinate under Sociomuseology, this book is just an invitation to establish contact with the outside of Latin languages world.

Regarding the traditional museums, Sociomuseology understands the importance of their existence and respects them as ancestors of what the whole potential of museums can be. We, Sociomuseology, see the interwovenness of traditional Museology with other knowledge areas as a big legacy we got to maintain in our identity. From the perspective of history, we see that European museums of modernity were created as stage-scenarios that exhibited the classificatory works of modern sciences but survived through their interdisciplinary communication. Perhaps, this is one of our strongest legacies in Museology. Museums, this first site of museality, the privileged but not exclusive locus of museological intervention, continue to have a close link with the development of different branches of the Human and Social Sciences. Museology, as a disciplinary area, besides sharing knowledge with these areas of knowledge, also establishes interlocutions with other fields of knowledge and with scientific knowledge.¹⁰⁶ (Primo, 2019, p. 9,10).

The following list of topics describe what Sociomuseology tries to work for, in every museal practice. The intent is to point out the difference between us and the neoliberalism and normative. Not every action developed under our scope will hold all these characteristics, but we can affirm that the intent is there to realize as much as possible, always.

- We reproduce community ideologies, keeping the narrative as plurivocal as possible, creating our narratives *with* a group and not *for* a group.
- We practice democracy in all the museal actions and in this way our institutions and actions teach democracy by doing democracy.

¹⁰⁶ Translated by the author. Original: “Sob a ótica da história, verificamos que os museus europeus da modernidade, nasceram como palco-cenários que expunham os trabalhos classificatórios das ciências modernas, mas sobreviveram por meio da sua comunicação interdisciplinar. Talvez, esse seja uma das nossas mais fortes heranças na Museologia. Os museus, este primeiro local da musealidade, o locus privilegiado, mas não exclusivo de intervenção museológica, continuam a ter uma estreita vinculação com o desenvolvimento de diferentes ramos das Ciências Humanas e Sociais. A Museologia, como área disciplinar para além de partilhar saberes com estas áreas do conhecimento, também estabelece interlocções com outros ramos do saber e do conhecimento científico”.

- We work closely with the notions of sustainability and the respect for nature and the environment.
- We search for the roots of injustice in the past, to understand the present, to be able to organize and act for a better future. In this way we follow Paulo Freire's concept of transforming object people into subject people, capable of interfering with their context.
- We work on promoting inclusion and respect. We are in this fight for racial and gender equality.
- We work on reducing the distance between social groups which feed on fear, misunderstanding and miscommunication to create false reasons for unjust distributions of rights, wealth and power.
- We focus on the sociopolitical and economic development of the territory around our institutions.
- Our material collections are held with the intent to represent immaterial collections with a patrimonial value, which is decided by the community linked to the institution.
- We affirm ourselves as militant, political and alive institutions, people, and scholars.
- We do not understand the museum as separated from the people.
- We do not see the traditional triangle: museum – collection – visitors. We see museum – heritage – users. The people should use the museum, not visit it.
- Our educational work happens in a two-way-street model. What does that mean? We provide education and receive education from the museum users.
- We want our institutions to function as forums, in which diverse discussions are welcome. No one should be afraid to speak about their opinion, as long as they are open for a conversation about it.
- Following Waldisa Rússio's principles, we think of the educational intent of our institution right from the beginning. Even before creating a collection, our museums already know why they are collecting and what they will use the material and immaterial objects for.

This list of characteristics does not need to be in its entirety by museums or actions to be considered Sociomuseology. It is just a didactic way of communicating what Sociomuseology stands for and can serve as a practical and condensed description of what we work for. Knowing that, the following questions stated by Chagas (2003, p. 64) make sense: Thus, from our perspective, it is fundamental to ask some basic questions. What is being researched? When is research done? Who is researching? (...) It is not about the formerly classical conception of musealization that removes the object from its function, from its previous existence, and makes it sacred as a museum piece. Rather, we start from the idea, articulated by Mario Chagas, of 'museum imagination', referring to the "singular and effective capacity of

determined subjects to articulate in (three-dimensional) space the poetic narrative of things.¹⁰⁷ (Biléssimo, 2019, p. 24).

