THE QUESTION OF REPATRIATION AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF FINLAND

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Recommendations for a Construction of a Repatriation Policy Concerning the Ethnographic Collection at the National Museum of Finland

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Image Credit: Photo of the *Kansallismuseo*, National Museum of Finland, taken by the author on 9 February 2020.

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List of Abbreviations

AAM	American Alliance of Museums
AAMD	Association of Art Museum Directors
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
EEA	European Economic Area
FELM	Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission
GHM	German Historical Museum
GMA	German Museum Association
HCPO	Hopi Cultural Preservation Office
ICCR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICME	International Committee of Museum and Collections of Ethnography
ICOM	International Council of Museums
ILO	International Labour Organization
MA	Museum Association
MAN	Museum Association of Namibia
MMPA	Marine Mammals Protection Act
NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection Act
NMF	National Museum of Finland
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OIA	Office of Indian Affairs
PETA	People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals
UBCMA	University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNIDROT	International Institute for the Unification of Private Law

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Chapter 1. Introduction

'*We just want these remains to be respectfully returned to the tribes and put back in place… They need to be returned there so they can return to the spirit world, in the next world... And we return back to the hands of the creator who brought us here*.'

-Clark Tenakhongva, vice chairman of the Hopi Tribe, (*Denver Post*, 3 Oct 2019)

On 2 October 2019, the American and Finnish governments made a major announcement during a White House press conference. The Native American ancestral remains, and 28 grave goods, associated with the Mesa Verde Collection at the National Museum of Finland, *Kansallismuseo*[1], henceforth NMF, would be returned to the Hopi tribe in Colorado (U.S Department of the Interior 2019). The statement was viewed as a great success by all stakeholders. It had also brought a sense of closure for the Hopi tribe who had begun the repatriation claim process in 2015 (Interview #1). This had been the first formal case where Finland had agreed to return human remains back to another country. Similarly, in 2017, the NMF had agreed to send over 2,600 indigenous artefacts to the Siida Museum, in Inari, which is a museum dedicated to the indigenous Sámi people who reside in the northern territories of Finland (YLE 2017)[2]. Both repatriation cases, while under different circumstances, highlight the increasing importance of returning both cultural and funerary objects as well as ancestral remains to communities of origin. Since the 1960s, the topic has had a substantial impact in the scholarly discourse as well as its

[1] *Kansallismuseo*, otherwise referred to the National Museum of Finland (NMF) by the author. The museum itself is located on the main street of Mannerheimintie in the borough of Kampimalmi in the capital city of Helsinki. It was designed by Armand Lindgren, Eliel Saarinen, and Herman Gesellius (Krakowski & Purchla 1999, 349). The museum itself opened after Finland's independence in 1917 (Aronsson & Elgenius 2014, 158). One of its famous features are the frescoes of the national Epic, the *Kalevala*, on its ceilings painted by the Finnish artist Gallen-Kalela (Krakowski & Purchla 1999, 349). The museum is under the Finnish Heritage Agency and the Ministry of Education and Culture (Finnish Heritage Agency 2020).

[2] Inari is a municipality in Northern Lapland, which is part of Finland. The museum itself is located within the Lake Inari region.

practical application within museum spaces (Goldstein 2014, 65). However, much of the discussion surrounding repatriation within the museum context has had an understandably strong geographical focus, particularly on countries with a colonial past and involvement in the trafficking and sale of illicit artefacts.

While little has been written about Finland's role with cultural repatriation, there has recently been a growth in literature surrounding Finland's position in the illicit art and antiquities trade (Benson *et.al* 2020; Bonnie *et.al* 2018; Maaperä 2017). Finland operates as a 'transit country' (Maaperä 2017, 48). It is an area where trafficked items of cultural and artistic value are shipped through on their way to their final destination (Maaperä 2017, 48). The Finnish antiquities trade regulations were substantially changed in the 1990s, making it easier for the illegal movement of cultural artefacts to move through Finland and out of the EU (Maaperä 2017, 48). The removal of regulations had initially been seen as a way to improve the art and antiquities trade between the Russian Federation and Finland, who shares its border on the eastern side (Benson *et.al* 2020, xxii). Legislation requiring import licenses for cultural objects does not currently exist in Finland and export paperwork from Finland itself, if the object is only going through the country, is not required (Benson *et.al* 2020, xxii). There is European legislation that Finland has ratified such as the 1994 Act from the Council of Regulation of European Communities on the export of cultural goods that requires the return of unlawfully removed cultural objects back to states within the EEA region (Benson *et.al* 2020. xxii). The reason for concern regarding the transport of illegal artefacts into Russia is due to the heavy ties between the art and antiquities trade and money laundering (Thomas 2014, 3).

There was also a case in 2015 of Finnish authorities stopping the transport of a supposed Syrian plaque (Maaperä 2017, 48). It had been bought at a French market and was in transit to Russia when it was intercepted (Maaperä 2017, 48). The Finnish authorities had flagged the shipment due to the increasing awareness of cultural artefacts of Middle Eastern origin being heavily smuggled through the Nordic countries (Maaperä 2017, 48). This awareness was the result of an increase of academic literature, and a focal point for UNESCO in 2017 regarding the impact of the Syrian civil war on illicit artefact trade (Brodie & Sabrine 2017, 74; Hardy 2017). The provenance of the plaque is still being investigated by the National Antiquities Board in Finland (Maaperä 2017, 50). At the time of this thesis's publication, there have been no new developments and the actual provenance of the plaque is unknown after doubt has been cast over the French market papers that the object's origin is Syrian (Maaperä 2017, 50). However, regarding the topic of repatriation, there is little to be found in terms of either scholarly articles or government policy in Finland.

Given the recent request cases at the NMF, it is increasingly important to attempt to understand how the museum has operated regarding repatriation under its guidelines. A vast majority of Euro-American museums such as the National Museum of World Cultures in Leiden and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, have even set their own return policies, which are publicly accessible online (Museum Volkenkunde 2019; MFA 2020). A few larger museum groups, such as the Smithsonian Institute, even have their own repatriation offices (Smithsonian NMNH). These museums have a longer history of responding to claims. Yet, the issue of repatriation within the Finnish museum context has been a contemporary one. For the last ten years, the NMF has seen a rise in repatriation case claims. The return of the Mesa Verde artefacts was branded as a masterstroke of cultural diplomacy on both sides. It became internationally relevant in 2019 and created the legally binding repatriation agreement of human remains and funerary objects associated with the museum's Mesa Verde Collection (U.S Department of the Interior 2019; Kansallismuseo 2019).

This thesis focuses on the request cases made towards the National Museum of Finland from 2010 to 2019. As a country, Finland finds itself in an interesting position when it comes to the discussion of repatriation of cultural heritage. Unlike several other European countries, it never was a colonial power. In 1917, Finland became an independent state after having been ruled interchangeably by Sweden and Russia for several hundred years (Tiitinen 2008, 225). However, the Sámi people, who live in the northernmost part of Finland, called Lapland, have been subjugated in a manner reassembling colonising practices. This has had profound 'social, linguistic, and cultural effects' on the Sámi people (Lehtola 2015, 22). Finland has had to deal with, and negotiate this particular legacy in their policies, such as acknowledging the damage caused by Finnish and Swedish-Finnish missionaries who removed, and sometimes burned, sacred Sámi objects due to their 'pagan' or 'shamanic' roots (Akman & Goodnow 2008, 23).

While Finland did not participate in colonialising campaigns in the countries where many artefacts present in their ethnographic collections originate, 'direct colonisation' is not the only way through which colonialism works (Simpson 2009, 121). Participation in or association with 'Western' practices of cultural collection can also be construed as 'cultural colonialism', thus involving Finnish museum institutions (Amsler, 2016). Effectively, a museum space can still support colonialist or imperialist ideologies through their acquisitions, use and presentation of collection space, and artefact labelling, handling, and storage. For example, Swiney mentions that 'for [the] museum staff, the register is a mundane object, familiar and unproblematic' (2012, 32). Registers hold records of the collections but, documents can be misplaced, discarded, transcribed

and translated (Swiney 2012, 32). For example, funerary objects can often be dismantled from its original grave context if certain artefacts begin to be lumped together and then re-recorded as different elements of a collection. The museum curators are the ones responsible for such changes, highlighting the issue that curators place their own hierarchy of importance of the material objects that make up a collection. This makes what Alberti refers to as a 'object [being] dislocated from its point of origin' even worse (2007, 373). Swiney states that 'registers do not simply record collections, they construct them' (2012, 43). Whoever is writing the register, and whatever their ideological background, influences how the collection is framed and what artefacts end up constituting that collection.

An example of a country that is in a similar position to Finland would be Hungary, who also did not have overseas colonies (Aronsson & Elgenius 2014, 145). However, Budapest's Museum of Ethnography, Néprajzi Múzeum, was noted for still having exhibition text panels and artefact labels shaped by the notion that

> 'black people, native Americans or South-East Asians [could be represented as] 'tribal cultures', [and] such exhibitions create a timeline where European colonists manifested the higher stages of historical progress' (Aronsson & Elgenius 2014, 145).

Part of the process of repatriation has also become linked to decolonization practices within the museum space (van Beurden 2018, 66). This will be further explored in later chapters.

1.1 Aim:

This thesis aims to review the current repatriation claims cases, filed officially or unofficially, that the National Museum of Finland has dealt with from 2010 to 2019. Unofficial repatriation cases are considered those that have not been filed in cooperation with a government entity. Specific case studies were selected that related to both possible claim categories. Furthermore, only claims that were still considered active or being processed were examined as part of this research. There was a request case not included in the chapter that covers the case studies. In 2013, Iraqi Embassy in Helsinki had sent a letter asking the NMF to return six artefacts that had been given to President Urho Kekkonen in 1977 by Iraq's Information Minister at the time, Tariq Aziz (YLE 2013). Figure 1 showcases the artefact that was labelled as the most significant; a clay 'dedication' nail (YLE 2013). In an official statement, the museum went over the trust papers of President Kekkonen and decided against repatriating the artefacts (YLE 2013). The letter had been sent in May, and by June of 2013, there had been elections in Iraq, and a new ambassador

came, and immediately dropped the case (YLE 2013). As a result of the Iraqi artefact case being neither active nor being processed, it has not been included as a case study in this research.

Figure 1: A Sumerian ‘dedication’ nail made from clay. The nail itself is transcribed with cuneiform characters. The estimated date of the nail (4,000 years old) would place it in the Urk Period. Photographer: YLE. Source: See References for Images Used.

Claims have so far only been made on the NMF’s ethnographic collection. As a result, there is a mixed geographical focus. Furthermore, this thesis will consider the legal protections for the ethnographic collections within the NMF. The aim is to review how the necessity of dealing with the claims has led to changes in curators' practices. As of this moment, the museum relies on a few guidelines. For example, those derived from the policy set by the German Museum Association, GMA, on how to care for collections comprised of colonial artefacts (GMA 2019). Other guidelines are highlighted in the third chapter. Currently, the National Museum of Finland does not have its own formal policy. Part of the broader aim of this thesis is to help make recommendations for a repatriation policy that is unique to the National Museum of Finland. This would aid the museum’s efforts on avoiding the use of another country’s policy documents since each country, historically, inhabits different positions with regards to the history of colonialism and its practices.

1.2 Research Questions:

The research question has been devised to investigate NMF’s handling of repatriation cases as well as to serve a practical purpose by providing recommendations for constructing a formal

policy. There is academic relevance to this topic as it can be used to fill the knowledge gap and contribute to scholarly debate regarding the Finnish museum context. Alongside this, there is also social and practical relevance because it can document and indeed hopefully help inform museum practice. The central research question is **to what extent has a lack of a formal policy regarding repatriation impacted recent claim cases at NMF?** Other research questions are:

º What were the challenges and specificities to each repatriation claim case?
º How did those challenges impact the outcome?
º Considering the museum's nine-year experience with repatriation cases, how have the claims impacted the practices and thoughts of the interviewed NMF curators?
º What would a future policy look like?

1.3 Definitions and Terminology:

In this thesis, the term repatriation is defined by an adaption of Erich Matthes's definition as the 'return of artworks, cultural artefacts, [or human remains and their associated burial artefacts] to their country, culture, or owner of origin' (2017, 193). The personal adjustments to Matthes's meaning was made in this thesis because, as noted by the reburial policy at the University of Melbourne, often indigenous communities feel frustrated that the remains of their ancestors as well as their grave goods, are viewed as cultural artefacts (University of Melbourne 2009). Communities making repatriation claims for human remains and funerary goods consider them as 'living' or 'sacred' (University of Melbourne 2009). This is different from the realm of what is typically constituted as a cultural artefact which is an 'object' (University of Melbourne 2009). It is also important to note that repatriation and recovery each have their own definitions albeit with minor changes. Recovery is slightly different from repatriation because it has connotations of trying to protect and retrieve stolen artefacts (Lindsay 1990, 165). The difference lies in the notion that there were legal protections for the artefacts at the time of removal from its source country or community and therefore is viewed as illegally acquired. In the case of the NMF, the collections used in the case studies have all been legally acquired. In this thesis, return, recovery, and repatriation will be used interchangeably. This thesis justifies this decision because many of the artefacts that are covered in the case study chapter left their communities or countries of origin as colonial loot or through processes which would now no longer be considered legal or ethical.

The case studies concern artefacts from several different geographic locations. Indeed, the fourth chapter covers collections that come from four different continents: North America, Australia, Africa, and Europe. Because of this it is important to clarify how this thesis defines certain groups of indigenous people and how they are referred to in this thesis. Native Americans

when mentioned in this thesis exclusively refers to the indigenous peoples of the United States. In addition, this thesis when mentioning the Mesa Verde Collection, includes references to the Hopi tribe in Colorado, despite the Hopi homelands including Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico (Tieck 2015, 7). The area of Mesa Verde when discussed explicitly deals with the Hopi reservation only, which is now part of the national park, and not the surrounding Navajo reservation land.

Additionally, the native population of Northern Finland are called the Sámi people. While the Sámi live in the Artic regions across Norway, Sweden, Finland, and northern Russia, the references to the Sámi people in this thesis only refer to those that live in the northern Finnish territories (Vitebsky 1994, 7). While occasionally referred to as Sámpi, relating to the area of Lapland, the general term, Sámi, is used instead as the repatriated artefacts can be from outside that region but still belonging to the Sámi people (Haarmann 2016, 44).

This thesis also examines a Namibian repatriation case study from the Rautanen's Ambo Collection. The claim surrounds a power stone, *emanya lyOshilongo*, coming from the region of Ovamboland (Nampala & Shigwed 2006, 190). The term 'power stone' or *emanya lyOshilongo*, will be used interchangeably in the case study example. The artefact is specifically dealing with the region of Namibia that was considered part of the Kingdom of Ondonga (Laely *et.al* 2019, 119). However, people from Ovamboland still primarily identify as Namibians and as a result, the chapter pertaining to the Namibian case study will not have a separate term for Ovamboland.

Due to the coverage of the Arrernte Collection, this thesis also concerns the indigenous people of Australia. This decision was a result of learning that the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), as part of its ongoing Return of Cultural Heritage Project, had flagged the NMF for artefacts in its collection (AIATSIS 2019). The collective terms that will be used to refer to elements of the collection as well as the current parties will be terms such as 'Native Australians', 'indigenous Australians', or 'aboriginal persons' (AIATSIS 2019). These terms have been used by indigenous Australians to describe native peoples originating from over 250 different tribes prior to European colonization, from both the mainland of Australia as well as the Torres Strait Islands (Dixon 2002, i). In this work, the terms will be referring to mainland indigenous Australians as the collection deals exclusively with artefacts pertaining to that region. Additionally, the Australian ethnographic collection that was under AIATSIS scrutiny was the Arrernte Collection. The Arrernte are Australian Aboriginal people who live in the central territory of the country (Dosset 2011, 38). The collection has cultural objects from the Western Arrernte people. As a result, it is possible to refer to artefacts from the collection by the local term, Arrernte, that would identify the local indigenous people associated with the region. The Arrernte

people are also sometimes referred to and spelled as Aranda but, Arrernte will be the only term used throughout the thesis.

Lastly, this thesis considers the ethnographic Alaskan collection present at the museum, which is referred to as the Etholén Collection. The descriptions of many of the cultural artefacts from the catalogue include the use of the term 'Eskimo' or 'Aleut' to describe the indigenous people living in the Alaskan territory. Effectively, what is being referred to as the Alaskan 'Eskimos' in the collection are actually the Aleut Atka tribe (Osinski 1992, 5). The term 'Eskimo' is used as a blanket term for the indigenous groups that live on the land stretching from Russia, Alaska, Canada, and Greenland (Osinski 1992, 5). However, in recent years, the term 'Eskimo' has been viewed as a 'derogatory term for the indigenous peoples of the wider Artic region' and is no longer used in Canada's academic circles to describe Inuit and Ýúpik tribes (Kaplan ANLC). The name had been considered insensitive because it was given by non-Inuit people and was said to mean 'eater of raw meat' (Kaplan ANCL). Even though linguists now believe that 'Eskimo' is derived from an Ojibwa word meaning 'to net snowshoes', the indigenous people of Canada and Greenland prefer other names (Kaplan ANCL). Indigenous scholar Maria Shaa Tláa Williams states that 'Alaska is home to…cultural and ethnic groups that speak over twenty different languages…terms such as 'Eskimo' and 'Indian' tend to diminish the diversity of cultures' (2009, xiv). Within the past twenty years the self-designative terms such as Ýu'pik', 'Yupiaq', 'Iñupiaq', 'Unanghan' and Álutiiq/Sugpiaq' have become popular as Native people correct the colonial naming process (Shaa Tláa Williams 2009, xiv). However, it is worth noting that 'Eskimo' still remains in the logo of the Alaska Federation of Natives (Ruskin APN 2016). The decision made for this thesis to follow the latest changes and use the tribe names or the term 'Native Alaskans' when referring to the Etholén collection. The term Aleut Atka will be used the most within the Alaskan case study portion of the thesis as many of the cultural object descriptions refer directly to the Aleut peoples who inhabit the Atka Island.

1.4 Methodology:

The data for this thesis was collected from November 2019 to March 2020. The methodology consisted of four aspects: 1) literature review, 2) analysis of the cultural artefacts, journalistic reports, and official documents related to them, 3) visitation of a temporary museum exhibition and finally 4) interviews with the museum curators. The literature review also provides the theoretical background of the research undertaken and presented in this thesis. For the second feature, a range of material was used as part of analysis including: museum annual reports, an online artefact catalogue, press releases, official government reports, news articles, cultural artefact labels, exhibition catalogues, maps, photos, and secondary literature were all consulted. The

interviews with the NMF staff was part of the qualitative data collected which pertained to the ethnographic collections at the museum.

The ethnographic collections themselves could not be visited in person, as many of the cultural artefacts in question were either in storage or being prepared for future transport. However, one exception was the Mesa Verde Collection as the NMF hosted a temporary exhibition from 14 January to 1 March 2020 (Kansallismuseo 2020). On display were the 28 funerary objects but not the human remains, which were designated to never be viewed by the public. This temporary museum exhibition is also used in later chapters with the discussions on how to handle repatriation claims. Most of the objects in question pertaining to the collections were analysed in both the publicly available digital database and printed ethnographic collection catalogues[3]. For example, the Etholén collection is available through this its own printed collection catalogue as well as on the online database.

