**Decolonization in archaeology collections**

**Interview and questionnaire questions with answers**

**Code table**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Institution** | **Interviews** | **Questionnaires** | **Total** |
| NMN officials | A1 and A2 |  | **2** |
| Past NMN Curators | B1 and B2 |  | **2** |
| NMB |  | C1 | **1** |
| UPM |  | D1 | **1** |
| **Total count** | **4** | **2** | **6** |

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| The data analysis and interpretation processed *was guided* by content analysis. With this technique I was able to track down, record, and interpret the appearance of concepts, and theme from different literature. Not only in literature, but also in content communicated through the interviews and questionnaires. Data coded from notes taking during the four semi structured interviews and two questionnaires *were categorised* using content analysis. |

Participants were asked to point out: **How long ago their respective archaeological collections were created.** Respondent “A1. *Stated that the collection was created 100 years back.*

Respondent “A2” from NNM remarked *“The Museum collection was developed during the colonial times from 1884 when German occupied South West Africa.* The interviewee further explained that “*The collection further developed during the British and South African colonial empires. The collection was first a private collection before the collection was handed over to the State Museum as the custodian the national collection under its control. After the independence of the Republic of Namibia, the State Museum was renamed, the National Museum of Namibia (NMN)”.* “

Respondent B1” *The Museum collection was established during the Pre Independence (German period). It was one of the collection to be created.*

Respondent “B2 It *was created before Namibia ‘s independence.*

Respondent “C1 Mostly *post-independence about 1966 and after.*

Respondent “D1 *The Mapungubwe Collection at the University of Pretoria was accumulated as a result of excavations from 1933 until the 1990s.*

The researcher posed a question on **The general theme that define their respective collections.** Respondent A1 stated *that “the theme that define the archaeological collection at the NMN are stone tools/ implements from the Middle Stone Age”.*

Respondent “A2 *The respondent did not comment on this question.*

Respondent “B1 *Stone implements around the middle stone age.*

Respondent “B2 *Stone Tools*

Respondent “C1 from NMB expressed “*that the themes the that define their archaeological collection are the materials from the Early Stone Age, Middle Stone Age and Iron Age”.*

Respondent D1 from UPM outened that “*the theme that define their archaeological collection are the materials from the Iron Age between AD 1000 -AD 13000 period”* while, respondent

Participants were asked this question: “**Is there a community engagement policy that governs the process through which all the archaeology collections are managed**”. Respondents A1 commented that *there is a no community engagement policy but there is education for the Museum.*

Respondents A2 commented that *“Not necessary, but communities are always engaged in obtaining information from them from the community’s point of view.”* The respondents further explained that *“The NMN does not have a specific policy addressing community engagement because policies instruments are not the only tools to achieve and impact heritage protection and safeguarding in Namibia. However, The NMN recognizes the vital role that community engagements play in sustainable development, building social cohesion in diversity and inclusivity in decision making. Therefore, community engagement at the National Museum of Namibia is mainly determined by consultation with the community during research field trips, open days (which is now called Heritage Week) or the National Heritage Week which is a yearly event”.*

Respondent “B1 *stated that there was some public engagement programmes that existed during the respondent’s time at the Museum. There was no public engagement policy for the collection.*

Respondent “*B2 No public engagement policy during the respondent’s time at the Museum.*

Respondent “C1 from NMB remarked that *“no real policy but the anthropological research act of 1968 addresses respect to the dignity of the communities where research is carried out”.*

Respondent “D1 from UPM highlighted that *“the University of Pretoria (UP) has a signed MOU with SAN Parks, Mapungubwe National Park who in turn have a community engagement forum.”*

A question was raised to find out to **What extend has the archaeological collection been accessible to the public**. Respondent “A1*. To a large extend. Students, learners and researchers were visitors to the collection.*

Respondent “A2 Respondent A2 remarked that “*the collection is well accessible by physically visiting the collection, sending a request to study the objects from the collection and requesting the Museum to borrow the objects in order to conduct research from the objects.”*

