

## 2

# Sociomuseology's theoretical frames of reference

---

Mário C. Moutinho | Judite Primo

The text aims to call attention to a series of documents that may constitute a theoretical frame of reference for Sociomuseology. As part of the whole summarizing process, this text is reductive, since it will always be the possible to call on other documents, other authors and other readings.

The paper reviews some of the events and perspectives that may be said to characterize Museology in the post-Second World War era, and which in some way may help clarify the bases of Sociomuseology. There is, however, an awareness that, as with all summaries, there is always the danger of exclusion or exaggeration.

The quotes are little more than simple indicative interpretations covering only some aspects of the issues under consideration. More importantly, it should be recognized that this text is the result of the meaning we attribute to the work we do in our Department of Museology, our deep links with MINOM-ICOM and our in-depth interaction with universities and museologists in Brazil.

For a long time, the concept of museology and the material nature of Museums was relatively consensual. Museology was a technique to work in museums which included various skills applied to the selection, conservation and restoration of museum objects that made up their collections. The Museum was a rather lavish building where collections of objects were kept, whose purpose was to be displayed in different rooms, corridors, stairwells and gardens. Objects were possessed of some form of symbolic or actual value, almost always signifying rarity, beauty or authenticity.

These Museums and this Museology are already sufficiently described, and we can't exclude of course their relevance as an essential element in the construction of memory/memories, by preserving snapshots of different social realities, in the construction of local, national and transnational identities. All the Louvres, British Museums and Hermitages, large and small, from every city and country, are undoubtedly there to demonstrate their place in everyday life and in the imagination of generations.

Philosophers, historians, anthropologists and sociologists have poured over these Museums and this Museology, and Paul Valéry's insight into museums, as much as Proust's, reinterpreted through the lens of Theodor Adorno's essential text, will always take us back to a dimension of a world outside the real world, where each object loses its life in favour of its new status as a museum object.

The German word, 'museal', has unpleasant overtones. It describes objects to which the observer no longer has a vital relationship, and which are in the process of dying. They owe their preservation more to historical respect than to the needs of the present. Museum and mausoleum are connected by more than phonetic association. Museums are like the family sepulchres of works of art. They testify to the neutralization of culture. (Theodor, 1983, p.173).

In some ways, it is an institutional category, which on the one hand would have supported itself, oblivious to the social and historical contexts in which it found itself, but on the other hand would have comforted or even served the dominant ideology of each era.

These Museums are an inevitable reality and were certainly the basis for the first definition of Museum drawn up by ICOM in 1946. Thus, the very naming of museums refers to collections of knowledge isolated from one another: Science Museums, Museums of Art and Applied Arts, Museums of Natural History, Museums of History of Science and Technology, Museums of Archaeology and History and Historical Sites, Museums of Ethnography (including folk art and culture), Zoological Gardens, Botanical Gardens, National Parks and Forests and Nature Reserves and Trailside Museums. More explicitly, ICOM's Constitution stated that:

The word 'museums' includes all collections open to the public, of artistic, technical, scientific, historical or archaeological material, including zoos and botanical gardens, but excluding libraries, except in so far as they maintain permanent exhibition rooms. (*ICOM Constitution, 1946*).

Yet, at the same time, in parallel with institutional museology, we must acknowledge many authors who pursued another role for museums and another rationality, more in line with the environment of which they were a part. Alma Wittlin, for example, argued that:

Museums are man-made institutions in the service of men; they are not ends in themselves. (...) What can museums do with regard to the unmet needs of people? Museums are not islands in space; they have to be considered in the context of life outside their walls. This truism has become a verity under present conditions of accelerated change and at a time when every institution has to take measure of itself as a means to legitimate survival. Exposure is not enough. One of our blind spots, in all manners of educational environments, is the assumption that the exposure of people to experiences necessarily results in learning and stimulation. (...) A museum, every single museum hall, every individual exhibit is a man-made environ-

ment; it is not a natural phenomenon resisting change; it can be changed (Wittlin, 1970, pp. 201-204).

In fact, it was said that museums should take into account the milieu of which they were a part, and that they should seek out solutions for the 'unmet needs of people'. They should not, therefore, simply be institutions turned in on themselves.

And it is precisely these simple directions which at that time were to be found in the growing self-criticism apparent in different academic fields. How could we fail to associate this questioning and reflection with John Dewey (1859-1952) or Paulo Freire (1921-1997) when they sought new ways to understand and make education itself.

