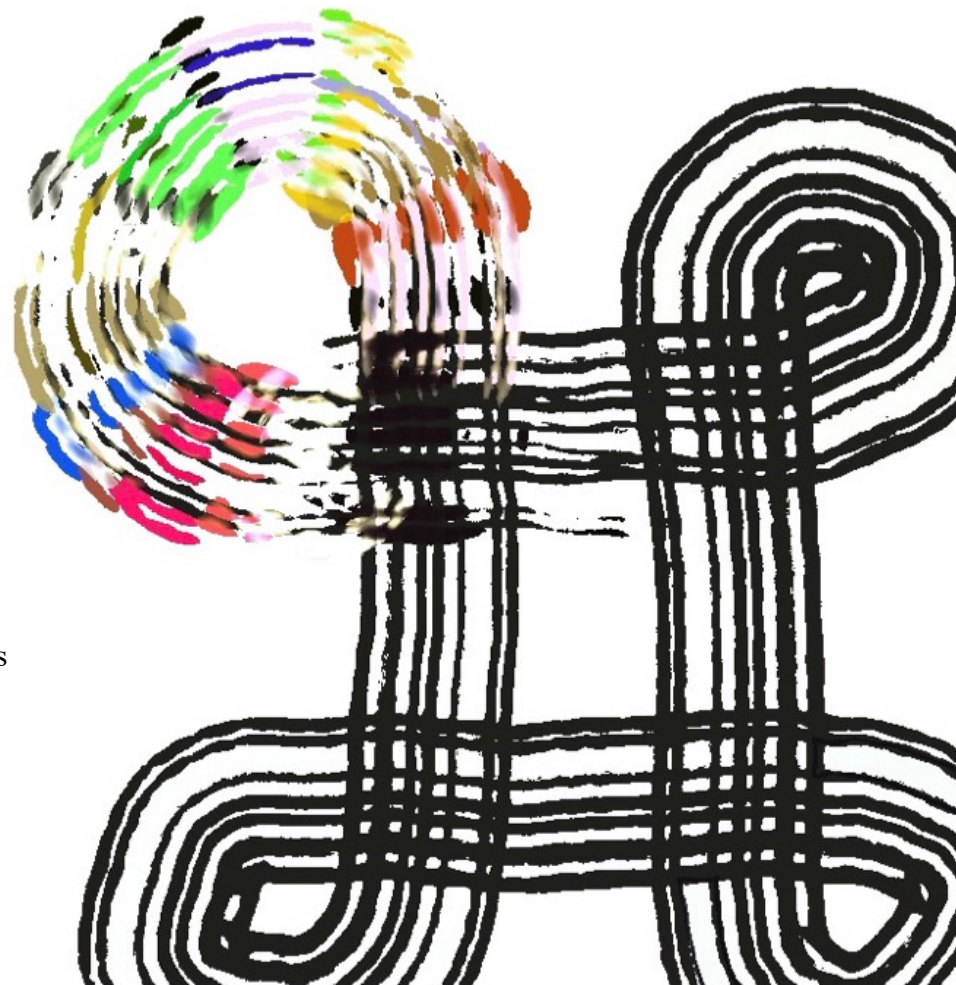


# Representation matters.

**National Identity, Marginalisation and Intersectionality  
in Permanent Exhibition Curation and Museum Strategy  
of the National Museum of Finland**

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<b>Title</b> <b>Representation matters.</b> <b>National Identity, Marginalisation and Intersectionality in Permanent Exhibition Curation and Museum Strategy of the National Museum of Finland</b>	<b>Number of pages</b>  72 + references and appendices
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<p>The network of meanings and values a national museum contains and upholds is vast and complex. As a collective memory of the society, a contemporary national museum institution needs to examine the power structures which shape its curatorial and institutional choices. As the authority of the past, present and future representations of Finnish national identity the National Museum of Finland holds a great responsibility in terms of inclusion and representation of all.</p> <p>The thesis is focused on how the National Museum of Finland is constructing national identity in their current permanent exhibitions and why there is a lack of more diverse representation considering minority and marginalised groups and identities in the Finnish national narrative and identity.</p> <p>The study aims to show the necessity of re-examining historical knowledges and truths, and the necessity to diversify the representations of identities constructing the national identity through an intersectional approach, in consideration of the diversity of people living in Finland in terms of race/ethnicity, socio-economic status/class, ability, gender and sexuality.</p> <p>This multidisciplinary study operates in the fields of arts management, feminist museology and critical heritage studies. The results suggest that the core issue in increasing minority representations is in the curatorial definition of the exhibition's core concept to what the visitor should identify themselves with (<i>samastumisen kohde</i>). In order to create social cohesion through an inclusive conception of Finnish national identity, intersectional approach is needed in re-defining the core concept of identifying.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b> national museum, arts management, feminist museology, critical heritage studies, intersectionality, identity	
<b>Additional information</b>	

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study

According to the Finnish Museum Policy Program 2030 (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2018), museums offer experiences and knowledge and thus create possibilities for creativity, for education, for constructing identities and understanding change, and they have an important task in building culturally, socially and ecologically sustainable societies and in improving societal well-being.

National museums have had an irrefutable position in the construction of nation-states, national identities and national histories. But what sort of identity construction has it been, when it can be said to have resulted in the construction of a homogenous monoethnic national identity, a vitrine for the history of the majority and a memorial for the story of the winner?

Lack of representation is a form of discrimination. This thesis studies the permanent exhibition curation and strategic decision-making of the National Museum of Finland (NMF) to examine the representations of minority and marginalised identities and the national identity which is constructed, preserved and displayed in the permanent exhibitions. It is a multidisciplinary study which reaches and utilises multiple theories and approaches as the question of identity construction is truly complex. My personal interest in this research is to find out why the national identity and narrative are not more inclusive of minority and marginalised groups in the current permanent exhibitions of the museum and I find it important, relevant and timely to engage the NMF in a discussion on these topics to further dismantle the underrepresentation of minority and marginalised groups in the Finnish society.

Minority voices have been silenced and pushed to the margins through centuries. A museum needs to make choices, and ethnographic and cultural history museums which stem from the Western European traditions have had a tendency of making those choices to represent 'typicality', which inevitably produces as a counterpart the 'other'. In the Finnish context, typicality manifests as heteronormativity, and in the context of race, there is an underlying

consideration of Finnish as white (Rossi, 2015). The phenomenon of presenting the majority identity as typical in the museums is not occurring only in Finland, but is deeply rooted in the Western museum institution and thus it is relevant to extend the examination of this thesis to a global context. To add to the multifacetedness of the thesis subject, I consider that the components affecting the formation of national identity from an intersectional perspective include race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, socio-economic status/class and ability.

Societal issues and movements that are shaping the global understanding of ourselves and how we exist in the world are affecting the museums as well: #Metoo, the Black Lives Matter, decolonisation, post-nationalism, mass-immigration and intersectional feminism have all shaken the power-structures of the global world and with it, the Western museum institution. Whose stories are museums telling, what are the objects in the collections and where do they come from, how have they been collected? How do we look like in a museum? Do we all find ourselves and our stories in a museum? As a queer person, these are questions which interest me not only on a societal and academic level, but on a personal level as well.

At the moment of finalising the thesis, the renewed permanent exhibition of the NMF is completed and consists of three parts: Prehistory, Otherland (covering the period of years 1100-1916) and Story of Finland (covering the years 1917-2016). When I started to consider the thesis subject in early 2020, the permanent exhibition consisted of the parts of Prehistory and Story of Finland, both opened in 2017. Not much public information, apart from the planned opening in February 2021, was available of the Otherland. It opened finally in May, 2021, after the delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

When examining the programming and the minority and marginalised groups' representations in the NMF then in 2020, the capacity to react to societal phenomena and visibility of minority themes in general seemed to be in the category of temporary and pop-up -exhibitions and events, which have a shorter season and lighter production. In permanent exhibitions emphases on minority and marginalised themes or sensitivity around the issues of inclusive representation were not visible as such, moreover, even some approaches which could be considered insensitive were identified. This prompted my thesis process. There is a flaw in the approach to only handle themes considering minority and marginalised groups in the temporary exhibitions: minorities are not temporary. We are a permanent part of the nation.

## 1.2 Problem Formulation

In the past, museums have been widely considered as educational places of neutrality, above social and political issues. However, like Robert R. Janes and Richard Sandell state (2019a), the recognition that museums are not, and never have been neutral, is widening, and current research is increasingly revealing that museums are taking positions on contemporary social issues. As Elzbieta Nieroba (2017, p. 86) states, museum as an institution has never been apolitical in its history.

As a collective memory of the society, a contemporary national museum institution needs to examine the power structures which shape its curatorial and institutional choices. The National Museum of Finland is a significant national institution and has a powerful position and authority in defining, archiving and representing Finnishness. Furthermore, it holds a great responsibility in terms of inclusion and representation of all. Its role in the historical development process of the Finnish nation-state is undebatable, furthermore, its positive input in constructing what we now consider as Finnish national identity has been invaluable when considering a young nation struggling to find its identity after centuries of being under the rule and at times oppression of the now neighbouring states. However, more emphasis on the post-national paradigm shift is needed and to study further the contemporary structural and societal changes and their consequences.

This is specifically relevant now, when the NMF is in the process of building a new extension wing, a project called the New National. An important part of the study besides examining the permanent exhibition curation is to examine the strategic development around the process of building the new wing for the museum. At this moment a plan of action to build it is approved and a rough schedule plans the opening for the year 2026 (NMF, 2020). The newly built expansion of the museum will offer more physical space, more versatile exhibition spaces with contemporary exhibiting technologies and possibilities to increase overall access and accessibility of the museum for future generations of visitors and co-creators of the Finnish national heritage.

The new wing will no doubt act as a refreshing new chapter for the NMF and within its development processes, it is essential to consider *who* is the future visitor and *how* they look at the museum materials presented by the museum. As Nicole Robert, a scholar on gender

studies and museology states (2014, p. 26), we can develop conscious understanding of the organising structures that create marginalisation and exclusion by reflecting critically and intersectionally on the diversity of systems museums employ.

The construction of the national narrative of Finland started in the late 19th century (Pettersson, 2011b). Despite of that constructed national narrative which lead to the contemporary understanding of the Finnish national identity, Finland was never a nation of purely white monoethnic, heterosexual, Finnish speaking, gender conforming, able-bodied, sauna, sisu and salmiakki people. We are and have been diverse in its multifaceted meanings and I find it necessary to engage the NMF in a discussion on how to communicate that in the future also at the New National.

### **1.3 Aim of the Study and Research Questions**

This thesis research aims to emphasise the importance of inclusive and norm-critical museum work and to present various ways in how to engage in a change-making process in a museum. The thesis aims to participate in filling the gap in research in Finland considering the position of NMF in the construction of intersectionally understood national identity and the representations of minority and marginalised groups in their permanent exhibitions. It aims to bring forth the importance and position of the NMF as one of the authorities in defining, presenting and creating Finnishness, and how important it is that the representations of the museum are inclusive and diverse. The thesis is providing context and combines various theories from an intersectional feminist research approach for re-examining museum representations, curation and strategy in order to diversify the presented identities.

The principal research questions in the thesis are:

- Which curatorial and strategic decisions can lead to a lack of representation of minority and marginalised groups and identities in the permanent exhibitions of the NMF?
- How is the NMF constructing national identity in the 21st century in consideration of the diversification of identities of the people living in Finland?



## 1.4 Previous Research

Due to the complex entanglement of national identity and representation, the framework of the research is wide. I strive to draw all the elements together with a multidisciplinary approach.

Finnish research about intersectional national identity construction in the current context of the NMF does not exist as such. However, in May 2021 I became aware of a coming edited book which would be published in 31.8.2021 called *Marginaaleista museoihin* (From the Margins to the Museums) edited by Anna Rastas and Leila Koivunen. According to the publisher Vastapaino this is the first comprehensive book in Finnish about the new approaches in museum work on cultural diversity, marginalised groups, inclusivity, equality and accessibility. The book will be published at the time I am finishing my thesis work so I will not be able to use it, however, I was fortunate to be able to read and use two of the articles pre-publishing written by Rastas and Koivunen, of which particularly the article by Rastas on racism in the museum context was illuminating.

There is a large body of works about national identity construction in museums globally from various perspectives (eg. Aronsson, 2011b; Mason, 2013; Pettersson, 2011a, 2011b; Sandell, 2003; Knell, Aronsson & Amundsen, 2011; Scorrano, 2012; Swensen & Guttormsen, 2020; Weiser, 2015). Pia Laskar has researched the national representations of minority and marginalised identities specifically in the Swedish historical museum context in their article Displaced Gaze in the book *History Unfolds* by the Swedish History Museum (2017) which offers a great overall insight of the histories and futures of minority representations in the national context (Laskar, 2017). Linnea Ollaiver has studied cultural diversity in the context of the educational programmes of the NMF in their MA thesis *Cultural Diversity and Integration at Museums*, comparing the programmes and approaches of the NMF and the Swedish History Museum (Ollaiver, 2016).

It is relevant to examine the core concepts of what a (national) museum is built on, and that is handled through various approaches in research (eg. Pettersson, 2018; Aronsson & Elgenius, 2011; Mason, 2013; Hourston Hanks, Hale & MacLeod, 2012; Weiser, 2015). As the thesis follows a feminist research approach, it is supported in the context of feminist museology and queering the museum by the research of Hilde Stern Hein (2007), Nina Lykke

(2010), Nicole Robert (2014), Rita Paqvalén (2020a, 2020b), Rita Grácio, Andreia C. Coutinho, Laura Falé and Maribel Sobreira (2021) and Arndís Bergsdóttir (2016).

Robert R. Janes and Richard Sandell (2019) have edited a comprehensive book on museum activism, which is an important source for this thesis. Critical heritage studies bring a perspective to challenge set ideations of cultural heritage and on that I am referring to Tim Winter (2013) and Rodney Harrison (2013). Intersectionality offers the overarching method to the study and that is considered mainly through the notions of Kimberlé Crenshaw (1993), Gabriele Winker and Nina Degele (2011), Patricia Hill Collins (2019), and Nina Lykke (2010). Neil G. Kotler, Philip Kotler and Wendy I. Kotler (2008) offer the framework for museum strategy making and in curation I refer to among others museologist Jana Reidla (2016), who has conducted a wide research of the practices of the national museums in Finland and the Baltic countries and Marta Keil (2018).

## **1.5 Research Approach**

This is a qualitative feminist study and the methodology is critical discourse analysis. The material consists of four semi-structured interviews and a printed summary leaflet of the strategy of the NMF, and supporting materials are two exhibition scripts and personal visits to the museum.

Interviewees are Museum Director Elina Anttila, Head of Production Päivi Roivainen (project manager in the production of *Otherland*, 2021), Head of Public Programmes Hanna Forssell (project manager in the productions of *Prehistory and the Story of Finland*, 2017) and Executive Director of Culture for All, Rita Paqvalén. Culture for All is a state funded agency tasked with supporting the Finnish arts and culture field in handling issues of accessibility, diversity, and equity.

I interviewed four subjects in-depth in April of 2021. By thorough examination of the answers by comparing and contrasting I will be able to point several discourses to study how intersectionality is understood in the museum decision-making and if it is a part of the museum's working discourse now and going further. The answers will reveal how the museum is constructing the national identity at the moment, why there is a lack of minority and marginalised groups representations, how *belonging* has been constructed through

identifying and how the NMF sees the strategic development on diversification towards the New National building process.

### ***1.5.1 Ethical Considerations, Queer Perspectives***

Following the principles of feminist research, I propose this thesis as a dynamic suggestion and a critical alternative to the current thinking in order to reveal silenced histories, rather than to present absolutes.

Reflecting on my position studying these issues, a question arises. How am I able to research topics considering the representations of minority and marginalised groups, being a white Finnish, soon doubly university educated person? I look at these issues through the minority lens of a queer person and I will examine the issues privileging intersectional feminist research approach.

The queerspecific lens resists the reproduction of white, patriarchal and cisgender heteronormativities (Grácio et al., 2021, p. 202), and as such, raises the potentiality of being aware of and more inclined to identifying other non-normative issues considering for example class and ability. Indeed, queer-perspective in this thesis does not limit to the perspectives of gender minorities or sexual orientation but refers to an overall norm-critical and inclusionary perspective to examining the museum's work.

