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Conocimiento y Naturaleza

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Museums and Community:
Concepts, Experiences and Sustainability in
Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean

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EU-LAC-MUSEUMS: Report on Roundtable of Santiago and community-based museums sustainability>> <<WP3 D3.1>>

An analysis of the “Round Table of Santiago” of 1972, the social role of museums, and its relevance to sustainability in the present.

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There is a secret agreement between past generations and the present one
W. Benjamin
Theses on the Philosophy of History

Introduction

This report's principal goal is to introduce the theoretical and conceptual background that sustains the applied research proposed and undertaken, that seeks to study the validity of the principles of the Round Table of Santiago in the context of the study of sustainability in museums of small and medium scale in the Los Rios Region, to generate--at the end of the process--a manual with recommendations for this type of museums.

The “Round Table of Santiago de Chile” of 1972 was the result of an interdisciplinary approach to the development and role of museums in the world. It was a meeting convened by UNESCO and ICOM where, as a result of the discussions on the social role and relevance of museums, recommendations were made which continue to influence museum strategies. The EU-LAC MUSEUMS project takes its cue from the Declaration and subsequent activities and Declarations initiated by the EU, UNESCO, and ICOM, to focus on small to medium-sized regional museums and their communities. Within the eight themes defined in the EU-CELAC Action Plan, the topics of social inclusion, sustainability, and community resilience have been

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addressed through innovative approaches to community museums in Latin America developed since the 1970s including their territory museums, and “integral museums”.

The emphasis of the 1972 Declaration recommendations links directly to the scope of this research project, as UACH proposed to undertake an integral characterization and participatory evaluation of a representative sample of community, rural, and small museums, all of which are members of the Museums and Cultural Centers Network of the Los Rios Region in southern Chile. The original results of this research are to be shared and discussed among consortium partners as work together, in order to increase the knowledge area of EU-CELAC relations in the museum world, and to evaluate project methods and outcomes in order to build long-term sustainable relationships between institutions in EU and LAC, and especially within our partner countries.

The local / regional network of community museums of Los Rios offers a unique experience in the Chilean context which, allows the project team to approach new practical and potentially theoretical points-of-view on local sustainable development, taking account of practical and integrated methods of combining local knowledge, environmental and heritage education, and inter-institutional action.

To register UACH's local museums, the Chilean team designed methodological tools that will allow us to undertake the characterization of sustainability. In the first place, a deliberation rubric was created based on the central components that form the root for the definition of museums, used by ICOM³ and referred to internationally until today. The ICOFOM⁴ Glossary was used as a reference, and 4 minimum criteria to be accomplished were chosen to be part of the study, namely: territory, heritage, community and institution. Secondly, a methodological tool has been designed in order to be able to characterize the museum chosen to be part of the study. The tool

³ “A non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, 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”. ICOM. (s/f). *Definición del museo*. [Available on: <http://icom.museum/la-vision/definicion-del-museo/L/1/>] [Consulted on 12/8/2017]

⁴ Desvallées, André and Mairesse, François. 2010. *Conceptos claves de museología*. Armand Collin. With the participation of the Musée Royal de Mariemont and the International Committee of ICOM for museology, ICOFOM. [Available on: http://icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/Key_Concepts_of_Museology/Museologie_Espagnol_BD.pdf] [Consulted on 12/8/2017]





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is called “A Day at the Museum” and it will compile information considering four key components: (a) territory, (b) users, (c) museum and (d) relationships. Additionally, a field observation guideline will be used. The collected information will allow the completion, for each of the fourteen museums, of their own characterization card.

This document describes the UACH team’s participatory analysis of the results of “Round Table of Santiago de Chile”: its resolutions, recommendations and the final “Declaration of Santiago”. This analysis provides the theoretical and practical background to the Chilean team’s aims to evaluate the round table’s impact—explicit or latent—on the formation of museums both in the Los Rios Region and in similar cases either in Latin America and/or Europe. In addition its purpose is to evaluate the adoption and evolution of the principles of 1972 that were supposed to lead to the creation of ‘integral museums’ (that is, museums integrated with society and the local community) and, in particular, their educational role within the communities where they are located.

This review and analysis of the principles embodied within the “Declaración de Santiago’s” historical context, is the first step in order to achieve our research objectives. Based on the synthesis and analysis of the validity of the principles established at that international meeting, we will present in this report the criteria and dimensions to consider that have enabled us to select the study cases to include in this research.

In 1972 questions related to the relationship between museums, their communities and their territorial environments were not always central to museum practice in the way that they are found today. On the contrary, the museum as institution developed in the modern era from practices of setting-up collections of objects and items – of archaeology, anthropology, geology, natural history, Egyptology - that were ‘discovered’ and ‘rescued’ in European expansionist contexts by explorers, collectors and researchers who removed them from their countries of origin and relocated them in major museums or Universities in Europe. Most of the collections in major museums in Europe and North America reflect such practices. In Latin America, similarly, valuable heritage objects belonging to indigenous cultures became part of the collections of major museums (Museum of American History in New York) and universities (Harvard, Yale) in North America since the late 19th century.