As the final aspect of the methodology, semi-structured interviews with curators at the NMF were conducted in Helsinki[4]. Prior to the interview process, curators were contacted and sent cover letters indicating the aims of the research, asking permission to record the interview, as well as outlining the rights of the participants (Appendix A). The rights of the participants as indicated in the cover letter included the right not to answer questions, the right to view the interview transcript if requested, and right to give information confidentially. Due to some information that was given during the interviews being either not formally announced by the NMF or the curators expressing their own opinions, that went against current museum policy, the identities of the interviewees have been protected. This was beneficial, because it meant that the curators were able to freely discuss their opinions or experiences. After the curators had accepted and given permission for recording, they were sent in advance a total of ten questions. Five standard questions were asked to all the interviewed curators. The final five questions asked had been tailored to fit specifically their respective regional focus. Samples of the ten questions for each curator are included in the appendixes (Appendix B; Appendix C). Follow up questions would be asked based on what the curators had mentioned in earlier questions. In terms of the method of interviewing, this thesis reflects the snowballing method. The use of the snowball sampling method meant that the museum curators would help direct the researcher towards other curators who could also participate in the research. This method was used due to curatorial roles having been switched over the years or curators that had been assigned to new parts of the ethnographic collection. Originally, many

[3] The online catalogue for the NMF is often referred to as MUESOT FINNA.
[4] See References for a list of interviews.

curators were contacted through the museum directory of personnel but during the interview process, participants mentioned other colleagues as possible interview sources. The final transcripts of the interviews have not been included in the appendix of this thesis because some of the details mentioned on the recordings can signify the identity of the participant.

1.5 Limitations & Delimitations:

There were time limitations associated with the interview process. In one case, a certain participant delayed the interview request until it was approved by the Ministry of Education and Culture. This was a personal decision based on repatriation being viewed as a 'political' topic and the curators working at a national museum (Interview #4). Other participants did not feel the need to do so due to the conditions set out by the cover letter which promised confidentiality. Alongside this, there was a case in which a curator was on sick leave and as a result, the interview was not conducted in the same manner as the others. This interview was conducted in a similar format in that a cover letter and a list of questions were sent in advance. However, the interview happened over the phone rather than in person. Additionally, the research being undertaken as part of this thesis happened during the quarantine period of the COVID-19 pandemic. The fifth interview had to also be done over the phone as a result. Alongside this, there were at times a delay in the responses to emails from the NMF curators regarding requests for information regarding certain cultural objects that were listed on the online database. Furthermore, the previously mentioned interview call happened outside the museum offices, as the NMF had been closed.

There is also an inherent researcher bias as the author of this thesis is a Finnish national who grew up visiting, and has a great awareness of, the collections at the NMF. These experiences have of course shaped the viewpoints of the author. The announcement of the repatriation of the Mesa Verde remains and grave goods coincided with the author's continued interest in the museum. The decision to focus this research on the decisions regarding repatriation policy was made in order to improve a museum space that the author has visited since childhood.

Due to the scope of the research question(s), the anticipated result of this thesis is to provide suggestions on how to make an effective national museum policy on the topic of repatriation. There are other museums such as the Ateneum and Designmuseo that are under the same Ministry of Education and Culture, might need more tailored policies regarding their own art collections. Indeed, there is a specific focus on ethnographic objects within a history museum which would have to be altered slightly if it was being applied to an art museum.

Moreover, a decision was made to not include photographs of human remains, funerary objects, or ritual objects that were not intended to be viewed outside their communities. This was done to respect the wishes of indigenous communities such as the Hopi Native Americans who explicitly stated to the NMF to remove the images of human remains, either bones or mummified remains, from the online and public museum database (Interview #1). However, many members of the Hopi tribe were also frustrated by the fact that funerary items were never supposed to be viewed after burial either and were still displayed (Interview #1; Interview #2). While the NMF removed the images of human remains from the public database, on 14 January to 1 March 2020, the NMF ran a small temporary exhibition on the 28 grave goods (Kansallismuseo 2020). This example highlights irregularities and inconsistencies in the museum's policy. Images from this exhibition titled, *Mesa Verde*, also have been excluded on the same premise as the other cases. Additionally, some information such as the artefact list for the repatriation of Sámi heritage, which totals to 2,600 cultural objects, is too long to add as an appendix to this thesis. Furthermore, many of the artefacts flagged for repatriation have been removed from MUSEOT FINNA, and no longer have a catalogue number. It was up to the memory of the interviewee or the use of the private museum database during the interview that made it possible for some of the catalogue numbers to be included into the following chapters in this thesis. It is also significant to mention that the ethnographic collection at the NMF has not been fully digitised on MUSEOT FINNA.

Lastly, there might be some difficulties for other researchers who wish to further examine the thesis's research question. Not all materials such as online artefact labels or government reports, have been translated into English. All translations from Finnish to English have been my own. Additionally, some information such as the human remains and associated funerary goods are no longer available through the museum's online database. In order to collect more information about this part of the Mesa Verde Collection, the researcher would have to rely on an NMF curator giving them supervised access to the museum personal database to view the information and materials surrounding the human remains.

1.6 Thesis Structure:

This thesis is divided into five parts. The second chapter in the thesis is the literature review and focuses on the theoretical background. Next, the third chapter focuses on the current stance the museum has taken regarding repatriation claim cases. Then the fourth chapter, 'Case Studies', is broken into several sub-sections. Each one of these segments corresponds to a part of the NMF's ethnographic collection. Sub-sections include a brief background of the collection, examples of the collection that have repatriation claim requests attached to it, and how the requests have been managed. The fifth chapter presents recommendations for the construction of repatriation practices

that can contribute to the development of a policy document. The qualitative data collected as part of the interview process is included in explaining the museum's current stance on repatriation requests, the case studies sections as well as the fourth chapter. Finally, the conclusion presents an answer to the research question as well as suggestions for both further research and for future repatriation policy efforts in the museum.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

It is important to first examine the theoretical background of cultural heritage repatriation within museum contexts. The debate regarding the return of cultural property back to their source or origin communities has evolved over time. Scholars have argued a whole host of approaches when it comes to the urgency of repatriation. It is central to address, not only the range of scholarly opinions regarding the physical return of human remains and cultural objects but, also the recent ideological shifts within museum studies regarding the role of a museum in a contemporary, globalized society. These elements directly contribute to the understanding of how the NMF has operated over the last decade regarding request cases.

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the issue of repatriation within the museum context was brought to the forefront during the 1960s (Goldstein 2014, 65). This decade attracted considerable attention to the issue of repatriation as it was tied to ongoing debates regarding colonialism, civil rights of minorities, property and voting rights for indigenous peoples, and the rise of national liberation movements (Goldstein 2014, 65). More than five decades later, the subject regarding the return of cultural objects and human remains has led to a wide variety of opinions on how museums should handle the topic of repatriation. Before addressing these opinions however, it is worth analysing how the role of the museum has evolved over time. One of the

clearer indications on what separates scholarly debate regarding repatriation, is how the role of the museum is defined and how it has changed over time.

The origins of the 'idea' of the museum can be traced between the intersection of the Age of Enlightenment and the Romanticism period (Burns 2003, 204). This span of two hundred years helped to solidify notions of value, including sentimental value, in objects, and the promotion of a historical past, even if that past was largely imagined or reconstructed in a manner to suit the interests of the state or of an institution (Burns 2003, 205). Moreover, the concept of a museum became tied to 'quests of knowledge'; that museum spaces could educate the wider public in an organized and systematic manner- although this systematism can of course be problematized (DeAngelis & Malaro 2012, 215).

The museum's purpose has always gone beyond being just a place that has educational value for its visitors. Even a definition of what could be the traditional role of the museum still includes the museum's responsibility for the researching, storing, preserving, and sharing of its collections (Günay 2012, 1250). As stated by Thompson, 'the mission of museums should be to acquire, conserve, research, and display their collections to all. That is all and that is enough' (2003, 252). While the public and private museums may have different goals and guidelines, their traditional function has still been defined as that of the preservation of their collections. The role of the museum also differs from country to country. The museums in the UK, for example, might rest on different values than ones in the US or even Finland. This difference is the result of each countries' historical pasts. Museums in the UK have to manage their values with their nation's history with empire. A complex dilemma that Finnish museums, while having to come to terms with its own involvement in colonial processes, does not have to deal with this particular problem.

The view that museums today have a larger part to play on the global stage can still reinforce the traditional role of the museum regarding how they are viewed as 'temples of culture' and 'centres of knowledge' (Cameron 1971, 11; Handler 1988, 194). Victorian culture critic Matthew Arnold in his 1869 collection of essays 'Culture and Anarchy' states that '[culture] seeks… to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere' (1993, 79). While Handler develops his argument specifically in the context of museum spaces, Arnold's statement reflects that the notion that museums could showcase 'the best…in the world current everywhere' was already rooted in a Victorian period mindset (Arnold 1993, 79). In addition, in 'Dismantling the Master's House', Giblin, Grout, and Ramos address how collections in national museums transformed from being displays of wealth by rich donors or reach of empire to being remade into representations of global culture (2019, 71). The notion that national museums have

shifted into representing international culture plays a factor in how some scholars viewed the legitimacy of repatriation. For example, Handler states that

> 'the case for museums as centres of knowledge demonstrate[es] that no object has a single home and no one culture owns culture. Objects alongside practices share our ideas about our past, present, and future' (1988, 194).

Handler furthers his reasoning that through the growth of a more globally connected society, any museum can represent themselves on an international stage and have their collections represent that goal. Effectively, as a result, no one can 'claim' an object of cultural heritage as their own as it now has become part of 'world heritage' (Handler 1988, 194). Handler does not address in his work the issues surrounding when the museum object is in fact a human remain but labelled as an artefact and who has the right to ownership then.

It is worth mentioning that throughout Handler's argument, it is made clear that these objects are ones that are on display within the museum. Much of the ethnographic collections of museums are in storage and cannot be readily viewed in person. It is also typical of museums to require that the storage facility visitors are researchers and not just any member of the public. Some artefacts are also lost in massive online databases if there is even museum catalogue available. Even if Handler had also included in his definition of objects as those in storage being researched, this still would not be relevant for the NMF. Without the repatriation process, further research would have not been done on specifically the Mesa Verde or Ambo Collections (Interview #1; Interview #2; Interview #3). While no doubt museums can act as 'centres of knowledge' due to their educational value, they can also be what Thomas refers to as 'temples of elite culture' (2016, 17). Indeed, an artefact or a collection is labelled as 'world heritage' is in fact owned by the museum that houses and stores them. While Handler claims no one can possess global culture, there is undoubtedly a 'owner', once the artefact is in the museum. The issue of repatriation calls into question whether that keeper, which often is a museum, should be.

There have also been arguments made that the museum's role, based around the early origins of the foundations of public museums of the 17th century, has rapidly expanded and adapted to the needs of contemporary society (Burns 2003, 204). Despite concerns that the 'efflorescence of digital culture would render physical collections and museum visits redundant', Thomas states that 'museums are more socially and economically vital, they seek to offer their publics more and they have long been established' (2016, 1-2). The mission of the museum has expanded beyond educating and entertaining visitors to include telling collective stories, helping further international

diplomacy, advancing research, fostering social cohesion as well as self-promoting 'a diverse range of social and economic benefits' (Thomas 2016, 2). He argues that a direct impact of the expansion of the museum's role has led to changes regarding the 'outcomes of negotiations with indigenous people [regarding their collections]' (2016, 5). Such changes resulted in not only new channels of communication between museums and source communities but in new ways of 'undertaking curatorial work, conservation, and public programming' (Thomas 2016, 5). While he acknowledges that the process between museum curators and source communities can at times be frustrating and difficult, it still leads to the 'reward of shared knowledge' (Thomas 2016, 5).

Part of the museum's new role also includes tackling previous notions of what a museum as a cultural institution stands for. Thomas adds that 'museums were lambasted…as warehouses of colonial loot, and hegemonic [organizations]' (2016, 17). Museums also had developed a reputation of being filled with 'dead' heritage (Thomas 2016, 18). In the 1960s, the Frankfurt school philosopher Theodor Adorno had referred to the unpleasant overtones of the Germanic adjective, museal or museum-like, which meant 'objects in the process of dying' (Thomas 2016, 18). Part of the development of shedding the more traditional view of the museum's role involves that the museum spaces themselves are dynamic, filled not with dying objects but living ones with a narrative to share.

It is in this debate where the museum's role in offering a living space where the inequalities being faced by today's society can be addressed and redressed, is situated (Thomas 2016, 15). This debate can also help bring changes to how marginalized groups or formerly colonized communities view and enter museums (Bench 2014, 111; Thomas 2016, 23). Part of this reassessment includes seeing museums as 'sites of conscience', a place of living memory that helps preserve elements of the past for future generations (Sevcenko 2018, 20). Correspondingly, the discourse of the 'object as an ambassador' has also emerged to challenge past perceptions of museums as 'warehouses' (Thomas 2016, 21). For example, some indigenous artists and leaders, notably from the Pacific region, have wanted their artworks to help promote their cultures and may approve of their display in globally renowned universities and museums such as the Musée du Louvre or the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Thomas 2016, 21-24). Furthermore, Thomas states that 'one of the key shifts that happened during…decolonialization is the attempt by museums and governmental policies [to integrate] ethnic minorities and immigrants into national narratives' (2009, 7). What Thomas mentions is indicative to the process of trying to also improve the opinions of museums spaces of indigenous communities who often feel that the spaces do not offer a place of living memory but rather showcase the Western bias of cultural heritage as well as place for the white global elite. The

marginalisation and exoticisation of indigenous cultures in the wider museum space continues to be a problem that needs to be tackled by dealing western centrism (Reilly 2018, 99).

Having covered the changing role of the museum, this chapter will now focus on the range of opinions regarding repatriation of cultural heritage. One of the biggest criticisms of the use of repatriation is who truly benefits the most out of this 'exchange' or 'return' (Barkan 2001, ix). Barkan documented the rise of repartition cases in the 1990s and argued that the pressure for restitution and apology was more likely to come from the perceived perpetrators than from the source communities (2001, ix). Barkan stated that the political leaders got involved in repatriation cases because

> 'holding the high ground [was] a good investment and …repatriations are acts that bring moral credibility to the elites of today, by drawing a contrast to their morally dubious predecessors…[as a result] ideas are diverted away from the problems of today' (2001, ix).

With regards to the political component inheritably present in issues surrounding the return of cultural property, Barkan's argument disregards or pays little attention to the fact that political leaders often become involved due to the petitioning of source communities. In most cases surrounding the desired return of human remains and cultural objects, a community must make an appeal through legitimate legislative channels on either a local, national, or international level for most museums to seriously consider their requests. However, claims can also start from and are discussed based on relationships between communities and museums, so they develop from non-governmental or institutional contacts as well. While there is a dimension of repatriation that can be used for political gain or for nationalistic causes, the act of repatriation is itself intrinsically political. It involves, on at least one side, the acknowledgement of 'wrongdoing' on the side of the current 'owner' of the object, and the rights of the source communities which might challenge established national narratives (Barkan 2001, ix). However, that does not detract from the fact that most source communities' main purpose of making a request claim is because they want the physical return of ancestral remains or objects of cultural or ritual value.

Cases for repatriation have also become tied with debates surrounding the erasure of uncomfortable or painful history. Thompson argues that

> 'we have a historical obligation to take responsibility for the past…..To the question of whether something can and should be done about the historical wrongs today, I would answer, yes, quite possibly, but I do not believe that rewriting history is the right approach,

> and nor is moving objects from one museum to another. To address the issues that negatively affect people's lives in the present, we need to turn our attention to what should be, rather than what was' (2003, 289).

Effectively, Thompson is arguing that museums should address past issues and inequalities but should place a larger focus on problems being faced by the contemporary public. These new difficulties that she refers to are never explained or how they differ from past ones. For Thompson, there seems to be a clear point in which the past loses relevancy with regards to issues faced by people today. This leaves little room for the incorporation within this type of argument for the acknowledgement of 'living' cultural artefacts versus static ones. If an object is still considered living so is its narrative. The artefact still impacts people's lives at some level. Additionally, Thompson equates repatriation on some level as a revision of history. By moving 'objects from one museum to another', she argues that the story of how the object ended up in the first museum to begin with, such as being an example of stolen heritage from a colonial context, becomes lost as it takes on the new context of another museum (2003, 289). What she defines as a rewrite could also possibly be viewed as adding another layer to the history of the object. It would not be presumptuous to assume that the source community, having received the object in question back, would then choose to highlight the journey of the object. In the case of the reburial of human remains, the story of the ancestors comes back to its original resting place where it belonged in the first place.

Thompson also states that the object's original spot at the first museum might highlight an uncomfortable narrative that would otherwise not be considered if the object was moved to a new museum context. She uses the case of the Parthenon Sculptures or the 'Elgin Marbles' as a case against repatriation (2003, 287). She states that through the return of the marbles back to Athens, the element of how the ancient Athenians built the Parthenon as a symbol of their power, which was built on the backs of slaves, who came from all regions of the wider Mediterranean, would be lost because that is not what a Greek museum would want to focus on (Thompson 2013, 287). However, it is worth noting that the British Museum, which currently holds the Parthenon Sculptures, in its own published and online materials, does not address the dimension of slave labour being used to build the Parthenon either (BM 2020). The main critique made towards Thompson's argument against repatriation is that it is often the case for many indigenous communities that the problems of the past have bleed into their present and foreseeable future. These groups are still dealing with issues pertaining to illicit artefact trading, land rights, voting rights, political involvement and representation, and a whole host of socio-economic problems that are tied to their history of being oppressed by state governments (Brancome 2013, 2). It can be

viewed as a lack of empathy by source communities if the museum projects a lack of understanding on why these groups desire to see objects that were removed, sometimes violently, returned.

There have also been fears amongst museum professionals and scholars that repatriation cases would damage or empty out museum collections. There are academics and museum curators who cannot imagine a situation where an established museum is without its well-known collection or artefact such as the British Museum not having the Parthenon Sculptures or the Rosetta Stone as part of its collection. James Cuno, the president of the J. Paul Getty Trust, stated 'by presenting the artefacts of one time and culture next to those of other times and cultures, encyclopaedic museums encourage curiosity about the world and its many peoples' (2014, 2). Cuno implies there is a significant loss, not only to the museum in cases of repatriation with the physical object being removed but, also the museum's visitors. Stockings argues that 'museum anthropologists, appealing to the role of their institutions in preserving the 'material heritage' of native peoples… were concerned that [these] great collections might be dismantled' (1988, 11). Fears pertaining to this dismantlement include the loss of elements of collections would directly result in a loss of scholarly research and knowledge.

Although that fear of lost knowledge has not been realized, the issue of the repatriation of cultural property has been the subject of international concern since the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the prohibition of the illicit transfer of cultural artefacts (Stockings 1988, 11). Once again, this view, that museum spaces provide the ultimate protection for its fragile collections, is heavily influenced by the notion that the museum is effectively, 'the final resting place' of a certain object (Reibel 1997, 111). Alternatively, the placement of an artefact in a museum, either on display or in storage, can be seen as part of the object's history of movement. Rather than a final stop, the museum simply becomes part of the object's provenance. This can especially be seen in examples where museums sell portions of their collections, including ethnographic ones, to both private collectors and other museums. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD), made the decision to relax selling guidelines for all objects (AAMD 2020). AAMD stated that these guidelines would at least last two years and it the laxing of the policy was necessary for smaller museums or ones that lack an endowment to manage general operating costs (AAMD 2020). Effectively, there is no guarantee that where an artefact is now located in one museum is where it will remain there, thus, the museum is not the end destination for any object.

In addition, many objects have never been properly studied before a request has been put in place meaning that repatriation claims generate more research. An example of such a case would be the Maasai tribe, who come from east Africa, whose representatives provided further information

on the collection of Maasai cultural objects at University of Oxford's Pitt Rivers Museum (Koshy 2018). Laura Van Broekhoven, the museum's curator noted that the process of repatriation was indeed invaluable to the museum as the visiting Maasai tribal representatives explained the cultural significance of several of the artefacts housed in the Pitt Rivers ethnographic collection (Koshy 2018). There is, right from the start of the repatriation claim process, an initiative for museum curators and staff to cooperate and establish open channels of communication between the museum and source communities.