However, a queer-identity does not make one a specialist on all minority and marginalised groups' issues, especially considering racism. As I am continuing to problematise my position, I am reminded by Nina Lykke that if 'we', as in white, middle-class, Western feminists, do not carefully reflect our positionality in a global and intersectional perspective and rethink the ways of politics and theory-making, we will end up supporting rather than breaking down the power structures against which we claim to fight (2010, p. 54).

The use of the term minority can be interpreted as contradictory. Some persons consider it as an othering term, and not all who are deemed as having a minority identity, consider themselves as minority. In this thesis using the word minority alongside the term marginalised serves a purpose, as the thesis aims to deconstruct the perceived neutrality of the museum representations of identities and bring forth the hidden, oppressing structures that often affect the minority identities, in order to dismantle them.

The term marginalised is used to highlight the position forced upon a group, as the position is derived from *othering* the group and setting them in a powerless position. This further reveals the matrix of domination and the patterns of privilege historically.

In conclusion, I acknowledge that these terms should be used with consideration, and with in-depth awareness and openness of one's own position and biases.

## **1.6 Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis is divided into six chapters, followed by references and appendices. After the introduction, I will present the theoretical framework in chapter 2. It will include considerations on museums, national museums, the activist, antiracist and feminist approach to museology and notions of critical heritage studies.

In the part on intersectionality, I will present the core concepts and most relevant theories of intersectionality and how they relate to national identity and representation. I am looking at the Arts Management approach through considerations on strategy and strategic planning and will conclude the chapter of the theoretical framework with the conceptions of curation and decision-making in the museum and how they could be broadened to include diverse perspectives.

Going further, in chapter 3 I will firstly proceed to presenting the chosen methodology of the research and I will present in short the approach of critical discourse analysis, case study, feminist and qualitative research and their relevance and applications to the themes at hand. Secondly, I will go through the data collection process and the analysis process. Thirdly, I will consider the limitations of the study in the critical reflections of the study.

Chapter 4 is for the analysis of the data and the results. Conclusions are presented in chapter 5 considering the presented theories and my own critical analysis and perceptions.

In chapter 6 Final Conclusions, a summary of the results, notions on generalisability and suggestions for further research are presented.

# 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter about the theoretical framework the areas of study which are utilised in the thesis are presented. It offers the ground onto which the research is built and situates the thesis research amongst the existing body of research.

## 2.1 Museum

International Council of Museums (ICOM) is an authority in the museum field as a membership association and a non-governmental organisation, and it establishes professional and ethical standards for museum activities. ICOM has created the definition of a museum since 1946, and makes recommendations on issues related to cultural heritage, fosters capacity building and disseminates knowledge. In 2019, yet another new museum definition was proposed but turned down by a vote because of its progressive content which according to criticism was considered steering away from what a museum is (Engelsman, 2019). The proposed definition stated:

*Museums are democratising, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures. Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present, they hold artefacts and specimens in trust for society, safeguard diverse memories for future generations and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people. Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent, and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing. (ICOM, 2019)*

Many of the elements of the proposed definition are in fact already implemented in the field. The collection policy program of Helsinki City Museum 2020-2024 (2020) states that in the collection work of the 2020s the emphasis is not what is being collected, but how it is done

and that the meaning and value of the collection is born in the interaction with users (p. 8). This indicates clearly the shift in the position of the visitor-customer in current museum thinking: they are at the core of the museum work, comparing to the historical definitions of museums as places of preservation, research and communication (Petrunina, 2019).

In the European National Museums (EuNaMus) report *Building National Museums* Peter Aronsson defines the motivations behind sustaining a national museum as a "mixture of a will to secure a scientific and relevant understanding of the national heritage, community integration, stimulating creativity and cultural dialogue and creating attractions for a burgeoning experience economy" (Aronsson, 2011c, p. 1).

In the introduction of the book *Museum Making* (Hourston Hanks, Hale & MacLeod, 2012, p. 27), the editors state that the narrative potential of a museum is particularly powerful because of its multi-dimensionality. They continue, that comparing to the restrictions of other forms of culture such as literature and its confines of linear arrangement, and theatre with its straight-forward perspective, a museum represents a completely embodied experience of media and objects in three-dimensional space, which can be experienced in free flow of one's own timing (Hourston Hanks, Hale & MacLeod, 2012, p. 27).

This reveals the unique position of a museum as a locus of meaning-making and its potential in broadening the understanding of ourselves and our histories. As Susanna Pettersson states (2018, p. 134), "memory organisations such as museums and archives form the backbone of our collective identity". What is more, these lead to understanding who we deem as the *other*, adding to the relevance on the continued sustaining of national museums despite societal changes and overall globalisation.

In the introduction to *Museums, Society, Inequality* (Sandell, 2002) Eilean Hooper-Greenhill and Flora Kaplan continue deeper in their analysis on the relevance of museums, maintaining that museums were constructed since the Renaissance as symbols of Western society, and this symbol is at the same time multifaceted and complex, and through their collections and exhibitions they mediate many of the principal values of society. They admit that these mediations are subject to contestation and that the museum can be seen as a locus of politics as well. What I find is especially relevant in regard to continued sustaining of national museums, is that Hooper-Greenhill and Kaplan state that in post-colonial societies museums have had to change radically and reinvent themselves under the pressure coming from

various directions, which include new functions and actions towards greater democratic access. This thought supports the demands of re-examining and reconstructing our notions of the past representations of national identities going to the 21st century. (Hooper-Greenhill & Kaplan, 2002)

Considering museums' ability to present smaller minority and marginalised groups has been approached from many angles in research, as Hannaleena Hieta describes in their dissertation on the concept of adaptive museums (2010). In 2002 museologist Angela Vanegas wrote that including sexual minorities in museum collection and exhibition policies has been approached through the notion that museums are institutionally homophobic (p. 98), and museums have a specific role in the societal acceptance of sexual minorities, because museums are considered in general offering an esteemed interpretation of history (p. 106), meaning that when museums exhibit contents on, about and with sexual minorities, museums legitimise their existence and show them as a part of the society.

The NMF has strongly shown its position on the matter of sexual and gender minorities by offering their premises during the Helsinki Pride in 2019 and 2020 as the Pride House.

Hieta writes (2010) in their dissertation that the approaches towards representations of ethnic minorities in museums varies and even if museums have reacted by presenting exhibitions by marginalised groups, it has not been simple to implement the new discourse on identities to museum context. Hieta continues that when a museum creates a collection or an exhibition which is meant to represent a group of certain identity, it will fail, as it will inevitably flatten the group to a stereotypical listing of traits and commonalities, meaning that as long as there is a museum professional involved as the authority of the process, the professional has the power to define the group in contrast to the group itself that is being presented. It has been claimed as well that as long as the museum institution has the authority to make definitions of who is the other and who is "ethnic", they maintain the position of the majority culture as default. (Hieta, 2010, p. 42)

### ***2.1.1 National Museums***

In the core of this thesis research is the question of how national identity is produced through the discourse NMF creates.

Recent developments in the rising of right-wing nationalism have resulted in the word and concept of national receiving an undesirable echo to it. In the European and Western contexts, nationalism can be considered linking to white supremacy and extremist patriotism, disregarding the multicultural and diverse histories of the nations.

The ambivalence considering generalised national heritage can be pinpointed to *which is everybody's, is nobody's*. Indeed, in the current day societies which acknowledge the diversity of their population, the discourse which is constructed in the national museums must be more closely examined. Rhiannon Mason states in their article on national museums, globalisation and post-nationalism, that despite these developments and overall globalisation, national museums have not been made redundant (2013). Next, the reasoning behind that is elaborated.

Mason looks at the relevance of continued sustaining of national museums from three aspects: firstly, they state that globalisation is not automatically antithetical to the national and can coexist with it. Secondly, a large part of the collections and objects in the national museums predate modern European 19th century nationalism and these objects have potential in sharing cosmopolitan and post-national stories. Thirdly, the European nations have always been diverse and heterogenic, and the objects in national museums have potential to illuminate this, even when nationalist discourse wants to disregard this and preserve the image of the nation as homogenous and monoethnic. (Mason, 2013, p. 2)

Susanna Pettersson notes that the discussion of the need for a national museum in Finland had been an ongoing debate since the 1860s and the focus was on a museum of archaeology and cultural history (Pettersson, 2011a). Pettersson describes the participation of Finnish national museums in building the national identity in her report on the birth of Finnish national museums as follows: "Communicating the core contents with the aid of collection displays was the museums' strongest tool in the nation-building process." and she continues that museums as memory organisations contributed to the nation-building process by curating, maintaining and displaying the national narrative (Pettersson, 2011b, p. 265).

Aronsson (2011) maintains that emerging states need to produce a national narrative in the face of a lack of history, and as a nation emerging from the devolution of empires, Finland also belongs in this group.



Regarding the creation of Finnish national identity and narrative, Pettersson states that Finland's national movement in the first decades of the 19th century was reflected in the arts and culture, as the country needed a history of its own and quite concretely created it by composing, painting, writing and collecting objects seen as typical which mirrored the character of the country, leading to museums and their collections playing a significant role in depicting the story of Finland. Furthermore, what is noteworthy in Pettersson's opinion is that such museums which highlighted the new national narrative were free from official policy-level responsibilities. What is also relevant to note in terms of the truly constructed nature of the Finnish national collection resources, is that unlike many other national museums whose collections were of royal origin, Finnish collections were "literally compiled from scratch.". (Pettersson, 2011b, p. 266-69)

Mason supports the statement noting that national museums therefore have the potential to demonstrate the constructed nature of contemporary nations should they be willing to reinterpret and reframe the collections through a cosmopolitan and reflexive perspective. They also state that the visitor should be encouraged to interpret the collections through a similar perspective. (Mason, 2013, p. 2)

Still in the year 2011, Pettersson described the role of the NFM as safe and neutral and not seeking to provoke, as it avoided difficult topics such as political traumas of civil war or the issues of sex, gender, ethnic minorities and disabled people (2011b, p. 276). Now in 2021 it can be said that the NMF has taken steps towards handling these subjects and opening to more challenging topics which is further examined later on, but more work and wider research is in order.

Museum visitors are increasingly diverse, multiethnic and cosmopolitan, fluid with their identity representations. The national museums have a challenge to communicate and develop their programs so that they interest and engage these varied audiences. As Mason further elaborates, national museums can be seen as "clusters of cultural practices and constellations of material culture comprising many different intersecting ontological scales" (2013, p. 2), we see that in relation to the challenges to constructing a contemporary, broad ideation of national identity, the concepts of intersectional curating and decision-making are the key.

M. Elisabeth Weiser states in line with the previous examples that the national museum narrative of history plays a dual role. On one hand, it encourages individual identification with the national 'we' through its imagery and perhaps the mythic image considered depicting the essence of national identity, however, on the other hand, identification with the ambiguous 'we' brings out the need to suggest a more dialogic national myth, one which has the capacity of merging those ambiguities of each of us making up the national 'we'. (2015, p. 398)

Aronsson writes in the European National Museums (EuNaMus) report *Building National Museums* that national museums have from the very beginning been visionary and even utopian projects supported by politicians, scholars, intellectuals and active citizens in the state and in civil society (Aronsson, 2011c, p. 3). In the light of the current changes in societal power structures, this sense of visionary and utopia should be strongly supported to envision a better and more equitable society for all.

### ***2.1.2 New Museology: Activism, Feminism, Queering and Antiracism***

The museum institution and related academics have changed significantly starting in the late 20th century. The shift to *new museology* started in the 1970s and 1980s. Reidla states (2018, p. 118) that "The new museology is a discourse about the social and political roles of museums, according to which museums are supposed to turn their focus from collections-centredness to society-centredness.". This shift affected the museum work as a whole and continues to do so.

#### **Activist Museology**

Further change in the museum field is still needed to serve societies comprehensively. Robert R. Janes and Richard Sandell, two prominent scholars in the museum field and museology, describe the reasoning for the change and how it can be achieved. Janes and Sandell state (2019b) that activist approaches are needed in museum work and to adapt those activist approaches in current global and societal issues, there are lessons to be learned from the LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer +) community. Firstly, they state that the museum professionals will have to be able to engage in conversations about subjects which might be understood as uncomfortable. Secondly, the museum professionals need to focus on the "immorality of inaction" (2019b, p. 4).

## **Feminist Museology**

In feminist museological writings keywords such as agency, queering and hierarchical binary, and concepts such as what is considered neutral, natural and objective, emerge. The networks of meanings in the museum objects are multifaceted. Through current theoretisations in research such as in feminist museology, we will be able to diversify the notions what we consider the objects in museums expressing and teaching us. The field emphasises *how* we see instead of *what* we see in the museum context. (Bergsdóttir, 2016; Stern Hein, 2007; Grácio et al, 2020)

Arndís Bergsdóttir states in their article on considerations of feminist museology that no matter where we look, we are entangled in and with materialities. Bergsdóttir continues that materialities are the core contents of cultural heritage museums and that their main role within the representational frameworks of museums has been to act as anchors to the narratives the museum exhibits. However, Bergsdóttir challenges this position as prevalent in their post-human approach to museology stating that more examination should be pointed toward the reciprocal relationships which happen between human and non-human materialities in museums. Examining the relations could lead to a wider understanding of the current global changes. (Bergsdóttir, 2016, p.127)

## **Queering**

A further approach within the feminist approach to re-examining museum work and museology, is the practice of *queering*. Queering implies "a reflection on how the museum participates in the construction of a heteronormative system, including not only gender but also social class, race/ethnicity and other lines of inequalities" (Grácio et al., 2020, p. 202). Queering the museum has been researched among others in the contexts of U.S. and Australian historical museums and in the Finnish museum context, revealing great insights in the hierarchical canons of societal power differentials which have been upheld in national historical museums and how queering can challenge those canons (Paqvalén, 2020a; Robert, 2016; Nguyen, 2018).

## **Antiracism**

There is no antiracist museum, states journalist Meri Parkkinen and continues, that the first step to equitable museum work is to acknowledge that (Parkkinen, 2020).

According to Rastas (2021), even if museums have reacted to the increasing multiculturalism by developing more inclusive working methods, the discourse on racism in museum context has concentrated largely to how different peoples and groups and their cultures have been represented and how they have been valued. Museums have been considered repeating a eurocentric, thus white, worldview. The signification of difference is relevant considering the examination of racism, however, a more varied approach is needed to recognise the multifaceted affiliations in museums to understand the inherently structural racism. Rastas continues that if resisting racism is considered to belong to museums' social responsibility, the ways in which racism emerges must be recognised. (Rastas, 2021, p. 163)

### ***2.1.3 Critical Heritage Studies***

According to Tim Winter (2012), critical heritage studies embrace the critical issues which challenge the world currently: the larger issues which extend outwards from heritage. Critical heritage studies also examine the complex relationship which the humanities and social science approaches to heritage have with the conservation sector which is guided by scientific materialism. These critical studies are essential in the development process of post-western understandings of heritage and culture, and the socio-political powers which surround them. Critical heritage studies can be seen as knowledge production that responds to and engages with pressing global challenges such as climate change, sustainability, human rights, democracy, the future of the state and the protection of cultural heritage itself. (Winter, 2012, p. 532)

Rodney Harrison (2013) describes the emergence of critical heritage studies as the counterforce needed to dismantle the nationalist, colonialist and imperialist archaeologies and the usage of heritage in nation-state building, and to answer the need to question the social and political contexts in which historical knowledge was produced using archaeology and heritage. Critical heritage studies could also according to Harrison address heritage as discourse; research the relationship between tourism and heritage and handle questions relating to the politics of representation and the ownership of cultural property (2013, p. 96).

Winter specifically emphasises (2012) the importance of critical heritage studies in relation to the scientific - humanist divide on conceptions of heritage. Winter specifies that if ideas about heritage are intellectually enclaved in two opposing sectors (scientific - humanist) and

divided by languages and knowledge practices, it will have a negative effect on how heritage could be seen as a positive enabler and actor in complex challenges that the globalised world faces today (2012, p. 533).