Sociomuseology works to clarify the relations between these museums and museal actions that fit into our canon. We look at their history of emergence, searching for similarities and differences. Sociomuseology tries to understand the contexts, the conditions in which it could intervene and give people instruments, capabilities, to act in their current situation.

¹⁰⁷ Translated by the author. Original: “Assim, sob nossa perspectiva, é fundamental realizar alguns questionamento básicos. O que se pesquisa? Quando se pesquisa? Quem pesquisa? ... Não se trata da concepção antes clássica de musealização que retira o objeto de sua função, de sua existência anterior, e o sacraliza enquanto peça de museu. Partimos, antes, da ideia, articulada por Mario Chagas, de ‘imaginação museal’, referindo-se à ‘capacidade singular e efetiva de determinados sujeitos articularem no espaço (tridimensional) a narrativa poética das coisas.’(Chagas, 2003, p. 64)”.

3.

Are

Sociomuseology and
Social Museology
synonyms?

There is a very present and heated discussion inside of Sociomuseology as Social Museology is used as a synonym to Sociomuseology by very influential representatives of our school of thought – especially in Brazil. Mario Chagas and Inês Gouveia go as far as confirming that separating the theory from the praxis would be a colonialist action. This argument is reasonable and the unease very understandable, especially considering that, if Sociomuseology's representants would affirm that the practical part is located in South America and the theoretical part in Europe. I personally would think that is colonialist too.

To counterargument here I would like to bring to light that Sociomuseology does not, in any way, want to appropriate the knowledge and ideas of South American practices and sell them as theirs, but to function as a bridge between the concept of Social Museology and the international University field.

There are Social Museology courses in Brazil. In many universities, at least at the Universidade Federal de Goiás (UFG), Universidade de São Paulo (USP), Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UNIRI), Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) and Universidade de Brasília (UNB), Museologia Social is obligatory content in diverse subjects, being therefore incontournable when studying Museology. Also, outside of the university realm, workshops of a week's duration¹⁰⁸ and distance learning courses¹⁰⁹ take place. On top of that there are networks created to support Social Museums in different cities or states, as for example the “Rede de Museologia Social do Rio de Janeiro”¹¹⁰, and the “Rede São Paulo de Memória e Museologia Social”¹¹¹.

Social Museology is therefore not a practice, but a concept that describes a movement which encompasses practices, thoughts, and finally public policies on a national and international level.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ <https://centrodepesquisaeformacao.sescsp.org.br/atividade/uma-introducao-a-museologia-social>

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.educaedu-brasil.com/curso-online-de-museologia-social--conceitos-tecnicas-e-praticas-cursos-33745.html>

<https://www.portaleducacao.com.br/curso-online-pedagogia-museologia-social-conceitos-tecnicas-e-praticas/p>

¹¹⁰ Cf. <http://rededemuseologiasocialdorj.blogspot.com/>

¹¹¹ Cf. <https://redespemuseologiasocial.wordpress.com/>

¹¹² Museologia Social has influenced the UNESCO 2015 Declaration, for instance. Interestingly the attention that UNESCO directed towards the social potential of museums seems to have its motivation in a request formulated by Brazil's institution for museums (IBRAM). In the period from 2003 to 2010, there were many activities performed by IBRAM that were closely related to Museologia Social. Midst these processes the IBRAM team noticed a gap in UNESCO's documents that deals specifically with issues relating to the protection and promotion of museums and collections and, in particular, their role in society.