Repatriation as a process has also been viewed by some as a backlash to the increasing globalization of today's society. Handler mentions that 'the repatriation of heritage objects often comes down to placing them in one's own museum…[which] establishes ownership but, only by reinterpreting cultural things in terms of the ideas of those who plundered them' (1988, 194). Handler ties the repatriation movement of cultural property to 'culture wars' in which 'nations fight for treasures in exile' (1988, 194). Interestingly enough, J. Paul Getty Trust's President James Cuno titled his essay, as 'Culture War: The Case Against Repatriating Museum Artefacts' (2014). Barkan also made similar criticisms regarding how the often the governments acting on behalf of a stakeholder group or community were too owner nationalistic (2001, ix). However, it is worth noting that while countries have begun to demand back certain artefacts, but they never left countries, and often artefacts can even predate borders. In fact, the artefacts left cultures. The source communities have asked governments to act on their behalf to reclaim their missing cultural properties.

Indeed, Handler goes even further to add that the repatriation process is intrinsically tied with 'false accusations of vandalism and theft', as well as 'cultural imperialism and the destruction of meaning' (1988, 194). For Handler, repatriation is too political, having ties to the rise of nationalistic causes rather than the preservation of cultural heritage. Handler also implies that what the source communities really want is promotion of their culture and assistance to promote it rather than the physical return of cultural objects. He states that 'indeed, one of the responses of Western museum administrators to Third World repatriation claims is to send foreign aid- to build and staff museums' (Handler 1988, 215). Effectively, Handler views the acceptable alternative to repatriation as the promotion of the source community's culture by the museum in question, or foreign monetary assistance in the creation of another similar museum context, just without the artefacts that had been requested back. This view fails to take into consideration that many origin communities want certain artefacts of cultural or ritual significance to become, once again, part of daily life, and not in a museum display case.

One crucial part that Handler leaves out is that many of the repatriated objects are not actually ‘objects’ or ‘treasures’ intended to be placed in someone else’s museum (1988, 194). Rather, the ‘items’ in question are often human remains and grave goods meant to be reburied. In the case of indigenous sites and graves that have been looted over several centuries, origin communities want the human remains and grave goods back with the intention of these remains to be never viewed again.

An argument can be made that repatriation is only possible because society increasingly has become globalized. The rise of digitized records that can be examined anywhere that has internet access. There is also a whole wealth of published museums records which more communities, especially indigenous ones, have become more aware of the dispersion of their heritage.

As described before, there are concerns amongst museum studies scholars and museum professionals that the increased calls for repatriation does more harm than good. Repatriation so far has been discussed through those who view it as a result of a heated political environment, an excuse to wash away uncomfortable parts of history or a challenge to a museum’s mission in retaining a complete collection. The other side of the debate deals heavily with artefact or object provenance, which influences how the validity of the cause of repatriation is argued for. Stockings argues that it is

> ‘no longer… possible for museum anthropologists to treat the objects of others without serious consideration of the matter of their rightful ownership or the circumstances of their acquisitions- which in the colonial past was often questionable’ (1988, 11).

However, repatriation is not simply a question of the ownership of cultural property. Repatriation cases also highlight who controls the representation of meaning of the objects or of material culture. Stockings adds that ‘the museum is no longer exclusively a Euro-American preserve… post-colonial ‘new nations’ have now established museums of their own’ (1988, 11). The topic of repatriation has been of great concern to indigenous peoples and others such as former colonies who have lost parts of their cultural heritage because of occupation. This often causes ‘ownership disputes and conflicts between the present owner of the material, be it a state, museum, or private institution, and the applicant, who claims it by virtue of being the culture of origin’ (Dahl & Gabriel 2008, 8). These disputes arise because the source community feels the loss of this material culture or single artefact.

Macdonald states that ‘the repatriation process is not so much the removal of indigenous cultural objects from museums as it is a shift in the type of museum that cares for and displays the objects’ (2006, 453). There has been a push for museums to become part of what James Clifford's 1997 essay, defined as wider ‘contact zones’, through having open channels of communication and more collaborative community programs (Boast 2011, 56). Repatriation can help museums define themselves within this space since the issue of repatriation deals with ‘cultural property, identity, collectively, and belonging…it is all about sustaining relationships’ (Thomas 2016, 25). However, as stated by both Jenkins and Thomas, repatriation is often constructed in the media as a positive action for the people in former colonies (Jenkins 2016, 282; Thomas 2016, 29). Historical objects, antiquities, and artefacts are not necessarily perceived as cultural heritage to their origin communities. Therefore, it is important to allow source communities to define what their heritage is and make repatriation claims based on that notion. Effectively, there must be an assessment of the value of museum collections and the artefacts that make them up by the source communities, not the museums that currently are in possession of these objects.

Simpson further elaborated on this notion that indigenous communities need to make an independent assessment of value of a related ethnographic collection through the ‘re-socialization of objects: their return to the place of origin where the intangible aspects of heritage provide meaning and where the objects themselves may stimulate renewed activities of the intangible aspects of culture’ (Simpson 2009, 122). Effectively what Simpson is stating is that for many source communities, their cultural objects on display behind glass are supposed to be accompanied by elements of intangible heritage such as songs, dance performances, poetry recitals, and storytelling (Simpson 2009, 121). Krmpotich, Howard, and Knights’ work with indigenous women of Toronto, Canada also highlighted that the ‘de-contextualizing’ of an artefact or the divorcing of it from its point of origin can be tackled through handling sessions and ‘talking circles’ and have it re-integrated into the collective memory (2016, 359).

Alongside this, the repatriation of ceremonial objects is crucial as Simpson states that these objects are crucial for ‘intergenerational knowledge transmission within indigenous communities and for preserving and renewing the intangible aspects of heritage’ (Simpson 2009, 122). Repatriation of cultural objects from museums can be linked with source community initiatives to spread and create new interest for cultural knowledge and traditional practices and handicrafts as part of the process of community revitalization (Simpson 2009, 122). As a result of the increasing acknowledgement of this element, museum conservation practices have slowly changed to include in the museum’s exhibition design the ability to ‘preserve the integrity of an object’s meaning and purpose as well as the material of its construction’ (Simpson 2009, 122). This statement can be

translated within a museum space as including videos of handicrafts being made or for visitors to listen to songs or recitals while examining the artefact.

Lastly, repatriation claims can help further foster closer relationships between the source communities and museums. As noted by Françozo and Strecker,

> ‘legal claims are not the only avenue for pursuing returns or facilitating access to some of the collections… current practice shows that most of the time law does not adequately deal with such conflict and that diplomatic means are usually preferred to national and international judicial proceedings. Any claim for returns, therefore, has a greater chance of success if done in a conciliatory manner through diplomatic channels, negotiation, or agreement in the spirit of cultural cooperation or “cultural diplomacy”’ (2017, 473).

While such arrangements require the cooperation of both parties, repatriation claim cases open the possibility for museums to actively engage with ‘cultural cooperation’ (Françozo & Strecker 2017, 473). Françozo and Strecker focused their combined work on Caribbean cultural objects located in European museums and noted that repatriation is not confined only to the issue of returns but also to that of accessibility. Therefore, when the return of objects is not at the immediate moment a manageable option, the creation of digital museum collection databases or the addition to making such as database public provides another option to view the artefact by the source communities. Repatriation can be a mutually beneficial relationship of the museum allows it to be. The act of the return of cultural property and human remains to a source community is an act of goodwill and expresses the desire to create trust and understanding of each other’s positions. This opens further avenues of communication, consultation, and collaboration.

Despite the NMF being a state supported national museum, dedicated to telling the story of the Finnish people, the museum has built up a significant international collection. It is the ethnographic collection that has drawn attention from around the world. Overtime, multiple return requests have been filed by source communities who wish to have back what they value as their cultural heritage. In the next chapter, the NMF’s current way of dealing with repatriation claims will be analysed.

Chapter 3. National Museum's Current Stance on Repatriation

The theoretical background on the topic of repatriation has been addressed. The previous chapter also analysed how a museum's policy concerning the return of cultural property is influenced by how a museum defines their role. As illustrated, the issue of repatriation is not new, however there is a necessity for the NMF to actively participate in the ongoing debates around it is. Other museums based in North America and Europe have been dealing with repatriation cases since the 1970s. For the NMF, this is a new challenge. There has been a growth of heritage policies and laws shaping the way museums have been operating and up until 2019, when the Mesa Verde repatriation case was settled, NMF had not participated in the development in literature.

Despite the outcomes of the request cases from the Hopi tribe, the Sámi people, and the Namibian government, the NMF still has not yet developed a formal policy document on repatriation. There are ethical codes set by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish Heritage Agency, which the NMF is under (Interview #1). From the interviews conducted with museum curators in February and March 2020, it is evident that the museum staff has started the process of drafting such a document since early February but, it is not near completion (Interview #3; Interview #4). As of the publication of this thesis, the policy document is still in its draft stages (Interview #4). During an interview with a museum curator who had also been tasked, along with others, to write up a future policy document, they mentioned what policy documents the NMF had been looking into to shape its potential policy around (Interview #4). The curator also acknowledged that many of these policy documents are country specific and need to be adapted into a Finnish museum context. They mentioned that 'some policies are clearly shaped by the countries that made them…for example Great Britain had so many colonies and operates in a different code of ethics' (Interview #4). Other aspects of the policy document have yet to be agreed upon. A curator mentioned that the museum is unsure whether to make the policy public, or to keep it private, which is what the Nationalmuseum, National Museum of Sweden in Stockholm, did (Interview #4). The policy documents that were mentioned in the interview as inspiration for the repatriation policy draft have been complied in a list below:

- 1966 United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCR)(OHCHR 1966)[5]
- 1970 United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (UNESCO 1970)

- 1989 International Labour Organization C169 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (ILO 1989)[6]

- 1995 Unidroit Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (UNIDROIT 2014)

- United Kingdom's Museums Association 'Policy Statement on the Repatriation of Cultural Property' (MA 2006)

- 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN 2007)

- 2017 ICON Code of Ethics for Museums (6.2 Return of Cultural Property) (ICON 2017)

- Report for French President Emmanuel Macron, 'The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage. Towards a New Relational Ethics' (Sarr & Savoy 2018)

- German Museum Association's 'Guidelines on Dealing with Collections from Colonial Contexts' (GMA 2018)

- American Alliance of Museums 'Code of Ethics' (AAM 2020)

The two main documents that were commonly cited during the interviews however were the U.N Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the French report regarding the repatriation of African art. As a result, it is worth stating the main elements of these two documents. The 2007 U.N Declaration under Article 12 of the U.N Declaration states that indigenous peoples have the right to 'maintain, protect, and have access in privacy…to their

[5] Sámi activists have been advocating for the ratification of this treaty for years because of Article 27 in the ICCR. This particular article states that 'in those states in which ethnic, religious, or linguistic minorities exist, [these minorities shall not be] denied the right…to enjoy their culture, to profess of practice their religion, or to use their own language' (OHCHR 1966, 14).
[6] Finland has still not ratified this convention (ILO 2017).

cultural and religious sites' (2007, 12). This would help indigenous communities preserve, develop, and teach their spiritual and religious traditions as well as allow for control over ceremonial objects and repatriation of ancestral remains (UN 2007, 12). Additionally, Article 12 states that states 'shall seek to enable access and/ or repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains…through fair…mechanism' which would be in collaboration with the indigenous communities concerned (UN 2007, 12).

Along with the U.N declaration, the French report intended for president Emmanuel Macron, regarding African art repatriation also provided a framework regarding how a museum should choose what guidelines to follow. Furthermore, it outlined how to justify or question the current place of an ethnographic artefact in its museum. Prior to this report, UNESCO assemblies had already had discussions regarding the repatriation of African art. UNESCO argued that the repatriation of African art will promote the economic self-sufficiency of African nations and encourage their cultural, social, and economic development (Nicgorski & Nafziger, 2009, 168).

Notably, there are a few international protections that so far, as of the time of publication of this report, that have not been included on the policy drafts list which was mentioned in the interviews. Protections not mentioned include the Hague Convention of 1954 on the Protection of Cultural Property in Event of Armed Conflict, which prohibited the illegal export of cultural objects from occupied territories and facilitates the return of these objects by the end of occupation (Roehrenbeck 2010, 195). Additionally, 1992 European Union Regulation on Export of Cultural Goods 1992, which restricts the export of cultural goods to non-EU countries, and 1993 European Union Directive on the Return of Cultural Objects, which requires the 'return of national treasures of artistic, historic, or archaeological value that have been unlawfully removed on or after January 1, 1993' are not yet included on the policy list (Roehrenbeck 2010, 197).

Other than these guiding documents, the head of the NMF, Elena Anttila, released a statement after an agreement was reached between the United States and Finland regarding the Mesa Verde Collection. For the first time, it publicly addressed how the NMF handled the repatriation case. Anttila stated that

> 'on an international scale, we have seen an increase in requests to repatriate a variety of original materials and items from museum collections to their countries and cultures of origin...every request and initiative is processed on a case-by-case basis. As a rule, it would be good for the collection to remain intact, well-preserved and available to the scientific community. Alongside repatriation, other solutions can include increasing the

> accessibility of the collections, enabling item loans and engaging in active interaction with the countries of origin. In this case, we recognize that the grave goods and especially the human remains in our collection are of particularly great significance to [the] representatives of Native American tribes, who also submitted an earlier unofficial request to repatriate the items' (Kansallismuseo 2019).

There is a clear indication that the results of repatriation cases will not have a blanket outcome, rather 'processed on a case-by-case basis' (Kansallismuseo 2019). Anttila's statement also indicates that the NMF presents processes such as the digitization of collections, loans, workshops, seminars, and opportunities for source communities to visit the museum as alternatives to the physical return of cultural property. Interviews with museum curators confirmed that to be the case,

> 'repatriation of cultural material can also be digital…[pause] Such as opening data contents to online platforms without moving the objects or other materials physically. This is what our museum has done for many years already' (Interview #2).

Another curator mentioned 'digital repatriation is very important… the method allows our collections to be accessed by source communities… it's a method used quite commonly in the Nordic network of museums' (Interview #2). Finally, another curator mentioned that 'Alaska, Siberia, Native American, Moroccan, Indonesian, and some Australian collections have been altered….by adding pictures….in the Finnish database called FINNA which the source communities can access FINNA electronically' (Interview #3). Throughout all the interviews, there was an emphasis placed on digital repatriation as an alternative to the physical return of cultural property.

With regards to how the museum curators viewed repatriation and how the museum should manage this issue, there was a general sense of consistency in the answers. One curator mentioned that 'repatriation cases are expected to have open lines of communication…[and] these cases are operated on basic scientific and humanitarian principles' (Interview #1). Another curator also mentioned that 'we considered both the national and international elements of these cases' (Interview #4). Lastly, another curator mentioned that repatriation cases are handled on 'ethical principles based on this code [ICOM] are largely what we follow because there is no legislation yet to dictate the return of cultural property and materials' (Interview #3). The curators seem to have a set ideal of how to handle repatriation cases and there was notably an emphasis on the return of human remains (Interview #1-Interview #5). It is worth pointing out that when all the curators were asked whether the museum considered artefacts that have been labelled as ritual or artistic objects

and also contained parts of human skeletal matter, to be human remains, they all stated that these artefacts are not classified as 'human remains' (Interview #1-Interview #5).

Notably, NMF curators that were interviewed showed awareness of the impact of colonialism on archaeology and museum collections while still acknowledging that 'while Finland had no colonies we were still part of this international network and….the museum does have collections that come from a colonial context' (Interview #1). From that same interview, examples of a collection with a colonial context was given. The curator mentioned both the Alaska and Congo ethnographic collections as the examples. Until 1917, Finland used to be part of imperial Russia and Finnish officials working on behalf of the Russian state operated in Alaska and collected indigenous Alaskan objects (Interview #1). The other example, pertaining to the Republic of Congo, was mentioned because when the Congo was under Belgium rule, there were Finnish river boat mechanics who also collected objects that ended up in the museum with no factual provenance (Interview #1). There are also other instances such as Carl Gustav Mannerheim, who used a front as an ethnographic collector to cover his spy activities and acquire sacred Tibetan artefacts for a private collector, H. F Antell who then donated his collection to the museum (Ishihama 2016, 145). Another curator stated 'it is important to know and recognize the existence of these collections' when speaking about the colonial context of some of the museum's collections (Interview #3).

Lastly, all curators expressed, to varying degrees, how the fact that NMF is a public museum affects how they handle repatriation cases. Three interview participants said the same phrase that 'our collections are considered state property' (Interview #1; Interview #3; Interview #4). Another curator mentioned that 'figuring out the outcomes of repatriation cases involves not just the museum itself but several ministries and of course our international partners' (Interview #5). There is a sense that the outcomes of repatriation cases are not fully in the hands of the people who work at NMF. One participant phrased the Mesa Verde case as 'we were dropped into the Mesa Verde case' and mentioned that 'repatriation of cultural property is highly political…it's not neutral in any way' (Interview #2). Additionally, the view that national agencies and the government had more of a say regarding issues of repatriation was prevalent through all five interviews (Interview #1- Interview #5). One curator noted that 'the process [the repatriation of parts of the Mesa Verde Collection] was not initiated by us…we are not trying to send any message…we are trying to act as seen fit in the code of ethics' (Interview #2). As a result, the curators are discouraged from making decisions regarding repatriation claims that come from private, unofficial channels. Due to the NMF being a national museum, it becomes a requirement

for source communities to get government officials invited on their behalf. Simply, its government to government.

The next chapter will focus on the five case studies pertaining to different ethnographic collections. The first three case studies will focus on repatriation claims that were successfully accepted by the NMF and the final two case studies will focus on request cases that have yet to go through official channels.

Chapter 4. Case Studies

This chapter focuses on the official and informal repatriation claim cases that the NMF handled from 2010 to 2019. The case studies in this thesis includes the Mesa Verde Collection, Sámi Collection, Rautanen's Ambo Collection, Arrernte Collection, and Etholén Collection. Each of the subchapters will cover one or several artefacts of significance to the culture seeking the repatriation claims. Human remains will also be mentioned during the coverage of the Mesa Verde Collection. Information regarding these remains and artefacts have come from the interviews with museum curators, the online museum database (MUSEOT FINNA), exhibition catalogues, and outside literature about the collections. The first case study, which covers the Mesa Verde Collection, also has the text panels referred to from the temporary exhibition, *Mesa Verde*. Each subchapter will include the repatriation claim of the requested objects, a description of the object(s) or remains, the basis for claim made, and how, if applicable, the claim was resolved.

4.1 Mesa Verde Collection

The Mesa Verde Collection at the NMF is extensive, including over 600 objects (Interview #1). In the repatriation claim case filed by the United States government on behalf of the Hopi tribe of Colorado, only human remains and grave goods were requested to be returned (Interview #1). From examining the whole, partial and mummified human remains that were part of the collection, 20 individuals could be identified, and at least 8 of which were children (Interview #1). There were over 28 associated grave goods coming from the excavations that had been carried out at the Kodak House, Pool House, Step House, and Raunio 14's burial mound (Appendix D). The complete list of requested grave goods and human remains along with their online catalogue numbers can be found in the appendixes (Appendix D; Appendix E). It is worth mentioning that since 2015, the images of

human remains have not been available digitally and as a result do not have online catalogue numbers that can be found on the public MUSEOT FINNA database.

The history of the collection can be traced back to the earliest excavations of the Mesa Verde region by amateur archaeologist Gustaf Nordenskiöld (Barnes 2015, 2). He came from a wealthy, aristocratic family who resided on the campus of the Royal Academy of Sciences in Stockholm, where his baron father, and famous Arctic explorer, Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld was a member of staff (Barnes 2015, 2). Nordenskiöld had originally been traveling to America to treat his tuberculosis but while in Colorado had met with the Wetherill family who offered to show him Mesa Verde's pueblo cliff dwellings known as the Cliff Palace (*Mesa Verde* Kansallismuseo 2020). He managed to secure funding from his father to pay for the excavation which took place during the summer months in 1891 (Lister 2004, 17). Figure 2 depicts the Cliff Palace prior to when Nordenskiöld started to excavate the area.

Figure 2: Nordenskiöld's Photo of Cliff Palace. Source: Nordenskiöld, G., 1893. *The Cliff Dwellers of the Mesa Verde*. Stockholm: P.A. Nordstedt & Soner. 63.

