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The evaluation and practices of social inclusion in Chilean art museums

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Abstract: Establishing the concept of social inclusion is still in process in the field of museums. This article considers eight essential categories to evaluate social inclusive practices in a total of nine Chilean public and private art museums, which are located in three different regions. The evaluation categories are safety, diversity, accessibility, communication consciousness, political consciousness, relevant skills, non-traditional educational practices, and work structure. Through qualitative deductive and comparative analysis, the results indicate that four museums maintain social inclusive practices and functions, though each of these museums has their individual strengths and weaknesses in their organization. One category, namely the work structure, needs to be improved in all museums, also in those with inclusive practices, though this aspect does not necessarily and exclusively depend on the museums themselves but also their type of belonging and financing. Further research could reveal the possible closer relation between work structure and visitor inclusivity, how the inclusion of museum staff and organization correlates with the public.

Keywords: *Social inclusion, museum educational practices, art museums, Chile*

Introduction

In the field of non-formal education, today museums are considered relevant and significant institutions for our society. For this reason, it is important that the concept of social inclusion is incorporated into their practices and reflections, and their practices are adapted to the needs of different public and contexts. The concept of social inclusion has been extensively researched by different authors (Asensio, Santacana and Fontal 2016; Coleman 2018; Marín-Cepeda et al. 2017; Sandoval 2016; Sandell 1998, 2002; Tlili 2008) and the analysis and clarification of inclusion should be incorporated into the principles of museums (mission, vision, and objectives). Kinsley highlights that inclusion is a matter of social justice, considering “that museum’s publicness still does not significantly extend beyond a narrow subset of the population” (2016, 475). It should be noted that the International Council of Museums (ICOM), which oversees the future of these institutions, published a new definition of museum in August 2022, which explicitly includes the concepts of inclusion, accessibility, diversity, and sustainability in the principles of museum (International Council of Museums 2022). In addition, UNESCO has expressed that all forms of exclusion in education should be avoided, whether by sex, ethnicity, social class, language, religion, nationality, and aptitudes (UNESCO 2017).

Diversity – museums for all

Even though museums intend to focus on and approach as wide public as possible, the majority still attract specific groups. Several publications show that museums, especially art museums, are visited by a more educated audience (Chan and Goldthorpe 2007; Peters 2018; Valenzuela et al. 2015) from high socioeconomic strata (Adipa 2017; Kinsley 2016, Ruiz 2018), and who belong to privileged racial groups (Anila 2017; Kinsley 2016). Diversity became explicitly a relevant and attainable concept with the acceptance of the new museum definition. According to Author (2024), diversity can be interpreted as a category which includes neurodiversity, ethnicity, culture, gender, different socioeconomic levels, religions, and vulnerable groups. Furthermore, it is crucial to recognize existing heterogeneity within a target group, as visitors can differ in their social and cultural capitals, and people usually belong to many of these above-mentioned categories (Author 2022; Grek 2009).

Considering age groups, statistics indicate that typically older audiences visit museums (Black 2017; Corsato and Devine 2021). A generational shift has also appeared since the 1990s with Generation Y or Millennials, and Generation Z. These generations grew up with the impact of globalization, demographic change, and new media. Therefore, they do not only value the access of digitalization but use it for both work and leisure time. Moreover, they seek unique experiences, challenges, and personal value (Black 2017). Museums should consider this perspective change together with the generational shift if they want to be attractive places for the younger generations too.

Inequality in museum visits

In Chile, the problem of inequality is strongly manifested in the socioeconomic situation and access to education and culture (Casassus 2003; Peters 2018; Peters, Güell and Sotomayor 2022; Santos and Elacqua 2016), which evidently influences museums, especially art museums (Ruiz 2018). According to the Encuesta Nacional de Participación Cultural en 2017 [National Survey of Cultural Participation in 2017], 20.5% of the Chilean population visited a museum at least once, compared to 2012 when the proportion of visitors was 23.6%. On the other hand, visits to visual arts exhibitions experienced a significant drop, while in 2012 participation reached 24.9%, the proportion of participants decreased to 16% in 2017 (Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes 2013, 2018).

It should be noted, the problem is not only the lack of participation in the cultural life of Chilean museums, but also visitors' education and socioeconomic reality. According to Peters, "Chileans carry out artistic-cultural activities based on the economic, cultural and educational capital they possess" (2017, 42). Although this concern occurs within a context of general socioeconomic inequality in the country, this phenomenon is also observed internationally, especially in art museums. Even though museums today try to reach out

and focus on a broad public, most of them only attract people belonging to specific and limited groups.