Indeed, along with Winter's thoughts, if the authority voice of heritage stems primarily from the knowledge production practice which relies on material-centric disciplines which privilege scientific methodologies, one must acknowledge that this approach is based in a discourse of scientific knowledge as *objective, apolitical* and *value neutral* which cannot answer to complex questions on heritage as a multifaceted concept: as Winter continues, heritage is now understood as "encompassing everything from language to sacred objects, and from rock music to 'queer spaces'" (2012, p. 541). Simultaneously, disregarding the technological and skill-based knowledge of conservation and heritage preservation, criticality can turn into anti-heritage (Winter, 2012, p. 533).

Harrison seems to confirm this by stating that the answer is in developing critical heritage studies as *dialogical* (2013, p.111).

Winter continues that critical heritage studies can play a distinct role in the challenge to develop approaches to heritage governance and conservation that respond better to the socio-political complexities in the sector. The field needs "people who are willing to look outside their own scholarly and professional tradition, and accept there are bigger issues at stake", Winter states. (2012, p. 540-541)

Critical heritage explores heritage as being "produced through sociopolitical processes reflecting society's power structures" (Logan & Wijesuriya, 2015, p. 569). Considering the colonial history and nature of the museum institution, their position to act as knowledge mediators and structures of representation is often based on biased and normative concepts of culture and its management and these concepts follow and impose narrow Western understandings and can discriminate against marginalised groups (Schütz & Oswald, 2020, p. 2).

Finnish history can be said to be the history of the conquered in many aspects, rather than of the conqueror. However, that reasoning is overlooking the fact that Finland has colonised the territories of the Sámi peoples and forcefully assimilated them into Finnish culture completely disregarding their cultural and human rights and continues to do so. Because of the discourse on the Finnish colonialist past has just recently started to open in earnest, a colonial

way of thinking has easily been activated for example through Finnish literature and entertainment. Whether the national community had a colonial past or not, colonial reasoning and representation can have an influence on thinking (Lappalainen, 2006, p.101).

Finland has also been taking part in settler-colonial actions through its population settling to stolen lands. We need be open to examining these pasts and how they affect our perceptions of the Finnish national narrative. Rastas states referring to Finnish exceptionalism:

*Nevertheless, Finns also gained economically from colonialism, and many Finns took part in the colonial enterprise, for example as settlers of Swedish colonies in Delaware in North America and together with other Scandinavians in the Congo (Palmborg, 2009). Furthermore, Finns were subject to racist stereotyping by Swedes and assigned a lower status in racial hierarchies also by some scholars in other European countries, but instead of questioning those ideologies Finns engaged in pseudo-scientific studies in order to produce counter arguments of 'Finns as White Europeans' (see Rastas 2004: 97–9). Consequently, racist ideologies (which linked race with nationhood) were also established in Finland. (Rastas, 2016, p. 90.)*

## **2.2 Intersectionality**

*The ultimate aim of intersectionality is to challenge inequality and enact change to eliminate it. (Rodriguez, Holvino, Fletcher & Nkomo, 2016, p. 207)*

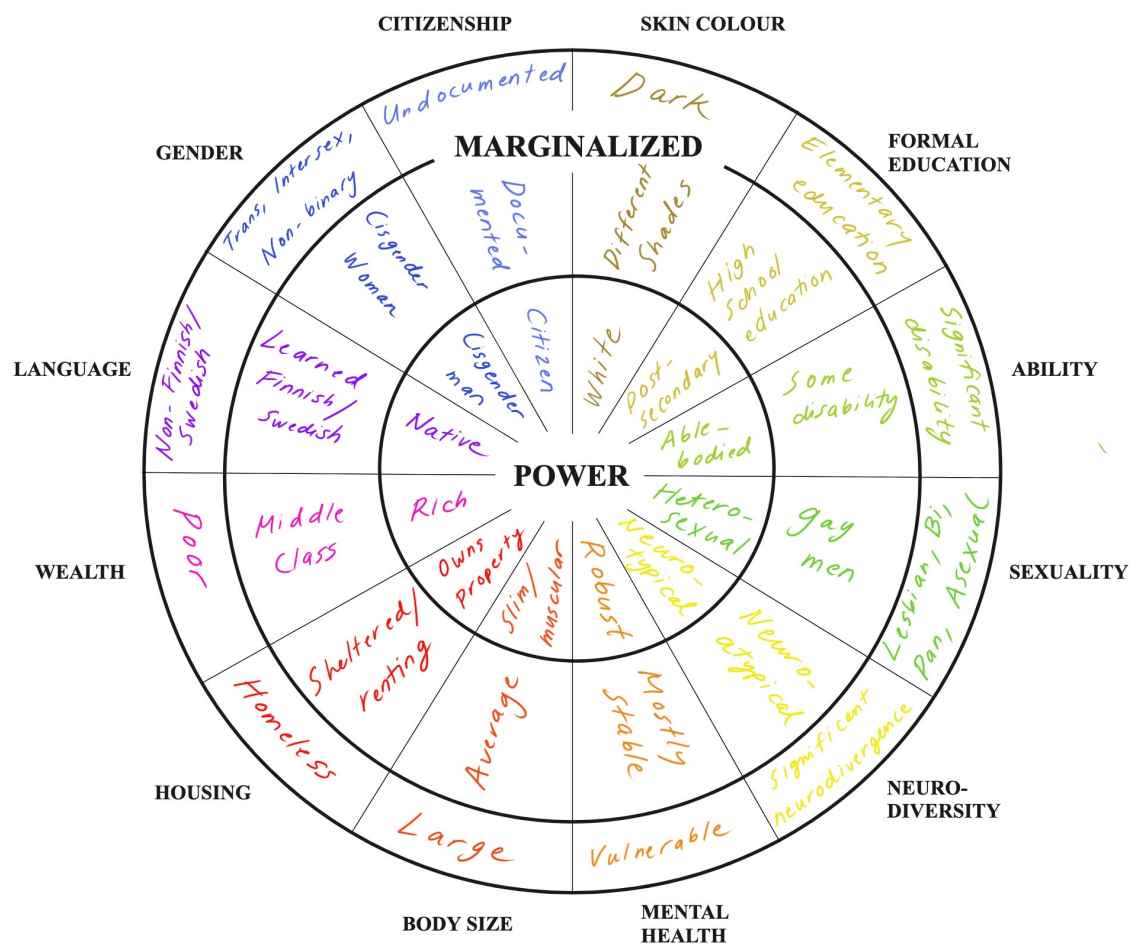
Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality in 1989, to groundbreakingly explain and illuminate the multifaceted oppression of African American women and writes about the intersectional approach as follows: "Through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better acknowledge and ground the differences among us and negotiate the means by which these differences will find expression in constructing group politics." (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 60).

To examine and illuminate the positions of power and to understand the different intersections of power and marginalisation, teacher and education technology consultant Sylvia Duckworth created the wheel of power/privilege. This illustrates clearly the positionalities of different groups of people in the context of societal power.

**FIGURE 1**

*Wheel of Power/Privilege*

## WHEEL OF POWER/PRIVILEGE



miro

*Adapted from ccrweb.ca / Sylvia Duckworth*

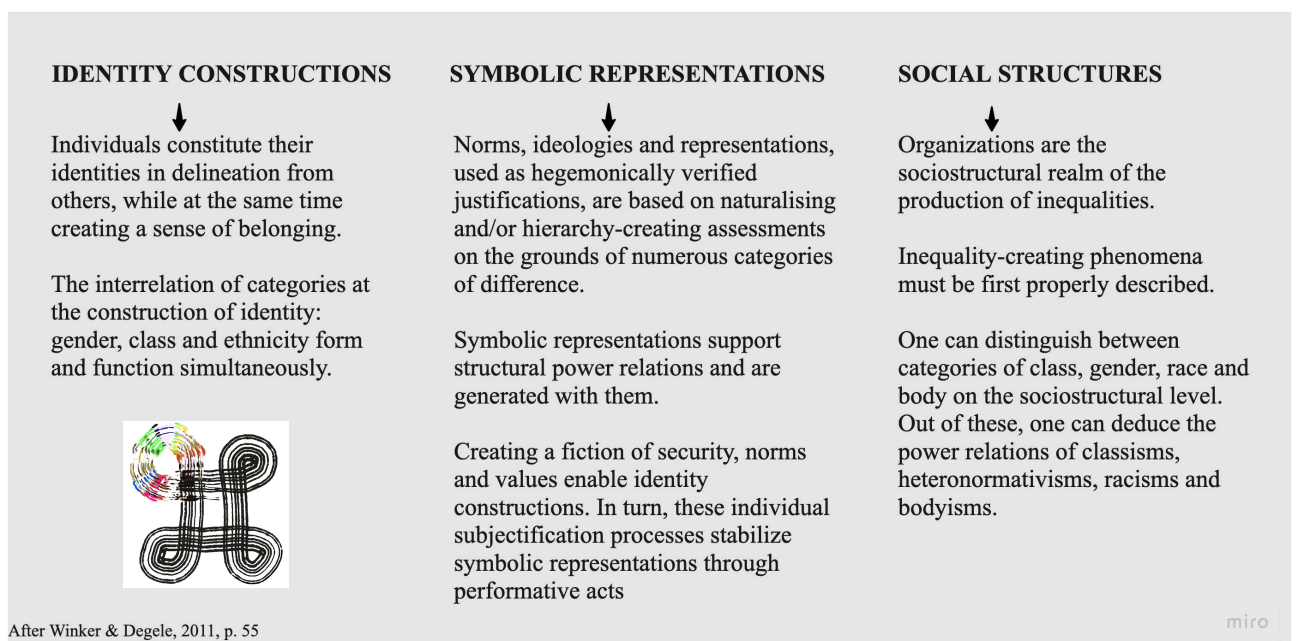
Cultural rights expert Farida Shaheed states in the foreword for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report on gender equality, heritage and creativity (2014) that all individuals simultaneously belong to multiple, diverse and

changing communities and that it is of utmost importance that individuals are not compelled to identify only according to one singular facet of their identity, such as gender, ethnicity or religion. Shaheed continues that the protection of multiple identities is an asset in resisting and conquering political forces seeking to inhibit pluralistic views on society and self. With these thoughts in mind, the next chapter continues to the conceptions of intersectionality which engage with the multiple factors forming the identity of an individual.

To establish a system, a structure, through which we can examine the power structures which affect the formation of national identity, we must be open to examine it from multiple perspectives. The challenge is how to be able to examine such a complex process systematically and theoretically and implement the results to practice. Winker and Degele (2011, p. 54) understand intersectionality as "a system of interactions between inequality-creating social structures (i.e. of power relations), symbolic representations and identity constructions that are context-specific, topic-orientated and inextricably linked to social praxis.". This implies that it is a complex, but a workable approach to examining national identity. Gabriele Winker and Nina Degele offer (2011) a multi-level method of analysis which illustrates the knowledge construction of the museum and how it can be deconstructed and examined intersectionally:

## FIGURE 2

### *Intersectionality as multi-level analysis*





Anna Rastas defines intersectionality as an approach which considers person's different social positionings simultaneously and brings forth the agglomeration of various elements causing marginalisation (Rastas, 2021, p.176).

Supporting these notions, Nicole Robert continues (2014, p. 24) that "The idea that identities do not operate alone but intersect with each other in dynamic and complex ways—that identities are intersectional—presents new possibilities for solving the challenges of identity-based inclusion.". This further strengthens the notion of intersectional approach being the right angle to examining the reconstruction of national identity in the post-national era.

Nina Lykke specifies, that intersectionality can be considered as a theoretical and methodological tool to analyse how historically certain types of power differentials and constraining normativities, based on constructed sociocultural categorisations such as ethnicity, gender, race, class, sexuality, dis/ability and nationality, interact and produce societal inequalities and unfair social relations (2010, p. 50).

Intersectionality in its complexity is not a miraculous method to solving multifaceted social inequalities, but as Patricia Hill Collins states (2019, p. 5), one of its greatest strengths may be its heterogeneity as a broad-based, collaborative political and intellectual process with varying social actors. Therefore, seeing its complexity as a positive aspect works as a reminder of the importance of the process: re-examining the past is often not a happy and a simple process, but a complex one and brings to the surface silenced voices. I am encouraged by the notions of Collins, as she suggests that using intersectional approach in research enables complex analyses of how, either singularly or in combination, patriarchy, colonialism, racism, neoliberal capitalism and nationalism inform the realities of different identity groups (Collins, 2019, p. 5.).

Annamari Huovinen maintains (2013) in their doctoral dissertation on political citizenship as intersectional identity that the research on intersectionality has traditionally seen the cultural categories which build identity as limiting and pointing out differences, thus bringing to the centre the concept of 'otherness'. The reasons for various experiences of being othered have been searched from the intersections of identity traits and categories. These identity categories are being formed through differentiating: excluding and including, which causes the experiences of being othered. However, Huovinen brings forth in their research ways in

which intersectional categories of identities can work as strengthening the identity, not just curtailing it. (Huovinen, 2013, p. 19)

### ***2.2.1 The Formation of National Identity***

The concept of national identity can be approached from multiple angles. Commonly, there is a need to identify of which elements a national identity constitutes and what are the nominators and histories which have affected its formation. National identity is socially constructed and is considered as something in common. Weiser states that a national museum can be said to represent a consensus of national identity and continues, that by fostering the reflective identification of a person's memories with the collective memory of nationhood, national museums provide a space for the dialogue of a public identity that is not just reflected in its exhibits but also reformed by its visiting individuals (Weiser, 2015, p. 386-387).

The earliest academic debates on issues of heritage were critical analyses of the usage of the past by governments to construct a sense of national identity (Harrison, 2013, p. 96). National identity is often recognised as deriving from two ideal-typical notions: ethnic (or ethno-cultural) and civic. Ethno-cultural notion of national identity draws harder lines between inclusion and exclusion than the civic notion of national identity. However, most commonly national identity is perceived as a mixture of both. (Schulman, 2004; Lindstam, Mader & Schoen, 2019)

Considering the (re)construction of national identity in the context of a national museum, they can offer tools to bridge over the perceived differences of various groups of nation's citizens (see eg. Weiser, 2015). These bridges act as linkages between the groups and render visible what they have in common instead of what separates them. However, the end goal of the reconstruction process of national identity is not to erase the power differentials, histories and divisions between citizen groups, but to come aware of them and foster the possibilities of healthier coexistence and respectful co-creation of the national identity.

To claim that the divisions could be diluted in the name of one true national identity is silencing the voices of the oppressed and marginalised. In the next chapter, one process of a national museum to change the perception of national identity from the ethno-cultural perspective to the civic perspective to national identifications is described.

Weiser brings forth a case of national identity reconstruction at the National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. The process leads to alterations in the historical narrative, the mythic image and the conceptions of the nation's perceived collective memory. Mythic image refers to a certain key object in a museum that embodies and unifies multiple perspectives. New Zealand's national narrative, sense of nationhood and the national identity required decolonising. The process lasted through decades of critical examination since the 1950s, ending up in a contemporary version where 'they', as in the indigenous peoples of New Zealand, became a part of the national 'we' that previously was defined by and from the position of the European colonisers. (Weiser, 2015, p. 398)

Still, it has been argued that through such unification a museum can also downplay past injustices (Kirwan, 2011), as it places the colonisers and the colonised in a parallel position. To avoid this, participatory approaches are necessary.

The construction of Finnish national identity and narrative starting in the end of 19th century did not include various skin tones, races, abilities, gender perceptions or unconventional families, and it seems a challenge to implement them in the identity even when the contemporary Finnish society has changed drastically. When I imagine our national identity, words such as ambiguous, fluid, searching, critical, open, welcoming, allowing, or porous do not belong in that image. Finnish identity does not permit losing, nor weakness, nor diverting from the *golden middle lane*. Concluding these thoughts, I might suggest that the Finnish national identity has been neither considered diverse nor inclusive. Finland has a long journey to establishing a national we that bases on the contemporary reality, and not in exclusion of the other.