Nordenskiöld was a geologist by trade (Barnes 2015, 6). Because of his background in the natural sciences, and their methods of quantifying data, Nordenskiöld made site plans and careful

observations as well as numbered and named the sites he made maps for (Lister 2004, 21). Figure 3 offers an example of a site plan he made of the Step House excavation. Additionally, he took well over 240 photographs of the region, excavation, and the finds (Lister 2004, 22). The excavations produced hundreds of artefacts of the Anasazi Puebloans from the 6th -14th centuries (Lister 2004, 22). Anasazi was the name given to the former dwellers of the Cliff Palace and Mesa Verde region. It is this group that the modern-day Hopi tribe claim ancestry from (Mesa Verde; Kansallismuseo 2020). Nordenskiöld notably saved materials such as animal bones, dried gourd rinds, human faeces, and other materials that 19th century archaeologists such as Willian Flinders Petrie and Frank Calvert would have discarded during an excavation[7] (Lister 2004, 22). Based on his travel diaries, he also introduced the Wetherill family to the use of a trowel for precise excavation of archaeological features and artefacts (Barnes 2015, 9). These particular elements were also highlighted in the text panel about Nordenskiöld, and how he differed from other early archaeologists, in the *Mesa Verde* exhibition (*Mesa Verde* Kansallismuseo 2020). Even though several of his methods were innovative, he was still bound by standards and practices of his time.

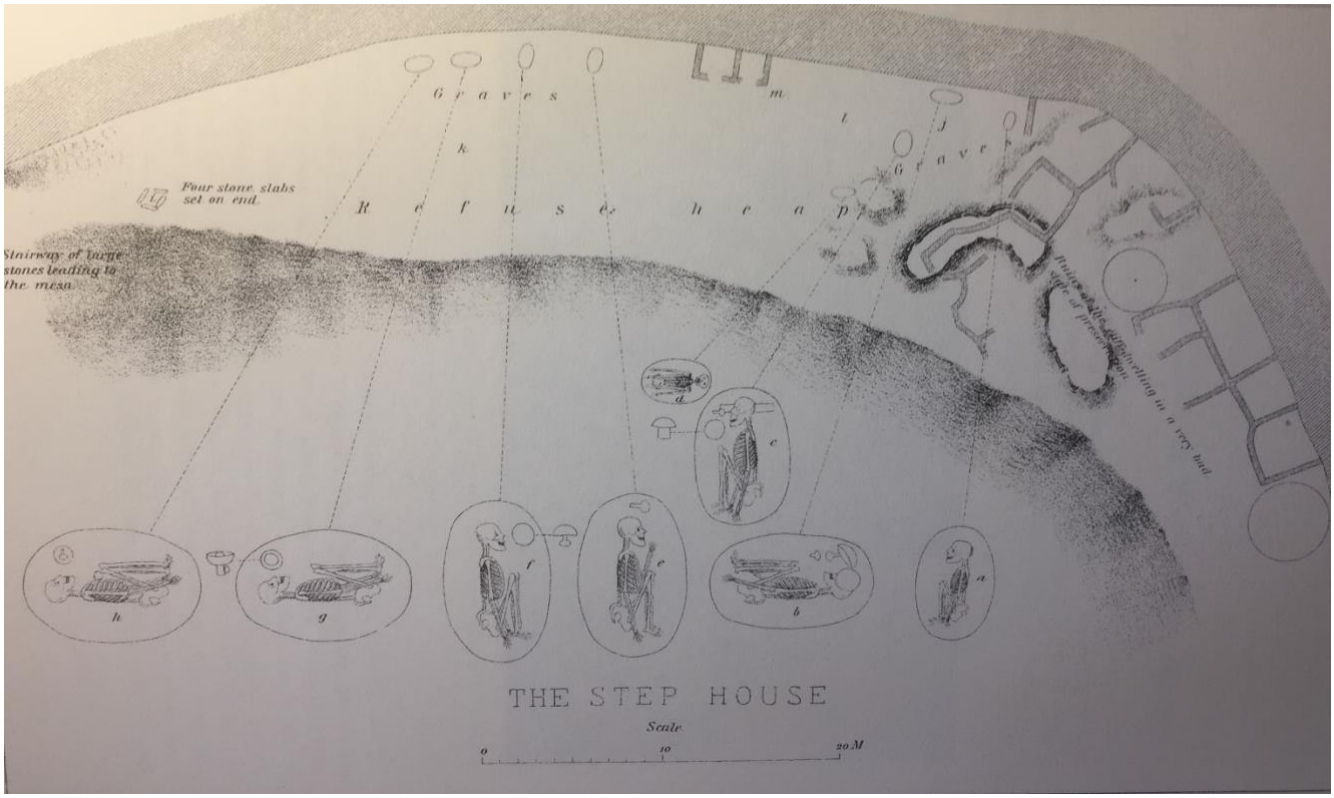

Figure 3: A hand drawn site plan of the Step House Excavation. Source: G. Nordenskiöld. 1893. *The Cliff Dwellers of the Mesa Verde*. Stockholm: P.A. Nordstedt & Soner. 37.

[7] Flinders Petrie was the first to investigate archaeologically the Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt in the 1880s (Uphill 1972, 356). Calvert excavated Hisarlık, the site of the ancient city of Troy, in the 1870s, seven years prior to the arrival of Heinrich Schliemann (Easton 1998, 335).

For example, it appears that Nordenskiöld 'did not keep or tabulate the volume of potsherds that in the future would be fundamental resource for scientists…[and] he recognized at the excavations at the Step House [that there were] 8 graves and [he had them] dug out'(Lister 2004, 22). He also misinterpreted the finds and suggested in his work that the Anasazi were the ancestors of the nearby Moki tribe (1893, 134). Nordenskiöld's willingness to dig the graves of those he knew were ancestors of the Native Americans who lived in the region, even though he did not know it was the Hopi people, are all symptoms of Nordenskiöld operating his excavations by 19th century standards. Moreover, there were no legislative acts in the United States that were aimed at protecting cultural heritage or Native American sites and burials at the time of Nordenskiöld's excavation.

Lister states that the real 'negative side to the Swede's high-minded endeavour' however was that he had planned on keeping the recovered 'artefacts', which included human remains, for himself (Lister 2004, 24). Since he paid for the retrieval of these materials, he packed them up, to send to Stockholm with the intention of selling the whole collection (Interview #1). The stationmaster in Durango refused to accept the shipment of seven boxes and barrels and arrested Nordenskiöld in 1891 (Smith 1998, 27). The barrels were never inspected, which contained the human remains (Smith 1998, 27).

The agent for the Office of Indian Affair, OIA, with jurisdiction over the Southern Ute Indian Reservation and the Navajo Reservation, which at the time contained Mesa Verde, notified the commissioner in New York that he had charged Nordenskiöld with abusing his permit (Lister 2004, 24). In the agent's statement he remarked that he made the arrest because of the devastation of Aztec ruins near Mancos, writing that 'some Indians complained that the remains of their dead were being disturbed' (Lister, 2004, 24). The protests came from local Coloradoan white citizens with political influence who were upset to learn that a foreigner had regional antiquities which were about to be shipped abroad (Arnold 1992, 11). The OIA agent asserted that he had issued Nordenskiöld a permit, which was required to visit reservation land, on 'the understanding that no objects or human bones would be removed' (Lister 2004, 25). Nordenskiöld, untruthful in saying he had not dug on Native American lands, also chose not to mention the presence of skulls and mummies of at least one adult and three children in one of his barrels (Lister 2004, 25). The commissioner later released Nordenskiöld stating that

> 'as the relics taken seem to be of but little consequence and as there is an abundance of the same still to be had on the reservation, and noting the fact that the Baron [Nordenskiöld] did not deface any of the ruins, I have concluded to permit him to keep the relics with the

> exception of such skeletons or bones, if any, as may be in the lot, which as justly claimed by Indians as being the bones of their ancestors'(Lister 2004, 25).

It is clear in the commissioner's report that Nordenskiöld did not mention that he had collected human remains as he wanted to return to Sweden as quickly as possible after his high-profile arrest. Once back in Stockholm, the entire collection was bought by a Finnish patron H. F. Antell, who gave it the State Historical Museum (Interview #1). Antell is highly regarded in Finland as the 'father of Finnish Museums' and a great patron of the arts (Interview #1). As the State Historical Museum or now referred to as the NMF had not been built yet, the collection was housed in the storage facilities of the Ateneum Art Museum in Helsinki (Interview #1). Antell's collection was later transferred over to the NMF after its opening in 1917 (Interview #1).

This information, the state of Nordenskiöld excavations and the importance of Antell to the NMF, has been included in this chapter because it has shaped the way the NMF had viewed the collection. It had been seen as unproblematic; the collection had come legally, before the Antiquities Act of 1906, and had been bequeathed to the museum by a beloved Finnish patron. Furthermore, given when Nordenskiöld put together the original collection, Smith notes that

> 'issues raised by Nordenskiöld's misadventures would not be easily resolved. Wealthy Americans were looting Europe in search of antiquities to collect and display and the British had a worldwide empire from which to gather relics. Some of this gathering was fine in the name of preservation, but all of it was designed to enhance private collections' (1998, 27).

While it is understandably a serious problem that much of European art and antiquities have also been unfairly and illegally plundered from their home countries, this by no means acts as a justification for the removal of Native American artefacts and remains from the US.

In fact, the Nordenskiöld case was one of the earliest events that helped define the United States' first protective legislation surrounding the removal of cultural heritage with the Antiquities Act of 1906 (Arnold 1992, 11). It would take another 84 years for Native American tribes to have any legal protections regarding their own heritage and ancestral remains. In 1990, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, NAGPRA, was passed by Congress (Macdonald 2006, 453). Macdonald stated that

> 'NAGPRA requires museums that received federal funds to prepare inventories of Native American human remains and associated grave artefacts in their collections…The museum

must notify those Native Americans reasonably believed to be culturally affiliated with the inventoried items. Museums must also prepare and publish less detailed summaries of un-associated funerary objects, sacred objects, and cultural items' (2006, 453).

It is worth noting that NAGPRA were instated almost a century after Nordenskiöld had left with his Mesa Verde artefacts and human remains. As a result, the NMF did not consider this legislation as relevant to the legal issue surrounding the repatriation case (Interview #1; Interview #2).

The Nordenskiöld case also motivated the local white residents living in the Mesa Verde region to set up a national park to preserve the site, which occurred in 1906 (Arnold 1992, 11). In 1893, Nordenskiöld put together a publication of a highly detailed, well-illustrated monograph on the subject of his excavations entitled *The Cliff Dwellers of Mesa Verde*. Museum curators, and the researcher that was hired from the University of Helsinki to make catalogue descriptions, all used this work as a reference (Interview #1; Interview #2).

The Mesa Verde collection had remained in storage at the NMF, but it had gained public attention outside of Finland in the 1990s. In 1991, the commemoration of the one-hundred-year anniversary of Nordenskiöld's dig at the Mesa Verde Park, the NMF had loaned a few objects and several photographs as part of this exhibition (Interview #1). The repatriation claim process began unofficially in December 2015, when the museum was contacted by a woman who claimed to be a Hopi tribe representative noting that 'their' ancestors cannot rest in peace if they are not in their final resting spot' (Interview #1). According to museum curators who were in email correspondence with this woman they felt that this representative had become impatient with them and the lengthy process (Interview #1; Interview #2). One curator stated in the interview when asked about their thoughts on the unofficial repatriation request period stated that

> '[that women] had gotten quite angry with us….she did not understand why everything was taking such a long time…she got quite aggressive with her emails once I told her I was just trying to make sure everything that she was looking for was in fact still in our storage…she panicked thinking that we had been careless with the collection and had mismanaged it… the Mesa Verde Collection has moved through several different storage facilities, that's why I wanted to make sure that everything was still there….but she did not seem to understand this when it was explained to her, we started to get emails almost every day…we told the head of the Ministry [of Education and Culture] and found out that the woman was affiliated with the Hopi tribe but was not in fact a tribe representative…we were asked to stop communicating with her' (Interview #1).

As indicated by the museum curator, the communications regarding the collection were halted. However, a positive action that arose out of the situation is that the NMF was given funding to pay a postgraduate student from the University of Helsinki to do extra research on the Mesa Verde Collection (Interview #1). As a result, they could add her findings to the artefact descriptions in English and Finnish on the NMF online database, MUSEOT FINNA (Interview #1). This action was done to not only give the museum more information regarding the materials collected from Mesa Verde but to also allow for a form of 'digital or information' repatriation on behalf of the source community, the Hopi people (Interview #3). However, the issue regarding the physical repatriation of the ancestral remains and the associated grave goods was not dealt with again for several years.

According to the curators, the issue of repatriation of the Mesa Verde Collection did not come up again until it 'suddenly became an issue that the current American ambassador to Finland, Robert Pence, and later President Trump had an interest in' (Interview #2). US president Donald Trump approached Finnish President Sauli Niinistö over the issue of repatriation and Niinistö acknowledged the importance of the human remains and grave goods to the Hopi tribe as well as the significance of returning these remains and goods would have for the 28 tribes with cultural connections to the Mesa Verde region (YLE 2019). Niinistö agreed that the remains should be brought back to their final resting place and meetings began in November 2019 primarily between museum curators from NMF and Ambassador Pence with officials from the American Embassy to make the arrangements (Interview #1). As indicated by one of the interviewees, there were additional problems for the NMF to deal with as they had to make sure that they could in fact legally repatriate the collection, as the Mesa Verde Collection was specifically tied to the trust of H. F. Antell (Interview #1). Curators expressed some disappointment with the American officials for not having a concrete plan on how these remains and grave goods would be transported to Colorado once the NMF sent them to the US (Interview #1; Interview #3). A curator mentioned that

> 'we cannot just send them over to the United States, only for them to wait in a Smithsonian storage facility for three or four years before they are sent to Colorado…and once they arrive in Colorado who is making sure that the tribe receives [the remains and grave goods?]' (Interview #3).

As of March 2020, details concerning the shipment, storage, and final transport are still being considered. Clark Tenakhongva, vice chairman of the Hopi Tribe, published a statement stating that

‘the tribes [will make sure that] funerary items are buried with the remains in the general area where they were taken, accompanied by a ceremony’ (Denver Post, Bryan & Fonseca 2019).

However, when asked about the involvement of the Hopi tribe representative or the presence of indigenous counsellors, the NMF curators revealed that there was none up to this point (Interview # 1; Interview #2; Interview #3). There seems to be no open communication channels, let alone conversations, directly with the Hopi tribe. Additionally, none of the members of the Hopi tribe were contacted when the NMF planned a temporary exhibition around the Mesa Verdean grave goods (Interview #1). The curators state that the reason for the temporary collection came about because ‘people had read in the news that we had this collection’ and ‘there was finally enough interest to show parts of the collection’ (Interview #1; Interview #2). The temporary collection was called *Mesa Verde* and ran from 14 January 2020 to 1 March 2020 (*Mesa Verde* Kansallismuseo 2020). It had on display the 28 grave goods. One of the grave goods of special interest was a willow mat, sometimes referred to as a reed mat, often placed into the graves of women (Hough 2012, 114). It should not be viewed after burial (Hough 2012, 114). In addition, it is still used in traditional wedding ceremonies and has a ritual value (Hough 2012, 114). While the exhibition gave extensive information on the Mesa Verde region and the reasoning behind the decision to accept the repatriation case, there is some contention over showing these grave goods, as they were never intended for display. The repatriation process has not had its deadline changed but the COVID-19 pandemic has made it significantly harder for the staff to arrange details pertaining to the transport of the remains and grave goods.

4.2 Sámi Collection

The Sámi people are the indigenous people living in Finland and their northern homeland is in the sparsely populated sub-arctic region of the country know as Lapland. The Sámi people live across Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia, and the rights and the history of the Sámi people has had variations due to the geographical-political boundaries (Vitebsky 1994, 42). For example, the Sámi of Finland have had a parliament of their own since 1976 (Vitebsky 1994, 42). An area of common ground for all Sámi people is their traditional way of life based on nature;

> ‘they make their living from the land they live…their clothing and handicrafts, their religion and ideas are based on the place of human being in the world, and their language are directly influenced by their surroundings (Vitebsky 1994, 26).

However, Lapland rapidly modernized after the end of the end of WWII when the Nazi troops burnt a great deal of Lapland down as part of a scorched earth policy (Haarmann, 2016, 50). Today,

the Sámi of Finland are navigating local customs and traditional life with the increasingly encroaching tourism complex, complete with masses of international tourists and the infamous amusement park, Santa Klaus Village (Haarmann 2016, 50). The explosion of tourist aimed attractions has had an overall negative impact on the Sámi people. Former President of the Finnish Sámi Parliament, Tiina Sanila-Aikio stated that

> 'almost every day there are people coming to the Sámi area asking where can I see the shamans… [and the] witches?... [this is the only] picture that the tourism industry has created and developed [for tourists]' (AFP 2019).

Indeed, the husky dog sledding and igloos are associated with the Arctic Circle but are not native to the region of Lapland but, are marketed as part of 'the indigenous experience' of the Sámi people (AFP 2019). Tourists are having the Sámi people presented as magical and mysterious, without the intricacies of their culture and religion.

It is also worth noting that there has been a long tradition of documenting, collecting, and studying the Sámi people and their culture. This has mostly been conducted from the external point of view, for example by priests, teachers or scholars, rather than the Sámi themselves (Harlin 2008, 193). Most artefacts, especially those collected in recent decades have been bought from the Sámi but items such as shamanic religious drums as well as ancestral remains were taken from the people against their will since the 19th century (Harlin 2008, 193). One curator also noted, when asked whether the remains from the Mesa Verde Collection had been displayed, 'no, never…however, if you go through the prehistoric section you will find the skulls of Sámi people…it's a bit of a double standard' (Interview #1). The existence of human remains in collections represents a traumatic issue for the Sámi people, not least because of 'the race-prejudiced burden of anthropology' (Harlin 2008, 193). In other religions and belief systems, it has been requested that the dead should always be left in peace (Harlin 2008, 194). However, in accordance with traditional Western scientific concepts, research into human remains is not considered ethically problematic. While Finland does not have Sweden's unfortunate history with the Sámi people regarding eugenics and race biology, it has not given any indigenous or land rights to the Finnish Sámi (Kral 2019, 107).

The Sámi Collection is only defined by its material artefacts and such skulls are not considered to be part of the collection (Interview #1; Interview #5). With regards to Sámi Collection present at NMF, the first Sámi objects were donated to the collection in 1830 by Finnish Lutheran missionaries (Interview #5). It is worth noting that the Sámi Museum Siida was opened in 1998 (Harlin 2008, 193). Its main task has been to represent and promote the Sámi culture in

Finland (Harlin 2008, 193). The Siida museum receives its endowment from the Finnish state (Harlin 2008, 193). In the interviews, curators stated that they were aware of the NMF's position, as a national museum, in the preserving the unique heritage of the Sámi people (Interview #1; Interview #4; Interview #5). The cooperation of the Sámi Finns and the museum have been described in various ways such as

> 'we have no longer purchased Sámi objects to our collection but have directed all offers to Siida. Sámi collection was also the first collection we [in the ethnological collections of the National Museum] digitized and opened to the internet…starting in the 1990s. By doing this we wanted to make this material easily available to the Sámi and to the general public [through the form of digital repatriation]. More recently we, as a museum, have assisted in several research projects of the Sámi artefacts. For example, Sámi handicraft and the tradition of making Sámi boats. Now we have entered a new phase as our two museums are jointly preparing for the repatriation of this collection' (Interview #5).