Likewise, and as Hooper-Greenhill (2000) states, art museums are less democratic compared to other museums, since art consumption has historically been considered relevant to social position (Bennett et al. 2009), and to establish and maintain social status (Chan and Goldthorpe 2007), socially positioning individuals from certain social groups, with possession of cultural capital and specific demographic and biographical patterns (Barbosa and Brito 2012; Bourdieu 1984). Black (2017) highlights the difference that occurs between generations as well. Another complication, according to the author, is that these young people highly value digital technologies and new experiences. The mentioned challenges are also valid in Chile. Peters, Güell and Sotomayor (2022) differentiate among six cultural consumer profiles in the country: (1) adults in vulnerable situation, namely low intensity cultural consumption, low complexity and limited goods to mass culture; (2) low middle-class adults with low intensity and some specialized cultural consumption (internet use, listening to music and watching films); (3) middle-class young adults, medium intensity cultural consumption with mass culture and specialized goods (museum visits, concerts, cinema); (4) middle-class adults, medium-high cultural consumption intensity with specialized non-digital consumption (visual arts exhibitions, museum or cultural center visits, theater, dance performance); (5) young adults, high intensity cultural consumption with preferably digital goods (internet use, listening to music, book reading, video games); and (6) young adults from middle-high social class with active, diverse and highly specialized cultural consumption (internet use, museum visits, visual arts exhibitions, theater, etc.). Therefore, museums must consider these profiles and needs as well if they want to preserve and increase their public.

The objective of this study is to evaluate socially inclusive practices among museum principles, educational practices and museum workers' perspectives in nine Chilean art museums.

The Chilean context of museums

By 2022, there were a total of 396 museums in Chile (Área de Estudios, SNM 2023). Regarding their territorial distribution, a notorious centralization of their locations is observed, since most of them (54%) are located only in 4 Chilean regions¹, 24% in the Metropolitan Region, 13% in the Valparaíso Region, 9% in the Los Lagos Region and 8% in the Biobío Region (Área de Estudios, SNM 2021, 2022). This centralization is reflected in the different communes of the regions, which means that most of the localities do not have any museums (52%) (Área de Estudios, SNM 2022). This situation is correlated with museum visits, since people in whose places a museum can be found, tend to visit it more, compared to those people in whose territories there are no such cultural institutions

¹ Chile is divided into 16 regions.

(Observatorio de Políticas Culturales 2019; Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes 2018).

The administration of museums is varied, since 58% is privately owned and 41% belongs to public entities (Área de Estudios, SNM 2022). Likewise, the received financial resources are also mixed. The majority of museums are financed privately, by municipalities or by the central government. On the other hand, 74% of the institutions have free admission and 26% charge the entrance, which price changes between 200 and 18,000 pesos² (Área de Estudios, SNM 2023).

Among the offered services, exhibitions occupy a central role, as well as the educational services such as guided tours (88%), workshops (60%), didactic materials (51%) and libraries (43%). Nevertheless, only a few museums have services for tourists, highlighting that 29% offer services in other languages, and 12% have audio guides. In order to connect online with the public, 73% of the museums had some digital platform by May 2022 (Área de Estudios, SNM 2023). Finally, and in relation to the age ranges in art museums, the public is concentrated in a higher age range: 42.5% corresponds to 45–59 years (Observatorio de Políticas Culturales 2019).

According to the Registry of Museums of Chile, the number of people who work in museums is 2,339 persons. In general, these institutions work with reduced staff, since 78% do not have more than 13 workers, and only 4% have a crew of 40 people or more, whose functions revolve around visitor care, exhibition implementation and mounting, education/mediation and outreach activities. On the other hand, the majority of Chilean museums (56%) do not offer internships for those who are interested and/or to compensate for the lack of personnel (Área de Estudios, SNM 2023).

Methodology

The research is carried out through qualitative methodology based on deductive analysis. This approach has allowed us to explore and explain existing and emerging perspectives in the educational area of museums and their relationship with the concept of social inclusion (Gilgun 2019). The paradigm that led the analysis was Interpretivism, which allows the researcher to use and validate her/his perspective, experience, and skills to understand how participants and agents explain a phenomenon or process (Charmaz 2006; O'Donoghue 2007). Regarding the researchers' perspectives, the authors of this article have professional and research experiences with museum educational and inclusive educational practices, which could facilitate them to understand the different aspects and conditions in the museums' environment and function. The analysis of this research focused on knowing how the concept of social inclusion is understood and incorporated in Chilean art museums and in their educational practices.

² 0.25 and 22.7 USD.

This approach is characterized by several terms: the use of concepts at the beginning of the investigation and the analysis of positive cases that involves data searches to determine the modifications, refutations, or reformulations of the concepts (Gilgun 2019). To familiarize ourselves with the subject and find and use some relevant concepts, as suggested Tavory and Timmermans (2012, 2019), the existing literature was reviewed. However, these pre-established concepts can be modified or reformulated based on the findings and data (Charmaz 2006; Gilgun 2019).

Data collection

The museums were selected intentionally and with maximum variation to explore the phenomenon and interaction between social inclusion, educational practices, principles, and the perspectives of museum workers of art museums (Creswell 2013). Nine Chilean art museums that also have an education or mediation department participated in the research out of a total of 27 Chilean art museums. Among the institutions are state, private, and university museums both in Santiago, the capital of Chile, and in other regions of the country (Valparaiso Region and Maule Region).