Pia Laskar, Swedish scholar in history of ideologies and gender studies, presents in their research that "By focusing on how in the past normative processes have excluded, denounced and displaced certain categories in favour of others, new perspectives on artefacts and older earlier narratives can emerge." (2017, p. 223) strengthening the notion that it is possible to reinterpret historical narratives and have them reveal new interpretations of national identity and its development.

As I was problematising the issue of Finnish national identity, I found a pertinent approach to it in an article by Sirpa Lappalainen about liberal multiculturalism and nation-making in Finnish preschool system (2006). Multiculturalism can be seen as culturally essentialist and

relativist concept which in reality just enforces the positions on majoritisation-minoritisation and mechanisms of dominance-subordination (Lykke, 2010, p. 55).

Lappalainen states in the context of inclusion and exclusion in educational systems that Finnish culture is conceptualised by Finnish people as more rational and more disciplined than other cultures and concludes that Finnishness can be defined as "an inborn ability to follow the 'right' path" (2006, p. 109). This describes very accurately one of the basic conceptions of the Finnish *national we*, which forces a rather fragile position on anyone diverting from the path of the considered Finnish normalcy or typicality.

Liberal multiculturalism was adapted to the preschool curriculum in the early 2000s, when after the collapse of the Soviet Union and Finland becoming a part of European Union, the population in Finland started to become more diverse and that had to be taken into consideration to be able to manage cultural differences (Lappalainen, 2006). Liberal multiculturalism was based on the conception of tolerance. Tolerance in context of liberal multiculturalism can be "understood as a nationalist practice of inclusion, which reserves the power to position the 'other' as an object within a space that one considers one's own" (Hage, 2000, in Lappalainen, 2006, p. 100). This is problematic, as it does not set the situation as equal but continues to sustain unequal positionings of power by suggesting that the other has the power to *allow* the other to enter the space the other seemingly controls and owns. Peter Balint confirms the problematic nature of the concept of tolerance in their article on anti-racism strategies that the act of tolerance performed by an individual proves that the individual is in a position of power to actually act intolerantly (Balint, 2015, p. 17).

During the 2000s the population of Finland has grown steadily more diverse. According to Statistics Finland (2021) in the beginning of 2000 there were approximately 120 000 persons with a foreign background, and in 2019 there were already approximately 420 000 persons with a foreign background living in Finland. These numbers do not count the persons whose other parent has a foreign background and other is Finnish, meaning that the number of Finland's ethnically and culturally diverse population is even larger than the statistics show.

The population living in the area now considered as Finland has been ethnically diverse even before the increase in immigration and internationalisation since the end of the 20th century. To give a rough overview, the population of Sámi peoples in Finland is estimated between

50 000 and 100 000, depending on the way of defining who is Sámi. There are approximately 10 000 - 12 000 Roma people and 600 Finnish Tatars.

### ***2.2.2 In the Intersections of Gender, Sexuality, Race, Ability and Class***

As has been affirmed in the previous chapters, the identity of a person consists of multiple identity markers. Because of that, also national identity must be examined from a diversity of approaches. The conceptions of gender, sexuality, race, ability and class play an important part in the contemporary formation of national identity. The people who consider national identity only as ethno-cultural try to dismiss this, as they are more prone to setting tighter limits to what is considered to belong into a national identity (Lindstam, Mader & Schoen, 2019).

Feminist theories and practices have proved that gender is a considerable element and principle for structuring societies and cultures. Furthermore, simultaneously when gender and gender relations have become more established and analysed in research, politics and activism, the conceptions of gender have become more complex and porous. (Lykke, 2010, p. XI)

Lykke further states that "Biological belonging to a certain sex destines the individual for a certain gender, which implies a predetermined sociocultural gender identity and a pregiven place in the hierarchical gender order of society" and continues that nationalism, colonialism, and fundamentalism are practiced repeatedly with gender, sex and sexuality as principal tools. Lykke strongly brings forth how the universal constructions of national, colonial and religious fundamentalist hierarchies are in fact linked to fixed, even mythologised, images of biologically determined differences and how they are affecting different social and cultural functioning. (Lykke, 2010, p. 23)

*Gender does not only encompass a binary concept of gender, but also closely related sexual orientation: gender designates the naturalized (and therefore unquestioned) binary male–female differentiation as well as a ‘common-sensical’ heterosexualization in gender relations which is called heteronormativity. Accordingly, heteronormativisms denote power relations that are grounded in hierarchical gender relations as well as in unquestioned assumptions about naturalized heterosexuality and a binary gender order. (Winker & Degele, 2011, p. 55)*

These notions of the 'mythologised typical individual' who is granted the majoritised position can be transferred to the contexts of ability, class and race/ethnicity, as the societal power differentials concerning them are similar. Even if museums reason that generalisations are made because of for example the limitations of exhibition space, looking from an intersectional and inclusive approach it would be more democratic to construct the ideation and representations of national identity by including as many of the aspects that affect it, and not through excluding and out-bordering.

If the discourse on national identity continues to support the ideations of heteronormative, able, white and patriarchal conceptions, it will erase the marginalised, oppressed and minority groups of the Finnish society. Representation is politics, states gender and queer researcher Leena-Maija Rossi (2015, p. 72).

According to Clover, Taber and Sanford (2018, p. 13), representation is a signifying practice which has an extraordinary impact on what is considered to be knowledge and it operates through visual imagery and text.

*Therefore, what we see, and the setting of this seeing, such as the authoritative context of the museum, together play a constitutive role in shaping what becomes reality. Seeing gives organized existence to everything from history to the present, aesthetics to identity. - - - The unseen, too, shapes and mobilizes knowing and meaning-making by rendering invisible the experiences of marginalised groups. (Clover, Taber & Sanford &, 2018, p. 13)*

It demands conscious work to make a museum inclusive, relevant and accessible: to construct a museum which is for all, not only for the few (Paqvalén, 2020b, p. 129). Furthermore, as Laskar points (2017), research has shown that merely letting for example women and minorities curate exhibitions in museums and adding their individual experiences into exhibitions, will not lead to a change in the overall perceptions of national identity: the change needs to reach a more profound level in the museum to push for change societally. Furthermore, as Laskar states:

*"Unless, for instance, heterosexuality is presented historically as a phenomenon that has been idealized and established until it became the norm*

*that is now taken for granted as the natural order of things, it will not be possible to understand the sexual and gender expressions that have been undesirable and excluded in the past." (Laskar, 2017, p. 223)*

## **2.3 Arts Management**

### ***2.3.1 Strategy as a Framework for Decision-making***

Strategy and strategic planning are an integral part of arts management. Museum professionals deal with challenges, choices and decisions daily as do all professionals in art and cultural organisations. Having a strategy is a prerequisite for sustaining and developing a museum and ensuring it is answering the multifaceted demands and trends emerging in the current societies and the museum field. The strategies which guide the NMF include steering by the Ministry of Education and Culture, the strategy of the Finnish Heritage Agency (2018), the collection policy program of the NMF (2010) and the strategy of NFM (2021).

*Museums must also provide meaning, value and enjoyment to a diverse range of publics within the context of changing societal values. In doing so, they must serve two unique communities—society's ancestors and those who are not yet born. Neither of these museum constituencies vote or consume, and thus have no visibility in commerce and politics—the dominant forces of contemporary society. To add further complexity, public funding continues to decline globally, while at the same time museums are compelled to foster organizational change and renewal to ensure sustainability. In short, museums exist in a world of often baffling complexity and do not have the luxury of a simple profit and loss statement. (Janes & Sandell, 2019b, p. 7)*

Strategy has many definitions, however simply put strategic planning can be defined as deciding what are the basic long-term goals and objectives, through which actions one meets these goals and how to allocate needed resources to be able to achieve the desired end-result. As Henry Mintzberg describes it, a strategy is a plan, "a consciously intended course of action" (1987, p. 11). That thought is enforced by the notions of Neil G. Kotler, Philip Kotler and Wendy I. Kotler (2008) as they define that strategic planning means making

various scenarios of the future and creating plans how to achieve them. Furthermore, they state that strategic planning for museums shows the museum where it has been, what its present position is and what is more, where it should aim, after having defined its internal and external conditions and position. (Kotler, Kotler & Kotler, 2008, p. 43-44)

In the museum context, strategic planning is usually lead by the senior staff in a museum institution, and besides offering information of the actions and goals, it defines who is responsible for the implementation of each action. An integral part of the strategic plan is an established timeline. Furthermore, an invaluable element of a strategic plan is an evaluation toolkit enabling the systematic evaluation of the strategy process. (Kotler, Kotler & Kotler 2008, p. 44)

What is relevant, is to consider how to implement change and new ideas to strategic planning and curation. Concepts copied from other institutions tend to be realised rather superficially, and reproduced without complete understanding (Stern Hein, 2007, p. 31). Because of this, it is elementary that changes in the strategy and introducing new cross-cutting discourses into the museum start with a strong internal motivation. That motivation can be triggered with cultivating a strong knowledgebase and investing in capacity-building, and implementing the change through professional facilitation.

Kotler, Kotler and Kotler state that the strategic plan of a museum offers a framework in which decisions are made (2008, p. 44). This is in the core of the questions asked in this thesis research: how are the decisions made and what is the effect of those decisions for the representations of identities presented in the permanent exhibitions, and in the coming New National?

Strategy-making and its implementation coexist and coincide with curation processes. In the next chapter curation is looked at in more detail from multifaceted perspectives.

### ***2.3.2 Curation: from Gatekeeping to Gate-leaking***

Estonian museologist Jana Reidla states (2018, p. 115) that a curator's work has been traditionally in close connection with the main functions of the museum, which are considered to be preservation, communication and research, however, the changes which have occurred in the museum field over the past few decades have influenced the curators' line of work



through specialisation. According to Reidla's comparative study on the exhibition production practises at Baltic and Finnish national museums (2020, p. 378), the current curatorial model of the NMF shows a diversity of specialist skills in an exhibition team and that the diversity of competences should guarantee the success of the project. However, according to Reidla, the diversity of competences leads to the fragmentation of decision-making and what is noteworthy to mention, to vagueness in the responsibility of the finished exhibition (2020, p. 378).

To curate is to use power. Marta Keil, a performing arts curator and a researcher, describes the curator as a *gifted scout* - a person who has the ability to single out and bring forth exceptional phenomena and is capable of identifying, publishing, critiquing, marketing and promoting that phenomenon (Keil, 2018, p. 324). Keil continues that contemporary curatorial practice is the product of late capitalism and the position of the curator a highly political one, and therefore needs to be critically examined (Keil, 2018, p. 326).

When the museum represents a whole nation: its history, heritage, present and future, the responsibility of its choices is vast. A position of power, such as a curator or museum director, is achieved through multiple factors, such as long higher education and substantial work experience. However, not everyone has equal prerequisites to reach such a high position: the cultural capital which is needed for the capacity to imagine oneself in a leading position is not a universal trait, but a learned and achieved part of identity which is affected by the positioning in the society through one's class, race, gender, ability and sexuality.

The consequence of this is that the majority of museum directors, managers and curators are in the Western context white and from socio-economic backgrounds which support higher education (Charr, 2019) and have an interest towards and knowledgeability about culture and art from early on. Only recently, the notion that persons from diverse backgrounds will in fact help to engage more diverse visitors, has started to make way for a change in recruitment (Charr, 2019).

The contemporary work of a curator could be summarised as understanding the perspectives of care and practises of responsibility, simultaneously repositioning different knowledges and epistemologies.

Curators, cultural mediators and museums are often called gatekeepers. *Curatorial activism*, a concept presented by Colectivo FACA in their article on feminist queering of museums (Grácio et al., 2021), has been considered as a way to untighten the gatekeeping and to push for change. Colectivo FACA presents as an example of curatorial activism their research project in 2019 named *Bringing the Margin to the Centre* at the Berardo Museum in Portugal with discussions on feminism, postcolonialism and queerness. They acknowledge, that the encouragement of change does not most often come from curators within the institutions, but from independent curatorial activists outside of them. The collective, which consists of curators, educators and researchers in the fields of art, aesthetics, architecture and philosophy, named this curatorial activism as *gate-leaking*, instead of gatekeeping. (Grácio et al., 2021, p. 210)

Curatorial activism could also emerge from within an institution. The discourse in the museum field about decolonisation, equity in representation and the position of women and other minority and marginalised groups is ongoing in the field and various initiatives and seminars have been raising the subjects to the forefront, along with the issues of climate crisis. It is fairly broadly acknowledged that it is no longer an issue of just the marginalised groups themselves but an issue of all, also the individuals in positions of power: the gatekeepers.

# 3 METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Research Method

This thesis is a qualitative, single case, feminist study. Its methods are critical discourse analysis and semi-structured interviews. Key personnel from the NMF and an outside expert were interviewed. The interview data and the museum strategy were examined through critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is chosen as the research method, as the National Museum of Finland is an important societal and cultural meaning-maker influencing cultural and museological discourse and thus, a dominant power figure in the cultural heritage field and museum policy in Finland.

The aim is to identify imbalances within the representations of different identities in the permanent exhibitions and to find disparities between the reality of the current diverse Finnish identity compared to the image the museum is offering in its permanent exhibitions and analyse the actions which the museum has taken towards constructing a more diverse representation and image of the Finnish national identity.

What is also examined is what is *not* in the museum: what the researcher finds through the lens of examination lacking in the museum discourse and representations.

## 3.2 Qualitative research

According to Patricia Leavy (2014), qualitative research is a way of learning about social reality. Qualitative research approaches can be utilised across disciplines to examine an extensive range of topics. These approaches to research can be utilised to examine, describe, or explain social phenomena; decode the meaning-making behind activities, situations or artefacts, enlighten links between individuals and institutional contexts, or explore underresearched areas of knowledge. The philosophical substructure of qualitative research lies in a wide array of beliefs how research should proceed, what can be known, who can know and how knowledge can be reached. Leavy continues that a qualitative researcher can

be thought of as someone who utilises many bodies of scholarship, methods, and theories to do their research. Moreover, qualitative research can be seen as a practical, scholarly, and a creative pursuit. (Leavy, 2014, p. 2-6)

Typical to qualitative research is the usage of inductive reasoning. Qualitative research starts with specific situations, from which the researcher finds patterns and themes in the data. A qualitative researcher might establish a tentative hypothesis, ending with developing theories or conclusions. To allow the researcher the necessary time and possibility to have deep interaction with the participants, qualitative studies typically tend to have smaller sample sizes. (Bui, 2019, p. 14)

### ***3.2.1 A Case Study***

As this thesis research studies the strategy and curation of one museum, it is a single case study. According to Robert Yin (2015), as a methodology, a case study acknowledges that multiple realities have multiple meanings, thus accommodating a relativist perspective and that findings are dependent of the researcher making the observations. A case study works well with research questions which start with how or why, and in cases when the research aims to in-depth and expansive description of a social phenomenon (Yin, 2015), thus answering well to the demands of this study at hand. The case study process method also allows the continued designing of the research throughout the process (Yin, 2015).

### ***3.2.2 Feminist Research***

A feminist approach to research takes an anti-canonical approach and emphasises and accepts theoretical diversity and methodological pluralism. Feminist research can deconstruct fixed and stereotyped ideations and notions of science and knowledge production. Feminist research can look at theories and methodologies not as universally given phenomena, but as suggestions rather than absolutes. (Lykke, 2010; Stern Hein, 2007)

Even if feminist research can be said to consider theories as more fluid, researcher Hilde Stern Hein maintains (2007) in *Redressing the Museum in Feminist Theory* that as theory discourages arbitrary experimentation and thrives on testing and correction, theory-making

is still of importance in feminist research. Indeed, Stern Hein continues that reliance on theory enables consistent practice and serves as a basis for plausible critique and coherent revisioning. Furthermore, Stern Hein maintains that feminist theory seeks to correct the restrictive divisions and barriers that limit our understanding and misconstrue our experience of the world. (2007, p. 31-32)

Feminist Studies have developed into a well-established field of academic knowledge production. Critical research and teaching on gender/sex, gendered hegemonies, gender relations, gender identities, symbolic representations of gender/sex and intersections between gender/sex, sexuality, race, ethnicity and class is today carried out at universities all over the world. (Lykke, 2010, p. 14)

Feminist research approach can thus be considered relevant in the context of re-examining and re-envisioning cultural history museums, as their identity has strongly depended on nature sciences which have a tendency to deal with matters as researched absolutes and base their reasoning in biologically determinist arguments. These arguments have according to Lykke legitimised in different ways racism, ethnocentrism, sexism, classism, colonialism, nationalism and heteronormativity, also in the museum context. Adding to that, Lykke continues that through "‘scientifically sustained’ references to ‘unalterable nature,’ biologically determinist arguments have often been used to block social and cultural change toward a more equal, democratic and just society that makes room for diversity and difference". (Lykke, 2010, p. 23)

Stern Hein seems to confirm what Lykke states, as Stern Hein writes that the cataloguing, mapping and placing the world on display by historical museums served an agenda of conquest and expansion provoked by science and technology (2007, p. 30).