By being directly or indirectly related to the different dimensions of Museology, many other authors should be taken into consideration, several of whom are referred to, in a 2-volumes fundamental work<sup>1</sup> organised by MNES, *Vagues: une anthologie de la nouvelle muséologie*. Everything happens as if a new awareness of the challenges of Western society was being built on the rubble of the Second World War. A new awareness of social responsibility that would cover different areas of knowledge. And, naturally, Museology would not remain impervious to this process.

### Stage One: Ecomuseology and the Santiago de Chile Declaration 1972

It is within this process that we can understand the sense of the Santiago de Chile Round Table, convened on the initiative of UNESCO by ICOM. The Declaration drawn up, which became a key document for understanding the new directions in museology, stated:

That 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 moulding the consciousness of the communities it serves, through which it can stimulate those communities to 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. (...)

That this approach does not deny the value of existing museums, nor does it imply abandoning the principles 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; that in some cases, the proposed change may be introduced

---

<sup>1</sup> de Bary, M.O, Desvallées, A., Wasserman, R., (1992-1994) *Vagues: une anthologie de la nouvelle muséologie*, 2 vols, Éd. W, Savigny-le-Temple : M.N.E.S. (Muséologie Nouvelle et Expérimentation Sociale).

gradually or on an experimental basis; in others, it may provide the basic orientation. (...)

That the transformation in museological activities calls for a gradual change in the outlook of curators and administrators and in the institutional structures for which they are responsible; that, in addition, the integrated museum requires the permanent or temporary assistance of experts from various disciplines, including the social sciences.<sup>2</sup>

This understanding, linked to the process begun in the period that followed “May 1968 movement” and resulted in the creation of numerous local museums recognised as **ecomuseums**. Somehow these initiatives were recognised in what George Henri Rivière characterised in his *Evolutive Definition of Eco-Museum*.

An ecomuseum is an instrument conceived, fashioned and operated jointly by a public authority and a 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 that 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<sup>3</sup>

Since then, ecomuseums have become a massive phenomenon spread across the five continents, revealing an extraordinary ability to adapt to the different social and political environments in which they find themselves. This process is analysed in detail by Peter Davis (Davis, 2011).

Unsurprisingly, these institutions have their own dynamics, determined by numerous factors, which means that over the years they have been transformed, renewed, reoriented or even institutionalised. The nature of these processes, in fact, bears witness to their relationship with the environment which is also subject to broader contexts.

At the ICOM General Conference in 2016, Ecomuseology occupied a significant place, not because it affirmed models, but because it underlined the importance of understanding the various paths that ecomuseums had taken in different parts of the world over the years<sup>4</sup>.

For example, it is worth noting that in a 2015 document from Heritage Saskatchewan and the Museums Association of Saskatchewan, in which Eco-

---

<sup>2</sup> Resolutions adopted by the round table of Santiago (Chile) (1973). The Role of museums in today's Latin America, *Museum*, 3 ( XXV), 193. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001273/127362eo.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Rivière, G. H., (1985) The ecomuseum—an evolutive definition, *Museum International*, ICOM, Volume 37, Issue 4, pp 182–183

<sup>4</sup> Forum Ecomuseums 24<sup>th</sup> General Conference Milan-Icom 2016.

museology is defined from contemporary practices, there is continuity in the understanding of the role of Ecomuseums.

First, as community museums, ecomuseums are products of their communities, so they need to be initiated, characterized, and managed by local residents. Their geographic scope, governance structure and other features are not determined or overseen by an outside agency, and whatever ends they decide to pursue, their activities and outcomes hinge on active community engagement. Second, ecomuseums put equal emphasis on natural and cultural assets, including local industries. This separates them from recreational or wilderness parks, which focus mostly on nature, and from heritage districts, which focus mainly on the built environment. Third, in keeping with their role as a museum, ecomuseums aim to preserve and interpret heritage assets, but they also work to apply this knowledge to address local development issues, with a focus on sustainability. To that end, ecomuseums provide a valuable conduit between the heritage community, the private sector, and elected officials. Fourth, the focus of an ecomuseum goes beyond objects, buildings, wildlife, and other tangible assets to include music, ceremonies, traditions, and other aspects of intangible heritage. This means that ecomuseums can be defined and mapped based on their tangible features, but they can also encourage more holistic approaches to learning and cultural adaptation. Finally, the fact that all of the assets associated with an ecomuseum continue to 'live' where they exist means that the organization itself is light-weight and flexible, with little need for capital investment. In effect, an ecomuseum emerges from, and adds to, the fabric of a community through what it does and who gets involved, using the unique features and qualities of a place as context.<sup>5</sup>

## Stage Two: New Museology and the Declaration of Quebec

The New Museology certainly accounts for the transformations that we have mentioned in museology in general, within whose framework Ecomuseology took shape. The term was consolidated at the 1st International Workshop - Ecomuseums/New Museology Workshop in Quebec (Canada) in 1984. This meeting marked a point of great significance in museology for different reasons.