The requests for the repatriation of the Sámi Collection at the NMF arose because the Sámi people of Finland were feeling discouraged that not enough of their cultural heritage was on display at the museum (Interview #4). Interviewed museum curators stated that these sentiments arose quite early in the 2010s (Interview #4; Interview #5). Finnish Sámi visitors felt that elements of their history, language, and identity were missing from the exhibitions pertaining to them (Interview #5). The lack of promotion of Sámi heritage and the resentment generated from representatives of the Finnish Sámi when learning that most of the Sámi collection was in storage lead to criticism and discontent (Interview #4). This soured previously amicable relations between the Sámi people and the NMF. The anger from the Sámi elders came from the fact that they felt that the collection was being 'hoarded', 'had no purpose within the museum space', and because the NMF is a national museum, 'it was almost purposely being ignored by the institution that is supposed to showcase their culture' (Interview #4). The museum had the largest collection of Sámi handicrafts and various other cultural objects in Finland but, the fact that the scale of the collection was not displayed in the visible space upset the Sámi people. One curator went as far as to say, 'they were very hurt by this…people did not realize how important this was to them…they had very strong feelings about this' (Interview #4). This was noted by the interview with the museum curator who mentioned

> 'when I was writing the manuscript for the Arctic experience exhibition I wanted a piece from the Sámi, something like an installation…..so when we planned this exhibit, we had planned to commission Sámi artists to make pieces for us…there are ones that operate

> around the Helsinki area… and initially they were willing to…however, when they started to talk to other members of their community, they learned about the relationship [between Sámi elders and the NMF]…they refused our offer….I did not get the art I wanted…I had to settle for a photograph taken by a Finnish photographer of the Lapland region' (Interview #5).

Clearly, this is evidence of a breakdown of communication channels, and just as importantly, trust, between the Finnish Sámi and the NMF.

There was also pressure coming from outside Finland that exerted influence on the repatriation of the Sámi Collection. In February 2017, the Sámi people of Norway held the 100-year anniversary of the first Nordic meeting of the Sámi representatives in Trondheim (Harlin 2019, 255). Part of the celebrations included Sámi from Finland, Sweden, and Russia visiting the city (Harlin 2019, 255). A festival was held and there was an exhibition titled *Bååstede*, the Sámi word meaning 'return', that showcased objects belonging to the ethnographic collections of museums in Norway that were to be repatriated back to the Sámi people of Norway (Harlin 2019, 255).

Elina Anttila, the Director General of the NMF, and Juhani Kostet, the Director of the Finnish Heritage Agency, were among the invited guests at the opening of the exhibition (Eriksen *et.al* 2018, 47). The *Bååstede* exhibition was viewed as 'the final stimulus towards the process that resulted in the repatriation of the largest and oldest Sámi ethnographic collection in Finland to the Sámi Museum Siida' in April 2017 (Harlin 2019, 255). Over 2,600 Sámi objects, the entirety of the collection, would be returned (Eriksen *et.al* 2018, 47).

A majority of the cultural objects that were being returned back were handicrafts, or *duodija*[8](Kulttuuria kaikille 2017). Figures 4 and 5 provide examples of the types of objects that are being repatriated back. Although especially important and extensive, the National Museum collection was not the first Finnish museum to repatriate its collection to the Siida Museum. In April 2015, the Tampere Museum Centre Vaprikki returned a collection of 40 Sámi objects and in October 2016, the Museum of Hämeenlinna repatriated an additional 23 Sámi objects (Harlin 2019, 255). As noted above, there was never a formal repatriation request by the Finnish Sámi, but the

[8] *Duodij* or *duodija* refer to the traditional handicrafts and arts of the Sámi people. Examples include 'baskets, costumes, cups, jewellery, knives, or paintings made of materials such as horn, leather, silver, pewter, wool and wood' (Aamold et. al 2017, 153).

museum had worked together with Sámi representatives and Finnish officials in order to make this process happen.

Figure 4: A Sámi doll, bought from a Finnish collector by the museum in 1950s. Photographer: Nella Nuora / Yle. Source: See References for Images Used

Figure 5: A traditional Sámi horn hat or *sarvilakki*. Photographer: Nella Nuora/ YLE. Source: See References For Images Used.

With regards to the repatriation of the Sámi Collection, one curator commented, when asked of a instance where the NMF may have acted proactively in terms of a repatriation case mentioned the 2017 decision, 'I think we can say we acted proactively….it was a long process, but we were

part of it' (Interview #4). This sentiment was lacking in the curators' discussions on the experience of repatriating the Mesa Verde Collection. While there was a push by the Finnish government to promote Sámi culture, curators that assisted this process felt that the museum, and by extension, the curators, had a voice or a part in the matter (Interview #3; Interview #4; Interview #5). Another curator stated the following when asked about the experience of returning the collection:

> 'I feel it is too early to evaluate the whole experience of repatriating the Sámi collection, since the process is still very much ongoing. We are now in the phase in which the collection is being transferred from our storage in Orimattila to the new collections and conservation centre in Vantaa, while objects are inventoried, photographed, bar coded and packed. At the same time, I´m checking all background information by going through catalogues, documents and records. Sometimes this requires for example checking old depositions between museums. We are also digitising the archive material so that we can provide Siida with all the information related to this collection. As you may know, the expansion of Siida´s collection facilities were a precondition to the repatriation. For the first time Siida will now have the possibility of receiving this collection. In many ways this is the right time for these objects to return home and we appreciate the meaning these objects and their return have for the entire Sámi community. Working together our two museums are preparing this historical move of objects. After this repatriation process we will continue to work together, continuing to present the Sámi culture also in the National Museum' (Interview #3).

The preconditions the curator is referring to in their statement are the ones outlined by the Finnish government, who directed funding towards the Siida Museum to build a new wing to fit its latest collection. The main precondition for the transfer of the 2,600 Sámi artefacts is the completion of the new museum wing (Interview #3). The curator statement also highlights the desire of the NMF to continue working together. This is elaborated further in the same interview when the curator added that the staff at the NMF 'are simultaneously preparing also a touring exhibition, a book and a documentary' related to the transfer process' (Interview #3). Reflecting on the experience, another museum curator noted that

> 'repatriating the Sámi artefacts is also an emotional process. As the keeper of the ethnological collections I am fully aware of the fact that a significant part of our museum´s history is about to leave us. However, in this new phase of our museum´s history I feel proud of being part of returning the Sámi artefacts back home' (Interview #5).

What is expressed here in this statement stands as a contrast to the ones expressed regarding the repatriation process of the Mesa Verde Collection. In one of the interviews, when asked about what was the first case of repatriation, 'oh it was the Mesa Verde Collection. The decision had been made by the end of 2019' (Interview #4). When the author reminded the curator about the 2017 decision on the Sámi Collection, they stated 'oh! yes…I had forgotten about that… but it is not really repatriation…it is happening inside of Finland…its Finland to Finland and not another country'(Interview #4). For both case studies, curators understood the claims the source communities had on the respective collections. However, in the case of the Sámi Collection, the NMF was prepared to transfer its entire collection, mostly handicrafts, over while the NMF intends to keep the remaining 552 objects that make up the Mesa Verde Collection. As noted by one of the curators, 'it is important that we address the concerns and give back the requested objects, but it is also important to maintain our Mesa Verde Collection' (Interview #1). It is a stark distinction and possible reasons for it will be further addressed in the next chapter.

4.3 Rautanen's Ambo Collection

The case study of the Namibian power stone is another repatriation example that was resolved by the NMF. In February 2019, Namibia's Vice President, Nangolo Mbumba had made a statement that coincided with the launch of the mobile museum exhibition titled '*Oombhale Dhi ihaka*' or *A Bound That Cannot Be Broken*, at the Nehale Secondary School in the city of Onayena, that he wished to see the repatriation of artefacts from foreign museums that were collected during Namibia's colonial period (Silvester 2020). The mobile exhibition which included the launch of a historical catalogue, focus on the story of 'the power stone of the Ondonga Kingdom' which translates as *emanya lyOshilongo* (Silvester 2020). The Ondonga Kingdom is located within the Ovamboland region. Figure 6 provides an image of one of the power stone's sides. Figure 7 highlights the region where the stone came from. The catalogue itself contains the photographs of 127 artefacts that were collected by the Finnish missionary Martti Rautanen from the Ondonga community (Silvester 2020). While Rautanen collected several hundred objects, the items that were included in the catalogue were ones that had been previously linked with the sketches and notes of Rautanen (Silvester 2017, 61).

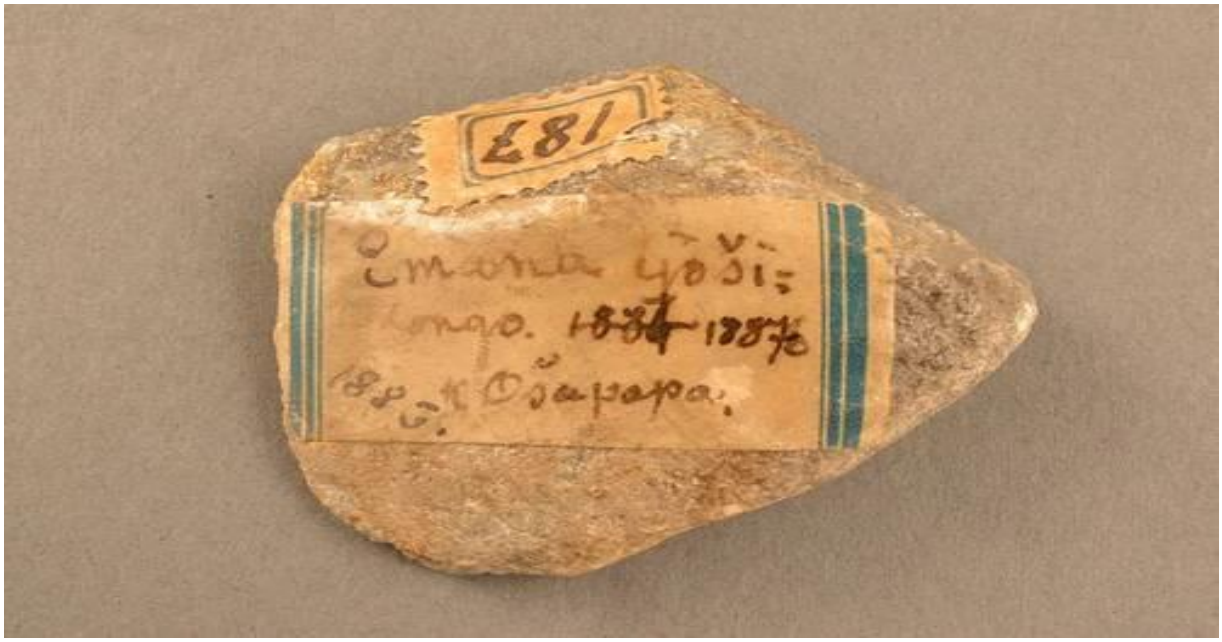

Figure 6: Namibian Ondonga Power Stone. Catalogue Number for MUSEOT FINNA: VK4834: 171. Source: ICME, The Power Stones of the Ovambo Kingdoms. Source: See References of Images Used.

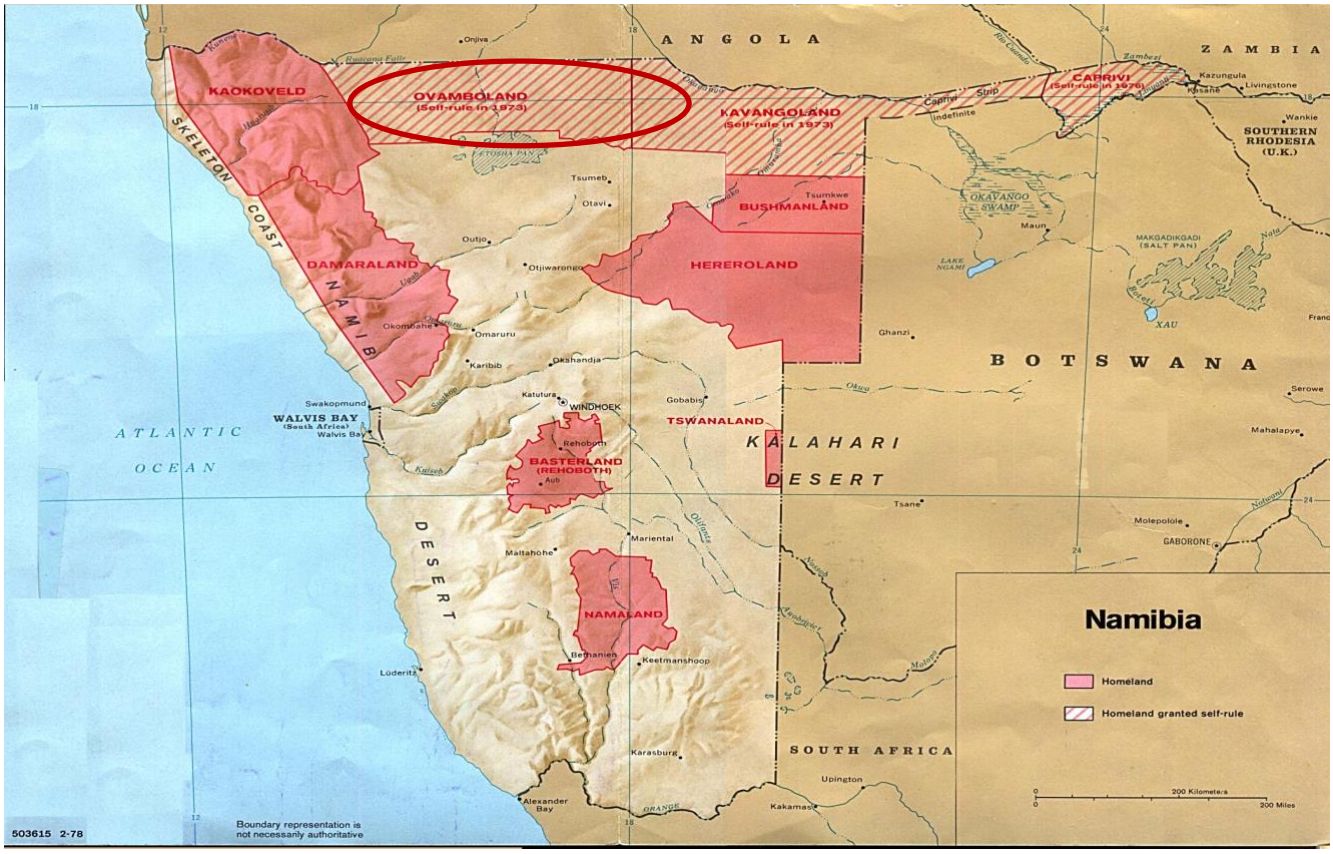

Figure 7: The red circle highlights Ovamboland. Map credit: https://www.worldstatesmen.org/Namibia_homelands.html.

Mbumba had stated that he had hoped the Finnish government would return the power stone in July of 2020, to 'celebrate 150 years of close relations, between Finland and Namibia' (YLE 2019). After Namibia's independence from Germany in 1990, two other power stones, the power stones of the Oukwanyama and Ombalantu kingdoms, had been returned (ICME 2020). The

intention behind the request for the return of the power stone is the promotion of cultural history and the desire to inspire Namibians through their past heritage (ICME 2020).

Finland joined the Africa Accessioned project in 2014 (ICME 2020) (Silvester 2020). Other countries involved were Sweden, Germany, United Kingdom, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe (Laely *et.al* 2019, 112). The main mission of the Africa Accessioned project was 'to establish the main museums in each country in Europe with collections from the partner countries' (Laely *et.al* 2019, 112). Part of the initial phase of the project included allowing museum curators who were based in Africa a chance to travel to see the ethnographic collections in Europe. Many curators based in Africa, who had not previously visited Europe, were unaware of the size of these collections. The Museums Association of Namibia, MAN, were able to secure funding from the Finnish government which allowed for three representatives to visit Finland and view the Namibian ethnographic collections in June of 2015 (ICME 2020). It is during this trip that the team from MAN, made up of Jeremy Silvester, Madalena Kaanante, and Charmaine Tjizezenga were able to view the power stone for the first time at the NMF (ICME 2020). Prior to 2015, the power stone had been part of the Kumbukumbu Museum of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, FELM, located in Helsinki (ICME 2020). FELM collections were comprised of objects, photographs, drawings, and notes amassed by Finnish missionaries who had travelled to Africa and Asia (Interview #1). However, in 2014, the museum closed, and its collections went to the NMF which placed them into the storage facility (Interview #1).

Part of the return of the *emanya lyOshilongo* focuses the ties of the Finnish and Namibian government as well as the collaboration between MAN and the National Museum Association of Finland (Interview #1). The joint project again involved the NMF as it helped to donate partly to the '940 educational resource materials to the Namibian Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture for secondary school libraries'(ICME 2020). The aim as stated, was for Finland and Namibia to strengthen their cultural connections to the equal benefit of both countries. This was to be achieved by the return of the *emanya lyOshilongo*, the project, and the commitment from the NMF (ICME 2020; Interview #1). In addition, by 2013, two other power stones had been returned by other Finnish museums back to Namibia stemming from the wishes of the Vice President Mbumba (ICME 2020). The case study of the *emanya lyOshilongo* is similar. The power stone had been projected to be returned in July 2020, with the Finnish president's visit to Namibia. As of yet, the date has not been changed despite the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus.

However, it is worth noting that the collection of Martti Rautanen and his fellow missionary Emil Liljeblad, whose Namibian collection was donated to the University of Oulu, amassed over

1,500 objects from their time in Namibia (ICME 2020). Some elements of the collection have a mixed or unclear provenance. There was another stone that was highlighted during the museum trip of by the three Namibian museum curators. The ritual stone from Angola or Namibia, considered to be a 'rain stone', which was thought to have a ritual property of coercing the skies to bring rain (ICME 2020). The rain stone is possibly from Evale, now part of present-day Angola (ICME 2020). Tatekulu Helao Shityuwete, mentions that his father, Neliudi Shityuwete, a member of the Evale royal family, 'described having seen the stone in the 1930s at a time when Christianisation meant that king was losing faith in his rain-making' (ICME 2020). However, it is impossible to assume that Shityuwete who was five or six at the time when he heard this, would be able to make a clear identification (ICME 2020). If the stone was from Evale, it would also be necessary to find out where the stone was originally located and explain how it might have ended up in Finland. The fact that the border with Angola was only finally agreed in 1929 might mean that there was easier access to the kingdom in the early twentieth century (ICME 2020). It was 'widely believed [in both Angola and Namibia] that the ancestors of dead kings, *ovakwamhungu*, were the [holders] of the rain' (Laely et.al 2019, 122). Several of the Ovambo Kingdoms, perhaps even all of them, had sacred stones and rainmaking in the region was associated with the stones that were located at the graves of kings (ICME 2020).

Additionally, the combined collections of these two Lutheran ministers included not just historical objects such as the *emanya lyOshilongo* but other cultural objects as well as examples of craftwork such as basketry, carvings, and jewellery. Such items could also have a great significance to the Namibian people. There has been a clear focus on power and rain stones as it relates with stability and strong governance. It is unclear to the curators if there are other material artefacts that their Namibian colleagues would like repatriated, only that the ritual stones were of national importance (Interview # 1; Interview #2).

Another example from the collection is an amulet made of small bones. It had previously belonged to an Ovambo seer named Noa Kaukungwa (MUSEOT FINNA). The artefact had entered the possession of FELM in 1932 and had been acquired in Ovamboland by Emil Liljeblad (MUSEOT FINNA). Liljebald had worked in the region from 1900-1908 and again from 1912-1919 (MUSEOT FINNA). The original owner of the amulet, the seer Kaukungwa, allegedly converted to Christianity and gave up his seer equipment (MUSEOT FINNA).

The old museum handbook dated from the 1930s has concluded that the small pendant was made of the bones of a small child (MUSEOT FINNA). The handbook reflects the attitudes of the FELM mission regarding the Namibian people they were trying to convert and their local customs.

The bones that make up this amulet have been identified as belonging to a feline or canine predator (Vaninonen 2019). This seer's amulet was another one of the objects that became part of the ethnographic collection of the NMF in 2015. The amulet was spotlighted as an 'Object of the Month' in February 2019 on NMF's website (Vainonen 2019). Additionally, it appeared as part of the *TRACES*, the pop-up exhibition that opened on 5 April 2019 to 4 July 2019 (Vainonen 2019, 8). The *TRACES* exhibition focused on artefacts from all over the globe that were made of animal parts. The focus was placed on the materiality of the objects rather than, in the case of the amulet, the ritual significance.