The feminist criticism of science as biased has led to a recognition of the importance of the researcher's perspective, or standpoint. Standpoint approach considers that individuals view the world differently, ask different questions, and use different methods to answer those questions, and feminist standpoint research does that to reveal sociocultural patterns of domination and subordination. (McHugh, 2014, p. 142)

### 3.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a complex form of analysis, and it offers a frame how to examine topics relating to power-structures and dominance in discourse.

*Since serious social problems are naturally complex, this usually also means a multidisciplinary approach, in which distinctions between theory, description and application become less relevant. (van Dijk, 1993, p. 252)*

The main mission of CDA is according to Thao Lê and Malissa Short (2009) to examine social injustice which can be manifested in many different social practices. The aim is to take a stand against issues such as social abuse, racism, social prejudice, or discrimination against dominated or marginalised people (Lê & Short, 2009, p. 4). CDA gives a methodological approach to examining the representations and the discourse on different minorities and marginalised groups in the NMF. Anu Pynnönen further confirms the relevance of CDA as a method by stating how speech and text are not merely reflecting something that already exists, but are recreating the social world continuously (2013, p. 4).

*Unlike other discourse analysts, critical discourse analysts (should) take an explicit sociopolitical stance: they spell out their point of view, perspective, principles and aims, both within their discipline and within society at large. Although not in each stage of theory formation and analysis, their work is admittedly and ultimately political. Their hope, if occasionally illusory, is change through critical understanding. Their perspective, if possible, that of those who suffer most from dominance and inequality. (van Dijk, 1993, p. 252)*

In this thesis examination, roughly described, the discourse created in the museum (through a myriad of factors) is the *dominant*, and the ones who suffer from that dominance are the minority and marginalised groups. Suffering meaning in this case being under- or misrepresented in the discourse of the creation of national identity in the permanent exhibitions of the museum. Why there is in fact mis- or underrepresentation of minority and marginalised groups and identities can be examined and understood through the literature and research about the museum field in general as has been presented in the theoretical framework and

through the interview answers of the co-creators of the museum discourse. As van Dijk describes, CDA is a way to get more insight into the significant role of discourse in the reproduction of inequality and dominance (1993, p. 253).

### **3.4 The Data Collection**

The primary research data consists of four semi-structured in-depth interviews of four individuals, each taking approximately one hour, and the printed summary of the strategy of the museum (NMF, 2021). The supporting data consists of research literature of the fields of study, two written exhibition scripts of the permanent exhibitions (*Esihistoria on tässä.*, Herva & Lahelma, 2017 and *Esseitä itsenäisen Suomen tarinasta*, Kuusi & al., 2017) and personal visits in 2020 and 2021.

According to Erica L. Tucker, open-ended and informant-directed interviews conducted with museum professionals help to understand the silent presumptions and aims which form and hinder the choices behind exhibition creation. Moreover, interviews with museum researchers, designers and curators enlighten how the exhibitions fit to the museum mission and strategic goals. (Tucker, 2014, p. 341)

To highlight the problem in the core of the thesis research I will point out some chosen examples of the permanent exhibition wall texts, however, all the wall texts are not analysed comprehensively in this thesis through critical discourse analysis due to the demarcation of the primary data to interviews and strategy, and due to the enormous amount of the texts. Additional materials were used as support to gain more knowledge of the current discourse on the museological field such as seminars, blog posts and media articles, which helped to bring the freshest perspectives to the museological discourse of the topics of intersectionality, minority representation and decolonisation of national museums in the post-national era.

The decision of interviewees was defined by evaluating who would have the most in-depth knowledge of the strategy, curation and decision-making of the permanent exhibitions, and by finding an expert outside of the museum specialised in norm-critical and inclusive museum work. It was extremely valuable to get the interviews from the museum staff and professionals: Museum Director Elina Anttila, Head of Production Päivi Roivainen (project

manager in the production of *Otherland*, 2021) and Head of Public Programmes Hanna Forssell (project manager in the productions of *Prehistory and the Story of Finland*, 2017).

The expert I chose outside of the NMF is Rita Paqvalén, Executive Director of Culture for All. I decided to interview her after the museum professionals, to ensure most on point questions for the interview. Paqvalén is an expert and researcher in norm critical thinking, diversity issues and the field of cultural heritage, memory institutions, literature, theatre and libraries. Paqvalén participated in the preliminary workshops of the *Otherland*-exhibition as an expert among a group of researchers and was also offered a possibility to contribute to the exhibition by writing, but because of contradicting schedules, did not. Paqvalén offered invaluable data, tips and knowledge to my thesis research and broadened the perspective of it through her vast experience on the subject matter.

### **3.5 The Analysis Process**

The four interviews were conducted in Finnish language. Two of them in person on location at the National Museum of Finland offering a glimpse to the working environment of the museum, and two interviews via Zoom online platform. The interviews were sound-recorded by phone and hand-written notes were taken. The interviews were transcribed in Finnish. The decision was made during the transcription to leave out repetitive words and non-meaningful word clusters, appearing when interviewee was searching for thought, from the transcripts.

Upon examination and following the methodology often used in critical discourse analysis, specific themes were recognised from the answers, most relevant parts were outlined to be analysed according to their relevance to answering the research question and revealing relevant information about the topics handled and then formulated into different discourses.

The interview questions were clearly thematised making it relatively simple to categorise the answers, keeping in mind the understanding of a semi-structured interview where we could return to topics and let the natural meandering of a discussion take us elsewhere momentarily.



The themes were categorised, and emerging discourses named, and the answers were classified under each discourse marking clearly with colour code whose answers they were. Continuing from there, I translated the relevant answers which would be used into English. The interviewees were given a possibility to comment on their translated answers in context before the thesis was published.

The analysis of the results was conducted systematically by comparing and contrasting the primary data to each other and to the existing literature, through the lens of previously described standpoint of the researcher and in the frame of the presented multidisciplinary theoretical background.

### **3.6 Critical Reflections of the Study**

The position of the researcher affects the study as was pointed in the chapter on feminist research, despite the considered neutrality of academic study, and in a thesis research which examines the power structures and positions of museological and societal discourse considering minority and marginalised representation, my queer identity, lived history (*herstory!*) and experiences as a visitor in the exhibitions are affecting the research. Keeping this in mind, I still find it relevant that persons from minority identities use their personal perspective into these societal issues through academic methods and perhaps thus reveal perspectives otherwise hidden.

In addition to that, the interviewees were aware (as much as they read the materials I sent them) of my identity, and that could have influenced their answers somewhat, even if I did not recognise such behaviour. However, I considered the revelation of my position and identity to be relevant to reach the necessary depth in the interview discussion. I did not want to be engaged in a conversation where we would be talking about minority identities as *absent others*, when they were not. I am not looking at these issues as a neutral outsider but through a specific lens, keeping in mind the purpose of scientific research: to present as unbiased as possible information of the matter at hand through the chosen method of examination. Indeed, the principles of CDA state, the work of critical discourse analysts is political, thus, never neutral.

It could be considered a limitation that I am not a student of anthropology or cultural heritage. Much of the academic discourse related to museums was new for me, even if a personal interest for the field has existed for a long time. However, I took studies at Helsinki University on the theory of museology and museum collections to add to the relevance of the thesis research. Furthermore, for the academic field of Arts Management it is of importance to conduct multi- and interdisciplinary research processes bravely to expand collaboration and academic exchange between the various academic fields considering culture and art. Unconventional perspectives might reveal new paths in both academia and practice.

A larger number of interviewees could have revealed more or different information about the creation of the exhibitions. However, as the three persons I interviewed had the highest authority in the creation of the permanent exhibitions, I found the number sufficient, and the scope of their answers possible to deeply analyse in the scope of my MA thesis, as like Bui states (2020, p. 14), qualitative studies tend to have smaller sample sizes to allow the researcher necessary time to have deep interactions with the participants.

Stating as a historical piece of information, this thesis work and its prework were conducted during the global pandemic of Covid-19 in 2020-2021, which strongly influenced the research period. Libraries and my university were periodically shut, museums closed, thesis seminar and thesis supervision conducted remotely. The opening of the Otherland exhibition, crucial to my research, was postponed from February 2021 until May 2021, which caused disarray in my research process, as the interviews were conducted before the exhibition was opened. The pandemic definitely had its effect on the materials at hand and the working process. Fortunately, much of the study material could be found in electronic form. However, many of the more casual humane conversations around a thesis process were missing. They were sorely missed as more communication might have altered some of the choices of the thesis process.

# 4 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In this chapter I am presenting the findings of the study and discussing the themes and discourses which emerged during the analysis of the data. The results of the interviews are analysed more closely and set in frame with the existing research on the topics.

## 4.1 Creating the Museum Discourses

The conception that the NMF is one of the main authorities of the Finnish museum and heritage fields and has grand influence on the development of the discourses and practices of those fields was emphasised and confirmed through the interviews. It was also stated that the NMF can be careful in its choices and developments, because of the strain of being a national giant and the strong expectations and negative critique, especially from the field of academic heritage studies, inhibit the courageousness of the museum's choices and can sometimes render it perhaps a bit too careful (Roivainen, 2021).

In the coming chapters I am analysing the discourses which emerged through the examination process. First, I go into the discourse of strategy, as that is the overarching factor which penetrates all areas of the museum's work. In the next paragraph, I will also summarise the main points of the museum strategy to illustrate the points of departure.

### 4.1.1 *Discourse of Strategy*

The current strategic process of the NMF was begun in 2014 with joint visioning discussions and workshops with the museum staff, and finished by a smaller core strategic working group in 2021. The published result was a concise, colour-printed leaflet with the core statements of the strategy, which I received at the museum. The strategy leaflet states that the museum builds cultural sustainability through increasing equality and cultural dialogue, the museum promises to care and to strengthen the public's relation to cultural heritage and it commits to creating a sustainable future. The slogan is chosen as "Historia on tässä!", meaning the history is here and now. The core claims of the strategy are that committing to

these strategic goals will increase societal peace, strengthen endurance in crises and increase mental flexibility. The statement of the strategy is that the future will be built on cultural adaptability. The museum strives towards opening the collections to the public more and towards influencing and evoking conversations as a trailblazer both nationally and internationally.

To begin with a closer look at the strategy, the director of the NMF Elina Anttila (2021) describes that as the museum is a national cultural institution, its actions are steered firstly by the Ministry of Education and Culture, and that the museum policy program of the ministry defines which are the mandatory tasks of a national museum. Secondly, the museum's own strategy, which is in line with the National Heritage Agency's strategy, is what specifies the more detailed goals and practices of the museum. Anttila mentions that the strategy of the museum is mainly formulated as a practical tool for the staff and not as much to the public. Anttila was leading the strategic process.

Hanna Forssell (2021), the project manager of the Prehistory and the Story of Finland exhibitions, was closely involved with the strategy making and she describes that one of the leading thoughts of the process was to create something simple and short enough for the strategy to be approachable and thus possible to instill in everyday work. Forssell continues that the strategy really encompasses all aspects of the museum work from collections and conservation to public outreach. Forssell reminds that the museum is the only museum in Finland which has the policy mandate to present the whole state history. This illustrates that not all curatorial decisions of the museum are free of choice; there are tasks which they have to fulfill.

Päivi Roivainen (2021), the project manager of the Otherland exhibition, mentions that even if she was not in the core working group of the strategy process, the whole strategy process and its themes are very familiar to her and she finds them close and overarching all the work they do. This indicates that the museum's strategic process is successful in a participatory sense, which further enhances the success-rate of the strategy in the long-term.

Elina Anttila (2021) mentions that it is important that the strategic process is not seen as something fixed and dictated from above, but a guide and a direction. Anttila points out that the everyday museum work is the actual making of the strategy: with each planned exhibition and curatorial decision the strategy is brought to life. This indicates how importantly the

strategy is interwoven with the curatorial decision-making, and marks how relevant it is that the core values are clearly stated in the strategy, as they directly influence the curatorial decision-making. Anttila continues that the societal and political discussions are something that keep the strategic process alive and they influence the decision-making and strategic thinking of the museum. Anttila mentions that throughout the strategic process cultural sustainability, equality and ecological principals were seen more and more important in the strategic thinking of the museum.

Anttila further states that the strategic process is also to look backwards: it is to evaluate and to examine the work of the museum and that the strategy is not something that dictates how to do things rather than how to instil the thinking behind the strategy to the everyday work. This is in line with the notions of Kotler, Kotler and Kotler, that the strategy should involve tools for evaluation to be successful (2008, p. 44).

Forsell describes (2021) a specific strategic change which had a profound effect on the new permanent exhibitions. It was decided that the process of creating the exhibitions should be significantly faster than ever before, as the museum wanted to stay true to the chosen slogan of the strategy "History is here!" and to the strategic aim of participating in current societal discussion. That is why the permanent exhibition creation was divided into three individual projects with separate budgets and schedules that would together form the renewed permanent exhibition. That strategic decision meant it would be possible to keep the museum open to visitors throughout the process and ensure that the exhibitions would have unique looks and approaches, as the working groups were not fully the same.

On one hand, the strategic separation of the production processes of the permanent exhibitions led to a positive outcome as the museum could stay open to visitors throughout the processes, however on the other hand, it resulted in exhibitions which represent quite different levels of inclusion and thus from an intersectional feminist approach communicate incoherently of the value-structure of the museum. The two earlier parts were more in line with the traditional Western museum representations of the typical and normative, when the last part more inclusively tries to open the representations to include a more porous examination of the Finnish national history. Basing on the interviews this is because of the societal shiftings around the current global social justice movements, the shift in the general discourse on the museum field around whose stories the museums are telling, and the reason that the participatory work included representatives of civic activist groups.

### ***4.1.2 Discourse of National Identity: Deconstructing and Reconstructing***

The conception that every Finnish citizen has equal opportunities is an often-repeated part of our national narrative. It is a common answer to multiple societal issues when trying to discuss and dismantle inequalities. As if there cannot be structural racism or gender discrimination in schools, institutions and workplaces because the Finnish law treats everyone equal and processes are equal. The laws and policies on paper suggest it, but the every-day reality for the minority and marginalised groups is different. The increased knowledge and effects of intersectional feminism, indigenous rights, decolonisation, #Metoo and the Black Lives Matter have brought to the societal discussion elements and examples of structural oppression and racism which penetrate entire societal systems and have led to reactions both in the everyday life and at the policy level.

Approaching the core question of the thesis, I asked the interviewees how they see the National Museum of Finland presenting and constructing the Finnish national identity in order to examine whether the strategy of the museum matches the experience in the exhibitions.

Hanna Forssell contrasts the ethos of the founding era of the museum to the present day:

*The National Museum was founded a hundred years ago just to do that, to construct the national identity, and now we are in a completely different situation. We are not trying to present a unified story or a unified identity. One example [of the construction of national identity] could be that according to oral history, there were blue and white Finnish national dresses exhibited in one of the first exhibitions, which were actually combined of dress parts that did not originally belong together but were put together to create the blue and white combination [of the Finnish flag]. At that time the construction of national identity was the thing. Now the thing is perhaps that we are trying to shake it off. Now we know that people move around and that there are various minorities whose stories we have not told. (Forssell, 2021)*

Analysing what Forssell says confirms the statement by Rhiannon Mason (2013) presented in the theoretical framework, that national museums have the potential and knowledge to

demonstrate the constructed nature of contemporary nations should they be willing to reinterpret and reframe the collections through a cosmopolitan and reflexive perspective, and that would act as a counterforce for the right-wing nationalists claiming the constructed narrative is the actual truth. Even the museums now emphasise that history is in fact interpretation often created to support a specific cause.