Different types of documents were collected from each museum: their mission, vision and objectives, the description of their educational programs about workshops, events, guided tours, training and exhibitions, each museum's entrance fee, location and accessibility, their organizational charts and descriptions of their workers' responsibilities, educational files and books, their audience research, and annual reports. The documents were collected between the period of 2019 and the first half of 2021 involving files and reports before and during the pandemic. This criterion could not be applied to two museums because one of them only kept documents from the year 2017, and another officially opened its doors again in October 2021, which limited the information collection between October 2021 and January 2022. 30 different documents with a total of 898 pages were reviewed and analyzed. Apart from the documents, 24 interviews were conducted with 14 museum educators/mediators, five curators, three directors and one curator-director. The interview process began in August 2021 and ended in February 2023 including the analytical process. For the analysis, Atlas.ti 8 software was used.

Table 1: Museum characteristics

	<i>Metropolitan Region / Other regions</i>	<i>Belonging</i>
<i>Museum 1</i>	Other region	Private
<i>Museum 2</i>	Other region	Municipal
<i>Museum 3</i>	Other region	State
<i>Museum 4</i>	Metropolitan Region	Private (University)
<i>Museum 5</i>	Metropolitan Region	Private
<i>Museum 6</i>	Metropolitan Region	State
<i>Museum 7</i>	Metropolitan Region	State
<i>Museum 8</i>	Other region	Private (University)
<i>Museum 9</i>	Other region	Municipal

Ethical considerations

All ethical aspects were considered in the research process. The directors of the participating museums were contacted, and a consent letter was sent to each institution to authorize the obtaining of documents and data necessary for the analysis, as well as to receive the acceptance of their participation in the research. To maintain the anonymity of museums, the names of the institutions were changed to numbers. The participation of museum workers was voluntary. They were contacted by email, through which they received information about the purpose of the research, their role in the research, the method of data collection and analysis, and the guarantee of their anonymity. A digital informed consent was added to the message, which had to be read and accepted by each participant. The identity of the contestants was protected by using pseudonyms.

Data analysis

To analyze the data, a reflective thematic analysis procedure was carried out (Braun and Clarke 2006). Reflective thematic analysis is a research approach that seeks to identify and thoroughly understand emerging patterns of meaning in qualitative data. It involves deep immersion through exhaustive reading to discover key themes and significant recurring categories. These categories must be contrasted and reviewed within the teams and/or put in constant dialogue with the theoretical perspectives and experiences of the researchers (Braun and Clarke 2006).

The first phase of the ATR was a comprehensive review of the transcribed interviews, with the aim of reviewing the initial categories that appeared in a first familiarization with the data. In a second phase, they were contrasted theoretically and empirically with the central themes from the review, and they play a fundamental role in the promotion of

social inclusion in the field of previously proposed museums. During this process, the existing categories were refined, making them more complex and, at the same time, more relevant and pertinent to the study at hand. With this procedure, eight central categories were constructed to account for the objective of the study.

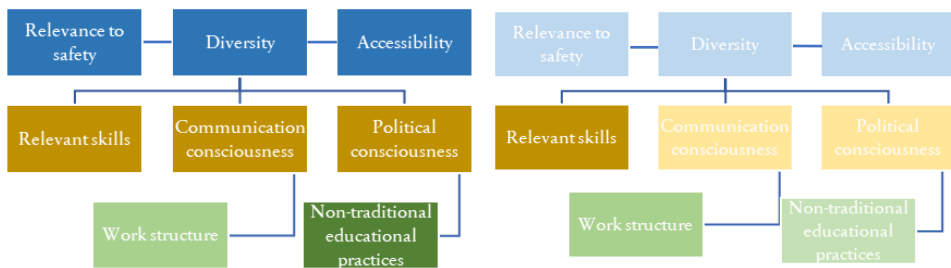
The categories are the following: (1) accessibility, (2) diversity, (3) relevance to safety, (4) communication consciousness, (5) political consciousness, (6) relevant skills, (7) non-traditional educational practices, and (8) museum work structure (Author 2024). The category accessibility (1) covers primarily spatial aspects, such as the physical aspects of the museum, the activities outside the building and the use of virtuality for the programs. Furthermore, all types of visitors can access and reach the museum with and without disabilities, from different socioeconomic levels, cultures, and ethnic groups without any trouble, including programs both on site and online. Diversity (2) relates to the types of visitors and museum workers, and includes concepts such as neurodiversity, ethnicity, culture, gender, socioeconomic levels, religions, ages, and vulnerable groups, as well as heterogeneity within the same target group. The category relevance to safety (3) encompasses visitors' and museum workers' emotional and social aspects within the museum, including equity and the feeling of belonging, acceptance, and familiarity in the museum. Communication consciousness (4) is defined by four aspects: assertiveness and punctuality in the communication of museum workers with visitors, multimodality, dialogues, and collaboration. Political consciousness (5) describes the protection of the guiding principles, such as the mission, vision and objectives, the social role of the museum, its possible agency vis-à-vis the citizenry, and the approach to relevant social issues. The next category, relevant skills (6), implies possessing behaviors and characteristics principally from museum workers that help to achieve greater social inclusion and better interaction with diverse visitors, such as care, multiculturalism, accepting the other person, empathy, listening to visitors, kindness, observing the environment well, the capacity for surprise, learning from visitors, open-mindedness, joking, curiosity, creativity, being adaptive, educating oneself and making people feel comfortable. The non-traditional educational practices (7) refer to different approaches and non-behaviorist educational tools presented in activities and exhibitions, and to the visitors' active participation in exhibitions and museum functions and educational programs. Lastly, the category of work structure (8) covers the dynamics, the hierarchy, and the collaboration between the workers and the different departments of the museum. On the other hand, it refers to the clarity in the staff's responsibilities and functions and their training (Author 2024).