Along with this ‘expropriation-conservation’ practice, the importance that national museums had – and still have - in the history of modern museums has to be recognized. These proliferated during the formation of the South American nation-



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states, conceived as useful to contribute to the ideological consolidation of the establishment of a 'nation'; they were a 'founding myth' for the newborn countries, providing pride and asserting an homogenous identity for each national community⁵. Therefore, these national museums are meaningful instances in the development of museology since they overtly position, for the first time, the museum as an institution with sociopolitical purposes, even though their concept of territory is the country and they serve a central power.

It was in the mid-1960s and early 1970s, a time of great social, political and environmental change, when social movements reclaimed public freedoms and social rights gained momentum that critical reflection on the role of museums occurred. These processes, which accompanied the emergence of new perspectives, foreshadowed a 'New Museography'. UNESCO, through ICOM,⁶ started to incorporate and promote considerations referring to an orientation towards the "service to the development of society" that was included in a revised definition of museum which still exists. In this way, UNESCO articulated the link between museums and their territory; the issue was now located at the core of the debate.

The first significant transcendental episode to prioritize ideas of territory and society took place in 1971 at the ICOM IX International Conference in Grenoble, France. At the time, museologist Hugues de Varine, based on conceptualizations developed alongside George Henri Rivière, coined the concept of the 'ecomuseum', highlighting the relevance of a museum connected to its territorial context. At the heart of this idea was a more democratic approach to museum practice, a recognition that communities had the right to identify, validate and celebrate their own heritage. In other words, the ecomuseum became a tool that wielded political power that could be used to reflect the needs, ambitions, knowledge, distinctiveness and peculiarities of a place and the communities found there.

Rivière⁷ used the concept of the ecomuseums as a mirror that the population uses to see and recognize themselves, where they look for the explanation of the history and distinctiveness of the territory in which they are rooted. It also was a mirror that the

⁵ Georgina DeCarli, Vigencia de la Nueva Museología en América Latina: Conceptos y Modelos. En Revista ABRA de la Facultad de Ciencias Sociales de la Universidad Nacional, Editorial EUNA, Costa Rica, julio – diciembre, 2003.

⁶ International Council of Museums. Organization dependent on UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization).

⁷ Georges Henri Rivière [1980], Definición evolutiva del ecomuseo. En Museum N° 148, 1985. Pág. 182.





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population offers to visitors to their territory so that they too can better understand a place, its history, environment and peoples.

In line with this definition, ecomuseum theoreticians introduced in Europe and Canada the first breakdown regarding the traditional museological practices, foregrounding local identities, and valuing the participation of the communities and their appropriation of the museum spaces. The ecomuseum came to be a useful tool at the local level and their collections started to be part of the local cultural heritage. They are now found in several countries throughout the world and have been defined as a process that links together a range of different heritages (nature, culture, the intangible) and provides for a better future – ‘A community-led museum or heritage project that supports sustainable development’⁸.

The Round Table of Santiago

The year following the Grenoble meeting, 1972, witnessed a milestone of great importance in this journey of transformation of museological practices; this took place in Santiago de Chile, when, attending the guidelines from the UNESCO’s 16th General Conference, Salvador Allende’s government invited a group of museologists from different Latin American countries to discuss “the importance and the development of museums in the contemporary world”. The meeting, held between the 20th and 31st of May in the symbolic building of UNCTAD III⁹, was characterized by the participation of specialists from other fields of study: urbanism, agriculture, education, science and technology; and focused on the needs of the region.¹⁰

The meeting reaffirmed in its Declaration the perspectives already considered in the Grenoble ICOM meeting, deepening the view that the museum should be committed to social development and its territorial communities. With a strong Latin American emphasis, it expressed the importance and potentiality that museums have to contribute to the cultural field and to transformative action within their communities. The main conclusions from the event were articulated around the concept of ‘The Integral Museum’, through which the participants wanted to express “a new image of

⁸ Davis, Peter (1993) Ecomuseums: a sense of place. Continuum. London and New York.

⁹ Building that was specially built to host the III United Nations Conference on Trade in the Third World between 1971 and 1972. After the coup d’état in 1973, it became the headquarters of the Military Government. After renovations, it currently houses the Gabriela Mistral Cultural Center.

¹⁰ Grete Mostny, El desarrollo y la importancia de los museos en el mundo contemporáneo, 1972. Pág. 3.