Respondent B1” Respondent B1 a previous curator who worked in the collection at the NMN replied as follow: *“During my time the collection was accessible to a certain extend. Bonafede researchers had more access to the collection, University students and school learners had access to the materials on request and the general public will see the materials on display through exhibitions.”*

Respondent “B2 *said to a small extend. There have been people coming in but not so many. Both school learners and university students were interested in human remains.*

Respondent “C1 *expressed that exhibitions mobile museum Program is the main activity to communities out of reach to museum.*

Respondent “D1 Respondent D1 pointed out that *“ The collection have been accessible to a larger extend especially after 2000. The Mapungubwe collection was temporarily curated and exhibited for 60 years by the former Transvaal Museum (today DITSONG Museums of Natural History) as they served as the repository of the Mapungubwe Collection until the 1970s. Sporadic exhibitions were held; however, the Mapungubwe Collection was permanently exhibited at what is today the University of Pretoria Museums since June 2000*

Another question asked was *“What* **challenges, if any, are there in the management of archaeological collection?”**

Respondent “A1. Respondent A1 from NMN *could not answer this question because she felt it will be best answered by respondent A2*

Respondent “A2Respondent A2 from NMN commented that *“Financial resources to conduct evidence based research, Covid-19 travel restricts and associated health protocols. Insufficient competent to conduct scientific research, Lack of laboratory and specialized research tools and equipment, Limited career growth within the heritage sector,*

Respondent B1” B1 a previous curator who worked in the collection NMN *was lack of storage, safety from risks like fire since artifacts are mostly in boxes, interest of researchers for more of already collected material were the pressing challenges.*. *he struggle over international, national, regional and individual significance value of heritage*

Respondent “B2 *Space for storage, storage boxes for artefacts, issues of the understaff, issues of the capacity building and lack of trainings.*

Respondent “C1 *storage, safety from risks like fire, mostly in boxes, interest of researchers for more of already collected material*

Respondent “D1 Respondent D1 from UPM remarked that *“the backlog of collections management over 85 years, poor documentation over decades and long-term conservation needs. Public access to other parts of the Mapungubwe Collection held by other institutions”.*

The researcher wanted to find out to **What extent has your museum been challenged to decolonize the archaeological collections curated by the institution?**

Respondent “A1. No challenged at all.

Respondent “A2 Respondents A2 from NMN explained that “ *I am responding to the question from the point of view that understand that it is not easy to describe what colonialism actually is, even though there have been numerous attempts to define it that differ according to the geographic or political position and agenda of those defining it and the epoch in which they undertook those definitions. This is not surprising, since it subsumes phenomena that date back up to six hundred years, evolved and changed during that period and affected the interaction of people from very different societies and “cultures”. Therefore, the National Museum of Namibia has embarked on the process of decolonizing the museum collection by first analysis the historical landscape of Namibia, which objects of the museum collection talks to the history and heritage of the communities”.*

Respondent B1” *Yes there were challenges. What the respondent did was to bring in the voice of the indigenous knowledge and come up with exhibitions.*

Respondent “B2 *The collection has been challenges due lack of efforts from the Museum’s management.*

Respondent “C1 Respondents C1 from NMB commented that *“No deliberate effort nor the use of that nomenclature. However, for e.g the 1994 Tsodilo management plan by Alec Campbell, former Director of National Museum in Botswana promoted a prestine environmentbeith no developments and infrustrure around the site, including denyong the communities of Tsodilo better roads, to limit influx and preserve the rock art. On the contrary, the 2005 integrated management plan (Ecosurv Consultants) 7of which I was convener, and our management plan for Tsodilo (Segadika and Taruvinga 2009) is post-colonial in its people first, landscape approach to the heritage site development schedule”*

Respondent “D1 D1 from the UPM outlined that *“The Mapungubwe Collection is one of the most contested archaeological collections for more than eight decades. The first attempt at decolonisation challenge goes back to 2000 by the UP to ensure access and public exhibition of the Mapungubwe Collection as a means of various layering of decolonisation inter alia, “providing wider access, better governance, promoting multi-disciplinary research”, in a sense moving the Mapungubwe Collection beyond the confines of archaeology. A second point is since the Mapungubwe Collection moved under the curation of the University of Pretoria Museums in June 2000, there has been active restorative justice move to directly address issues such as readdressing the polyphonic narrative of the history of Mapungubwe, the Mapungubwe repatriation of human remains*

The researcher posed another question to determine **the dominant theme(s) in the archaeological displays at your museum? What informs the choice of such theme(s)?**

Respondent “A1. The respondents did not respond to the question.