It is worth mentioning that Finland is not the only country that is returning artefacts of cultural significance to Namibia. The German Historical Museum, GHM, also agreed that it would return a stone cross in late August of 2019 (BBC 2019). The cross that had been placed by the Portuguese explorer Diogo Cão in 1486 on the country's coast which was plundered by 'a German naval commander in 1893' (BBC 2019). The Berlin based museum also has stated that it intends to return artefacts and human remains to its former colonies (BBC 2019). The GHM repatriated on the basis that it was an object of cultural and historical importance.

4.4 Arrernte Collection

In June 2018, a group of Arrernte Australians visited the NMF to see the Arrernte ethnographic collection (Interview #1). The 232 cultural objects that make up the collection had been purchased in 1913 from the Museum für Völkerkunde in Leipzig, Germany (Interview #1). The reason stated for the sale from the German museum's view was that their Australian ethnographic collection scale was so large that parts could be sold in order to obtain funds for new acquisitions (Lahdentausta 2018). The Arrernte Collection includes artefacts VK4918:1-232, as labelled in the online museum catalogue, and these artefacts were collected by Oskar Liebler, a Lutheran missionary who carried out his work in Australia from 1910-1913 (Interview #1). It is this part of the collection that has been identified as having objects collected belonging to the Western Arrernte, who had been hunter-gatherers that lived and migrated between semi-permanent camps (Lahdentausta 2018). Figure 8 highlights the region of Australia where the Arrernte are from.

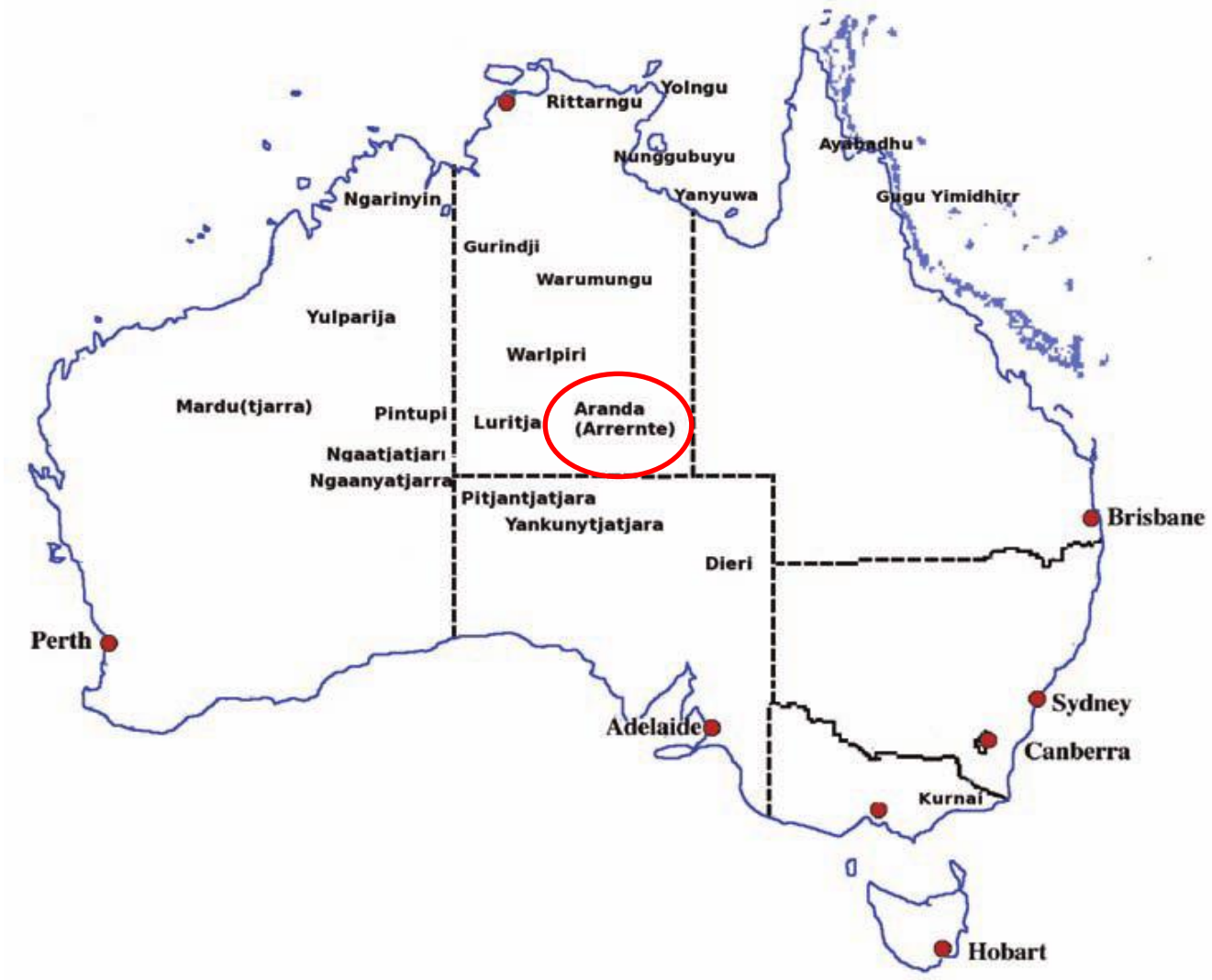

Figure 8: Circled in red on this map highlights the Arrernte region. Map Credit: Dosset, L., 2011. *Australian Aboriginal Kinship: An introductory handbook with particular emphasis on the Western Desert*. Les Manuels Du Credo. 38.

An immediate outcome of the 2018 visit was the museum learning that 'certain objects that made up the collection were never meant to be seen outside the Australian Aboriginal [Arrernte] community' (Interview #2). The NMF now acknowledges that 'our Arrernte collection features many ritual objects or otherwise sensitive materials, not intended to be seen by those outside the community, especially women' (Lahdentausta 2018). These flagged objects can no longer be viewed on the online database nor can appointments by non-indigenous Australians be made to view them (Interview #2).

The museum visit by this group also led to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, AIATSIS, contacting the NMF in late 2019 about their Return of Cultural Heritage Project. AIATSIS's mission with this project is to

'secure return of items of indigenous cultural heritage to Australia...with funding from the Australian Government, [and]…intensify the effort to return material (including but not

> limited to objects, photographs, manuscripts and audio visual records) held overseas back to [help support] cultural renewal, revival, support and maintenance' (AIATSIS 2020).

The NMF agreed to participate in the project and directed AIATSIS representatives towards its Arrernte Collection and included more information of the MUSEOT FINNA database regarding the collection. According to museum curators at NMF 'over 80 or so objects have been flagged by [AIATSIS]' (Interview #3). The list itself is in flux, going through several revisions. Significantly, one of the items continues to be included. The single item that is known to be flagged was VK4918:1, titled on the MUSEOT FINNA database as simply 'ritual object'. This ritual object is described as 'a bunch of bones and hair tuffs of quolls hanging from a brown string'[9](MUSEOT FINNA). This simplistic term used in an artefact description, without further explanation is problematic. As stated by Errington that

> 'the lack of cultural specificity of the label, the use of only English language [terms] (ritual, ceremony, initiation, etc.), the failure to explicate the purposes and sociology of these 'ceremonies' (initiation into what? By whom and for whom? Ritual in order to do what?) leave the casual visitor with the distinct impression that [this culture] is [somehow] obsessed with ritual [but without knowing the reason why]' (1998, 91).

There are no indications what makes the 'bunch of bones and hair tuffs… [on] a brown string' ritualistic, in either its use and/or its materiality. It gives few details in how this object has meaning to the Arrernte people and threatens to reduce the 'ritual object' into an oddity or curiosity. The image of VK4918:1 has not been included as it is unknown by the curators if this is a ritual object that should not be viewed by outside of the source community (Interview #3). Airing on the side of caution, the author of this thesis has decided to not include the image.

As highlighted in the interviews, the second phase of the Return of Cultural Heritage Project, the physical return of material has been postponed by AIATSIS. This is because the project is currently out of Australian government funding after its initial first phase (Interview #1). However, upon closer examination of the interview transcripts, one curator specified that the NMF was still committed to the project (Interview #2).

[9] Quolls are a tree-climbing marsupial that is native to Australia and there are at least four different species (Bush Heritage Australia 2020). It is unclear which species of quolls make up this artefact.

In contrast, another curator mentioned, regarding the possibility of repatriation of the objects requested that 'it is unlikely that will happen…we acquired them legally…it is not an official request' (Interview #1). Unlike the previous examples, there is less of a willingness to consider the physical return of the artefacts. In fact, on a matter of technicality, all the collections highlighted in this chapter have been 'acquired legally'. Yet, there seems to be exceptions made in this case, even though the conditions are similar to other unofficial claim cases.

It is worth noting that there has been an increased momentum for returning artefacts to the Arrernte community since museums such as the Manchester Museum in the UK announced it was repatriating 43 sacred ceremonial objects last year (Manchester Museum 2019). The museum stated that it had agreed to give back the objects to 'the Aranda [or Arrernte] people of Central Australia, Gangalidda Garawa peoples' of northwest Queensland, Nyamal people of the Pilbara [and] Yawuru people of Broome' (Manchester Museum 2019). This event was memorable in that it mirrors the situation with the NMF in certain ways. The Manchester Museum worked with the AIATSIS and repatriated religious objects such as an item that consisted of emu feathers and string that appears to be similar to the artefact made of quoll that the NMF holds in its collection (BBC England News 2019). Arrernte representatives explained that the emu feathered object would be housed in one of their museums but, would still be used as was intended when needed in initiation rites ceremonies (BBC England News 2019). It would be used in headpieces at times, as it was supposed to be utilized as well (BBC England News 2019). This precedent that was set should have meaning for the NMF.

4.5 Etholén Collection

The Etholén Collection is comprised of indigenous Alaskan artefacts. They were collected by Adolf Etholén and his fellow contemporaries during their administrative posts assigned to them by the Imperial Russian state (Interview # 4). The artefacts that had been collected where promptly donated to the museum after arriving in Finland (Interview #4). Figure 9 covers the main territories of Alaska that will be discussed in the subchapter. With regards to the NMF collection of Native Alaskan artefacts, it is this collection that has seen two high profile museum loans as well as numerous visits from indigenous source communities. Early interest in the Etholén Collection occurred when an Anchorage Museum's exhibition *Dena'ina Huchúlyeshi,* translated as *The Dena'ina Way of Lif*e was held in 2013 (Eaton 2013). The NMF loaned eleven artefacts that were made by the Dena'ina Athabascans, the indigenous people of Southcentral Alaska for this exhibition (Interview #4).

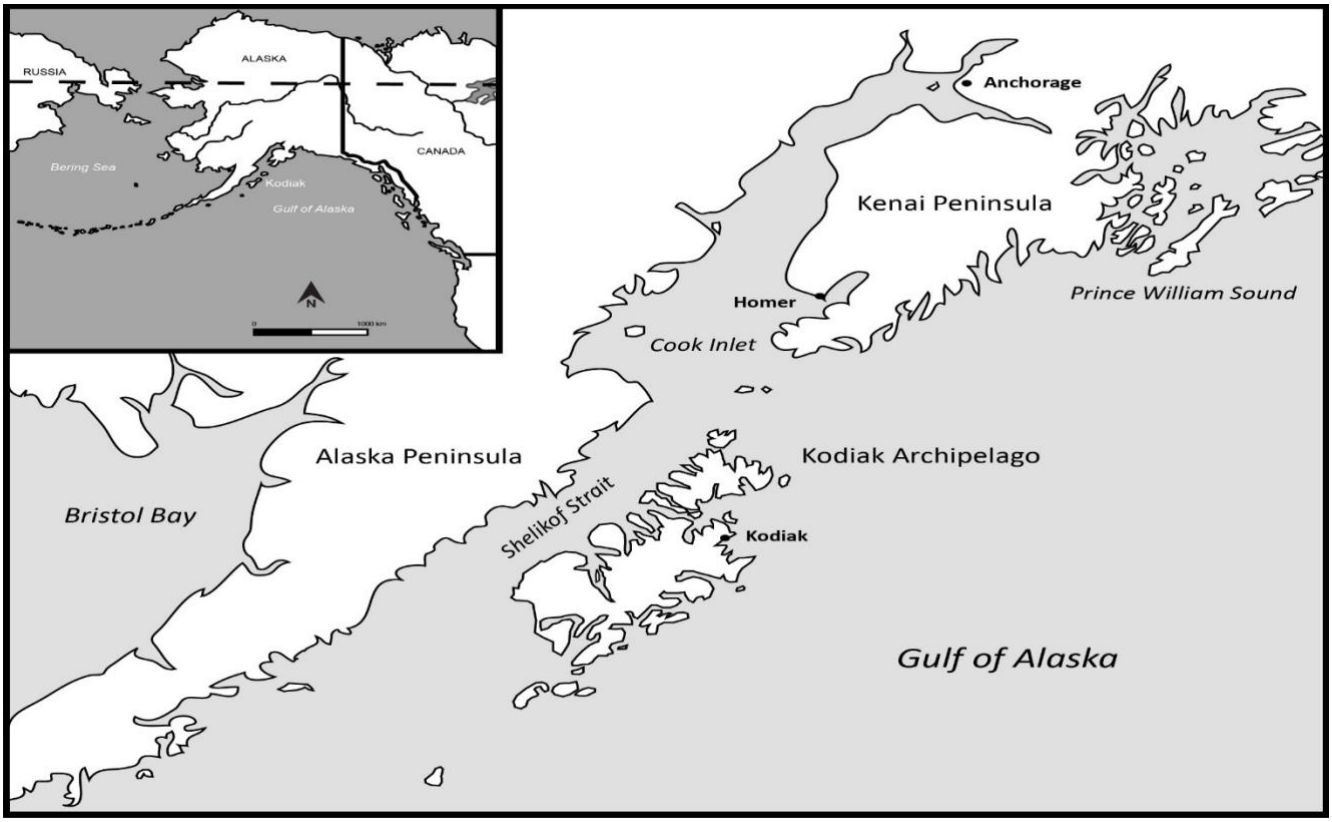

Figure 9: Map of the southern region of Alaska. Map credit: https://alutiiqmuseum.org/learn/the-alutiiq-sugpiaq-people.

The other museum loan was for the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology, UBCMA, in Vancouver, Canada (Interview #4). The museum ran an exhibition from 2017 to 2018 titled *The Fabric of Our Land: Salish Weaving* (MOA.UBC 2020). Salish people are the native population of the Pacific Northwest of the US and Southwest Canada (MOA.UBC 2020). Salish weavers had chosen blankets and other examples of weaving crafts from the 1800s and examples were loaned from Scotland, England, the US, and Finland (MOA.UBC 2020). The NMF loaned a 'ceremonial robe…that was made sometime between 1778-1827…it was woven by the Muskwa group' (Interview #4). UBCMA had also included a series of weaving and sewing workshops for Salish people to teach their craft to younger generations and learn traditional handicrafts (Interview #4).

Alongside these loans, there were group visits by Native Alaskans that had organized trips amongst themselves to visit the NMF's collections. Two tribal representatives from the Alutiiq Koniag visited the NMF in 2010 in order to collect more information and take photographs and notes on the Koniag artefacts (Interview #4). These representatives were part of, and had been funded by Koniag, Incorporated which manages the land and financial assets of 3,850 Alutiiq Koniags who live in the Kodiak archipelago (Alaskan Natives-Koniag-Incorporated; Interview #4). In 2013, six Alutiiq Koniags coming from Kodiak Island visited the NMF after receiving a US federal grant to go to Finland and other European museums to learn traditional leather sewing by

examining ancestral handicrafts (Interview #4). Some of the artefacts that were viewed at the NMF included sewn cloaks, fur skin clothing, and decorative hats (Interview #4). Part of the project included teaching the leather sewing techniques to five different schools on Kodiak Island (Interview #4). The group was also gathering ideas for their own institution, Alutiiq Museum, which is also located on the island (Interview #4).

The most recent group of Native Alaskans to visit were the Chugach, who are Alutiiq people who live in the region of the Kenai Peninsula and southern coast of Alaska (Interview #5). A group, that had three Chugach elders, visited the NMF in 2015 (Interview #5). Their project was funded by the program *'Becoming Aware of One's Origins'* and their mission was to create a virtual exhibition of Chugach artefacts from the US and Europe (Interview #5). The six artefacts that were shown to the visiting group included brimmed hats, wooden dishes, baskets, and models of canoes (Interview #5). The Chugach elders also assisted museum staff with identifying other Chugach artefacts or ones of potential Alutiiq origin (Interview #5). Overall, these loans and museum visits have been described by the interviewed curators as an extremely positive experience (Interview #1; Interview # 3; Interview #4; Interview #5). It is worth mentioning though that the museum visits have been independently organized by the Native Alaskan tribal groups rather than an outreach or open communication channels between the groups and the NMF.

Interest from the Aleut Atka peoples regarding the Etholén Collection came when Finland had been elected for the second time to the Arctic Council to serve as chair for the 2017-2019 period (Ulkominsterio 2020). Finland centred its Arctic program to focus on environmental issues and addressing the complications of global warming. In its Chairmanship Program statement, it also stated that

> 'the economic potential of the [Arctic] region should be harnessed in a way that brings prosperity to and guarantees the livelihood and social progress of [both] Arctic inhabitants and communities' (Arctic Council 2017).

Part of this economic development plan involved the promotion of cultural events and festivals, especially those traditional festivals that celebrate indigenous Artic traditions (Arctic Council 2017). The reasoning behind this promotion of culture is largely due to years of issues regarding land and hunting rights as well as criticism and misunderstanding about Native Alaskan heritage and practices. Both Inupiat and Inuit people have struggled since the 1970's for land rights and fighting major oil corporation who wanted access to over 340 million acres of former indigenous land for operations (Hess 1999, 5). Moreover, during the 1960s and 1970s, indigenous Alaskan

people were criticized and condemned by animal rights organizations such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, PETA, for whale hunting (Tauber 2016, 76). However, the United States Marine Mammal Protection Act, MMPA, makes exceptions for the Native Alaskan tribes (Tauber 2016, 76). MMPA states that this exception is based on indigenous 'culture and economic reliance on hunting marine mammals' (Tauber 2016, 76). Part of the extension into cultural diplomacy also resulted in Alaskan tribal representatives for the Aleut Atka tribe to become aware of the NMF collections (Arctic Council 2017).

As mentioned by Buijs there has only been a 'recent shift since the 1990s in recognizing Arctic communities as stakeholders in their own cultural artefacts' (2018, 37). The artefacts of interest to the Aleut Atka people, with regards to physical repatriation, are objects of ritual or spiritual value. An example of such an artefact would be the knife carved, ivory talismans, carvings, or shamanic amulets that are designed in the shape of animals (Hess 1999, 80). The Etholén collection has approximately 50 'Aleut' walrus ivory carvings, mainly from the 1840s (Varjola 1990, 198). Figures 10, 11, and 12 all depict examples of ivory talismans of whales, seals, and walruses.

Figure 10: Description for VK 254:19 states that 'A walrus ivory figurine of a male killer whale attacking a sea lion… Each figurine is attached to a wooden board painted black…The sculptures are very detailed; some incisions are pigmented in black… the length is 6 cm' (MUSEOT FINNA).

Figure 11: Description for VK254:7: a 3 cm ivory carving of a seal pup being carried by its mother (MUSEOT FINNA).

Figure 12: Description for VK254:14: a 3.40 cm ivory carving of a walrus (MUSEOT FINNA).

As mentioned by Lajiness regarding wider Aleut culture;

‘their religion is based on nature. They honoured animal spirits with ceremonies and rituals led by shamans. They believed certain songs and charms would help men during the hunt. The ivory animal carvings [were meant] for good luck such as fish, seal, and whale charms. These charms were meant to honour animal spirits (2017, 18).