Päivi Roivainen starts with thinking about how those individuals, who do not belong in the majority, experience the history which the museum present. Roivainen mentions:

*Traditionally the history has perhaps been very white, and still is white and presents the history of the more fortunate part of the society and because of that the museum has less information about the poor and the minorities. And that in the past when collecting exhibits, it might be that this sort of information has not been registered: if we think about a queer perspective, it might be that we have a lot of objects that are related to those histories, but we just do not know it, or the collections have not been researched from that perspective. (Roivainen, 2021)*

Roivainen continues (2021) that this has posed as a longstanding dilemma: the museum would want every individual visitor to find points of identification in the permanent exhibitions, even if there was lack of direct exhibits referring to their lives and histories, however, it would require a lot of research before these issues could be presented holistically in the museum. Roivainen describes:

*The National Museum of Finland highlights at the moment quite strongly, like, person's humanness, the shared humanity [ihmisyyys] and the person as an experiencer [kokijuus]. We are not constructing a unified grand national narrative anymore. Moreover, we want to tell that this museum is for everyone and that the national identity the museum presents would be as wide as all the people who visit us, what they represent. (Roivainen, 2021)*

Queering, examining the collections from a queer perspective, requires time, resources and expertise. Jana Reidla states in her research of national museums in the Baltic countries and Finland, that in relation to the research conducted in the collections department at NMF "The

main problem here is that scientific research in collections can be carried out only when “there is time left or when it is needed for the exhibition”” (2018, p. 126).

To name shared humanity or humanness (*ihmisyyys*) as the common nominator, which should make the exhibition relatable for everyone, can be argued being too wide considering that the perceived synonym and image for a typical *human* has been in the Western museum context a white, heterosexual, able-bodied cis-man. Just the notion of us all belonging to the same species, human, is not enough for creating relatability for a diverse audience, when minorities and marginalised groups have such a long history of being dehumanised and excluded from the main historical narratives.

Rita Paqvalén, the Executive Director of Culture for All, analyses (2021) that the way the NMF has constructed the national identity has been in the past very traditional and homogenous, and the minorities have been understood as an addition to the national narrative, rather than an integral part of the narrative. Indeed, Paqvalén continues that minority groups such as the Roma and the Sámi have been represented through folkloristic aspects such as costumes, rather than as active actors co-creating the national narrative. Paqvalén also confirms the notion that minorities have been seen as non-visitors and for that, special programming has been created for them to allure them as visitors, instead of challenging the representations and materials in the permanent exhibitions to include more diverse representations, stories and norm-critical examination, which would create a more relatable exhibition for all.

Paqvalén mentions (2021) a temporary exhibition by the NMF which she considers being a positive turning point in how the museum has presented the Finnish and their past, created for the 100th anniversary of Finland's independency. The NMF describes the exhibition *The Public and the Hidden Finland* (16.6.2017-14.1.2018) as presenting pictures which illustrate Finland's journey as it becomes a land of equality, wellbeing and togetherness and the themes were education, war, race, equality and democracy, nature relationship and communality. The museum describes that behind each theme's success story lies various phenomena that the nation might have wanted to forget or hide. Therefore, the exhibition challenged the nation to discuss its history and the transparency of those times (NMF, 2017). Paqvalén describes the exhibition as very significant as it showed a less flattering image of Finland, bringing forth painful histories but also different minorities and new perspectives, and continues that the exhibition pointed a very critical insight to Finnish history.



Discussing the successes in norm-critical museum-making at the NMF, Paqvalén (2021) describes the powerful effect of *The Public and the Hidden Finland* -exhibition which openly exhibited the past flaws and horrors in the Finnish history. The exhibition consisted of photos from silenced historical events and phenomena such as the Finnish national socialists, the painful Finnish civil war, eugenics and exhibiting minority ethnicities in zoo-like exhibitions. Paqvalén was disappointed that the exhibition did not get widely acknowledged in the media despite of its ground-breaking importance; "it wasn't as media sexy as the Barbie-exhibition" (Paqvalén, 2021). These hidden histories should be included in the museum discourse in some capacity as a part of the permanent exhibitions. Like Winter (2013) states, heritage must be considered as discourse, and as the heritage discourse evolves in the contexts of decolonisation, diversification and democratisation, it is relevant to exhibit the historical narrative more thoroughly.

Anttila mentions that in all three current permanent exhibitions the museum has aimed at re-evaluating the conceptions of national identity and continues:

*I myself have addressed it as such: the world is diverse and national identity cannot be something that excludes that diversity. However, what is it then exactly and what the nation would need, is to find something which can be shared within this diversity. (Anttila, 2021)*

Anttila (2021) continues that in the case of Finland, perhaps the common thing for us would not necessarily be a one shared national identity, but a hopefully shared understanding of Finland as a country which is accepting of diverse identities and that we are fostering a future where everyone can be themselves, even if according to Anttila there is a long road to reaching that. She continues that the current permanent exhibitions are comments towards how the museum defines national identity.

Anttila sees the role of the National Museum in the society as very significant, even if there has been discussion of the need of a national museum in current societies:

*For that reason, we do need [national museums]: because we can defend for example diversity, and for this, we have a voice of our own. The National Museum was founded in a time when one unified identity was promoted and now when we present that hey, this is changing, do you notice*

*that we should go in another direction, I believe the [museum's] voice has significance that someone else does not have. A society is strong when its citizens have a strong sense of their roots - and it goes without saying that this should concern all the citizens. (Anttila, 2021)*

This notion is aligned with Vanegas' statement (2002) that museums have a specific role in the societal acceptance of minorities, because museums are considered in general offering an esteemed interpretation of history and affirms that the museum's position as an authority.

### **4.1.3 Discourse of Curation**

*Even though we are inherently entangled with and navigate these issues from our multiple positions, we have to admit that it is hard to recognize or locate the reasons why social justice and enhancing marginalised voices seem to be something that most institutions are rooting for but, at the same time, fail to take necessary actions. These contradictions seem to be thoroughly pedagogical as they involve questions of learning social justice, learning intersectional feminism, and unlearning oppression. (Lindholm & Raudaskoski, 2020, p. 111)*

The process of curation of the museum is examined through the permanent exhibitions and two illuminating examples of temporary exhibitions which emerged during the interviews. Hanna Forssell was the project manager on the first two parts of the permanent exhibition, Prehistory and The Story of Finland, opened in 2017. Päivi Ronkainen was the project manager on the Otherland, opened during the thesis writing process, in May of 2021.

Talking about the curation and the decision-making of the permanent exhibitions, Hanna Forssell states (2021) that in cultural history museums the words curation or curator are not used as often as in art museums, however, in effect the work of choosing the exhibits is similar.

As curators are in significant positions of power, it would be more transparent for the NMF to use the word curator instead of project manager or similar. That would reveal in a more transparent manner the positions of decision-making and simultaneously, of responsibility.

Like Reidla maintains, the current exhibition production method of the NMF can lead to vagueness in responsibilities of the finished exhibition (2020, p. 378).

Elina Anttila (2021) agrees with the statement that the role of a curator is significant, and that the word curator should be used more consistently in cultural historical exhibitions. That would emphasise the decision-making process in the background, as inevitably there are personal thoughts and interpretations behind the exhibitions.

*I believe we should be bringing it out more consistently with that name, because otherwise we are sort of hiding it that the exhibitions are created by certain individuals' thoughts and interpretations. (Anttila, 2021)*

Päivi Roivainen describes (2021) that the curatorial decisions are guided by and embedded in the strategy of the museum, however, she suggests that the strategy is related more straight-forwardly to the temporary exhibitions: whether the topics of temporary exhibitions are in line with and in support of the current strategy.

This might be considered problematic, but understandable in that sense that the temporary exhibitions are executed with shorter timeframes and have a better potential to react to current discussions. However, if the strategic goals are not reflected in the permanent exhibitions, it results in an incoherent message of the values of the museum. In terms of minority and marginalised representations it can mean that even if the strategic aim is to build cultural sustainability through increasing equality and cultural dialogue, it is not as apparent in the permanent exhibitions.

Rita Paqvalén points (2021) that compared to the previous permanent exhibitions, the production process of the Otherland was more open to collaboration, which she states was very significant. Paqvalén also mentions examples of other temporary exhibitions and events, where curatorial decision-making and control of the programme was granted completely away from the museum's hands to different minority or marginalised groups, which was an impressive development and very welcomed by different stakeholder communities. In these examples the NMF offered the platform for the groups, but most importantly, the content was created from the standpoint of the groups themselves.

Considering the complexity of examining the past from queer and norm-critical perspectives, Paqvalén notes (2021) that we need to be careful not to apply identities and conceptions of

today on past events, but to contextualise them in their historical setting. She asks how we can fill the gaps of historical and queer knowledges of diversity and to implement them into the historical national narrative in a fair manner, when we do not have much historical evidence of the lives of the queer and of the minority groups of the past. Paqvalén answers that a way to implement queering narratives could be in teaching the visitor to look at the National Museum's exhibitions from a norm-critical perspective, so that the visitor would have the knowhow to understand that some stories and histories exist even if they are not presented.

#### ***4.1.4 Discourse of Ethics***

According to Roivainen, many of the curatorial discussions concerning the curation of the Otherland where about ethics.

*We are in the National Museum very critically examining our own actions and our own historical working practices. There are quite large processes involved in that discussion, such as the repatriations of the Sámi and the Mesa Verde collections, and that we are very actively thinking about who has collected these collections and from which viewpoints. And we are thinking what is ethically correct, especially as this exhibition [Otherland] is also examining the period when the National Museum was built: what were the foundations it was built on and how does it relate to the way we are examining history right now. (Roivainen, 2021)*

Upon examining the Otherland in May 2021 this thought process presented by Roivainen is emerging in the exhibition texts. Even if this thesis research is not comprehensively researching all the exhibition wall texts due to the demarcation and the general scope of a MA thesis, I am pointing out a couple of examples which directly illustrate positions of dominance and power, in order to examine them through CDA. This example is of a room discussing the people historically living in the areas of what is now considered Finland, which were known as Finlandia, Tavastia, Carelia, Lappia, Eastern Land or Old Finland:

*Who knew the names of these lands? In whose realm were they? Did they belong to women, or to children, or to the Romani, or to the Sámi, or to*

*the Ingrians, or to the Tatars? Did they belong to the disabled? Or to those who were neither women nor men? They were the lands of all these people. But realms of a few men.* (NMF, 2021)

This critical approach of the exhibition to historical narratives was already hinted in an interview article published months before the opening of the exhibition, where Roivainen and professor of church history Tuomas Heikkilä, also involved with the production of *Otherland*, described that the coming exhibition would not just be about the history of men and the winners (Niskanen, 2021). This approach and the museum text cited above is a direct acknowledgement that the typical representation of the Finnish national narrative is historically dominated by the white, heterosexual, able-bodied, cis-male position. For me, as a person identifying as minority these texts brought hope that the knowledge-production of the NMF can be critical and questioning towards the normative history and is able to significantly point out oppressing structures of the historical narratives, as we know the histories of these *few men* but not of the many *others*.

Elina Anttila (2021) states that one of the most important curatorial strategic decisions of the new permanent exhibitions were that the curatorial processes should be participatory. This relates to the change in the ethical discourse of the museum considering sharing its power through the participation of different stakeholder groups. However, Anttila also states that even if the processes were built as participatory, the museum should not be blinded that the model for curation is ready and unflawed as such. There are always more diverse individual needs and hopes than people participating and the process should be in constant re-evaluation, she continues.

Anttila maintains that a great characteristic of their exhibition teams is that they consist of dozens of individuals which creates friction and helps to push for more pluralistic views (2021).

As this is true that there are multiple opinions and academic fields in the teams which leads to a variety of perspectives, one must be critical also about the diversity of the representations of the teams in light of the knowledge about the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities and people with foreign background in the museum field. As diversity expert Sara Salmani states, it is hard to consider diversity in museum work, if the staff is not diverse (in Parkkinen, 2020).

#### *4.1.5 Discourse of Participation*

Indicated by the interviewees, the participatory processes had similarities and differences between the three parts. What was common to them, is that they were informal stakeholder group discussions with groups chosen by the museum. According to Forssell (2021), the groups that were participating in the discussion for Prehistory and the Story of Finland were scholars, artists, journalists, media people, students of political history, immigrants and decision-makers such as members of the parliament. According to Roivainen (2021), groups that were participating in Otherland were the museum staff, researchers, groups of children, amateur history enthusiasts, Ruskeat Tytöt -collective, members of disability advocacy associations and specifically the guides of the museum who encounter the visitors daily.

Forssell (2021) mentioned a detail of the participatory process for the Story of Finland which gives an illustrating example. The museum was involved with Next Helsinki project (<http://www.nexthelsinki.org/>) in 2015 which aimed to prove the international potential of existing Finnish museums, when trying to illustrate that building Guggenheim Museum in Helsinki was unnecessary. The NFM created a participatory project for immigrants to join the creation of the exhibition. Forssell states that the aim was to get them to concretely participate in the making of the exhibition, however, it did not happen as such, as Forssell says that the immigrants were not ready or did not find themselves qualified enough to write about or to curate the exhibits.

This correlates to critical discourse analyst van Dijk's notion that "Even when present as participants, members of less powerful groups may also otherwise be more or less dominated in discourse." (van Dijk, 1993, p. 260). In the future, through intersectionally constructed and understood facilitation and participation processes, a more concrete participation and sense of ownership could be achieved, and make the participation turn into veritable co-creation.

However, Forssell mentions that there was one concrete element that came from the immigrant group to the finished exhibition: the heavy music exhibit in the Story of Finland exhibition. Upon asking the immigrant group how they would present Finnishness, one of them answered: by heavy music. The museum decided to take the idea. Now, as a representative of Finnish music culture, there is a corridor showcasing several example songs

of Finnish heavy music: a music genre which can be generalised as patriarchal, patriotic and very white (see eg. Byrne, 2015).

Furthermore, other curatorial differences between the processes emerged from the interviews. Forssell describes (2021) that the themes of the exhibitions arose from the participatory group discussions and the exhibition scripts were then written according to them. What was unique in the process of the Story of Finland was that among the script writers were individuals from also other fields than museum and heritage professionals. The base script was written by professional researchers and the dramaturgy was created by cinema professionals. The exhibits were chosen following the script, however, Forssell mentions that the exhibition designers also had a say in what was exhibited, as according to Forssell it was important to break from the tradition of only one person deciding what is in the final set-up of exhibits.

According to Roivainen (2021), the working group of Otherland had the benefit of being able to learn from the previous processes of Prehistory and the Story of Finland and could improve some of the different phases of the work. They decided not to write a whole script in advance. Firstly, they wanted to start with learning from the staff of the museum what was good and worth saving from the old exhibition, to better answer the question what they want the museum to represent. Secondly, they wanted to write the script "straight into the exhibition spaces" (Roivainen, 2021), as Roivainen mentions that the architecture of the old museum building with its complex layout would in any case cause changes in a script written in advance. Roivainen also mentions that the initial discussions were a great way to start the process, as now when the exhibition is almost ready, it can be noticed that many of the very core curatorial decisions derived from the first discussion with the staff.

The change in discourse of participation can be observed in the process of Otherland, as a more activist approach was wanted by including Ruskeat Tytöt and representatives of a disability advocacy association. Ruskeat Tytöt Media is an independent online publication committed to centering and normalising the perspectives of Brown women and people with underrepresented genders in Finnish and Nordic media. The stronger participative inclusion lead to an exhibition which can be said is more inclusive to marginalised groups, even if there still should be improvement in the acknowledging and presenting the silenced and diverse histories in a more comprehensive and holistic manner throughout the finalised exhibition.

#### ***4.1.6 Discourse of Representation and Changemaking***

As was previously presented, according to Janes and Sandell (2019b) activist approaches are needed in museum work, and to adapt those activist approaches there are lessons to be learned from the communities which are active in social justice. They state that the museum professionals will have to engage in conversations about uncomfortable subjects and the museum professionals need to focus on the "immorality of inaction" (2019b, p. 4).