On the one hand, the recognition that the New Museology was not only the movement of ecomuseums, but instead manifested itself in different ways, such as Neighbourhood Museums in the USA, Identity Museums in some African countries, local museums in Portugal and in Spain, Casas del Museo in Mexico, or popular exhibitions in Sweden (Riksstälningar). In every instance, these were institutions or initiatives that based their activity on local communities, in search of what Alma Wittlin termed 'unmet needs': affirmation of identity, local development, democratisation of museum practices.

This process of enlarging the meaning of New Museology was not done in a

---

<sup>5</sup> A report prepared jointly by Heritage Saskatchewan and Museums Association of Saskatchewan, February 2015.

simple way; quite the contrary, it was the cause of deep discussions that resulted in the Declaration of Quebec, which stressed that

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.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, this meeting was the origin of the International Movement for a New Museology<sup>7</sup>, an organization which would be recognized by ICOM two years later. This was perhaps how the most innovative idea took shape, the recognition of the right to diversity, removed from Adorno's idea of the 'mausoleum museum'.

### Stage three: Sociomuseology

Sociomuseology is not a new term for the new museology. It should instead be understood as a multidisciplinary approach to doing and thinking about museology, as a resource for the sustainable development of mankind, based on the equality of opportunities and social and economic inclusion, grounded on the interdisciplinary inclusion of other areas of knowledge.

This museology was recognized in the final document of the XV MINOM International Conference, which took place in Rio de Janeiro in 2013, in defence of a museology aiming at the:

Breaking down of power hierarchies, to enable the emergence of new protagonists with their own memories;

Understanding community museums as political, poetic and pedagogical processes in permanent construction and linked to very specific world-views;

---

<sup>6</sup> Declaration of Quebec – Basic Principles of a New Museology 1984 Special edition 22nd ICOM General Conference 2010, *Sociomuseology IV, Cadernos de Sociomuseologia*, 38, <http://revistas.ululsofona.pt/index.php/cadernosociomuseologia/issue/view/153>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.minom-icom.net>

All these organizations give and take, make and unmake their memories, feelings, ideas, dreams, anxieties, tensions, fears and live their own reality, without asking permission from the established authorities;

Recognizing that all these museums and museological processes have their own ways of ‘musealizing’, appropriating and making use of diverse knowledge in the way that suits them.<sup>8</sup>

In this sense, Sociomuseology can be situated within the social sciences, establishing paths to understanding the various contemporary museological practices, at the same time as being an agent of museological activity. In Brazil, the terms Sociomuseology and Social Museology are used interchangeably. However, we believe it is more accurate to recognize social museology as the practice of community-inspired museology, in its different ways. As for Sociomuseology, it is about recognizing a new school of thought, which aims to clarify and, to a certain extent, enhance the new museological practices at the service of development. As a basis for reflection, at the XII International Conference of MINOM held at the Universidade Lusófona in Lisbon, we put forward a document in which we assessed the current status of a possible, but above all necessary, “evolving” definition of Sociomuseology.

Sociomuseology expresses a considerable amount of the effort made to suit museological facilities to the conditions of contemporary society.

The process of opening the museum, as well as its organic relation with the social context that infuses it with life, has resulted in the need to structure and clarify the relations, notions and concepts that may define this process.

Sociomuseology is thus a scientific field of teaching, research and performance which emphasizes the articulation of museology with the areas of knowledge covered by Human Sciences, Development Studies, Services Science, and Urban and Rural Planning.

The multidisciplinary approach of Sociomuseology aims to strengthen the acknowledgement of museology as a resource for the sustainable development of Humanity, based on equal opportunities as well as social and economic inclusion.