When asked about the possibility of the physical repatriation of the ivory carvings, the curator stated that 'they are not always ritual objects, some of them were made on purpose as items or souvenirs to sell' (Interview #1). However, the same can be argued for the case of the Sámi Collection. Duodji or handicrafts were still returned and acknowledged by the museum as significant enough to be repatriated. The ivory figures, even if once made for commercial use, can still be given new meaning if the source community wants them back.

The ivory figures could also be replaced by replicas, with the originals being returned to the Aleut Atka people. The Smithsonian Museum of Natural History made a replica of an artefact in their collection known as *Kéet S'aaxw,* or the Killer Whale clan crest hat (Solly 2017). Figure 13 is an image of the duplicate on the left and the original hat on the right. The south-eastern Alaskan Dakl'aweidi clan had asked for the return of the hat since the foundation of NAGPRA and received it back in 2005 (Solly 2017). The hat's role in its community is to 'embod[y] clan ancestors and lets members of the tribe feel the presence of their relatives' (Solly 2017). The 3D scanning and copying of a sacred object such as the Kéet S'aaxw offers an example of what can be done in order for museums to keep objects in their collections while source communities receive back their heritage.

Figure 13: Image of the replica and the original Kéet S'aaxw. Photographer unknown. Source: See References for Images Used.

All five case studies have been described and the current outcomes of each have been highlighted. As mentioned throughout the paper, there have been numerous inconsistencies in the way the NMF has handled repatriation cases, even if it has all been treated on a case by case basis. The next chapter will construct an outline of what a formal repatriation policy could potentially look like.

Chapter 5. Recommendations for the Construction of a Repatriation Policy

As exemplified in the previous chapter, the NMF's current stance regarding repatriation, while clearer in its public statements, operates differently for the case studies covered in Chapter 4. The first three cases that were covered all went through the official channels by getting their national governments involved on their behalf. Of the three cases involving the Mesa Verde, Sámi, and Rautanen's Ambo Collections, are all considered to be ongoing as the end result has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The case studies that represented the unofficial claim requests were the Arrernte and Etholén Collections. Even though the cultural objects that have been requested to be returned follow the types of cultural property that the NMF has shown that it is willing to give back, the outcome has not been the same.

Regarding the construction of a repatriation policy for the NMF, there is one element that would be non-negotiable; the position of the NMF as a national museum. The museum is funded by the Finnish taxpayers and the collections are legally owned by the wider Finnish public. Because the museum functions under the government of Finland, all repatriation requests would have to be handled in some capacity country to country. Intermediaries such as embassies, consulates, and heads of state would have to step in with the process of repatriation. This has already happened in the cases for Mesa Verde Collection with Ambassador Pence and the Ambo Collection with Vice President Mbumba. This can also be a possible explanation as to why the Mesa Verde case study turned out to be a success and not the Etholén Collection. This is a requirement that will unavoidably shape how the policy operates. The necessity for government involvement in repatriation was one of the reasons why scholars such as Barkan and Handler were critical over the process. Both argued repatriation was just a way for nationalistic administrations and 'elites' in politics to make grand gestures or get wider support from constituents (Barkan 2001, ix; Handler 1988, 215). However, given the position of the NMF, the role of national governments is fundamental to its repatriation policy.

The policy document should also be available for interested parties. In one interview, a curator mentioned that 'I do not know if we will publish our repatriation policy document online once we are finished…the National Museum, the one in Stockholm, made one and did not make it public' (Interview #4). The policy document needs to be online and be available in the standard

languages typical of Finland's bilingual government policy; Finnish, Swedish, and English. The inclusion of the one in English is meant for a wider global audience. The policy document should have specific instructions set out and an email address where anyone can make an inquiry or offer recommendations and insights into parts of the collection. Stating clear objectives for both museum staff and for the wider museum public is important. The press release statement and mixed decisions have left room for ambiguity. A case by case basis is an acceptable way of handling the requests but the same rules have to apply to every case. While this might take more time, it makes protocol easier and offers specific protections. Otherwise there might be pushback from certain groups who feel that they are not being respected and treated fairly as opposed to other cases.

In the formal, online policy document, there should be a breakdown of how cases of repatriation would be handled for the NMF. These guidelines should be numbered and follow a realistic progression. First, there needs to be an inquiry by source communities for repatriation information and expression of their desire of artefact(s) they wish to be returned and on what basis. Secondly, an optional request for a consultation visit with the museum or an entire review of a collection can be made if that is possible for the interested parties. This step could be considered optional and not mandatory because it would come from an extremely privileged position to assume that all source communities, that do not have additional government or institutional funding, could afford to travel to Finland to view the collections in person. Additionally, communities may not want to travel due to health concerns. Alternatively, a telecommunication conference can be another possibility. As a result, the collections or artefacts in question to be repatriated should be made available first through the museum database MUSEOT FINNA. In the case of a collection review visit, photography and filming should be allowed if the group members are taking photos to be presented to other members of their community and to help with future consultations with the NMF. The third action should be outlined as the formal repatriation request, that has to go through government channels. The fourth step should then be the research of the claim and its review by the NMF and the Ministry of Education and Culture. The fifth activity should be the process of the physical return of the artefact(s) if the decision was made in favour of the return. There also needs to be an inclusion of a permissible sixth step, in case the source community would like to appeal the decision of the Ministry and NMF. The NMF will always 'consider' repatriating artefacts that do not have the same priority as human remains on the basis of cultural significance. However, the preferred museum policy is to act on a case by case basis. Because of this, the origin community should have the right to make their case again after learning the conditions on why the request was not accepted and further improve their own argument. This argument needs to be made as the draft of the repatriation policy would also have to be approved by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

There have also been numerous oversights and contradictions to the NMF's stance on repatriation. As a result, there are several elements that need to be considered in the process of making a repatriation policy. There is a clear emphasis on human remains and funerary goods as part of the NMF's position on physical repatriation. This can most clearly be seen in the NMF's public statements and the interviews with the curators. It is acceptable and even recommended that human remains are given priority amongst other examples of repatriation. This is a good place to start.

It is important to have a policy of being empathetic, especially towards source communities who are trying to bring back ancestral remains to their final resting place. It is key to address how these claims need to be handled. The case of the Hopi woman who initially made contact with the NMF in 2015 regarding the human remains stored from Mesa Verde area comes to mind. The way her concerns were handled needs to be highlighted. While understandably, the NMF could only make arrangements with government officials, it is worthwhile to mention the mixture of anger, sadness, and stress the indigenous people feel regarding these processes. Often, they are concerned over the length of time their mission takes to bring their ancestors home from abroad and they feel guilty that it does not happen sooner or remorseful over their ancestors being treated as scientific specimens. The NMF could have mentioned earlier to the Hopi woman what the process of repatriating these remains would entail rather than cutting communication with her, especially since it was the last time the museum would hear from Hopi tribe members until 2019.

The deepest cut that colonization has made has come from the handling of indigenous communities that have had their identities and cultures stripped away. For them, as stated by Simpson, 'collective efforts to preserve their cultural continuity are also linked to improved health and suicide rates in First Nation communities' (2009, 123). Repatriation is seen as renewal and a chance to rebuild. The returning of sacred artefacts and ancestral remains is viewed as a stimulus for healing. The revival of ceremonial life with an emphasis on preservation can have immense value for museums as well.

Alongside this, there are, as highlighted in the previous chapter, Sámi skulls lining the prehistoric collection in the main hall of the museum. In addition, while removing the images of Mesa Verde related skeletal remains and funerary objects from the museum's public database, the 28 funerary objects were still shown to the public, without the permission or initial knowledge of the Hopi tribe. While it can be argued that there is a educational element to the display of human remains, or funerary goods, the pain it can cause indigenous communities such as the Hopi or the

Sámi people to have their ancestors and their grave goods viewed as ‘objects’ or ‘curiosities’ inside glass display cases instead of a suitable resting ground must be considered. The museum also needs to update its definition of what it believes constitutes human remains. As mentioned in Chapter 3, artefacts that are not wholly remains or are not grave goods but, are made of human skeletal matter, should be included in what the museum defines as human remains.

While it is advisable to define the repatriation of human remains as a priority, one of the steps that needs to be set within the formal document is what constitutes objects of ritual significance and cultural value. This has been one of the largest threads running through all five of the cases that were covered in the previous chapter. If the NMF has made the decision to repatriate artefacts on the basis of ritual value, then that needs to be carried over uniformly to other cases as well. While it is understandable why the ‘rain stone’ has not been repatriated, due to issues with its provenance, the reasoning behind the rejection of ritual objects from the Arrernte Collection is confusing. Additionally, the NMF has decided, through its repatriation of thousands of Sámi handicrafts that this is also an element that could be the basis of repatriation. A precedent has been set. The issue with the Aleut carvings, since the ritual element is an area of doubt for the curators, could also be repatriated under its value as a traditional handicraft that could be used to inspire modern day Aleut Atka people.

There also needs to be an inclusion of how the museum wishes to operate with origin communities before, during, and after the repatriation process. The current museum guidelines and future policies regarding repatriation do not include statements that indicate the desires to network with indigenous advisors and there is a lack of open, active channels of communication between source communities and the NMF. There has been some progress between the Sámi people, Namibians and certain Native Alaskan groups but largely absent from the other case studies. The combination of the consultation of indigenous advisors and the museum operating proactively, contacting origin communities first, would help greatly to foster partnerships and encourage research and information sharing. One particular case study that stood out the most as being unfulfilled by these elements was the Mesa Verde Collection. The communication was cut off and even after the approval of the formal claim, was never again initiated. The claim that it would be difficult to find representatives of the Colorado based Hopi tribe to talk to would be debatable. A quick search online would reveal the homepage for the Hopi Tribal Council, which contains the full contact information for both legislative and administrative posts as well as representative information (The Hopi Tribe 2020). The Hopi Cultural Preservation Office, which is situated in Arizona, assists with Hopi repatriation claims and has dealt with reburials in the past or the Grand Canyon Trust who could have directed or even provided names and contact details of

representatives of the Hopi tribe to speak with, who live on the Hopi Reservation in Colorado (HCPO 2020; Grand Canyon Trust 2020).

A good example of the outcome of fostering long term relationships after the repatriation process is over would be the return of the Lakota Ghost Dance Shirt by the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in Glasgow, Scotland. The Lakota people believed that the shirts protected the wearer from harm. Ghost Dance religion had developed in the 19th century, incorporating several Native American beliefs together, and was rooted in the campaigns to stop expansion of white settlers into their shrinking homelands. With regards to how the Kelvingrove Museum acquired the Ghost Dance shirt;

> ‘in 1892, Glasgow's City Industrial Museum obtained [Lakota] items from George C. Crager, [who was a] interpreter for the Lakota performers at the Buffalo Bull Wild West Show… Crager claimed that these objects had been taken from the [Massacre of] Wounded Knee, South Dakota… including a Lakota Ghost Dance shirt’ (British Museum, BBC 2014).

The Massacre of Wounded Knee killed the Sioux Chief Spotted Elk, Si Tanka, and roughly 250 Lakota men, women, and children by the US 7th Calvary (Utley 2004, 228). It is a particularly dark moment in Native American history and artefacts that survived the grave looting from this period are deemed particularly important. Once the Lakota tribe had become aware of the presence of the shirt in the collection, the repatriation process started. The claim for the Ghost Dance Shirt began when

> ‘in 1992 [when it was] in a major temporary exhibition in Glasgow on the fate of American Indians, where it was seen by an American lawyer, John Earl. He reported his discovery and a letter requesting repatriation was sent. In April 1995 a delegation from the Wounded Knee Survivors Association (WKSA) led by their lawyer Mario Gonzalez, accompanied by Marcella LeBeau, a Lakota elder, arrived in Glasgow. They requested the return of the Ghost Dance Shirt… said to be from Wounded Knee… [Gonzalez] recounted the events leading up to the Massacre and stated that "the crucial consideration" was that "this Massacre was not a battle during a war, but a Massacre of innocent people, mainly civilians, women and children, so that the material is not war booty. The items were stolen off dead bodies of people whose persons and property were protected under US law’ (Glasgow City Council; Parliament 2000).

In 1999, the shirt was returned to the Lakota after the City Council made the decision to do so (Glasgow City Council; Parliament 2000). A member of the Lakota tribe, Marcella le Beau, made a hand sewn replica of the shirt and presented it to the City Council which is now part of the Kelvingrove collection (British Museum, BBC 2014. Additionally, the shirt was brought to South Dakota Cultural Heritage Centre that includes the shirt's history in Glasgow as part of its artefact description (Henare 2005, 48). Figure 14 depicts the replica shirt that was made. The Kelvingrove Museum still has Lakota artefacts which the Lakota tribe members have also provided additional information on. Through the replication of the artefacts, both the Lakota Ghost Dance shirt and the Killer Whale clan crest hat created lasting friendships between the indigenous communities and the museum institutions through their mutual respect and understanding of each other's positions. There is a possibility for the replication of the Aleut Atka ivory carvings to follow this same suit at the NMF.

Figure 14: Photograph of the Replica Shirt. Photographer unknown. Source: See References for Images Used.

Issues with the Mesa Verde exhibition reflects on other problems such as whether to use the term Eskimo or Aleut in artefact labelling and in museum reports which could be resolved with native consultants. A curator mentioned during the interview 'we do have artefacts that come from the Eskimos. Oh, is that the right term? Can we still use that? I am not too sure' (Interview #1). Especially in the case of the Mesa Verde exhibition, the Hopi tribe was not asked permission

regarding the funerary objects nor was it included in the original planning process. There was no co-curation, no partnerships built, and no sense of togetherness despite the successful outcome of the repatriation agreement. There is clearly an opportunity for the NMF to engage with the Hopi tribe. This chance had presented itself as a result of the claim case. As mentioned by Dahl and Gabriel,

> 'Different partnership models' for repatriation could include, but are certainly not limited to 1) dividing collections into two equal parts, 2) pro-active ways of assisting countries or peoples of origin to investigate what cultural heritage is available at their own and other museums, private and cultural institutions, returning copies in circumstances where museum facilitates are lacking or unsatisfactory in terms of preservation, establishing shared collections 'on tour', which could certainly be rewarding to both parties, repatriation in exchange for other collections. The primary goal of repatriation should never be the transfer itself but the establishment of a working relationship that can be beneficial to all parties involved, regarding for instance the sharing of knowledge in future research projects, exhibitions, etc. The express recognition that the concerns of various ethnic groups, as well as those of science, are legitimate and to be respected will permit acceptable agreements to be reached and honoured' (2008, 191).

Members of the Hopi tribe could be contacted for suggestions on what out of the hundreds of Mesa Veridian artefacts still part of the ethnographic collection at NMF could be displayed in a temporary exhibition. Curators could also contact indigenous artists and overall improve their relationship with the Hopi tribe. Artefact labels could be made that include the native language. This would be a similar case for the Arrernte and Etholén Collections. Prioritization of the voice and perspective of source communities would greatly help to decolonize the museum space. The inclusion of indigenous advisors, as well as the necessity of including them as part of a planning process of an exhibition, should be written into the policy document.

There has also been a strong push by the NMF, as indicated by the interviews with its curators, for digital or information repatriation (Interview #1- Interview #5). There is a clear stance taken by the NMF that digital repatriation works as an alternative to the physical repatriation of an artefact, except in the cases of human remains. Digital or information repatriation, that is, the process of adding images and information about a collection or artefact onto an online public museum database, only works in case where that is the main request from the source communities.

The artefact loans and museum visits by indigenous groups also forms part of this category of information repatriation. The desired goal for the origin community is to become better acquainted and more knowledgeable about their culture, which can be shared then with the museum as well. The NMF has done several loan programs and has been open in the past to receiving stakeholder groups containing indigenous elders. Digitisation of the collections has been an essential step forward and by doing so, the NMF has been making a move in right direction by appearing more participatory and willing to open up. However, digital repatriation does not work as an alternative to requests concerning physical repatriation of cultural property. It is neither 'real' repatriation, as the museum still 'owns' the object in question, and it does not address the desires for the return of the object back to its source community. Loans, museum visits, and updating collection information on the public FINNA database are possible ways of fostering partnerships and knowledge sharing. It does not, however, address unequal power relations between museums and indigenous communities the way physical repatriation does.

It is important to note that the NMF and its curators do struggle with issues of repatriation because the museum is not always in charge of its own decisions. This is due to its position as a national museum which means that its collections are owned by the Finnish public and the NMF is funded on taxpayer money. One curator lamented

> 'we are hindered by position here in the organization…we used to be our own museum and were for 19 years…we used to be in a different building…we had more independence… now that we have been integrated…We are not so free to do things anymore… but who knows? In the future, that [having indigenous advisors] would be very worthwhile…it would be very good…it would be wonderful to have them as part of the curatorial process' (Interview #3).

The issue with this statement is that there are already opportunities that the NMF could be involved in that do not require permission from the Ministry of Education and Culture. Curators, especially those with involvement to all five of the collections, can take the initiative or in some cases, use old contacts in order to foster new relationships with indigenous communities. A central element of the repatriation policy statement for the NMF would have to include the recognition of indigenous communities as stakeholders. This was already the case with the Sámi Collection when the Finnish Sámi were recognized as stakeholders in 2017.

The process in which a repatriation case claim should be handled was best summarized by Gabriel and Dahl. They stated that the process of a claim should start first as

> '[giving] accurate inventories, [then] proactively contact communities [and then having an] active transfer of knowledge and communication [to address the]…the power imbalance relationship between the indigenous communities and museums… [highlights that] repatriation [is] not easy, but in some cases is the final essential step in forming these new relationships' (Gabriel & Dahl 2008, 8).

The initial implementation of such a policy could take time for the museum to get used to but, the protocol will be clearer than the current stance on repatriation, in which certain cases are validated while others are not, even if it is for the same reasons. Importantly, the process outlined by Gabriel and Dahl also allows for the prioritization of indigenous voices and value systems to be implemented into the wider museum space; stretching past the display halls and into museum registers and artefact labels.

Hausler and Rowley also make a case for 'proactive repatriation' and how this needs to be incorporated into formal repatriation policy (2008, 202). This is due to the fact that 'many [source communities] have neither the research capacity nor the funding to locate their remains' (Hausler & Rowley 2008, 202). 'Proactive repatriation' would entail the NMF researching its own ethnographic collection, highlighting artefacts of provenance that have the potential to be returned, and notifying stakeholders such as indigenous representatives. Funding could also go towards building a consortium of museums for loan exchange programs or the creation of virtual exhibitions in cross cultural partnerships. Understandably, this form of collaboration would be both time and energy intensive. Additionally, it would require an economic investment by the Finnish public. It is their tax money that would fund these types of projects. The proactive repatriation is mentioned as worth including into the formal policy because Finland, and the Finnish people, draw a great source of pride from being considered a leader in issues of human rights. A particular pride is being the first country to have full universal suffrage in 1906, eleven years before the country was even independent (Simonton 2007, 241). The country has been lauded internationally for its 'large footprint in peacekeeping and mediation' despite its small size in both population and land mass (Schuster & Stern 2015, 297). This inclusion of acting energetically in terms of the return of cultural property would be an area worth considering and adding to the national museum's legacy. As mentioned in earlier chapters, Macdonald statement 'the repatriation process is not so much the removal of indigenous cultural objects from museums as [it is] a shift in the type of museum that

cares for and displays objects' holds particular weight in this discussion (2006, 453). The NMF has the ability to be motivated to become the kind of museum Macdonald describes in her statement.

Additionally, as highlighted by Adrian George in *The Curator's Handbook*, there are multiple parities included in the process of curating an exhibition which would have to incorporate the roles of indigenous advisors and or suggestions such as proactive repatriation. For a standard exhibition, there is the curatorial team, the registration team headed by the collection manager and collection curator, the development and fundraising team, the head of finance, the press and public relations offices, the events managers, and the education and interpretation team with everyone from audio/media guide producers to gallery assistants and interns (George 2014, 87). For example, the press office could organize press releases with indigenous groups to allow for greater media attention online. Sufficient news coverage is what the NMF curators had wished for with the Mesa Verde case.