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this institution, which will have to be intimately linked to the present and future of the community”¹¹ It states:

The museum is an institution at the service of society of which it is an inalienable part, and it has in its own essence the elements that allow its *participation in the formation of consciousness in the communities* they serve to, and through that consciousness it *can contribute to translate into action such communities*, projecting their activity into the historical scope that has to sew up the current issues; that is to say knotting the past with the present and committing itself with the prevailing structural changes and producing others within the respective national reality.¹²

In fact, in their resolutions, the Round Table of Santiago paid attention to the context of ongoing profound transformations in Latin America during the period, considering that these “constitute a challenge for museology”. Likewise, based on a diagnosis according to which “most problems present in the contemporary society are rooted in situations of injustice and [that] the solutions are unreachable while they are not fixed”¹³, noted that, drawing from the contributions from experts in diverse perspectives and disciplines, the necessity of strengthening museum activities that were oriented towards the issues that communities were facing, in such contexts of crisis.

Among its general resolutions “for the development of museums and its better service to society”, the Round Table considered the need to incorporate advisors from different fields beyond museology, with the purpose of “creating conscience [among professionals and users of museums] of anthropological, sociological, socioeconomic and technological development”; the strengthening of the tasks of restitution and protection of the cultural heritage “to put it into a social function and to avoid its dispersion outside the Latin American milieu”; the improvement of the conditions of access to their collections and materials; the incorporation of assessment systems and the improvement of conditions for the training of museum professionals.¹⁴ We have taken these recommendations into consideration--as we recognize their validity and relevance--for our own team by forming an interdisciplinary team that approaches museums sustainability from the diversity of our field studies (anthropology, archaeology, agronomy, history, and psychology,

¹¹ Op. cit., p. 3

¹² Mesa redonda sobre la importancia y el desarrollo de los museos en el mundo contemporáneo. Resoluciones, 1972. p. 5.

¹³ Op. cit., p. 5.

¹⁴ Op. cit., p. 6.





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among others). From that perspective, this research also recognizes the relevance of museums' collection for museums sustainability in its social dimensions.

In the same way, but with a specific character, it presented a series of recommendations. Among the most outstanding are:

In relation to the rural environment, it calls for "greater awareness" of problems in this area, and to suggest solutions through "exposure of technology applicable to community improvement." It also called for promoting "public awareness [...] by exposing elements of cultural heritage and the proposal of alternatives to their problems in their social and ecological context".¹⁵

In relation to the urban environment, it recommended that 'the city museums' should emphasize the importance of "in a special way [in] urban development and its problems, both at the level of exposure and research" and to "inform the inhabitants about the possibilities and disadvantages that big cities offer".¹⁶

In relation to scientific and technological development, and in view of the need for further development in these areas, they committed themselves to promote them "based on the reality existing in the community", and especially to emphasize, before the relevant authorities and agencies, the understanding of the museum as "a means of diffusion of these fields".¹⁷

Regarding education and its institutions (primary, secondary and higher), it recommended "the museum to intensify its role as an excellent factor for the permanent education of the community" by incorporating "an educational service, to fulfill its didactic function" and to provide "adequate facilities and resources for its action inside and outside the museum". Likewise, the inclusion of the museum "within the national educational policy", the formation of collections in schools, the elaboration of exhibitions "with elements of their cultural heritage" and the implementation of training programs for teachers of all educational levels, among other guidelines.¹⁸

In addition, the Santiago Roundtable, considering that "the importance and potential of museums for the community are not yet fully recognized by all authorities or by all

¹⁵ Op. cit., p. 6.

¹⁶ Op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁷ Op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁸ Op. cit., p. 7.





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sectors of the public," resulted in the formation of the Latin American Association of Museology (ALAM), which was created with the aim of improving communication between Latin American museums and museologists, fostering cooperation and exchange and, as an Official Body, ensuring the interests of the profession in relation to its members and its community.¹⁹

In sum, the meeting concluded by providing ambitious recommendations which were aimed at subverting the established practices of museums and promoting dramatic changes. The very foundations of museums and their traditional functions - collecting, conserving, exhibiting objects – were to be seen merely as adjuncts as they became a social tool for development. This anchoring of the museum in a novel 'social function', would mean a total re-consideration of the attitudes, roles and professional practice of the museologist, regarding his/her political responsibility.²⁰

These guidelines and the recommendations made by the Round Table, as well as the concept of *integral museum* that came out of it, have informed both UACH's research and the EU-LAC-MUSEUMS project as they focus the research on the social role of museums. They have also been taken into account for the statement of research design that will allow us to design methodological tools to undertake the study of five small and medium-sized museums, and as one of the aspects to analyze the sustainability dimension of museums.

