

PRESENTATION

Each time more, museology professionals are confronted with terms such as *community*, *social inequality*, *social inclusion* and *development* in their quotidian. Be it in conferences, publications or museum programmes, these are increasingly recurrent terms which, in great part, translate the dynamics of a relationship between museology and community development that has been constructed since the late 60's. Although it is not new, such relationship has gone through a major bloom in the early 90's and arrives today as an emerging priority within the world of museology.

A first glance on the subject reveals that very different approaches and forms of action share the efforts in endowing museology with a role in community development today. In addition, despite of its growing popularity, it seems to be some misunderstandings on what the work with community development requires and truly signifies, as can be pointed out in a number of assertions originated from the field of museology. Accompanying such a plural environment, discussions and disagreements about to what extend museology is able to claim a role in social change also mark its affairs with community development. People are faced, indeed, with a rather polemic and intricate scenario. To a great extend, language barriers hinder the exchange of information on current initiatives and previous experiences, as well as on the development of concepts, approaches and proposals. Lack of better interactions among the groups of museology professionals and social actors who carry out different works with community development also contributes to making the potential of museology as a resource for development more difficult to be visualised.

In this way, considering the relevance and growing popularity of the work of museology with community development; considering that such dialectics is marked by diversity, some confusion and polemics; and realizing that most references to museology's work address on

particular approaches, this thesis proposes to offer a contribution to the discussions on the relations between museology and community development by pursuing an integrative vision of museology as a resource for development. It proposes an integrative vision in the sense of trying to comprise different proposals and relate them in one framework for museology as a resource for development; and in the sense of relating museology proposals to the broader field of community development. The thesis also comes to attend a particular desire to bring to the English language ideas developed in Portuguese speaking countries, in this particular case Portugal and Brazil, where relevant initiatives of development take place.

Two main questions appear central to this work:

- Can museology contribute to community development today and in the near future? If yes, in which ways?
- How can museology fulfil the demands from the broader field of development?

In order to answer these questions, this work aims to:

- identify the features and possible contributions of museology to community development today;
- identify possible demands that the broader field of community development may address to museology practice and theory, and briefly draw suggestions on how to fulfil those demands.

Firstly, a framework for community development will be established. Next, some proposals originated from the field of museology will be investigated and will serve as matter for a general vision of museology as a resource for community development. Finally, a comparative analysis between the two fields aims to identify possible demands that community development may address to museology and provide the final input to answer the questions mentioned above.

This work acknowledges the difficulties in addressing on a topic that only gains sense and form in practice. The same way as the concretization of ideas on community development is intimately related to their application in reality, one could say that a truly understanding of what an initiative of development is requires experience in reality. For that, there has been an effort to meet with museologists and other community development practitioners associated with museology, and visit a few community museums. Namely, they are Hugues de Varine (France), Odalice Priosti (Brazil), Mario Moutinho (Portugal), Judite Primo (Portugal), Fernando João Moreira (Portugal), César Lopes (Portugal) and Alfredo Tinoco (Portugal). Visits included the Ecomuseum of Le Creusot (France), Museum of Monte Redondo and other local museums (Portugal), Ecomuseum of Santa Cruz (Brazil) and the Lusófona University (Portugal). Brief contacts do not fulfil completely the need for a live experience. However, they were vital to provide a clearer view and deepen the understanding of proposals.

The fact that the work of museology with community development cannot be dissociated from practice also imposes limitations to literature review, the main investigation method used in this thesis. In this regard, it is important to explain that ideas and experience/examples reports (which are treated here under the general notion of proposals) were assessed having in mind that they represent authors' views and opinions, with all the losses dynamic processes such as community development can suffer when translated to words. Because of this, this thesis means nothing but to report a review of proposals (or body of proposals), which have been first treated separately in their own contexts and, later, conjugated to create a framework for museology as a resource for community development in the XXI century. Thus, such framework should not be seen as theory, but as the result of an interpretation of the referred proposals.

As to the thesis structure, the introduction is dedicated to setting a framework for community development today.

Chapters one and two comprise the investigation of proposals on community development originated from the field of museology. Chapter one refers to proposals dated between the late 60's and early 90's, and Chapter two to proposals from the early 90's until the present. Such division departs from the premise that in the decade of 90, community development has become increasingly popular in the field of museology as a whole, comprising the work of other museological structures (e.g. traditional museums) that until then were not involved with community development. With this, new types of proposals have been added to those traditionally related to the subject. Furthermore, the 90's have also brought transformations those proposals representing "traditional" approaches, i.e. approaches which have been already developed in the decades of 70 and 80. Experiences prior to 1990's are considered, in this way, as a fundamental source to investigate museology proposals today once they set the foundations of important current approaches to community development.

The investigation of proposals is mostly based on the exploration of a number of past and ongoing initiatives on community development. These cases refer to the work of different types of museums and professional associations. In addition, authors' personal work or theoretical reflections are also explored. The main criteria for the choice of cases and authors were the availability of publications and the personal contacts with professionals related to the work of museology with development. This has come to privilege initiatives in Western Europe (mainly France, Portugal, and UK), North America (Canada, EUA) and South America (especially Brazil); many of which are already well know examples of the work of

museology with community development¹. Due to limitations in accessing other publications, unfortunately this thesis brings no mentions to relevant experiences from countries in Africa, Asia, Oceania and others in Latin America (including more experiences in Brazil).

In other to allow a crossed analysis between the different cases, the investigation of proposals has aimed to answer some main questions in each case explored. These are:

- What does community development mean in the scope of this initiative? Are there clear references?
- What is the specific role this initiative claims in community development?
- What are the aims of this initiative (i.e. what does it wish to achieve)?
- What are the targets (i.e. what does it propose to do in order to achieve its aims)?
- What are the methods (i.e. how does it carry out its work)?
- How does the initiative relate itself to the community (i.e. the beneficiaries of development) or other targeted publics? What is the level of direct community input?
- In which level of society the initiative proposes to carry out its work (i.e. micro, meso or macro-level²)?
- Which are the partners for action?
- What is the relevance/influence of this initiative to following developments in the field of museology?

¹ All the sources in French, Spanish and Portuguese have been freely translated into English.

² Micro-level refers to the individual and group levels; meso-level refers to the community and regional levels; and macro-level refers to the broader regional, national and international levels.

Chapter three is dedicated to creating a framework for museology as a resource for community development today, based on the analysis of proposals explored in the first and second chapters. It includes a general vision of museology as a resource for development (including notions and approaches to development present in the field of museology, justification on the relevance of museology's work with development, general aims, roles, targets, methods and forms of action, as well as notes on the subject of community participation) and the demands from the broader field of development addressed to museology practice and theory.

The conclusion brings a brief analysis on the place museology occupies in the scope of the broader field of community development (based on the comparison between museology's trajectory/general approach to development and the framework presented in the introduction), an overview of museology's proposals and of the possible directions museology may take in order to fulfil community development demands.