Now we know that there are Brazilian¹¹³ universities that – empirically – reflect on Social Museology. What differs is that the course of Sociomuseology in Lisbon, being the only of its kind forming Masters and Doctors in Sociomuseology, is that it focuses its efforts on analyzing practices of a Museology that is deeply compromised its social function – striving towards development and transformation of reality to the better. We discuss the actions of the museum (research, collection, preservation, communication, exhibition) in the perspective of practices that focus not on the objects but on the people and the social, political and economic development of the community the museum stands in.

The practices Sociomuseology reflects on are all those that hold in its stem the principles of dialogue, democracy, and human rights. Therefore, Sociomuseology and Social Museology are two sides of a same coin. Social Museums would be the most radical example of Sociomuseologies principles materialized. Sociomuseology does use literature from Brazilian universities and Mário Moutinho always affirms in the classroom: without the Brazilian (and South American) Social Museology, Sociomuseology would not exist. Most of the students and teachers at ULHT, in Lisbon, where it is taught, are Brazilian. That is a statement. What makes the post-graduation course in Sociomuseology in Lisbon so significant is – that there (or here) we focus exclusively on dialogical museal practices, leaving behind the traditional discussions of Museology that focus on objects.

At this point it is of imminent importance to repeat: Social Museology cannot be reduced to the description of a practice – it addresses a movement that started in Brazil and now is being practiced and incorporated to public policies in a wide area of South American countries. It is always accompanied by a mission, the intention to change local reality to the better and therefore comprehends a lot of thought and actions planned towards a goal. It emerges from the consciousness about injustices and assumes a clear position working towards socio-political and economic development in the area it is based in. Social Museology can – by no means – be reduced to a technical approach to doing museums.

The fact that scholars use Sociomuseology and Social Museology as synonyms is not bad, nor good. It just is like that. Sociomuseology and Social Museology and its representatives work towards the same goal – instrumentalizing the museum for social change, protecting the people, nature, cultures and non-western knowledge.

¹¹³ And other universities in South America with high probability – I just do not have contacts there which I could ask to complement this research.

Conclusion

Let's get straight to the point and answer the questions proposed in the introduction:

1. Is Sociomuseology effectively still bound to the Portuguese-Spanish-French speaking bubble? Or is it already spreading?

We have seen that Sociomuseological (which officially subordinate to Sociomuseology and were written at the ULHT university in Lisbon) reflections take part almost exclusively in Portuguese. Only two doctoral theses were written in Spanish and focused on Cuba. All the other empirical productions, analyzed by Angelo Biléssimo, were written in Portuguese.

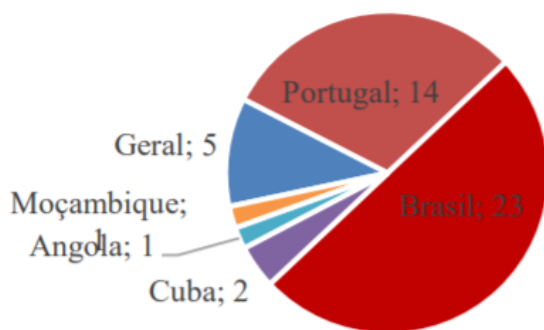


Diagram 1: Geographical scope of topics dealt with in the PHDs produced at ULHT until 2019

The diagram shows the geographic topics dealt with in the PHDs produced at ULHT until 2020. According to Biléssimo¹¹⁴:

Only Cuba, outside Lusophone countries, was present among the themes, with two occurrences, in 2018 and 2019. These works, developed largely concomitantly, do to us not seem to point to a trend, but rather to respond to specific contingencies. They point, on the other hand, to the possibility of expanding the geographical spectrum

¹¹⁴ Adapted from Biléssimo, A. (2019). Construindo a Sociomuseologia: uma análise das teses defendidas no doutoramento em Museologia da ULHT (2008-2020). Cadernos de Sociomuseologia, 21-42.

of the research developed, and to the vocation of internationalization that marks the program.¹¹⁵ (Biléssimo, 2019, p.35)

Biléssimo's words demonstrate the openness of ULHT to the internationalization of Sociomuseologies' reflection, but also that until now they are almost entirely bound to the lusophonic countries.