Sociomuseology bases its social intervention on mankind’s cultural and natural heritage, both tangible and intangible.<sup>9</sup>

Like any disciplinary area (we were far removed from the old discussion about ascertaining whether museology is a science), Sociomuseology has a growing body of theory, with a multifaceted field of action, emerging from social practices which recognize a set of shared values. These values are very clear within the conceptual framework of the “National Museums Policy” instituted in Brazil by Minister Gilberto Gil (2004-2017). This lay at the root of the trans-

---

<sup>8</sup> *Final Declaration, XV International Conference of MINOM, Rio de Janeiro 2013*

<sup>9</sup> Moutinho, .... (2009). Evolving definition of sociomuseology: proposal for reflection. *Cadernos de sociomuseologia*, 28(28). <<http://revistas.ulusofona.pt/index.php/cadernosociomuseologia/article/view/510>>. accessed: 20/01/2017. 2018.

formation of the Brazilian museological outlook, once open to recognizing the relationship between museology and social responsibility. Once understood as a disciplinary area, it is important to recognize the need to systematize its assumptions, clarify methodologies, and act towards the establishment of a consistent theoretical body.

In this context, we must situate the international and contemporary acknowledgment of this process, which has led to the recently approved 'Recommendation concerning the protection and promotion of museums and collections, their diversity and their role in society' adopted by the UNESCO General Conference at its 38th Session Paris, 17 November 2015. In particular, the following points should be noted:

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. 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<sup>10</sup>.

This important document, conceived in 2010 in the Department of Museological Processes at the Brazilian Museums Institute (IBRAM) by its specific coordination devoted to Education and Social Museology, had in fact identified the lack of a document at international level that recognized the principles of renewed contemporary museology.

Once the process was initiated, after a long procedure, with the participation of over 160 experts from at least 70 Member States, the recommendation was approved.

Mário Chagas, coordinator of the Department of Museological Processes and one of the main inspirations of the National Museums Policy, referred to the

---

<sup>10</sup> [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=49357&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=49357&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

Recommendation, and stressed its importance for the whole international museum community:

The recommendation discusses themes that are central to the activity of an increasing number of museums on every continent. These are recognized as drivers of development, social inclusion, gender equality and respect for diversity, taking on board the principles and values already signed up to in the Declaration of Santiago de Chile in 1972, that the recommendation itself invokes in its own right. This is a document that mobilizes, guides, recommends and encourages action. Therefore, although in some places it is possible to identify an undisguised desire to producing standards and rules in the final draft of the Recommendation, this UNESCO recommendation represents essential guidelines to guarantee, expand and subsidize new reflections and practices in Social Museology and Sociomuseology that express the challenges of the contemporary world.<sup>11</sup>

We couldn't fail to mention a possible new phase that could be called *Alter-museology*, as announced by Pierre Mayrand in his *Manifesto* presented in Setubal, 27 October 2007.

Today, globalization obliges museologists to combine their energy, in peoples and organizations that fight for a transformation in museums on the Forum – Agora – Citizenship. It also leads to a didactic and dialectic attitude, capable of promoting dialogue among peoples in a gesture of cooperation, resistance, liberation and solidarity with the World Social Forum (Mayrand, 2007, n/p).

Maybe this is the dimension that museology should assume in a world where challenges are increasingly global, and their solution lacks a comprehensive understanding, but can express local realities and contexts.

### **Sociomuseology in the context of the social sciences**

As Sociomuseology is increasingly consolidating its practice, and constructing its theoretical boundaries and its place in the field of social sciences, it is also important to look at other identical processes in areas of knowledge (or science) that in recent years have opened up to society's challenges, not only to understand their meaning, but also to claim an active place in their possible direction.

---

<sup>11</sup> Brief considerations about the genealogy and the meaning of the *Recommendation on the protection and promotion of museums and collections, of their diversity and role in society Paris, 20 November 2015*, Alessandra Gama, Alexandre Gomes, Ana Valdés, Claudia Storino, Inês Gouveia, João Paulo Vieira, Judite Primo, Juliana Siqueira, Luisa Calixto, Luzia Gomes, Marcelle Pereira, Marcelo Murta, Mario Chagas, Mario Moutinho, Mirela Araujo, Nathália Lardosa, Pedro Leite, Sarah Braga, Simone Flores, Vania Brayner, *Cadernos de Sociomuseologia*, 10, pp. 163-180

[http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=49357&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=49357&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

This is the case, among others, of Public Sociology (Burawoy, 2005), or Public Archaeology (Funari & Robrahn-González, 2008).