The concept of history and the social role of museums

Suddenly, I heard the high-pitched, mocking voice of Irene. The voice spoke in Latin; the voice (which came out of obscurity) was reading, with obvious delight, a treatise or prayer or incantation. The Roman syllables resounded in the earthen patio; my suspicion made them seem undecipherable, interminable; afterwards, in the enormous dialogue of that night, I learned that they made up the first paragraph of the twenty-fourth chapter of the seventh book of the *Naturalis Historia*. The subject of this chapter is memory; the

¹⁹ Asociación Latinoamericana de Museología, Santiago, 31 de marzo, 1972.

²⁰ Hugues de Varine, Alrededor de la mesa redonda de Santiago, intervención en ocasión de una reunión realizada en São Paulo comienzo de los años 2000. En Mesa Redonda vol. I, págs. 98





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last words were *ut nihil non iisdem verbis
redderetur auditurn*²¹

Jorge Luis Borges
Funes el memorioso

The tension or even ‘rupture’²² represented by the concepts of the ecomuseum and the integrated museum (as a synthesis of the perspectives of New Museology)²³, with respect to the traditional concept of museum has a long history in philosophy. It is certainly a subsidiary tension of the notions of history, heritage and memory that, in each case, the different perspectives emerge at the moment of conceiving the meaning, mission and purposes of the museum.

Indeed, as early as 1874, Friedrich Nietzsche in his “Second Untimely Consideration: From the Usefulness and Injury of History to Life”, introduced the distinction between a monumental history, an antiquarian history and a critical history.²⁴

In the first case, it is mainly what historiography has designated since the middle of the XX century under the label of ‘official history’. This is the case, according to the influential German philosopher, of a practice that draws from history (as facticity) “the idea that the great ever existed, that, in any case, was possible and therefore could be possible again”. It is also what we usually observe in the account of the great national museums which, as we said, were built in the face of the need to guarantee social cohesion through the constitution of a common reference point during the processes of formation of national states and, as such, can be understood from their function as ‘ideological apparatuses of the state.’²⁵

With that function, monumental history does not require “complete truthfulness”; on the contrary, it tends to attenuate “the differences in motives and intentions” between the present and the great episodes of the past on which it focuses its attention,

²¹ So, nothing that has been heard can be repeated with the same words.

²² Luis Alegría, A 35 años de la mesa de Santiago una doble ruptura museológica, 2007.

²³ Belén Iglesias. Georges Henri Rivière y la Nueva Museología. Revista Mito, 02.01.2014. [Available at: <http://revistamito.com/georges-henri-riviere-y-la-nueva-museologia/>] [Accessed on 20.12.2017]

²⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, Segunda consideración intempestiva: de la utilidad y el perjuicio de la historia para la vida [1874]. Biblioteca Nueva, Madrid, 2001.

²⁵ Louis Althusser, Ideología y aparatos ideológicos del estado [1969]. En Slavoj Žižek, Ideología, un mapa de la cuestión, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Buenos Aires, 2005.





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among the actors of the different epochs to “present the effects of an exemplary way and worthy of imitation” (...) “at the cost of the causes.”

Then, without exaggeration and since it dispenses as far as possible from the causes, monumental history could be called a collection of ‘effects on itself’ or a collection of events that would have an effect over all epochs... The past suffers from this damage: large parts of it are forgotten, despised, constituting something similar to a continuous grey flow in which particular facts, previously embellished, stand as isolated archipelagos.²⁶

The case of antiquarian history is related to that of practices most closely linked to museum work, such as collecting. It comprises a work that “preserves and venerates” the old but for which, however and regarding “the things of the past” (...), “neither differences nor proportions that judge them comparatively” exist. Thus, “the time comes when all the old and the past are taken as equally worthy of reverence, repudiating and discarding without respect, on the contrary, everything that is new and is constantly changing.”²⁷ The previous is a form of approach to history in which value is attributed to the object by its condition of antiquity and not necessarily by the meanings it contains or the ones that is capable of eliciting.

In this way, “antiquarian history is only capable and understands preserving life, but not of engendering it”, since “it only hinders that powerful impulse towards the new, and paralyzes the man of action who, as such, will have no choice but to violate certain devotions.”²⁸

The third case, critical history, derives from the necessity that the human being, “in order to be able to live, has the strength to destroy and free himself from the past, as well as from the fact that he can use this force from time to time.”²⁹

“This is achieved by judging the past, instructing his case in a painful way, and finally, condemning it, for that is what happens in the things of man, always wrapped in human strength and weakness. But it is not justice here which brings human things to judgement, and even less clemency which pronounces the verdict. It is only

²⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, op. cit., p. 57

²⁷ Op. cit., p. 63

²⁸ Op. cit., p. 64

²⁹ Op. cit., p. 65





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life that expresses itself here, that dark and invigorating power, that power that, with insatiable eagerness, desires itself.”³⁰

That is to say, the life that wishes to live needs to be projected into the future, both with a sense of continuity and with a creative impulse that opens space to the new and indeterminate in each generation.