2. Is it possible to call all this movement in Museology – characterized by transferring the focus of museums from objects to the people, human rights, social justice, equality, etc. – a Sociomuseological turn in Museology, even if museum-people are still not aware that they are doing Sociomuseology in some of the cases?

There is a noticeable movement of inclusive Museology across the world.

Museum staff continue to form partnerships, and through them, to consciously attempt to unlearn privilege, by working critically back through their beliefs, prejudices and assumptions, and understanding how they arose and became naturalized. (Lynch, 2020, p. 5, 6)

But we are far from we want to get, because normative museums continue affirming their openness to negotiation whilst continuing to define the rules of engagement, avoiding conflict and the active agency of participants to express it. (Lynch, 2020, p. 6) The fear of positioning the museum in a political way is frequently mentioned in German Museology, for instance. Avoiding conflict by producing narratives that try to be as neutral as possible is, for us a political act of silencing and compliance. Robin Boast formulates: “No matter how much museum studies have argued for a pluralistic approach to interpretation and presentation, the intellectual control has largely remained in the hands of the museum” [Boast 2011, 58]. And “Museums of the 21st century must confront this deeper neocolonial legacy... To do this, however, requires the museum to learn to let go ... for the benefit and use of communities and agenda far beyond its knowledge and control. [Boast 2011, 67]”. (Lynch, 2020, p. 6)

The exercise to let go of authoritarian power and start understanding the museum as an instrument of social change is yet to be seen in most of the normative

¹¹⁵ Translated by the Author. Original: “Apenas Cuba, fora da lusofonia, teve presença entre os temas, com duas ocorrências, em 2018 e 2019. Estes trabalhos, desenvolvidos em grande parte concomitantemente, não nos parecem apontar uma tendência, mas sim responder a contingências específicas. Apontam, por outro lado, para a possibilidade de ampliação do espectro geográfico das investigações desenvolvidas, e para a vocação de internacionalização que marca o programa”.

museums. Sociomuseology has been active in research and the creation of empirical knowledge regarding these themes for such a long time. Hence the importance to ultra-pass the linguistical barriers.

3. What is the relation between the terms Ecomuseology, Social Museology and New Museology?

Having taken a deeper look at the literature produced in an effort to clarify the definition of Sociomuseology, Social Museology, New Museology, and Ecomuseology, one can affirm that there is never absolute consensus about each. Still, I feel comfortable tracing parallels between Ecomuseology and Social Museology and between New Museology and Sociomuseology. I understand the two first concepts as descriptions of museal processes (which are accompanied by empirical reflections) and the third and fourth as schools in Museology.

New Museology is a perspective very intimately tied to Ecomuseology – and therefore to participation, inclusion, and decentralization. In Sociomuseology, we can observe similar ties to Social Museology. That does not mean that New Museology focuses exclusively on Ecomuseums, not at all. New Museology has considered the many different approaches to communitary museum making. In this sense Sociomuseology does not limit its field of study to the analysis of Social Museology practices. The fields of study of New Museology and Sociomuseology are broader, and they overlap.

As Ecomuseology and Social Museology play a significant role in the history of a more socially focused museum, I deem it interesting to define some profound differences between them.

Starting with Ecomuseology: it depends on professional Museum-People, which can guide a museal institution to open to the surrounding community in a deeper way or signify the impulse to open a museum intending to strengthen the sense of belonging.

Social Museology is understood as the instrumentalization of the museum institution towards the development and transformation of realities marked by injustice. Social Museums work towards a better world and are primarily opened by social groups under effects of marginalization.

We can analyze time frame, geographical location and style in both of the schools, New Museology and Sociomuseology. New Museology has its *official* roots in France, while Social Museology was made possible by public policies in South America and has been institutionalized in the form of a school of thought and university subject in Portugal.