Public Sociology seeks to bring sociology into a dialogue with the audience beyond academia, an open dialogue, in which both sides deepen their understanding of public issues. It is the opposite of Professional Sociology – a scientific sociology created by and for sociologists - inspired by public sociology, but, also, without which public sociology would not exist. The relationship between professional and public sociology is thus the fruit of an “antagonistic interdependency” (Burawoy, 2005).

For its part, Sociomuseology is recognized as a significant part of the effort to adapt museological structures to contemporary society, and, moreover, to build a dialogue beyond the museological profession, also made by and for museologists.

The significant difference arises from the fact that over time museological theory has been an area of knowledge essentially focused on the museum institution, paying little attention to the social environment that characterized its context and consequently its practice. This has almost always been reduced to the practice of the museum institution, with its increasingly complex audience, the central role of the material heritage of its communication capabilities and the modernization of institutions.<sup>12</sup>

Their openness to the social environment which gives them life is their current direction.

This explains to some degree what Burawoy thinks of the sources of Public Sociology, and may legitimately invoke the work of Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Gramsci, as well as of contemporaries Bourdieu, Touraine, Habermas, Beauvoir, Freire, Hooks and Fanon.

The starting point for Sociomuseology seems to be rather distant in time. But if we consider its epistemological roots, it is also difficult to sustain Sociomuseology without reclaiming the same sources and the same schools too. This is most evident when it comes to Freire, Fanon, Gramsci and Habermas or even the ‘misguided’ vision of Foucault on museology. In other cases, it is also hard to think of Sociomuseology without Marx, Weber or Durkheim, whose contributions continue to support a more consistent understanding of contemporary society. In other cases, it is hard not to consider the thinking of a host of researchers who have contributed, in particular since the 1970s, to knowledge in the field of museology, in particular Sharon Macdonald, Martin Schäfer, Georges Henri Rivière, Hughues de Varine, Hooper-Greenhill, Zbynek Stránský, Anna Gregorova, Peter van Mensch, Marta Arjona, François Mairesse, Geoffrey Lewis, Mario Chagas, Cristina Bruno, Adriana Mortara, Maria Celia Moura Santos, Bernard Deloche, Jean Davallon, Peter Davis, Ulpiano Bezerra de Menezes or Pierre Mayrand, to name just a few.

---

<sup>12</sup> cf. Agren, P.U. (1992). “Museology – a new branch of humanities in Sweden?”, *Papers in museology* 1/Acta Universitatis Umensis 108 Stockholm, 104-113.

It is not a matter of situating Sociomuseology within the broader public Sociology. This is taking Sociomuseology in its 'antagonistic interdependence' with Museology, taking its essence as part of Social Sciences and assuming that its place in contemporary society is much more relevant, the deeper its dialogue with Public Sociology; and also, of course, with all disciplines or sciences that open themselves up organically to the society which is their context.

Both Public Sociology and Sociomuseology have the same objective in common which is in some way to deconstruct the two areas of reflection that sustain and inevitably nourish them: Sociology and Museology.

Understood in this way, Sociomuseology becomes a new school of thought arising from the connections between other areas of knowledge that contribute to the contemporary museological process.

The splitting of the Museum in two and its organic relationship with the social context that gives life to it, have led to the need to elaborate and clarify relationships, notions and concepts that can account for this process.

This proposal for a definition of Sociomuseology is more than purely an exercise in semantics. It aims to actually draw attention to a whole area of concerns, methods and objectives that make increasing sense of a museology whose boundaries never cease to grow. The restrictive vision of museology as a working technique oriented towards collections has given way to a new understanding and to museological practices geared to the development of mankind.

It is precisely towards this reality, the result of connecting areas of knowledge that grew out of museology, but gradually became indispensable resources for the development of Museology itself, that Sociomuseology can contribute to understanding processes and defining new directions.

## The University and Sociomuseology

This understanding naturally entails looking for the new space that the University can and should occupy regarding the issues raised.

In recent decades, Museology in many countries has become an object of study and research, with academic recognition in parallel to the already consolidated programs of museology understood as a set of techniques.

Based on the work of the most important precursors and with reference to new practices and resources, universities moved essentially in two directions:

1 – Training and research geared to the needs of museums, focused on their collections, with all the corresponding responsibilities vis-à-vis the management, maintenance and conservation of collections. Research and qualification in these areas, which are connected with the challenges of enhancing the institution's relationship with different audiences, and in both situations with the growing importance of new information and communication technologies. In fact, programs oriented towards these museums require a more global vision of the role of Museologists, in the paradoxical situation of the break-up of the profession,

resulting from increased specialization of the different tasks that these museums perform.