Anttila summarises the core approach on diversity in museum representations as respect:

*We [as a museum] should remember to respect and value all, also the non-visitor. The museum should be constructed so that it would be pleasant also for a non-visitor to come. This is an idealistic view, because we are so many, but that includes the thought that museum work should never be exclusionary even if we could not tell about everybody. (Anttila, 2021)*

It can be interpreted from the museum texts whether those uncomfortable discussions have taken place or not, as the tone of discourse changes when there is in-depth understanding of oppressive structures and marginalisation. Some examples can be pinpointed from the Story of Finland (2017) exhibition. There is an exhibit text which tells about the *assimilation story (sopeutumistarina)* of the Skolt Sámi, disregarding the colonising methods of forced assimilation by merely stating that traditional skills and Sámi languages *were forgotten* during this period, when in fact the use of the languages was prohibited in the society and the boarding schools where Sámi children were taken to. The chosen wording dismisses the injustices of that period, which still have grave consequences in the current society. In the same exhibition, the years 1992-2016 are summarised on a wall timeline consisting of a curated collection of the most important societal events or changes of that period in Finland. On the timeline, for example the publication of Angry Birds -videogame by the Finnish game company Rovio (2009) and the creation of the law for a civil union for same-sex couples (2002), a monumental societal step towards the acceptance and equality of LGBTQ+ individuals, are presented as equal societal happenings, when arguably, putting these events on the same level of value and meaning might be seen as truly insensitive towards marginalised identities.



Forssell (2021) states that the strategic aim of the museum is that everyone could find themselves represented at the museum, but that the museum does not always succeed in that task. Forssell continues that in all the current permanent exhibitions the main point of relatability has been defined as humanity, humanness (*ihmissyys*), meaning that the point of finding one's representation in the museum should be found in the shared humanity. Going into a more detailed example, Forssell describes that even if the Story of Finland exhibition would not tell *your* story, there could be something in that exhibition that one could relate to through that notion of humanity. Forssell concludes by stating that the conception of one absolute historical truth not existing is increasingly accepted in the museum context.

Roivainen (2021) discusses the questions of representation through examples of the museum's collection from the time scope of Otherland exhibition (1100-1916). Roivainen problematises the collections as they are collected from certain viewpoints, and do not diversely represent the nation's minorities, as there is a lack of exhibits from for example the communities of the Afro-Finnish, the Tatars and the Roma. Roivainen (2021) mentions as one example of why there is a lack of objects in the collections that "they do not similarly keep or at least give exhibits to museums" in Roma culture.

In Otherland exhibition Roivainen mentions (2021) that the aim was to enlighten history from the perspectives of diverse viewpoints and bring out diverse stories, not only from the perspective of rulers and winners. As the museum is still mandated to tell the history of the state which is closely tied with the ones in the positions of power, the rulers and the winners, they wanted to find fresh perspectives into how to talk about them and decided on the perspective of how the average citizen would have seen the elite.

Roivainen mentions (2021) that from the standpoint of the NMF, there is often a bit of a feeling of fighting the windmills: there is a lot of discussion of the topics of underrepresentation and how the museum wants to bring out diversity, however, often it is considered hard and challenging to implement. But they strive towards it and try to learn to their best ability, Roivainen states.

The progress in discourse around representations can be interpreted in the exhibition of Otherland, through both straightforward statements to uncovering unjust histories, such as the wall text presented earlier about whose lands these areas we now call Finland were, and through diversification of representations in the exhibitions, such as including the portrait of

teacher Rosa Clay in the portrait gallery, the first African granted Finnish citizenship in the history of Finland on 1.9.1899 (Leitzinger, 2020).

Director Anttila continues (2021) that considering representation, it is impossible to include everything into one production, however, the museum should highlight and include diverse elements, and more openly communicate that even those elements are just some of the possibilities of representations among many alternatives. Anttila highlights that if a person can relate and empathise backwards in and with history, it is the same skill than when a person can empathise in their own time, with difference. The ability to understand difference empathically could be learned for instance in a museum, she continues.

The comparison with the ability to relating to history and relating to difference is apt and can be utilised when developing tools for visitors on how to interpret and experience the museums contents.

Elina Anttila confirms the important position of the NMF stating that even if contents relating to minority issues are already present in the society at large, they can be still pushed out of an individual's sight to the margins. But when a national institution, for instance the NMF, presents these issues, they cannot be ignored and brushed off: from minorities' issues they become everyone's issues.

## **4.2 Rethinking Exhibitions and Knowledge Production**

The NMF has an important position as the producer of national knowledge, narrative and history and to present it justly as a national institution mandated to exhibit the state history. However, the conception of what the historical truth is can be debated depending on the viewpoint, as feminist and critical heritage theorists have proven. Therefore, the pressure to make all stakeholder groups satisfied is challenging and present in the making of the museum programme and exhibitions.

Rita Paqvalén (2021) states that the development of the knowledge production and contents of the NMF are developing in a good direction considering minority and marginalised groups' representation both when it comes to exhibitions, public outreach, and the cooperation with different communities. Paqvalén continues that another important step has been

taken through the repatriation process of the Sámi collections and of other indigenous materials in the collections of NMF. However, she maintains that in order for these changes to become more permanent, the museum needs to pay more attention to issues regarding inclusion, diversity and accessibility when recruiting new staff and in making the budgets, as well as when engaging external experts and service providers.

Päivi Roivainen (2021) describes that traditionally the NMF has been under strong demands and still is, and that the contents of the museum draw a lot of criticism. Roivainen continues that the criticism might have at times led to too cautious decision-making, to avoid negative feedback. In the process of *Otherland*, they rather thought of the exhibition as a way to arouse thinking and asking questions, rather than teaching a one unified truth of the history of the country. Roivainen uses the word *peer*: to think of the museum staff as peers to the visitors, also themselves asking questions of the times long gone.

Roivainen mentions that indeed, research and academic knowledge are essential for museum work and curation, however, she continues that it would be important to still diversify the methods of research to gain more knowledge produced by ethnographic research methods and to gain knowledge produced by the minority and marginalised groups themselves.

Roivainen seems to affirm the notion presented in the theoretical framework of how the Western, patriarchal knowledge production structures of the academia and the museum field have overlooked the viewpoint of the *other*.

Paqvalén points a pertinent example of the past hierarchical knowledge production of the NMF by describing an exhibition on Finnish design *Man Matter Metamorphosis – 10 000 Years of Design* (2018) at NMF. The curators, who were not from the regular staff of the museum, made the decision to repeat a colonialist approach to maker identity by choosing to leave out makers' names in the case of the exhibited Sámi objects, however, in the case of Finnish designers, such as Alvar Aalto, makers were named. This emphasised the difference which is often produced in the context of indigenous art and design: it is considered general crafts rather than design or art, and thus there is no need for the maker to be attributed and copyrighted. Paqvalén continues that the museum leadership should have contested this practice of the curators to enact the needed change of the perception of indigenous art works and their ownership, by either naming the makers or finding matching Sámi objects which would already be attributed.

### 4.3 Intersectional Shift in the Representation of National Identity

The conception of Finland as an exceptionally equal country distorts our collective understanding of our national identity. The conception of "the land of equal opportunity" makes the nation appear better than it is in practice, and the majority of Finns should be more open to critical self-examination by considering the lived experience of various minority and marginalised groups and the colonised indigenous Sámi peoples and their lands. Museums and other art and cultural actors are in the position of enforcing and fostering this critical examination.

In the core of the thesis are the conceptions of intersectionality, critical heritage and feminist approach to museology. Elina Anttila states (2021) that the term intersectionality is not used in the museum, as she mentions that the language used in the daily museum work is less academic and less scientific. That applies also to other terms such as post-nationalism, typicality, and feminist and activist approach to museum work. However, Anttila maintains that elements of intersectional thinking are intertwined in their actions.

Anttila (2021) sees that in the future intersectional thinking could liberate the museum from thinking of people and different minorities as homogenous groups, like some of the steering guidelines given to the museum tend to do. There are many guidelines to ascertain inclusion of certain minority groups, which are of course well-meaning, however, the stiff categorisations of people do not correspond to our real society. Anttila reminds that even if they consider the museum staff representing various viewpoints, they are a certain chosen group, and must remember the existence of all the other groups.

Päivi Roivainen considers (2021) that intersectional thinking has been present in the process of Otherland, even if the actual word was not used in everyday work. Roivainen continues that the discourse about identities and histories is ongoing in the museological field and at times it is heated, and that it is important that the NMF reacts to the discussion and should not be afraid to participate in it. In the context of the increasing of the discourse around intersectionality just in recent years, Roivainen states:

*This process [of Otherland] which I am leading has been ongoing for a couple of years now, and during the process the discussion increased, even to that extent that I have been thinking that if I were to start the process of the exhibition planning now, I would perhaps do it more strongly from the perspective of intersectionality. To even put it in concrete words. (Roivainen, 2021)*

Roivainen ponders (2021) that because of the increased discussion and the length of the exhibition construction processes it might feel that the exhibition texts can be considered outdated even before the opening. That is why Roivainen thinks it is important to be open to possible changes in the exhibitions even after opening. She also thinks that even if intersectionality sounds theoretic and serious, its perspectives could perhaps make it possible to bring a certain lightness, or increased trust, into the discussion among different groupings of people.

This increased trust which Roivainen mentions, could be facilitated through intersectional examination of the museum representations. One element of being able to relate to what a visitor sees or experiences is recognition, thus it is important that the museum visitor recognises the efforts and the value-construction of the underlying meanings of the exhibition contents.

Roivainen mentions (2021) that in a certain historical discourse Finnish people and people historically living in the area known as Finland are talked about as Finnish *tribes*, including certain minorities as just their own tribe. This falsifying discourse of tribes is something that they have avoided in Otherland. Roivainen problematises how the museum could approach persons as persons, despite of the ethnic or regional group they belong to.

Forssell confirms that the term intersectionality has not been used in the working processes. Forssell mentions that the terms they concentrated on were equity (*yhdenvertaisuus*) and equality (*tasa-arvo*) and the determined term and aim for identification was shared humanity, humanness (*ihmisyys*). She also emphasises that one of the main themes in the Story of Finland was women's position in the Finnish society.

### ***4.3.1 Discourse of the New National***

After renewing the permanent exhibitions, the next great step of the National Museum is the process of the New National. It is the new extension wing built on and under the enclosed historical inner yard of the building, estimated to open in 2026. Hanna Forssell is leading the visions and values process which started the content development process in April 2021.

Elina Anttila states (2021) that the extension project is very important for the museum and continues, that the reconstruction of national identity is manifested in the extension project in how it functions, which content is presented there, and what kind of services they will offer. Anttila states that equity and diversity are core values in the project, however, upon answering of whether intersectional thinking is intertwined in the process she says that:

*Yes, probably in the process where we are searching for the vision and the values which we are anchoring onto it is [intertwined], however, we want to maintain a certain openness and what is more, it is important too that we have in mind diverse audiences and that we want a wide array of visitors to come, so we cannot be bound by one mission, we must have sort of a cultural spaciousness. (Anttila, 2021)*

Hanna Forssell explains that they are starting the vision and values defining process for the New National in the spring of 2021, however, Forssell mentions they are not starting the visioning from scratch as the basis will be the current museum strategy. Forssell says that the content of the new extension is not yet known but it will be a space for both exhibitions and events. What is more, the new space will enable collaborations with commercial partners for the events, which will diversify the usage according to Forssell. She describes that the visions and values process is not just concerning the extension, but also the contents of the older side of the museum, as she states that:

*We are thinking future-oriented in the visioning process. We are ambitious in renewing the contents, however, there are also elements that we will keep on sustaining as they are. (Forssell, 2021)*

One aspect of the strategic processing of the New National extension will be new recruitments, because increasing physical space, exhibitions, events and visitors require more staff.

The Opening-report (Lahtinen et al., 2020) by Cupore - Cultural Political Research Center about the status of foreign-born art and culture professionals in Finland concluded, that there have been issues with the National Museum's recruitment processes in for example enabling foreign-born applicants to apply. Anttila says (2021) when asked about it that thinking intersectionally could improve the diversity of the recruitment process for the New National. Forssell and Anttila both state that there is no reason why a strict demand of Finnish or Swedish language skills should be asked for every position in the museum and that there is openness towards developing everyday working practices to ease the language barriers, even if that has not yet been needed at the museum.

"Social power is based on privileged *access* to socially valued resources, such as wealth, income, position, status, force, group membership, education or knowledge." states critical discourse analyst van Dijk (1993, p. 254). The pool of applicants to museum jobs is already forming from those who are inclined to study topics such as museology and heritage studies: an individual needs social and cultural capital to become aware of the possibilities.

Päivi Roivainen mentions that overall, the museum field attracts a certain type of applicants and continues that a common nominator for museum professionals is that they come from families with strong academic backgrounds, and that individuals who do not have an academic family might feel like an outsider in the museum working environment, despite having high academic qualifications themselves (2021).

Museum is a locus of social power, and it is of relevance who is using that power. This is of course a part of a much wider conversation about democratisation of educational possibilities in order to diversify the staff of the museums.

The leadership of the NMF interviewed all agree that diversification is needed. They still have much to do to amplify the voices of the silenced who historically have been deemed the other, the outsider, not belonging in the constructed national image of Finland.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

*The fact that significance is evasive, that meanings evolve, or slightly or radically drift or shift with different perceptions or viewers and users or with the same individuals over time and circumstance. The fact, in other words, that the relationship between forms and meanings is neither one of autonomy nor determination, but one of semi-autonomy and situational determinacy. (Preziosi, 2011, p. 57)*

In the era when many contemporary societies are battling with the rising of far-right ideologies, disinformation, increasing hate-speech and attacks on democracy and diversity, the responsibilities of national cultural institutions should be examined and their positions as enablers of cultural adaptation, education on diversity, resilience and openness supported.

It is evident that the NMF has started to work towards more diverse representations, however, I argue that they would benefit from more advanced working methods, knowhow, resources and terminology to really tackle the issues considering intersectionally understood construction of national identity. I recognise that the museum has done very powerful and meaningful gestures towards the minority and marginalised groups in for example being the Pride House in 2019 and 2020, by repatriating the indigenous Sámi-collection consisting of over 2000 artefacts to Siida, the Sámi Museum in Inari in the Autumn of 2021, by using more participatory working methods and by diversifying the programmations in temporary exhibitions. These are formidable symbols of inclusion, decolonisation and critical re-evaluation of historical canons.

When examining representations and expressions of identities, one searches for points of identification among the museum exhibits. As Divya P. Tolia-Kelly states, heritage, which is a part of an identity, can be seen as emerging from the feelings of being, becoming and belonging (2016, p. 897) in a museum. Upon examining the answers from the museum staff, one element emerged: the intended point of identification was defined as humanity, humanness (*ihmisyyys*). This was named as the common nominator to which any visitor could identify with.



However, supported by the statements by Rita Paqvalén, I argue that in the light of the research which points that in Western museum context 'humanity' and 'human' has been equalled to the majority identity, the point of relatability and identification should be reconsidered. In the Western context the majority identity still refers to a white, heterosexual, able-bodied and well-off cis-man. Indeed, the time has come to really address the diversification of national identity in the permanent exhibitions bravely by using intersectional feminist and queering methods of examination to collections and current exhibitions. The museum maintains that they are open to re-evaluating the contents of the exhibitions, which is the most important point of departure.

Our national cultural institutions need to act as representatives of an equitable, liberal, democratic and diverse Nordic welfare society. Since latest great societal movements such as the Black Lives Matter and #Metoo and the demands of decolonisation, minority and marginalised groups will no longer settle to being seen and represented through the majority gaze: we reclaim our identities, authority and representations into our own hands.