Despite all the suggestions, this thesis will address the reality is that since the government can pick and choose the cases it would like the NMF to pursue, it might set up some eventual complications for the NMF in the future because of its lack of power when dealing with these claims properly. For the government to launch initiatives such as proactive repatriation, or even the return of artefacts that have been formally requested, the government would need to view it as significant and provide funds. This points to another reason a formal document is needed, it can spell out what it is willing to cover and ensure.

The NMF and its curators already view the repatriation as a selfless act of returning artefacts that were legally owned by them. What needs to be added to this outlook is the potential to assess repatriation cases as a mutually beneficial goal, one that would create lasting friendships, international interconnectedness, inspire visits from the heads of states, help with cultural diplomacy, and be seen as an act of kindness by the source communities. It is a statement of goodwill by the museum. Effectively, the museum needs to operate, as described in Chapter 2, as a 'contact zone' which would help to decolonize the NMF's space. Together with this, the museum can act proactively with regards to request cases by compiling reports and taking inventories of collections or objects of cultural patrimony that have been flagged or have the potential to be.

Chapter 6. Conclusion.

The aim of this thesis has been to review current claim cases made towards the ethnographic collection present at the NMF from 2010-2019. Based on the evidence from the five case studies and the museum interviews conducted, the lack of a formal policy document for NMF regarding repatriation has influenced the museum's practice on how return requests are handled. The cases that have been the most impacted by this lack of consistent policy are the ones that have not gone through official channels. These would be the ones from the Arrernte and Etholén Collections. Chapter 4 addressed the challenges and specifics of all the claim cases while Chapter 5 assessed how to address these issues in a policy document. Both chapters also highlighted how the interviewed curators had been impacted by the nine-year process of handling repatriation cases. While part of the methodological processes was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, it

completed its intended goal and provided new, original insight into a topic with little scholarly research written about it. Curators have become more aware of the importance of digitising the NMF's collections, promoting loan exchange programs, and being accommodating for stakeholder groups during museum visits. However, a lack of understanding over the benefits of physical repatriation of cultural property and the use of indigenous advisors still persists.

While Finland, historically, has not held the role of a colonial power it does have artefacts and human remains from both abroad as well as from home. Most museums have policies to preserve their collections and the NMF is no different. As a holding institution they currently have a set of informal guidelines that do not clearly acknowledge the beliefs, practices, and the customs of communities from where the objects in their collections originate from. While the case-by-case practice is standard amongst policy documents, the NMF is selective with regards to what is human remains or what is cultural objects. This influences the judgement of what is deemed appropriate for return. As a result, what would allow one case study's ritual object being returned to its community of origin might be grounds for another to be rejected.

Parts of a repatriation policy document for the NMF would be understandably unchangeable. Given the museum's placement as a national museum under the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish Heritage Agency, the NMF lacks the ability to accept unofficial repatriation requests. National governments must be involved. All applications will have to go through official channels. That is, that source communities would need to have political officials representing them and not just formal tribal representatives as these are not considered to be legitimate authorities. Furthermore, the NMF does have to look at its own collections as state owned. That means that it still requires state approval for out-reach projects. With regards to these aspects, to decolonize the museum space will be a gradual, time-consuming process. The mission, however, is a necessary one.

The main suggestions made in this thesis regarding the construction of a formal policy on repatriation can be broken down into the following;

1) An outline of the process on how origin communities can file for repatriation requests or make recommendations needs to be included.
2) In the policy, there must be a step considering the process in which a source community can appeal a decision made by the Ministry of Education and Culture if their request is denied.

3) The document needs to be available online and accessible to the global public. Terminology and protocols need to be defined in order to combat the inconsistencies and ambiguity that characterizes the current museum stance.
4) There needs to be an unclouded decision to show what is prioritized and this needs to be applied across the board.
5) The NMF's digitization of its collections needs to continue as it opens its ethnographic collection to a wider audience.
6) There must be indigenous advisors who can be consulted prior to an exhibition planning process, before putting together a catalogue, getting second opinions on parts of the collection, creating further ties for the museum.

What became certain through the repatriation process of the five case studies is the need for open channels of communication and greater community involvement in the museum's collections. The museum needs to create lasting relationships. The best examples of this, the Sámi and Namibia case studies, which should serve as an event to further study. In reviewing the main points, the Sámi case study reflected that the NMF can make energetic, empathetic, and proactive decisions regarding repatriating cultural heritage. The goal of the process is to have an integration of indigenous advisors within the planning process of exhibitions and in collection reviews.

This thesis assumes that there will be problems going forward but advises a plainly drawn out policy to minimize discrepancies. One can anticipate that there will be difficulties defining the line between sacred and secular, since that is a hard boundary to define. Many forms of art are not strictly religious in nature and the functions of the objects may not be entirely clear. Some museums refuse to give artefacts the designation of being sacred or having ritual significance even if for example they were possessed by a shaman or seer. The outcome of this research is relevant because it indicates that there are pressing issues with community involvement and inclusiveness that must be taken seriously at the NMF. Outreach and extended research in collaborative ways with indigenous advisors is recommended and can assist in avoiding decisions that could be labelled as ignorant or worse by origin communities.

While the methodology was appropriate for the size of the study that the research carried out, suggestions for further research could include representatives from the Finnish Heritage Agency and the Ministry of Education and Culture in order to better engage with the topic of repatriation. As mentioned before, the curators at the NMF do not have the final say in matters regarding claim cases. It would be worth conducting a wider survey of museum professionals

working at the NMF as well as the agency and ministry in order to engage with a wider variety of opinions coming from different occupations and agendas.

Finally, it cannot be stressed enough that repatriation is more than just a debate of the ownership of object(s). Heritage preservation and explanation are a primary function of museums and make up the most public dimension of museum practice. Voices contribute to a broader understanding and highlight the importance of the maintenance of cultural identity that benefits museums. The process of repatriation includes a sort of restoration and renews the spiritual dimension of exhibits and source community cultures. The NMF needs to show that it is willing to address and reflect on hard truths and issues of diversity and equality in their space. For example, there needs to be a complete overhaul concerning human remains and how they are presented, stored, and labelled. Additionally, movements that happen in the public sphere, such as the commercial re-branding of household names and products that use cultural stereotypes or the renaming of buildings that were previously tied with slave owners, spill into the museum context. Within the decolonisation process, the NMF has its role to play in this narrative as well.

Abstract

Since the 1960s, the issue of repatriation has been debated amongst museum studies scholars and professionals and how its application could affect the museum space. Repatriation has been linked with the decolonization process of the museum and curatorial practice. While it is something North American and European counterparts have been dealing with for decades, for the

National Museum of Finland, NMF, repatriation claims have been a recent issue. This thesis addresses past practices in Finland and how it operates inside a system of Western law. It points out the claimant groups have little power other than their moral authority and the ways a clear repatriation policy can ease some of the imbalance. This thesis surveys some of the cultural heritage of indigenous groups that resides at the NMF. The research primary focuses on the ethnographic collection and highlights five claims cases that covers four continents. The National Museum has been operating on a case by case basis based on informal guidelines. This work discusses to what extent a lack of a formal policy has affected the work of museum curators and select exhibits of grave goods that have been shown. Some of the struggles that exists between ethnic groups that have been fighting to get control of their lost cultural heritage and human remains and the NMF are highlighted in this thesis. Some aspects that are pursued concern recommendations for a repatriation policy, suggestions about indigenous advisors, the ease at which groups have access and can make claims, and contemporary laws that reflect the historical events and legal issues source communities have had to face over time. Importantly, there is a path suggested in moving forward. This thesis shows that due to a lack of formal policy the National Museum has been operating on a case by case basis as they arise. Using interviews and case studies, it offers some suggestions for a potential formal policy on repatriation.

Keywords: repatriation, return, museum policy, museum collections, National Museum of Finland, the Mesa Verde Collection, the Sámi Collection, the Rautanen's Ambo Collection, the Arrernte Collection, the Etholén Collection, decolonization, 'contact zones'

Glossary of Terms

Aleut Atka- Aleut tribal group situated on the largest of the Andreanof Islands of Alaska, Atka.
Aleut Koniag- Aleut tribal group that is based primarily in the Kodiak Archipelago in Alaska.

Anasazi- a native American culture of the Southwest that began around 1 CE and existed until 1300 CE or longer.

Arrernte- one of Australia's native semi nomadic hunter-gather groups who are also sometimes referred to as the Aranda people.

Basket Maker period- that span of Anasazi culture from 1-550 CE.

Chugach- Alutiiq tribal group inhabiting the regions of the Kenai Peninsula and the southern coast of Alaska.

Dena'ina Athabascans- indigenous people of southcentral Alaska.

Duodijie- traditional Sámi handicrafts or visual arts mediums.

Hopi- a present day pueblo culture in Arizona and New Mexico.

Mesa Verde- a national park in Colorado where the Anasazi ruins are.

National Board of Antiquities- located in Helsinki, Finland and later renamed to Finnish Heritage Board in 2013.

Navajo- present day native American culture; the Navajo arrived in the 'Four Corners' area about 1400 CE.

Ovakwamhungu- the ancestors of dead kings.

Power Stone- a stone meant to represent and was believed to be directly correlated with the wellbeing of a kingdom.

Pueblo- a Spanish word meaning 'village' which often refers to the type of native American architecture in which small houses are grouped together on one location.

Quolls- a type of native Australian marsupial.

Rain Stone- a stone that has a ritual purpose in rain-making ceremonies that are often conducted by a king.

Salish- the indigenous people of the Pacific Northwest of US and Southwest of Canada.

Ute- a native American culture currently living near Mesa Verde.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Figure 1: A Sumerian ‘dedication’ nail made from clay. The nail itself is transcribed withcuneiform characters. The estimated date of the nail (4,000 years old) would place it in the Urk Period. Photographer: YLE.

https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/finland_refuses_to_return_ancient_artefacts_to_iraq/6666723, accessed on 15 June 2020.

Chapter 4. Case Studies

4.1 Mesa Verde Collection

Figure 2: Nordenskiöld's Photo of Cliff Palace. Source: Nordenskiöld, G., 1893. The Cliff Dwellers of the Mesa Verde. Stockholm: P.A. Nordstedt & Soner. 63.

Figure 3: A hand drawn site plan of the Step House Excavation. Source: G. Nordenskiöld. 1893. *The Cliff Dwellers of the Mesa Verde*. Stockholm: P.A. Nordstedt & Soner. 37.

4.2 Sámi Collection

Figure 4: A Sámi doll, bought from a Finnish collector by the museum in 1950s. Photographer: Nella Nuora / Yle.
https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/finnish_national_museum_returns_thousands_of_artefacts_to_indigenous_sami_people/9558574#:~:text=Finland's%20National%20Museum%20is%20to,Finnish%20S%C3%A1mi%20in%20Inari%2C%20Lapland, accessed on 14 April 2020.

Figure 5: A traditional Sámi horn hat or *sarvilakki*. Photographer: Nella Nuora/ YLE.
https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/finnish_national_museum_returns_thousands_of_artefacts_to_indigenous_sami_people/9558574#:~:text=Finland's%20National%20Museum%20is%20to,Finnish%20S%C3%A1mi%20in%20Inari%2C%20Lapland, accessed on 14 April 2020.

4.3 Rautanen's Ambo Collection

Figure 6: Namibian Ondonga Power Stone. Catalogue Number for MUSEOT FINNA: VK4834: 171. Source: ICME, The Power Stones of the Ovambo Kingdoms.
http://icme.mini.icom.museum/activities/projects/the-power-stones-of-the-owambo-kingdoms/.

Figure 7: Map of Namibia. Map credit: https://www.worldstatesmen.org/Namibia_homelands.html, accessed 25 April 2020.

4.4 Arrernte Collection

Figure 8: A map which highlights the Arrernte region. Map Credit: Dosset, L., 2011. *Australian Aboriginal Kinship: An introductory handbook with particular emphasis on the Western Desert.* Les Manuels Du Credo. 38.

4.5 Etholén Collection

Figure 9: Map of the southern region of Alaska. Map credit: https://alutiiqmuseum.org/learn/the-alutiiq-sugpiaq-people, accessed on 12 June 2020.

Figure 10: Description for VK 254:19 states that 'A walrus ivory figurine of a male killer whale attacking a sea lion… Each figurine is attached to a wooden board painted black. They date from the 1840s and are carved with an iron knife. The sculptures are very detailed, some incisions are pigmented in black… the length is 6 cm' (MUSEOT FINNA).

Figure 11: Description for VK254:7: a 3 cm ivory carving of a seal pup being carried by its mother (MUSEOT FINNA).

Figure 12: Description for VK254:14: a 3.40 cm ivory carving of a walrus (MUSEOT FINNA).

Figure 13: Image of the replica and the original Kéet S'aaxw. Photographer unknown. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/replica-tlingit-killer-whale-hat-spurring-dialogue-about-digitization-180964483, accessed on 12 June 2020.

Chapter 5. Recommendations for the Construction of a Repatriation Policy

Figure 14: Photograph of the Replica Shirt. Photographer unknown. http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/g7TsYP04QoOgJBdHRd-X7A, accessed on 17 June 2020.

Appendix A

Cover Letter & Consent Form

The aim of this research is to examine the current repatriation policy of the National Museum of Finland and the recent claim cases. This cover letter briefly details the rights of interview participants:

1. In the case of the participant wishes not to be recorded, notes will be taken by hand. Participants that are willing to be recorded will have the recording of their interview deleted after the thesis research process is over.

2. Participants are allowed to request transcripts of their interview. They are also allowed to have parts of the transcripts redacted if they wish.

3. Participants do not have to answer questions they are uncomfortable commenting on and can stop the interview at any time.

Please let the researcher, Sonja Salminiitty, know in advance concerns about recording and/or transcript process. Additionally, the research collected from the interviews will be used in a master's thesis that is under embargo (not open access).

Appendix B

Interview Questions (Sample #1)

1. What would be the responsibilities of the National Museum be with regards to handling repatriation claim cases?

2. With regards to alternatives to repatriation, what methods (use of indigenous advisors, digitizing collections, etc) has the museum employed?

3. Has there been a return of anything from the collections that museum curators found should be removed for professional or ethical reasons?

4. Have the recent repatriation claim cases, dealing with internationally spanning material culture, brought any attention to the museum's role in international diplomacy?

5. To what extent, if any, have repatriation claim cases changed curatorial practice? Has the museum in anyway changed how it classifies, collects, stores, and/or displays its collections?

6. What relationships have been built with the indigenous tribe groups, organizations, or agencies such as the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, after receiving formal or informal repatriation requests?

7. What the message that the museum is trying to set with the recent repatriation case regarding the Mesa Verde collection?

8. What is the purpose of the temporary exhibition of the Mesa Verde collection that contains some of the funerary objects that will be repatriated back to the Native American tribe?

9. What was the museum's motivation behind the upcoming return of the Namibian power stone? Will it still be repatriated back to Namibia in July 2020?

10. Are there any considerations regarding highlighting the modern struggles such as land ownership rights and tribal recognition with the collections surrounding indigenous groups?

Appendix C

Interview Questions (Sample #2)

1. What would be the responsibilities of the National Museum be with regards to handling repatriation claim cases?

2. With regards to alternatives to repatriation, what methods (use of indigenous advisors, digitizing collections, etc) has the museum employed?

3. Has there been a return of anything from the collections that museum curators found should be removed for professional or ethical reasons?

4. Have the recent repatriation claim cases, dealing with internationally spanning material culture, brought any attention to the museum's role in international diplomacy?

5. To what extent, if any, have repatriation claim cases changed curatorial practice? Has the museum in anyway changed how it classifies, collects, stores, and/or displays its collections?

6. Has there been a previous collaboration with Sámi members in the past regarding museum research and collections? How does the museum view these collaborations?

7. Has the role of Finland as chair of the Artic Council drawn any attention to the museum's collection of Alaskan indigenous tribal artefacts?

8. Have there been any visits from Artic indigenous leaders to the museum's collections or any form of collaboration regarding research and collections?

9. What were the experiences with repatriating material objects to the Siida, the museum dedicated to preserving the cultural legacy of the native Sámi people?

10. What were the challenges faced by the museum that arose from repatriation of Sámi artefacts?

Appendix D

Funerary Items from the Mesa Verde Collection (VK4834)

Kodak House:

VK4834:171 clay ladle

VK4834:172 clay bowl

Step House:

VK4834:285 wooden digging stick

VK4834:293 clay bowl

VK4834:294 clay bowl

VK4834:301 clay ladle

VK4834:303 willow mat (together with human remains)

VK4834:304 basket

VK4834:305 corn flour (probably from inside basket :304)

VK4834:306 clay bowl

VK4834:307 clay ladle

VK4834:308 corn cob

VK4834:329 clay bowl

VK4834:330 clay mug

VK4834:331 willow mat

VK4834:332 wooden digging stick

VK4834:333 clay bowl

VK4834:336 clay jar

VK4834:337 clay mug

VK4834:338 clay bowl

VK4834:339 clay bowl

VK4834:340 clay bowl

VK4834:369 wooden peg

VK4834:370 wooden peg

Pool Canyon:

VK4834:452 clay ladle

VK4834:453 clay bowl

VK4834:454 clay bowl

Raunio 14; hautakumpu (burial mound) Wetherill Mesalla:

VK4834:414 stone axe head

Appendix E

List of Human Remains from the Mesa Verde Collection (VK 4834)

This information comes from the private museum database only accessible to curators.

Long House:

- Skull (VK4832: 142) and skeleton (VK4834: 143)
- Skull (VK 4834: 148), jawbone (VK4834: 128), and possibly skull fragment (VK4834: 141), but this has not yet been verified to part of the same individual
- Skull (VK4834: 166) and skeleton (VK4834: 607)
- Jawbone (VK4834: 169)

There is with some certainty that there are the remains of at least four individuals from the Long House excavation. There is possibly six, if the VK4834: 148, :128, and :141 belong to different individuals. In addition, part of the jawbone VK4834: 138 and some hair fragments VK4834: 145 are from the Long House.

Kodak House:

- Skull (VK4834: 170) and skeleton (VK4834: 502)

There are the remains of one individual from the Kodak House excavations.

Step House:

- Mummified remains (VK4834: 300)
- Mummified remains (VK4834: 302)
- Mummified remains (VK4834: 334)
- Skull (VK4834: 292) and skeleton (VK4834: 503)
- Skull (VK4834: 328) and skeleton (VK4834: 504)
- Skull (VK4834: 335) and skeleton (VK4834: 505)

- Skull (VK4834: 375)
- Skull (VK4834: 376)

There are the remains of eight individuals from the Step House Excavations. In addition, the hair fragments (VK4834: 291) are also from the Step House context.

Raunio 14 Burial Mound:

- Skull (VK4834: 413)
- Skull (VK4834: 415)

There are the skulls of two individuals from Ruin 14.

Sprucetree House:

- Skull (VK4834: 416)
- Skull (VK4834: 418)
- Skull (VK4834: 419)

There were three individuals from the Sprucetree House context. Alongside this, teeth (VK4834: 417) and hair fragments (VK4834: 420) are also from this context.

Pool Canyon:

- Skull (VK4834: 451)

Remains of one individual comes from the Pool Canyon excavation.

Mesa Verde Excavation, with no further contextual information:

- Mummified remains (VK4834: 497)

There were remains of one individual that has not exact location with the Mesa Verde region. Moreover, teeth (VK4834: 495), hair fragments (VK4834: 496), and possibly a mummified skin fragment (VK4834: 498) have no additional contextual information. Lastly, there are two jawbones that have no sub numbers.

Summary of Mesa Verde Collection's Human Remains:

Step House: eight individuals

Long House: at least four individuals, possibly even six

Kodak House: one individual

Raunio 14: two individuals

Pool Canyon: one individual

Sprucetree House: three individuals

Mesa Verde, no context: one individual

Total remains of at least 20 individuals (36 if counting possibly sub numbers)