More than half a century later, another German philosopher, Walter Benjamin, introduced a concept capable of understanding the operative dialectic in this act of affirmation of life, clarifying especially and very concretely the way in which historical subjects, at the time of action, enter past, present and future in the paths of historicity. In the words of the Chilean philosopher Pablo Oyarzún, “it is not merely a matter of directing an explanation of the concept of history through the more or less banal recognition of an efficacy of the past over the present, but of a determination of the presence of the present by the past.”³¹

In his famous “Theses on History”, Benjamin begins by distinguishing a notion relative to history as facticity, from the interpretation that subjects are capable of making of those events (a narrative or narration of those facts that actually happened, as historiography or memory):

The angel of history must have that aspect. His face is turned to the past. In what appears to us as a chain of events, he sees a single catastrophe, which incessantly stacks ruin upon ruin and throws it at his feet ... this tempest drags him irresistibly towards the future, to which he turns his back, While the cluster of ruins grows before him to the sky.³²

The angel of history is given the faculty of seeing it as an absolute. He can observe all that has actually happened as a whole in which nothing is lost, but nevertheless, and for the same reason, he does so in a way that lacks the articulation that expresses the significance and meanings of each episode. Historical subjects, on the other hand, do not have that faculty of preserving everything that they have lived. We need to forget in order to live, and in that act we select elements and discard others, group biases and finally interpret them as processes that give meaning to our present and project us into the future.

³⁰ Op. cit., p. 65

³¹ Pablo Oyarzún, La dialéctica en suspenso. Fragmentos sobre la historia. Lom, Santiago, 2009. p. 22

³² Walter Benjamin, Sobre el concepto de historia [1939]. En Pablo Oyarzún, Op. Cit., p. 44.





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It is, in fact, a concept of history that contains the potentiality to understand the conditions in which the past mobilizes the course of present events and colors its presence, conceiving the possibilities of efficacy of the historical subjects in that movement. For Benjamin,

“Historically articulating the past does not mean knowing it ‘as it truly has been’. It means taking possession of a memory as it flashes in an instant of danger. Historical materialism is concerned with grasping an image of the past as it suddenly happens to the historical subject at the moment of danger.”³³

It is not difficult to gain a general appreciation of the way in which these notions of history concern museological practices and are brought in with their different facets, or to envisage the way in which, especially the conceptualization offered by Benjamin's philosophy, can be useful to give theoretical support and even practical guidance to the profiling set forth by New Museology. We will come back to this in greater detail towards the end of our reflection.

Impact and progress after the Round Table of Santiago

*It is true that we need history, but we need it in a different way from
that of the rude idler in the garden of knowledge, although he contemptuously
contempts our
needs and considers them rude and devoid of grace. This means that we need
history for life and for action,
not for its comfortable abandonment, nor to alleviate the effects of a cowardly and
dishonest action.*

Only insofar as history serves life do we want to serve it ourselves ...

*F. Nietzsche
Second hasty consideration³⁴*

The resolutions and proposals of the Round Table of Santiago did not, as would have been expected, materialize in Latin American museums. Like so many other social, political, economic and cultural processes, these were reaped after the *coup d'état* of September 11, 1973 and the dictatorships that from then on took over the

³³ Walter Benjamin, Op. Cit., p. 41

³⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, Segunda consideración intempestiva: De la utilidad y el perjuicio de la historia para la vida [1874]. Biblioteca Nueva, Madrid, 2001.





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continent.³⁵ Specifically, this context of regression and destruction of democratic processes weakened the possibilities of effective renewal and progressive ideas emerging in the museological field, preventing their implementation and development.

Years later, however, the same outlines were recovered by the International Movement for a New Museology (MINOM)³⁶, which has already formally articulated and has reintroduced the orientations enunciated in Santiago through a succession of meetings that began in Quebec, Canada, in 1984, with the 'First International Workshop on Ecomuseums and New Museology'. This event brought together French-Canadian and European-born museologists and provided the second document of importance to the movement³⁷, one that emphasized the need to extend the traditional functions of the museum "to open up to initiatives embedded in [...] [...] the physical and human environment", and "in a contemporary world that seeks to integrate all the resources of development", the will to strengthen an interdisciplinary approach that contributes to "the participation of the users", putting local communities at the core of the museological task – "to the full development of the population".³⁸ By recalling the considerations of Santiago de Chile from oblivion, the declaration of Quebec merely reaffirmed the social role of the museum, and the primacy of this function over its traditional functions (conservation, building, objects, the audience).³⁹

The Quebec declaration reaffirms New Museology's interest in incorporating a "global approach to problems", capable of articulating "scientific, cultural, social and economic concerns", and making museum resources available as quality tools or instruments that, in order to address such concerns, can and need to be "adapted to each context and to each specific project."⁴⁰ In other words local needs needed to be addressed within the context of global issues.