Results

The results of the analysis show the nine participating museums belong into two groups, as can be seen in Figure 1. Four museums fit into the inclusive museum category (museum 1, 2, 5 and 6) while the other five institutions (museum 3, 4, 7, 8, 9) are in progress to accomplish higher level of social inclusion, which also means these museums do not possess

inclusive practices in the above-mentioned eight categories. The four inclusive museums together reach an ideal level of social inclusion, except in the category of work structure.

Three categories – relevance to safety, diversity, and accessibility – appear in the first line of Figure 1 with blue color. These are identified as indispensable categories to achieve social inclusion in museums. The second line of the graph also contains three categories in color yellow-mustard, called relevant skills, communication consciousness and political consciousness. These three categories are considered conditions, as they create the necessary aspects and characteristics for reaching the indispensable categories. The last line in green color represents the facilitator categories – work structure and non-traditional educational practices – which help to achieve the indispensable categories and the conditions. The shade of colors represents the accomplished inclusion level of the two groups (the darker color shows higher inclusion in the category). In the following subsections, the museum practices of each category are discussed.



Inclusive museums

Museums towards inclusive practices

Figure 1. The levels of social inclusion in the participant museums

Accessibility

Three museums (museum 1, 5 and 6) implement the most accessible practices in this section. All of them are located in the city center, easily reachable by public transport and designed to be accessible for people with physical disabilities. All three museums hold various digital activities and didactic materials, mainly for students, adults and/or elderly people. Moreover, museum 6 offers curatorial texts and catalogs in various languages, such as in English, Creole, and Mapudungun apart from Spanish, to involve people from indigenous communities, minorities, and foreign visitors in the participation.

The museum educator, Irene, further expresses museum 6's standpoint to offer accessibility for a diverse community:

I believe what summons us here is to watch over rights and guarantee the rights and access to culture. The museum has in its foundation statements that have to do this, [and] that the museum is for the people of Chile. It is thought that everyone enters, the worker, the housewife, students, academics, everyone is entitled to

access it [the museum], but it must be made known, it must be validated, and it must be disseminated. (Museum educator, individual interview, 2021)

According to another educator, Emilia from museum 5, visitors should be taught and be aware that accessibility is everyone's right, and it should be respected and valued: "So, one also teaches other people who are [in the museum], just with the gesture of realizing that there are other people who come, who have the same right to access that artwork, and that they have to access it in an equitable way."

Furthermore, an important aspect of this category is to offer educational activities and/or exhibitions for people in different cities and/or regions. Emilia explains the educational approach and the operation of the itinerant exhibition of museum 5:

The [program] Museum goes to the school not only involves the collection, but the educators also go, those who do the mediation, but also a deaf person, a blind person, the blind person does tactile mediation, the deaf person makes an artwork description, or tells the story of an artwork. (Museum educator, individual interview, 2022)

As one of the relevant challenges in this category is to convert Chilean historical buildings that are considered national heritage into edifices with a more accessible approach, for example with elevators, universal access, and design, and maintain these tools in usable condition. Not all the analyzed museums can provide universal accessibility for their visitors, as Ana expresses:

In architectural terms, we have flaws in terms of the structure of the building, for example, in the case of accessibility, our elevator is currently bad and has been bad for a couple of weeks. Other types of things and modifications that could be made to the building are not done or have not been done yet because they require a lot of planning, in terms of the fact that it is a heritage building. (Museum educator, individual interview, 2021)

Diversity

In the category of diversity, museum 5 contains the most various and developed practices among all the analyzed museums. The institution organizes activities for a wide range of target groups, such as children, students, families, people with physical and/or mental disabilities, blind, deaf, and deaf blind people, immigrant visitors, elderly people, teachers, people with vulnerable socioeconomic background, and students from other Chilean cities than the capital. As described above, in the accessibility section, the museum implements traveling exhibitions and activities for those schools whose students could not go otherwise to visit the museum.