The timeframe of New Museology concentrates in the 70s and 80s, where it was, actually, new and revolutionary, while Sociomuseology is a more recent

approach that has its roots in New Museology and has its moment of origin in the 90s. The discussion about the difference between Social Museology and Sociomuseology is vivid in present times, as the terms have been used as synonyms many times.

The school of thought of Sociomuseology reflects on the fluidity of concepts positively preferring adaptable concepts to static, limiting ways of thought, thus the answer to this discussion will never be the same for every representative of Sociomuseology. Some see Social Museology and Sociomuseology as synonyms. Some see Sociomuseology as a study that focuses on practices as Social Museology, Ecomuseology, Community Museology, and just about every museal experience that occurs in close contact with the community and focuses on its well-being. I would even affirm that Sociomuseology focuses on any action involving identity, heritage, and social and political development.

After my personal experience as a Master-Student at ULHT, I would affirm that Sociomuseology reunites people interested in dialoguing about Museology, parting on three bases: dialogue, participation, and the focus on the community. Sociomuseology directs its attention towards common aspects between museal practices with a solid social transformation interest and the consequences that can be evaluated in the contexts of these museal processes.

My perspective on Sociomuseology is a consequence of two years of studying Sociomuseology at the ULHT in Lisbon. In my eyes Sociomuseology represents a fundamental rupture with the notion of a technical Museology, limited to collection, research, conservation, restoration, exhibition of material objects. It subordinates itself under the umbrella of Social Sciences, instead of the mentioned technical approach. Sociomuseology does not, in any form, have a hegemonic pretension about Social Museology and the other forms of dialogical community focused museum work. We consider that everyone interested should think about and discuss new, insurgent, social museologies. We acknowledge the empirical production about new museologies around the world, with a strong representation in England, in New Castle, for example, where museum practices with a social focus are analyzed and theorized as activist museologies.

Sociomuseology, because it has a solid relationship to South America and especially Brazil, always includes a decolonial perspective. We search for the roots of injustice that created the demand for an insurgent Museology before focusing on the museum institution. I welcome the prospect of international exchange about museal practices and its theories that focus on their role in building a tolerant, self-conscious (in the sense of having conscience of one's own identity and ancestors and prospects for the future), and equal society for all.

All four concepts treated are a reflection of museological tendencies that adapt to the challenges imposed on humanity at the end of the second and the beginning of the third millennium. It is up to the museologists to get to know these possibilities in order to expand in their field of action to an effective cultural

transformation that favors a more promising environment for the development of social justice in society.

Sociomuseology welcomes every interested person to come to Lisbon and have contact with us. For now, learning Portuguese might be a good idea. Hopefully we will be represented better internationally in a near future.

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About the Author

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Maria Magdalena Neu strives to conduct a comprehensive analysis of Museology, delving into insights drawn from Brazilian, German, and Portuguese museum studies. These diverse perspectives have intricately molded her understanding of the vast potential inherent in museal institutions. Splitting her life between Brazil and Europe, she not only carries the imprints of sociopolitical divergences but also the sharp disparities prevalent within university contexts. These divergent educational experiences, especially in relation to museum studies, have distinctly shaped her perspective.

A propos de l'auteur

Maria Magdalena Neu s'efforce de mener une analyse étendue de la muséologie, en explorant les idées développées en ce domaine au Brésil, au Portugal et en Allemagne. Sa compréhension de l'énorme potentiel des institutions muséales est étroitement liée au croisement de ces diverses approches. Partageant sa vie entre le Brésil et l'Europe, cette chercheuse se fait l'écho des divergences sociopolitiques entre ces pays, mais aussi des fortes disparités qui prévalent dans les contextes universitaires. Ces expériences de formation discordantes, notamment en ce qui concerne les études muséales, ont clairement façonné ses perspectives.



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