³⁵ Georgina DeCarli, Op. Cit.

³⁶ "MINOM was founded in 1985, in Lisbon, Portugal, during the 2nd International New Museology Workshop. This official foundation was the result of the 1st International – Ecomuseums / New Museology Workshop in Quebec (Canada) in 1984, when museologists from 15 countries adopted The Quebec Declaration as a reference point for the movement. Its ideological origins are found in the Santiago Declaration adopted in 1972 in Chile." [Available at: www.minim-icom.net] [Accessed on 20.12.2017].

³⁷ The first one was the Declaration of Santiago.

³⁸ Declaración de Quebec, 1984. En Museum N° 148, 1985. p. 200

³⁹ Pierre Mayrand, La proclamación de la nueva museografía. En Museum N° 148, 1985. p. 201

⁴⁰ Declaración de Quebec, 1984. En Museum N° 148, 1985. p. 200





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In October 1984, a meeting entitled “Ecomuseums: The man and his environment” took place, in parallel, in Morelos, Mexico, and representatives of Latin American museums attended. This meeting resulted in the Declaration of Oaxtepec, which explicitly expressed solidarity with the Round Table of Santiago, the Declaration of Quebec and the concepts of the New Museology, “as well as with all the Latin American efforts that saw in museology an instrument for the unhindered development of the communities”. In addition, it introduced a definition of ecomuseum which understood it as “a pedagogical act for the eco-development”, highlighting the interaction among “territory, integrated heritage and active community”.⁴¹

Later, in 1992, also on the initiative of UNESCO, a meeting was held in Caracas, Venezuela, which, like the previous ones, took place in reference to the Santiago Round Table. On this occasion “from the recognition of the profound social, political, economic and environmental crisis that Latin America is going through”, and under the title “The mission of the museum in Latin America today: new challenges”, this seminar concluded:

“Twenty years after the Round Table of Santiago, and with a new millennium approaching, the museum presents itself in Latin America not only as the ideal institution for the recognition of heritage, but also as a useful tool for achieving balanced human development and a greater collective well-being”.⁴²

According to Hugues de Varine, the meeting in Caracas meant a space that – “applying renewed methods but in the same spirit- allowed “the updating of the Santiago’s doctrine” and, after two decades, “its development and dissemination among the new generation of museologists”.⁴³ In a consistent manner, and paraphrasing Pierre Mayrand (coordinator of Quebec’s meeting), it is fair to assert that, from Santiago (1972) to Caracas (1992), “we are witnessing the transition from museology to social and political consciousness”.⁴⁴ It is also significant to mention two meeting held in Santa Cruz, Brazil in 2000 and 2004 regarding Ecomuseums, which also follow the spirit of its predecessors.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Declaratoria de Oaxtepec, 1984.

⁴² Declaración de Caracas, 1992.

⁴³ Hugues de Varine, Op. Cit.

⁴⁴ Pierre Mayrand, La proclamación de la nueva museografía. En Museum N° 148, 1985. p. 201

⁴⁵ Peter Davis, Ecomuseums: A sense of place. Leicester University Press. 1999. p. 219.





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In the current context, characterized as a period of profound worldwide crisis in relation to its development model⁴⁶, the perspectives of the Round Table of Santiago still apply. In 2015 UNESCO supported its guidelines again:

“Member States are encouraged to support the social role of museums, as highlighted in the Declaration of Santiago de Chile in 1972. In all countries, it is increasingly considered that museums play a key role in society and are a factor of integration and social cohesion. In this way, they can help communities cope with profound changes in society, including those that lead to increased inequality and the termination of social ties”.⁴⁷

These ‘profound changes in society’, are related to major ecological catastrophes, such as climate change, desertification or degradation of vast natural territories as a result of unbridled economic growth. War and other devastating social phenomena, such as inequality, the commodification of human relations or the weakening of community spaces and public institutions, also play their part. As a result there has been an intense search for new models of development which have seen many new ways of managing natural and cultural resources which have the concept of sustainability at their heart. There is no doubt that understanding museums as a tool at the service of the communities and for development also requires a sustainable approach. Museums need - of course – to sustain their collections, building and staff, but their new role demands that they sustain the local community, local culture, local economies and the local environment. Only by doing so can strengthening of the museum's social function be firmly expressed in the concept of an integrated museum. The community museum must be sensitive to the complexity that characterizes all social problems and is actively involved in the search for solutions.

Sustainability: analysis and conceptual context

Museums, as far as educators and cultural mediators, are taking an increasingly vital role when it comes to contributing to the definition and implementation of sustainable development and practices ... We have to do everything that is in our hands to ensure that museums are part of the main

⁴⁶ For the Chilean case, see, for example, the recent report for Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD): *Desiguales: Orígenes, cambios y desafíos de la brecha social en Chile*, 2017.