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Every year, this cultural institution organizes a convocation exhibition for young artists with a premium for the winner, who is chosen by an expert jury. With this practice, the museum does not only offer support and visibility for these young people, but it can develop higher diversity with the selection of various and different artists. Furthermore, the museum has a permanent exhibition about Mapuche culture, which is organized by a Mapuche curator. Moreover, and related to educational practices which can generate a more diverse cultural environment, museum 5 works with elderly people and with a deaf person as volunteers and museum workers. In this institution, different points of view and opinions are respected and valued. Emilia, the educator, expresses museum 5's standpoint in the following way:

First, the museum learns from diversity. It is understood that not everyone learns in the same way... It is understood that everyone has different opinions. It is understood in everything; therefore, since everyone has different opinions, all opinions are valid. And it is understood that an artwork can have thousands of interpretations. (Museum educator, individual interview, 2022)

The category of diversity shares many variables within itself, as above-mentioned, nevertheless, some interviewed museum workers' view about the concept of inclusion should be revealed in this section. In these museum workers' interpretation still exists the belief that inclusion mainly involves people with different disabilities. Even though the situation of people with disabilities is significant in the perception and interpretation of social inclusion, it is not the only aspect of the concept. It is worth emphasizing the other relevant variables, and the existing heterogeneity within a specific group. For example, in the case of blind people, museum workers, especially museum educators would need to consider their education, cultural background and if they belong to a minority of the country. The above-mentioned variables together with the background of museum workers' diversity should be considered in the implementation of museum (educational) programs, events, and exhibitions in order to attract and satisfy a broad museum public.

Relevance to safety

Museums 1 and 6 stand out in the analysis with their practices to provide an equal, safe, and stable environment both for visitors and museum workers. The polyphony of exhibitions and the presence of a diverse, recurrent, and loyal public show the success of these two museums in this category. Both museums 1 and 6 are active in establishing a dynamic relationship with the museum's local public, neighbors, and schools, as we can see in the educator, Irene's opinion in the case of museum 6:

It's super interesting because it allows us to dialogue, stress, reach an agreement with the curators, with artists, and we also involve the communities, for example, artists who are mounting and there is interesting work in the process. It opens this

process and invites, for example, a group to come to give their opinion, to ask to talk about the mounting, or to have a snack³ with the artists or a school gets to know an artist [in person] who is on display or who participates in the exhibition. [It is important] to generate meetings and conversations with students. All this happens by being involved from day zero, [and] being there doing the follow-up. (Museum educator, individual interview, 2021)

The two museums also focus on establishing a familiar, welcoming and accepting environment. The same educator, Irene, talks about it in the following manner:

There is a certain gap with access to museums. Museums are still [perceived as] somewhat distant and somewhat sacralized spaces. We have worked together with several museums to break that, where people feel that it is a space which they can visit freely, without feeling they should have previous knowledge, but rather the opposite, to discover knowledge. (Museum educator, individual interview, 2021)

Ursula, the curator of museum 6, expresses the relevance of museums as agents of social care:

I think that, precisely, in the context of the pandemic, we activated ourselves as a soup kitchen to people in street situations or for hungry people (...). And I dare to say that it still happens because... Because of the pandemic, we try to do, to contribute. I think it is the fact of establishing ourselves as a soup kitchen and trying to be a bit of an agent in the community. (Curator, individual interview, 2022)

As part of the museum familiarity, exhibitions should be welcoming and comfortable for the visitors. Ursula, as a curator, especially attentive and conscious about this issue:

People laugh when I want, I insist on mounting low because in Chile people are not very tall, although not all our public are Chilean. Children, of course, (...) the elderly (...), and it is very important because it immediately gives a more familiar tone of belonging ... I feel comfortable in the museum, the museum is also my home, the museum, this collection is also mine. (Curator, individual interview, 2022)

As part of the inclusive practices, this category should also involve the museum workers' perceptions about their working environment and feeling of belonging in the museum. Nevertheless, the participating museum workers principally relate this category to the museum visitors, and they do not necessarily mention and/or include themselves and

³ "tomar once"

their working environment. In order to this category would operate well, museum workers also need to have a welcoming and accepting atmosphere.

Communication consciousness

Relating to this category, three museums (museum 1, 5 and 6) implement the most effective communication to their public, to different other cultural and educational institutions, and among their departments and workers. All three museums have developed collaborations with various national cultural institutions and schools. Furthermore, museum 6 maintains more extensive contacts with international cultural institutions, researchers, and curators. Museum 6 also developed strong connections with its neighbors and organizes permanent and varied activities with them.