Respondent “A2 *The actual themes in the archaeology display can be observed through the lenses of the Curator who is currently responsible for the collection. As discussed, when the curator was appointed, management give a directed for the curator to analyse the collection and know more about not limited to the community voices and traditional knowledge of the*

*community knowledge about the collection. How the history of on human evolution and*

*analysis of material culture in the collection as well as the need to rewrite African History*

*from an African perspective. Hence the post-colonial exhibitions and displays should be*

*developed aiming at community engagement in the preservation, management as well as*

*sustainable development of the museum collection relevant to the current and future*

*generation. The issue of provenance is also an important tool in the field of archaeology*

*thus it will also be used to create an overview as to whether the materials’ context was*

*recorded. The curator was given the instruction to facilitate the conduct provenance*

*research which to a place where object was originally found or came from, who collected*

*the object, how the object was used by who, how the object was acquired etc.*

*for the Museums.*

Respondent B1” Respondents B1 from NMN indicated that *“the dominant theme(s) in the archaeological displays at the museum during our time is rock art. This is because Namibia is well known for its rick paintings and rock engravings. In addition, rock arts are the dominant theme in the Namibian archaeology and it receives a lot of attentions from many foreign researchers”.*

Respondent “B2 *Rock Arts exhibitions. Because Namibia is well known for its paintings and engravings.*

Respondent “C1Respondent C1 from NMB indicated that *“Museum is currently closed, New exhibition being founded Previous one was chronological didactic display from. ESA to Iron Age. Lineal Theme was "man and the environment" therefore this was fitting in that narrative*

Respondent “D1 Respondent D1 from UPM remarked that *“The Mapungubwe Collection is one of 56 other collections curated by the UP Museums. There remains a dedicated Mapungubwe Gallery, the theme alternates every 3 years. Currently, the theme is ceramics and there is a permanent exhibition of the Mapungubwe Gold Collection, National Treasures at the new Javett-UP Art Centre. A new exhibition in planning is dedicated to the Mapungubwe bead collection. The choice of themes is not only curatorially determined but also by public interest and current interests of the community- which is both the research community, immediate university student community* *and an exhibition at Mapungubwe National Park in the Interpretative Centre since 2011”.*

**The question on political pressure, especially after the formal end of colonialism and Apartheid, to decolonise the archaeological collection of the museum was asked***.*

Respondent “A1. Respondents A1 from NMN highlighted *that no pressure at all.*

Respondent “A2 “*the Namibian Government like any other African countries which were colonized wishes to decolonize their heritage. For example, decolonize from the political colonizers, second is from the commercial colonizers, third is from the cognitive/metaphysical colonizers. Therefore, for Namibia to realize its full independence, the archaeology collection and associated material with pattern of historical account of the Namibian history should be decolonized to reflect the modern settlement and provide information on the community voices and oral history of the communities written by the Namibians for the Namibians first before the international communities impose their history on the Namibians”.*

Respondent B1” *No. Because museum and the archaeological collection was never a priority.*

Respondent “B2 *The issues of decolonization were not critical at all. There was no pressure to change anything.*

Respondent “C1 Respondents C1 also indicated that *“in Botswana the museum was a post-colonial if post-independence construct. The pressure was therefore to do a new museum. Perhaps a closer study of that process and the persons involved (a former wildlife warden, an amateur archaeologist and white English man became first Director. Therefore, the influence of colonial perception and views of what a museum is cannot be excluded)”.*