⁴⁷ UNESCO, *Recomendación relativa a la protección y promoción de los museos y colecciones, su diversidad y su función en la sociedad*, 17 de noviembre de 2015.





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cultural engine of the world's sustainable
development."⁴⁸

Prof. Dr. Hans Martin Hinz

Throughout the history of mankind, man has intervened with nature through his worldviews, his instincts, desires and needs. Human history has witnessed a long process of co-evolution both of nature and culture. The forms of social organization, the hierarchical structures and actions of domination in human societies - associated with forms of knowledge and practices, their ignorance and their unknowns - have generated dynamics that have altered ecosystems, generating ecological imbalances and, in some cases, destroying cultures and civilizations.

From a historical perspective, we can affirm that 'development' imposed by Western civilization has systematically impacted on biological and cultural diversity, reducing our natural and cultural assets, to the detriment of society. The great challenge to society is how to manage change and development, turning them into opportunities that provide long-term benefits.

In this context, we have referred to the history and the approaches that emerge from these paradigms and how they have appropriated spaces — as museums — whose social role has been growing. The concept coined during the meeting held in Chile in 1972, the *integral museum*, identifies — as a basic role of these institutions — the contextualization and location of the community it is concerned with within the broader aspects of their world, so that local people become aware of their roles as individuals and in society. To comply with this mandate, museums must deal with this problem and provide perspectives that allow people to give a constructive meaning to their existence. The question remains – how can museums do this in a sustainable way and deliver a sustainable future for their communities?

As scholarship has shown, museums can be considered as prime agents for sustainable development. This new type of museum, due to its specific characteristics and functions, seems more appropriate to act at the level of regional or small and medium museum. This has certainly proved to be the case in the

⁴⁸ ICOM, Como preparar el día internacional de los museos. ICOM, 2015. Pág. 6 [Disponible en: http://network.icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/minisites/imd/Kit/IMD2015_Museos_kit_ESP.pdf] [Consultado el: 17.12.2017]





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implementation of the ecomuseum phenomenon, where small scale local initiatives had delivered change successfully. However, museums need to make gradual transformations to reach the goals set by the Round Table. Museums, have always, of course made changes over time as the theory and definition of the museum and its usefulness has evolved.⁴⁹

From the perspective of UACH research, the three pillars of EU-CELAC Actions of Sustainable Development, (Museum) Education and Employment, and Regional Integration and interconnectivity to promote social inclusion and cohesion, go hand-in-hand.⁵⁰

Arguably however, the integrated museum – or community museum – demands the incorporation of sustainable attitudes and practices. Sustainability is a collective task whose conditions are not pre-established since it requires the participation and debate of all the involved stakeholders. It requires the involvement, contribution and collaboration of all the stakeholders that make up the human ecosystem, as well as the spaces that contribute to the concretion and discussion of the problems that the citizens of the territory face today. In this sense, and in regards to sustainability, the main question we face is: What processes can we put in place to sustain the heritages – nature, culture, intangibles - that are valuable for us?

To answer this question and thus begin the discussion and analysis of sustainability in the specific case of community-based museums, the UACH team developed a methodological analysis proposal to be implemented during the implementation of this research project and to meet its objectives.

The methodological proposal arises from defining the criteria used to build the deliberation rubric that allowed the team to identify and select the member museums of Los Rios Region Museums and Cultural Centers Network. What are the characteristics, that make them suitable to be included in the study? Our starting point was to use ICOM's Definition of a Museum (2007). The reason for this is that this definition has four main elements - territory, heritage, community and institution – that fit nicely into the elements related to the concept of sustainability, namely:

⁴⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, op. cit.

⁵⁰ EU-CELAC Action Plan [Available at <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/23757/eu-celac-action-plan.pdf>] [Accessed 18.12.2017]





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environmental, cultural, social and economic .⁵¹ They also respond to the principles established in the “Round Table of Santiago” that identify an integral museum.

In this sense, the territorial aspect of a museum is consistent with the environmental dimension of sustainability, taking into account criteria such as the conservation of collections and buildings; the proper use of the museum resources, recycling, clean energies and water care; reducing the use of pollutants; and the integration of the environmental aspects of the territory into museum work. In this way, it will be crucial for this research to design and implement in each case study, an environmental impact assessment to analyze each of the mentioned criteria.

The cultural heritage aspect of the museum is linked to the cultural dimension of sustainability by making part of its role the promotion of spaces for reflection and discussion that value and respect cultural diversity and interculturality. The articulation of the temporal dimension of museums, which accounts not only for the past but also for the present; and the integration of cultural and natural heritage. The terms of reference that will be used to study these aspects will be: cultural diversity, interculturality, and cultural, intangible and integral heritage.