Museum 5 emphasizes its relationships with people with different disabilities, both visitors and museum workers or volunteers. Emilia describes the museum's atmosphere and dynamics:

We also had a deaf person, once. (...) Also, it was like an experience, as Natalia also told me that she wanted to be here, and I said: "Nati, I don't have money, but if projects come out, I can incorporate you, let's start this way." "Perfect." And it was also great because Nati is deaf, she speaks sign language, but Nati reads your lips, so it was a little easier in this way. (...) Finally, I asked Natalia herself to help us, and she gave us sign language classes. So, she gave classes to the receptionist, to the guards, [and for] my production partners too. To be able to communicate with Nati because they wanted to talk to her, and they didn't have the tools. (Museum educator, individual interview, 2022)

All three museums (museum 1, 5 and 6) build their educational activities on active participation and dialogues with visitors. Moreover, communication consciousness, respect, and diversity in opinions are important parts of a teamwork that enrich the working environment, could result in various and more creative programs, and generate open-mindedness. Lorena, the director of museum 1, sees teamwork as a crucial aspect of working dynamics: "For us, from the perspective of the museum's value models, we have teamwork. It is essential that museum work, a cultural space that works for education, is [realized] within a group of people, even if one is thinking about something different or one has a different perspective." (Museum director, individual interview, 2022)

Collaboration forms a significant part of this category. Museums can function more effectively with the support of other educational and cultural institutions, as Lorena explains:

We work a lot in relation to the municipality or partner companies, schools, universities, and institutions similar to us, as well as working with children, especially in the region, [and] museum people. It isn't such a big world, so, we get

to know each other and work together. We know a little about what each one of us is. The truth is that I believe that in the cultural space... I believe that in all spaces, but in the cultural sphere it is super important to work in a network, in the end. You can't work any other way. I believe that institutions lose if they do not work together. (Museum director, individual interview, 2022)

Regarding this category, the main limitation in the majority of museums is the lack of knowledge and speaking of foreign languages. Even though many museums offer audio guides for their foreign visitors, unfortunately, many museum workers do not speak another language except Spanish. Furthermore, considering the budget of the museums, not all of them can support their staff with language courses or with training.

Political consciousness

Museums 1 and 5 have a special focus on all the important aspects of this category, such as the guiding principles, the mission, vision and objectives, the museum's social role, its possible agency vis-à-vis citizenry, and the approach to relevant social issues. Art is not only about aesthetics, but it is also related to social, cultural, political, and economic circumstances in the past and present even if it does not involve specific ideologies. The contextualization and perception of artworks can vary in different periods and can be person-dependent. Art museums could embrace these changes and incorporate them into their view and interpretation, apart from their esthetical perspective. The director of museum 1, Lorena, describes the relevance of continuous development and contact with the current world:

Let's see, I think the world is evolving very fast. I think it is something that one cannot lose sight of, especially as a museum because it [can] happen as we work with the past, we stay in the past. Yes, we try and always think about our principles. That, deep down, they [the principles] correspond to the current world, which is not the same world as two years ago... It [the world] is really changing. I can say that we have some basic principles and one of our principles is to work with socially important issues, that is a topic we have. In some way, we have a thermometer, and we say, look, this is happening now, (...) let's consider it. (Museum director, individual interview, 2022)

While some museums that participated in the research have carefully considered mission, vision statements, objectives and even department objectives, other museums do not possess all these relevant principles in their goal-orientation. Well-established principles with emphasis on values (for example inclusion) are essential in the operation of museums, as well as the clear orientation of museum workers and the public. Without their existence and implementation, social inclusion cannot be implemented effectively.

Relevant skills

The interviewees of museums highlight the importance of personal behaviors and characteristics in the treatment of visitors such as the value of multiculturalism, empathy, care, attention, listening, understanding the visitors, curiosity, humor, capacity for adaptation and kindness among others (Author 2024). For example, the educator of museum 7, Alonso, pays special attention to the social environment where the visitors come from, in order to provide them with more specific materials and information regarding their social background. Furthermore, through empathy and open-mindedness, museum workers can learn a lot from their visitors, as the educator in museum 4, Maria's opinion shows:

You have to put yourself in their place [people with disabilities] and, of course, sometimes you have to modify your discourse. Moreover, I think that there is, on the other hand, the surprise, letting yourself be surprised because occasionally, you believe that they [people with disabilities] are that way, and you underestimate them, and they have much more to offer. Furthermore, one has to prepare and listen to them because one can believe, one can think that an activity is inclusive and, from what one read in a book, but it turns out you [should] put it into practice with them, who will be the final users. (Museum educator, individual interview, 2022)

In general, museum educators of the analyzed museums know or act well intuitively in understanding and attending visitors. The results show, the participating museum educators manage well at least the emotional aspects of their public. However, some of them expressed challenges in the case of specific target groups, for example students with vulnerable backgrounds or people with different disabilities. To support museum workers in order to develop more appropriate skills for managing diverse and heterogeneous target groups, trainings about interpersonal and intercultural skills should be organized, available and offered to museum workers which could serve the relationships towards the public as well as among museum personnel.