Respondent “D1 Respondents D1, responded as follows: *“Yes, both directly and indirectly. In the case of the Mapungubwe Collection, the curriculum of archaeology requires more decolonisation, as well as the nature of research, needs to decolonise than the collection itself. Mapungubwe as a national and global interest remains under political pressure since its scientific discovery in 1933 and before that from “indigenous pressure” too, as claimants and communities do not always agree and Mapungubwe remains perpetually contested by all forms of pressures”.*

Responding to the question: *“***To what extent has your archaeological collection been researched*?”***

Respondent “A1*. To a large extend. The archaeological is one of the collections that has been researched at the museum.*

Respondent “A2 Respondent A2 from NMN commented *“to a large extend, the collection is well researched by local and international researchers. The NMN promotes the staff members and other researchers to undertake research in pursuit of generating new knowledge to strengthen the Namibian history and provide evidence-based research which promote traditional knowledge and intangible cultural heritage of the community*.

Respondent B1*” Intensive research coming from foreign researchers.*

Respondent “B2 *To a large extend. So many researchers came in from foreign countries.*

Respondent “C1 Respondents C1 from NMB remarked *“to a certain extent, perhaps 40% is Product of academic research while the other 60 % is product of Archaeological Impact Assessment”.*

Respondent “D1The respondent D1 from UPM Expressed *“To a large extend, from the moment of Mapungubwe’s scientific discovery of gold to the world in 1933, the collection has been researched. In more recent decades research has been transdisciplinary in nature, from historical perspectives, environmental sciences, physics, architecture etc. Dominant research has been on the ceramic materials mostly, trade beads, human skeletal remains and faunal remains, there remains however major gaps of research in the collection*

In response to the question: *“***Is there any specific part of the collection that has attracted much more attention from researchers? What could be the reason behind such*?”***

Respondent “A1. The respondent did not respond to the question.

Respondent “A2 *On a wider scale, the archaeological finds from different sites in Namibia, the Human Remains collection and the Underwater Cultural heritage or maritime archaeology. Most of the research is published in journals and other print media publications.*

Respondent B1” *Yes. Rock arts has attracted more attention because Namibian archaeology is rooted in rock arts.*

Respondent “B2 indicated that *“most of the researcher were on the stone implements especially from the Middle Stone Age. Most of these researchers were foreign students specializing in stone implements”.*

Respondent “C1 from NMB noted that *“most research is Mostly stone age and Iron age periods. Current research by international researchers has a stone age skew”.*

Respondent “D1 Respondent D1 from UPM indicated that *“What could be the reason behind such? The chronology of Mapungubwe has dominated research so ceramic typology has attracted research and of course the study of human remains. Excavation has focused on mass recovery and stratigraphic data to secure the dating sequence of Mapungubwe”.*

Finally, the researcher asked the question*: “***What has been the general value of research conducted on the archaeological collections at your museum*?”*** Respondents A1 outlined that  *It is part of the museum policy in the permit that says outcomes should be deposit back to the museum and some researchers do report back on what they have research on. Research alone helps us improve our collections example it gives opportunity for sponsorship as well as improve our activities and line of research though the recommendations made”.*

Respondent “A2 *There is a great value in studying the museum collection to find out different*

*archaeological objects, practices and culture of the Namibians and comprehend how the*

*archaeological collections emerged from the colonial and post-colonial perspectives. The*

*local communities are enable to influence the decolonization of Namibian history from*

*past colonial masters, Germany, Great Britain and South Africa*.

Respondent B1*” Not of value because the research that was alone does not respond to the daily struggle of the community. Archaeological research at the collection is no use to the local indigenous people (local people are not given a voice).*

Respondent “B2 explained that *“Not much or rather no significant at all because most of the research did their research in the collection during my time but never sent report on quit a few reports back on their research findings*

Respondent “C1 *influence on presentation of exhibitions and interpretation of heritage sites, production.*

Respondent “D1 from UPM indicated that *“The University of Pretoria has generated a majority of the research data on the Mapungubwe Collection, more particularly the value of research translated into other narratives for society to understand the significance and importance of Mapungubwe as a site, not just an archaeological site of the past, but a very significant natural and cultural landscape in contemporary society today”.*