EU-LAC-MUSEUMS aims to build an EU-LAC knowledge area in sustainable museums and community in order to develop a common voice for regional museums working **against social exclusion**. The social dimension of sustainability is linked to the role of communities in museums, dealing with access and participation of communities; the research, training and dissemination actions of the communities; and of the contribution to narrowing social inequality. Social cohesion has also become a major field of cooperation for the EU-LAC partnership, since the 3rd EU-LAC Summit held in Guadalajara in May 2004.⁵² The development of the research of the case studies will be focused on aspects such as the community, the social role of museums and integration, as they will be for other partner case studies in our collective bi-regional research.

Finally, the institutional aspect of museums is attached to economic sustainability, both of the museum itself and the local community. Strategies must address criteria such as public and private participation; short, medium and long-term planning; the

⁵¹ For this research - for now and until the methodology is applied, we will take into consideration 4 of the 17 UN's Sustainable Development Goals that we consider relevant in the museum case (in coherence with the principles of the round table of Santiago and the concept of integral museum).

⁵² European Commission External Relations. Social Cohesion in the EU-Latin America/Caribbean strategic partnership. 2008. [Available at http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/la/docs/social_cohesion_en.pdf, accessed 18 December 2017] [Accessed on 20.12.2017].





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selection of efficient economic resources; the connection with ecotourism or cultural tourism; the development of economic proposals around these spaces and the communities to which they belong; and the contribution to the development of the local economy. For this research, the characteristics of the studies are the creation of resources, funding, economic sustainability and place tourism.

Both the aspects of a museum and the dimensions of the concept of sustainability, reflect the spirit of the “Round Table of Santiago” and its resulting concept, the *integral museum*, by echoing the social role of museums. In this sense, the theoretical framework summarized here takes into account the integrated treatment of the multiple aspects of museums and the conviction that these institutions are an inalienable part of society.

The statement of research design presented here is based on the theoretical analysis of the “Round Table of Santiago” and the definition of both museum and sustainability. This framework will allow, later, to design a methodology and to define the tools for the characterization of the museums located in Los Rios Region. It will be from the results of the characterization that the Chilean team will be able to define sustainability criteria to select the case studies that will be researched starting the second year of this project.

Conclusion

By focusing on the theme of *Museums and Community: Concepts, Experiences, and Sustainability in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean*, the EU-LAC-MUSEUMS project aims to create a common vision for sustainable, small to medium-sized local and regional museums and their communities, and reinforce mutual understanding and cooperation between regions. To achieve this goal, our research takes account of past and present cultural, scientific, intellectual and social exchanges in the Chilean case study, but with wider reach to all partner countries in the EU-CELAC area.

Working with history, heritage and memory is, above all, to interpret these notions. The ‘truth’ of what has happened is also, first of all, an exercise of power. Power over the past and also power over the future. The invitation of the Round Table of



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Santiago (initiated in Chile) and the set of experiences developed by the New Museology movement, in short, constitute a call to make a committed interpretation from the territories, with the communities, with the social and political changes, with the hope of contributing with museological work to the construction, in the present, of a better life for all.

The fact that such an important episode in the history of museology has taken place in the Chile of *Unidad Popular*⁵³ is not innocuous, since those three years represent, without fear of exaggeration, one of the greatest democratic processes at the global scale. In its specific field, the statement on 'the importance and development of museums' is another of its fruits, which as such, had a congruent future. In this sense the relevance of evoking it and of conceiving the museum as an instrument in the service of sustainable development, constitutes not only a necessary but also an urgent effort. This important as community museums are subject to profound conditions of technical, institutional and financial precariousness. Such situation infringes upon their potential to fulfill fully and effectively the honorable programmatic purposes enunciated in Santiago 1972.

The challenge remains. We know that "the new type of museum, by its specific characteristics, would seem more appropriate to act at the level of regional museum or museum of medium and small populations", and the value of multidisciplinary contributions to fulfill its institutional mission. Territory, heritage and community seem to conform the conceptual elementary triad, which can support an update of these guidelines. Our research is not an adventure merely towards the recovery of what was proposed by Santiago, or a search that seeks to reinstall what did not become. Instead, it will be a critical exercise that allows communities to build new histories and deliver ideas that are sensitive to the needs and alternatives of the present times.

In this light, the mission of the community museum will need to incorporate, when designing their working program and mission, a concept the community museum that allows the community to interpret its own history in order to elucidate and be conscious of the path that has led them to its current situation. The community museum must provide spaces for dialogue and reflection that open up - collectively and in context – alternatives for the future. In other words, communities will be given the options for change and transformative sustainable actions of their own territories and environments.

⁵³ A left-wing political alliance in Chile that supported Salvador Allende in 1970.





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