Non-traditional educational practices

The dominance of non-traditional educational practices can support reaching inclusive museums, for example, it is apparent in museums 1 and 5. Both institutions use various educational approaches such as participative, playful, interactive, creative, and constructivist approaches apart from their own developed methodology. Furthermore, they focus their activities and exhibitions on relevant social issues, for example gender equality, immigration, cultural rights, environmental consciousness, and children and adolescents among others, on top of the art and aesthetics. Both museums emphasize stimulating creativity, reflexive and critical thinking, emotional education and developing dialogues

between museum educators and the public, and among the visitors. They offer diverse types of programs like concerts, theater plays, different art workshops, teacher training courses and workshops, talks, among other virtual or activities *in situ*. Museum 5 especially considers the view and opinion of people with disabilities as it can be seen in the educator, Emilia's response:

We turned to CREA association, which is an association for people with disabilities, to teach us because I believe that blind people can see one thing, but in reality, it is something else. So, I thought and believed what they should see, but when we met them and talked to them, they actually told us: "No, this is not what we want to see, what we would like to see is something else." Therefore, this program was also put together in relation to what they wanted. (Museum educator, individual interview, 2022)

Finally, both museums offer texts with simple and straightforward language which can be easily read by any visitors. According to the director, Lorena, it is among museum 1's role:

There is no appraisal, we don't have any appraisal for difficult academic classes. On the contrary, we constantly look for the difficult to do it easy when obviously there is hard theory and there are several [topics] that we can talk about, but in the end, what interests us is the real world. Not being with four academics talking about postmodernity and Peirce. It's not our role. (Museum director, individual interview, 2022)

The results of the analysis show that the museums try to apply non-traditional educational approaches in their programs and events, such as Constructivism, Interpretive Reasoning Methodology, participatory, playful, and creative approach, among others. However, the analysis reveals that these non-traditional practices are mainly implemented in educational activities and/or by museum educators/mediators and are not necessarily present in exhibitions.

The exhibitions still have the tendency to maintain a traditional, cognitive approach, that is, the public receives new knowledge through a passive manner that mainly expresses the perspective of the curator and the museum. Regarding the relationship between the museum and visitors, in the opinion of Hooper-Greenhill (2007), it is usually authoritarian, added to the fact that educational processes are designed to transfer information and knowledge from the expert to the visitor, who is perceived as a student. Pastor (2004) clarifies that the content is constructed through explanatory texts and/or conferences based on logic and linearity. According to this approach, memorization replaces meaningful experiences, and knowledge and learning are isolated from the real-world context (Hein 2006). The educational method is cognitive rather than experimental and favors the mind

over the body (Hooper-Greenhill 2007). The results of the research analysis reveal that the participating art museums mostly use a traditional approach, relying mainly on the perspective of experts, curators and/or artists.

Work structure

Considering this category, museums should provide a reasonably equitable and diverse working environment. Taking museum 6 as an example, here each worker's function and responsibilities are clear and written. Furthermore, the institution elaborates an annual report about each organized and implemented activity. This museum, especially the education department, works with the neighbors, they develop together various activities. Moreover, the meetings among the museum workers are always collaborative, equal, and less hierarchical; all the department coordinators meet to discuss the museum programs, as the educator, Irene explains:

Being part of another coordination plan with the museum management, where other roles are fulfilled, such as being part of the museum's, let's say... editorial committee or being part of the exhibition committee, where the coordinator [of the department of education] also have an opinion or voice in relation to the exhibitions that are coming in the following years. (...) We [the department of education] are included from day one, what's more, from before, from when the exhibitions are chosen, we [department of education] also have an impact. (Museum educator, individual interview, 2021)

Nevertheless, and despite the above-mentioned example, museum workers still tend to think of inclusion as a condition which mainly involves museum visitors and does not directly relate to the working conditions. Moreover, museums should pay more attention to staff diversity in cases of recruitment, internships, and volunteering. Finally, the analysis of this category also reveals the precarious situation of museums and their workers, that is, the lack of resources in the field. However, it is worth mentioning that funding challenges and the situation of museum workers, especially museum educators, are worldwide problems (Arriaga 2019; Rende et al. 2021).

Finally, at the end of this section, it should be noted the limitations of the analysis. As the paradigm is Interpretivism, it allows the researchers to use their own perspectives in the research analysis. Considering the authors' professional background, it helped them form a more profound understanding of the discussed issue, namely, the manifestation of social inclusion in art museum educational practices. The descriptions and quotes of the section intend to show a broad perspective of the discussed issue. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the manifestation of social inclusion is varied in each museum due to different aspects, such as location (capital versus more remote region), financial background, state, or private belonging of the museum, number of personnel, the

perspectives of each museum worker and each museum's target groups. Even though the above-mentioned categories can provide a general categorization of the manifestation of social inclusion in art museums, it can differ by the situation of each museum.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the analysis show that the presented institutions try to change and tackle the concept and approach of elitism and the stigma that still reflects art museums (Khashan 2019; Lott 2019; Ruiz 2018). The described museums focus on diverse target groups and their access to the programs. Similar to the results, various authors underline the necessity of diversity and equal acceptance of all ethnic groups (Bazan et al., 2021; Catlin-Legutko 2019; Gonzales, 2020).