2 – On the other hand, programs oriented towards the museums with their willingness to respond to *unmet needs*. This is about guaranteeing training and research for a museology that is recognized as a communications resource, focused on 'new collections', constituted by the challenges of contemporary society. And working with objects is fundamentally different from working with people facing the challenges of the societies of which they are a part.

This is the recognized dilemma of Museology which works **for**, or Museology that works **with**. But nowadays we must also recognize that museology, as a whole, is not divided into watertight areas.

The daily practice of a growing number of museums and museological experiences has reduced this separation. Traditional museums increasingly integrate into their activities programs and actions that seek to deepen the relationship with their stakeholders in order to respond to the real challenges of the environment, social integration, gender, and more broadly social inclusion. At the same time, we must recognize that many institutions situated at the apex of social museology build collections which they use in different forms and are forced to consider all the problems that the conservation and management of collections necessarily require.

In this sense, it appears necessary to rethink existing educational models, to meet the needs of these new museums characterized by the highest levels of conceptual complexity. Such need would certainly apply to many of the Museums of objects, Museums of Social Museology, Museums of global challenges, Museums of technological luxury, Imperial Museums and other contemporary Museums.

We are therefore faced with Complex Museums, not so much by the technical complexity required to run them, but by the fact that they work simultaneously with different structural concepts in their very essence. Sorting out ideas and consequently building the skills of those working in these complex museums is, in our opinion, the main challenge that the University must face to reorganize its educational programs and adapt them to the multifaceted reality in which the Museum now operates.

## References

- Agren, P.U. (1992). "Museology – a new branch of humanities in Sweden?", *Papers in museology 1/Acta Universitatis Umensis* 108 Stockholm, 104-113.
- Burawoy, M. (2005). *For Public Sociology*, *American Sociological Review*, 70, 4–28, <http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/Public%20Sociology,%20Live/Burawoy.pdf>, accessed: 20/01/2017.
- Davis, P. (2011) *Ecomuseums: A Sense of Place*, London, Bloomsbury Academic; 2nd edition (June 2, 2011)

- Funari, P.P. A. & Robrahn-González, E. M. (2008). Ética, capitalismo e arqueologia pública no Brasil, *História*, 2, (XXVII), pp.13-30
- ICOM Constitution, 1946, available at [http://archives.icom.museum/hist\\_def\\_eng.html](http://archives.icom.museum/hist_def_eng.html)
- Mayrand, P (2007). Manifiesto de la Altermuseología. XII Taller Internacional del Movimiento Internacional para la Nueva Museología (MINOM). *Museus e sociedade: Agarrar a mudança, que acção?, que pensamento comum?*. Setúbal (Portugal), 27 October.
- Rivière, G. H. (1985). The ecomuseum-an evolutive definition, *Museum*, 148 (Vol. XXXVII), available at [http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0101-90742008000200002](http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0101-90742008000200002), accessed: 20/01/2017.
- Theodor, W. A. (1983). Prisms, Valéry Proust Museum, Series: Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought, Cambridge, The MIT Press. pp.173-184
- Wittlin, A. (1949). *Museums: In Search of a Usable Future*, - The Museum. Its history and its tasks in education, Cambridge, The MIT Press.

#### MÁRIO C. MOUTINHO

Full Professor and Dean of Lusophone University, Lisbon. Researcher of Interdisciplinary Research Center for Education & Development (CeIED).  
Email: [mcmoutin@gmail.com](mailto:mcmoutin@gmail.com)

#### JUDITE PRIMO

Professor and Director of Museology PhD at Lusophone University, Lisbon. Researcher of Interdisciplinary Research Center for Education & Development (CeIED).  
Email: [juditeprimo@gmail.com](mailto:juditeprimo@gmail.com)

#### *Originally published:*

Moutinho, M., Primo, J. (2017, July). Sociomuseology's theoretical frames of reference, Keynote at the International Conference The Subjective Museum? The impact of participative strategies on the museum, Historisches Museum Frankfurt & Department of Museology of the Universidade Lusófona, Historisches Museum Frankfurt, Frankfurt am Main, 26-28<sup>th</sup> July 2017.