To attract a diverse public, different viewpoints and voices should be heard in exhibitions (Anila 2017; Bunch III 2017; French 2019) and even specific target groups should not be thought of as homogenous (Candlin 2003; Moorkens, Verreyke and Ortega Saez 2022). These changes relate to the reflection of Sandell, that is, museum claims to social agency "become more concretized and more closely linked to contemporary social policy and the combating of specific forms of disadvantage" (2007, 95). The relevance of the mentioned statement is shown in the results, as the researched museums with a more inclusive plan not only focusing on dialogues about actual social issues, but also manage to work together with neighbors or employ people with disabilities and/or with different cultural background. The results also indicate what this author expresses, namely, that "museums can impact positively on the lives of disadvantaged or marginalized individuals, act as a catalyst for social regeneration and as a vehicle for empowerment with specific communities and also contribute towards the creation of more equitable societies" (Sandell 2007, 96). Sandell's first two arguments are underlined in this article; however, further empirical research is needed to determine museums' impact on more just societies.

For more effective work and stronger relationships, various authors highlight the importance of collaborations among institutions in the cultural, educational and museum sphere (Dragouni and McCarthy 2021; Marzio 2007) as the results also reveal. Apart from these outside contacts, Hollows thinks that for inclusion and social justice, dialogues on activist practice are necessary to focus "on the role of museum staff as community members within the institution, and the influence of their individual values on the work of the museum" (2019, 80). According to the author, every museum worker is an agent who can generate change and has a choice to contribute to social justice, which should result in more democratic community involvement. Moreover, Hollows emphasizes that curatorial practice is about "a team of participants actively making choices" (2019, 83) that is in line with the results of this article. For example, in the case of museum 6, the department coordinators are involved in the planning and formulation of exhibitions. Furthermore, the education department organizes and implements displays together with the neighboring community.

Nevertheless, various interviewed museum workers, especially museum educators, commented on the difficulties of attracting and engaging teenagers in activities. In relation to youth collaboration and activism, Crabbe, Husok and Kraehe describe participatory action research for young people. As stated by the authors, the adolescents want to “positively impact other teens by showcasing youth art (...) and their community by adding value to the museum and the city” (2022, 64). The illustrated program and article show how young people can be actively and enthusiastically involved in the museum function and life, that can usually be a challenging task. It would be interesting to lead future research about effective strategies to engage young people in museums.

Relating to the category work structure, museums should consider workforce equity, clear and specified responsibilities, and collaborations among museum departments, aspects, which are as relevant in adequate social inclusion practices as considering the visitors and museum communities necessities. All four participating museums with inclusive practices in the study (museum 1, 2, 5, 6) count on equitable organigram with clear personal responsibilities. Nevertheless, the difficulties of work structure and staff appear to be a global challenge. Rende et al. (2021) in their research found that in the United States, museum educators have wide-ranging job responsibilities apart from low-income salary and hierarchized organization.

Moreover, and in relation to employment, Martins (2016) thinks that the involvement of people with different disabilities in the museum staff promotes the understanding of their conditions. Martin’s conclusion is confirmed by the results of this study, as in some participating museums, where people with disabilities worked, the museum personnel became aware of their lack of knowledge and limitations to communicate with their fellow workers with conditions and wanted to learn to connect properly with them. It would be interesting for future research to see how emotional skills like empathy and open-mindedness, among other characteristics, can change with the employment of people with different disabilities both in museum staff and in visitors.

As French (2019) states, to bring social inclusion, museums need to function as spaces for dialogues and exchange. To make this change, both educational programs and exhibitions should focus on participants’ active involvement. For this reason, polyvocality (Anila 2017) and interculturality (Cimoli 2023) on the exhibitions and non-traditional educational approaches (Bradford, Diaz, and Schilling 2021; Falchetti 2020; Hooper-Greenhill 2007; Vidal et al. 2019; Wright 2020) like constructivism, interactivity, exploratory and participatory methods should be part of the educational activities.

This article considers eight essential categories to evaluate social inclusive practices in nine Chilean art museums. These categories are relevance to safety, diversity, accessibility, communication consciousness, political consciousness, relevant skills, non-traditional educational practices, and work structure. The described categories in this article can be used as effective categorization in the possible evaluation of the manifestation of social

inclusion together with the consideration of the specificities of museums (geographical location, cultural, economic situation among others) in the museological space.

Furthermore, the analysis of the study shows the participating Chilean museums can be divided into two groups: (1) museums with inclusive practices and (2) museums towards inclusion. Nevertheless, all participating museums develop more or less inclusive practices in their educational programs and organization. However, differences exist among their inclusive function and activities, which due to the limited space of this article cannot be examined individually. Another limitation of the study is that it does not include visitors' perspectives in the analysis. Future research can focus on the opinions of the public, other types of museums, results comparison or quantitative research involving the described categories.

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Informed Consent

The author has obtained informed consent from all participants.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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