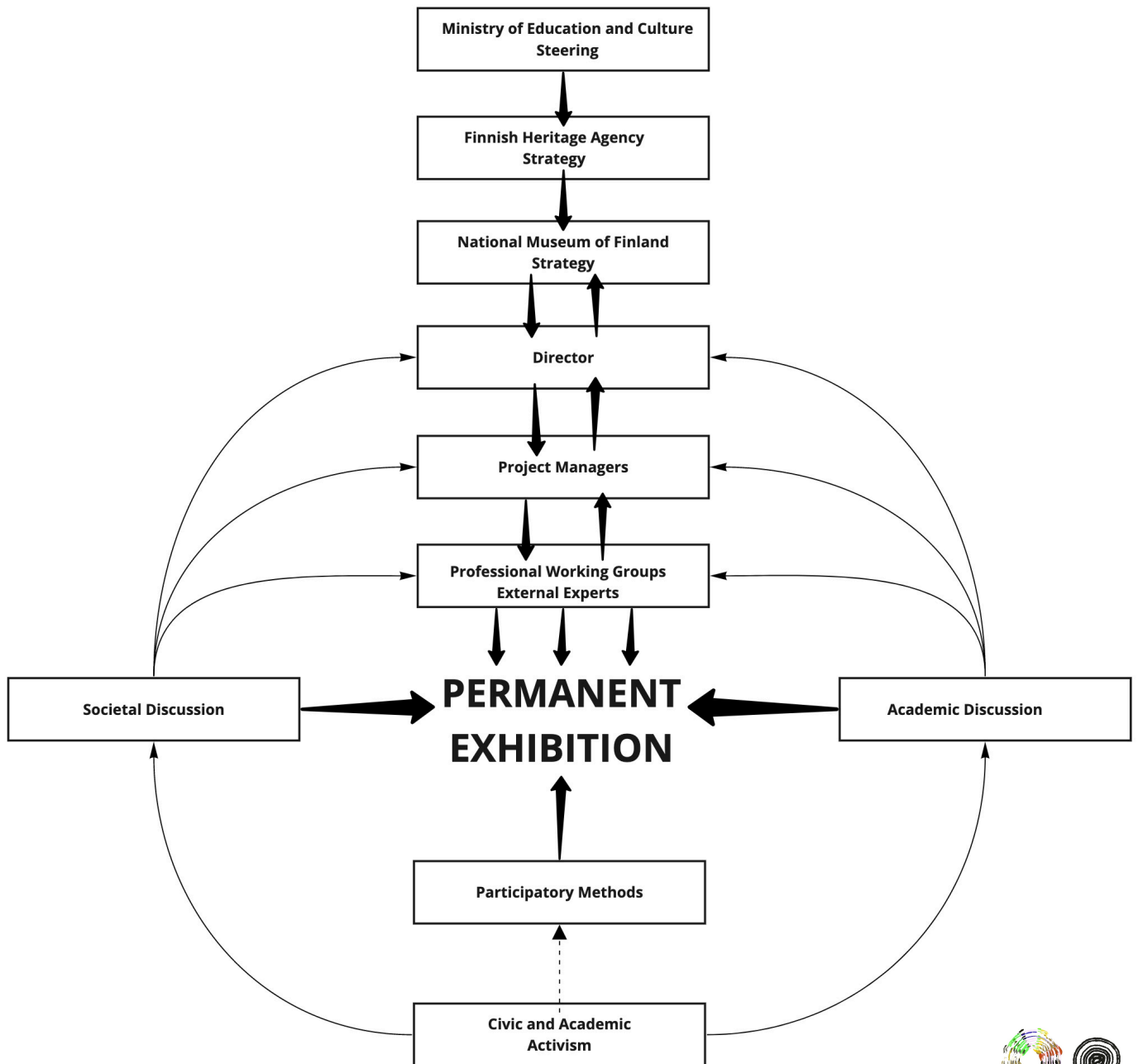
I argue, that by placing the civic and academic activism in a more prominent position in the construction of the permanent exhibitions, the representations of minority and marginalised groups will be more diversely presented. Like Sandell and Janes state (2019b), adapting activist methods and engaging in difficult discussions will increase the skillset of the NMF to bring forth and include minority representations in the national narrative rather than present them as additional program. Activist and queering methods will also facilitate the finding of a more inclusive and intersectionally thought overall concept to which the museum aims the visitor to identify with. It is important for the museum to consider societal discussion from multifaceted perspectives and to incorporate more diverse voices to the strategy-making and creation of permanent exhibitions with civic and academic activists and in addition to that, by diversifying the staff.

In this figure I have illustrated the decision-making and the influences on the process of the making of the permanent exhibitions according to the interpretation of the data. It shows the flow of authority and the political nature of the position of the NMF as a national cultural institution steered firstly by the Ministry of Education and Culture, secondly by the Finnish Heritage Agency and thirdly by the strategy of the NMF. The chart illustrates the input of several factors to the creation of the permanent exhibitions and the proposed analysis of what

is lacking in the process: the disconnection of civic and academic activism to participatory methods of curation.

**FIGURE 3**

*Decision-making and the Flow of Influence in the Permanent Exhibition Creation*



## 5.1 Understanding Intersectionality

To be able to implement change, an institution should be ready to observe and examine their attitudes and prejudices holistically and critically. Even if museums also need to consider the competition of the leisure market, they cannot abandon their core function as enablers of critical societal discussion to attract more visitors.

The answers of the interviewees from the museum reveal that they do not use the word intersectionality in their everyday work. By analysing the answers, it can be considered that it is because the concept is not perhaps comprehensively understood in a strategic or curatorial level to be inclusive but thought as exclusive. Intersectional thinking does not exclude, it includes, and creates that desired cultural spaciousness. Thus, it could be included in the overall mission and vision of the New National development process.

However, intersectional examination does not solely reveal the positionalities of the minority and marginalised representations in the museum: it can be utilised to understand and dissect the different parameters and practices which affect the formation of the Finnish national identity. In critically examining the different societal affiliations for the reasons of exclusion, the museum can participate in the construction of a more diverse and porous ideation of national identity and divert from the constructed heroic images from the Kalevala, the national epic based on Carelian stories.

Understanding why the NMF would be careful in using words such as intersectionality can be examined through what Päivi Roivainen mentioned of the criticism that the museum is often receiving. Being a national giant, there are many stakeholder groups both within and outside the museum which are looking out for their own benefits and perspectives to be represented, and intersectional feminist research, which is indeed a critical method of examination and questions the normative ideations of truths and positionalities, might not be welcomed without criticism and doubtfulness as it represents an alternative viewpoint and might lead to shifting of the historical power structures.

However, when one of the strategic goals of the NMF is to influence and evoke conversations as a trailblazer nationally and internationally, it is for the sake of the credibility of the museum relevant that when the representations of identities are re-examined, intersectional

approach should be utilised. Moreover, as Anna Rastas states, if resisting racism is considered to belong to museums' social responsibility, the ways in which racism emerges need to be recognised (2021, p. 165), also in the National Museum of Finland.

As Winter states, the heritage field needs people willing to see outside their scholarly and professional tradition and come to terms with the fact that there are more urgent, and larger issues in question (2012). An essential element to achieving social justice, engagement and equity is *allyship*, which refers to individuals of dominant communities choosing to support individuals in non-dominant communities to end prejudice and discrimination (Pickett & Tucker, 2020). By implementing the conception of allyship into the strategic discourse of the NMF, the museum staff will be able to facilitate contents considering minority and marginalised groups in a more holistic and constructive manner.

## **5.2 "Nothing About Us Without Us"**

As Tim Winter states, to examine critically the construction of meanings by contemporary museum institutions, we must develop processes for post-western understandings of heritage and culture, and the socio-political powers which surround them (2012, p. 532).

The saying "Nothing about us without us" refers to the thinking that policies should not be decided without representation from those who will be affected by the policy, and was firstly used in the context of disability advocacy. In museum work this refers to inclusive and participatory working practices as well as recruitments to ensure that the perspectives to museum work and exhibitions would be constructed polyphonically. The NMF is using participatory methods in their initial processes for curation and decision-making, however, a more diverse staffing and stronger inclusion of civic and academic activist discourse would result in a more coherent and communicative meaning-making and identity-building in the museum. This is supported by the statement of Rodney Harrison that critical approach to heritage must be developed in dialogue (2013, p. 111).

The museum's strategy states that the future will be built on cultural adaptability. This prompts a thought whether this extends to the cultural adaptability of the museum itself in its actions and recruitment. It was stated in the Opening-report (Lahtinen et al., 2020) by Cupore - Cultural Political Research Center that the recruitment methods of NMF were not

easily accessible to foreign-born applicants. According to the statements by the interviewees it seems that the will to diversify exists, however, there is still a lack of concrete measures to implement actual change.

As Pia Laskar states in the context of museums, "Objects from the past are silent in themselves, they do not utter a word without an interpreter. Interpretation is essential." (2017, p. 220) and continues that museum professionals and researchers interpret these objects through rejection or acceptance and through using or discarding theories and narratives. Laskar states that with these methods they can refocus the narratives of the past according to contemporary ideations (2017, p. 220). As mentioned earlier, queering, or examining the collections from a queer perspective, requires time, resources and expertise, and as Jana Reidla states, there is a lack of time for research in the NMF (2018, p. 126). Should the museum decide to amplify the voices of the previously silenced, it should allocate resources for internal research or invite external researchers to start an extensive process of critically examining the existing collections from an intersectional and queering perspective and to include indigenous knowledge production.

### **5.3 Permanent Representation Matters**

Referring to the (re)construction of national identities, national museums can offer tools to bridge over the perceived differences of various citizen groups (Weiser, 2015) and these links can illuminate what these groups have in common instead of what separates them. As Grete Swensen and Torgrim Sneve Guttormsen state (2020, p. 16), "when the population and potential users of museums become more heterogeneous and diverse, the idea of a shared common national history becomes contested.". However, as mentioned, the end goal of the reconstruction process of national identity is not to erase the power differentials, histories and divisions between citizen groups, but to become aware of them and foster the possibilities of peaceful coexistence and respectful co-creation of the national identity.

Firstly, this process can be reached through a more comprehensive reconsideration of the representations of identities in the permanent exhibitions and thoroughly re-positioning and weaving the minority and marginalised identities into the national narrative, not treat them

as additions or special thematic exhibitions. As Cristina Lleras states referring to the shortfalls in reparation in museum context, "Special events' simply will not do" (2011, chapter 29).

Secondly, the word curator should be considered as the title for the person in charge of the permanent exhibition creation process. The permanent exhibitions are indeed a creation by a large group of individuals, however, the use of the word curator instead of project manager or executive producer, would in a more transparent way indicate that the process and final exhibition consists of choices and meaning-making which are influenced by the decisions of individuals. Permanent exhibitions are, in fact, not pure facts, but interpretations of a mass of information and objects and how they are related to each other. If we agree that the work of a curator is to reposition different knowledges and epistemologies for the visitor to further interpret them, we must also give some tools for the visitor for the critical thought process to understand and make connections between the various knowledges.

## **5.4 Creating the New National Strategically**

A country with a population of only 5,5 million cannot disregard the development of diversifying ethnic backgrounds having an effect of the perceived national identity and national culture. Considering national identity, representing the multiplicity of intersecting aspects that formulate that identity would result in museum exhibitions that are much richer, more educational and in support of the diverse democratic processes. Furthermore, to support the need for structural change Nina Lykke states that cultural and societal hegemonies, exploitation, oppressing, inequalities and exclusion are legitimised by structures that are seen as impossible to change, similarly to how the conceptions of national identity often are perceived (2010, p. 23).

As Director Elina Anttila states, the core values of the New National -project are equity and diversity, however, she states that the process cannot be bound by one mission (intersectionality) but must retain cultural spaciousness (2021). The ambiguity that can be read in this answer is telling in my opinion: the museum is careful in how it communicates its values as to perhaps not come across being too close to identity politics and social justice efforts in a manner which the more conservative visitors, stakeholders and right-wing nationalists would

perhaps willingly misunderstand. The nationalist right-wing has misconstrued intersectionality and intersectional feminism in the media as something which is aiming at dismantling the core beliefs and identities of the "traditionally" understood Finnish society, however, cultural institutions should not hesitate in using the concept and word to bring its correct meaning and applications to wider audiences.

Here the level of importance of the museum strategy is illuminated. To implement change in the museum representations, the strategy is the tool. Simultaneously a strategy which reaches all aspects of museum work ensures that the museum is in effect answering the multifaceted demands of the current society. Therefore, the inclusion of the intersectional approach should start from the strategic level.

As Kotler, Kotler and Kotler state, systemic evaluation of the museum strategy is needed (2008). The NMF will benefit from the re-evaluation of the contents of the permanent exhibitions, especially the parts opened in 2017, in relation to the published strategic goals of increasing societal peace and increasing mental flexibility from an intersectional point of view, to eliminate the possibilities of continued insensitivities considering minority and marginalised identities still in place in the exhibitions.

To introduce cross-cutting discourses such as intersectional feminism to museum work there needs to be a strong internal motivation. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, this internal motivation can be cultivated through investing in capacity-building. I would argue that capacity-building should be developed in collaboration with civic and academic activists on matters of social justice, critical heritage studies and intersectional feminist approach to museum representations, to increase cultural dialogue which is one of the museum's strategic goals.

# 6 FINAL CONCLUSIONS

## 6.1 Summary of the Results

National cultural institutions as gatekeepers to our past and present representations are at the fore-front of societal development and could lead the way towards a reconstructed diverse and intersectionally understood contemporary national identity.

This thesis research looks at the formation and representations of Finnish national identity in the National Museum of Finland through the permanent exhibitions of the museum, opened in three parts between 2017-2021 and through the museum strategy. The research was conducted in order to understand how the decision-making of the museum strategically and curatorially is taking into consideration the diversification of the Finnish identities and population in the 21st century and how the museum takes into consideration the societal change on the perceptions of various minority and marginalised groups.

The research was ignited by the observations from a personal visit to the museum in 2020 and the observations of a lack of diverse and inclusive representations of identities in the permanent exhibitions. Some museum contents could even be considered insensitive from the perspective of a minority or marginalised visitor. The need to understand what led to this prompted the process of diving into the decision-making, strategies, values and aims of the museum leadership and curators and to the literature and research about the subject matter both in Finland and internationally.

By the data-collection which included interviews of three professionals from the NMF and one outside expert of diversity and accessibility issues of the museum field especially from the queer perspective, I ensured firstly the data straight from the museum's decision-makers, and secondly, from a renowned outside expert's perspective to the work of the museum.

The answers to the research questions were found through critical discourse analysis of the answers of the museum professionals compared and contrasted with each other and the answers from the outside expert. The result I concluded to be the foremost reason as to why the representation of national identity was not more diverse and inclusive of minority and



marginalised identities in the permanent exhibitions was firstly, that the decided curatorial concept for identification for the visitor was chosen as our shared humanity, humanness (*ihmisyyys*), which in the Western museum context refers strongly to the majority identity what is still considered being white, heterosexual, able-bodied, middle-class, cis-man. As minorities and marginalised groups have been exempt from belonging to humanity, humanness, due to the hundreds of years of historical exclusion through pseudo-scientific classifications as inferiors, a museum needs a more intersectional point of identification to act as a locus of inclusive representation and to foster a sense of belonging for every visitor. Secondly, the concept of intersectionality was partly considered as academic and exclusionary.

This decision to use humanity (*ihmisyyys*) as the common nominator for the visitors to identify with, forms the over-all lens through which the exhibitions are built and considered. Therefore the end-result can continue to repeat the image of Finnish national identity as non-diverse and static, as it represents the viewpoint of the considered majority identity. Without thorough re-imagining and theoretical deconstructing the concept of the majority identity as *typical* and *natural*, the museum could be seen as repeating in some parts of its exhibitions the national identity as exclusionary.

The newest part of the permanent exhibition Otherland (2021) shows a more comprehensive thought on diversity and inclusion through its wider participatory curation process, surely affected by the project's timing coinciding with the large global societal movements such as the Black Lives Matter and #Metoo, which have brought the structural oppression of various minorities and marginalised groups to the forefront of global societal, cultural and political discussion. The project manager of Otherland Päivi Roivainen even mentioned that if the exhibition process began a bit later in time, she would have included intersectionality more concretely in the process (2021).

The thesis research confirms the previous international research (eg. Laskar, 2017) on the difficulty to implement change in a national museum considering diversification of representations of national identities. The NMF has through participatory curation methods and a more diverse programming on temporary exhibitions fulfilled partly its mission on inclusion of minority and marginalised identities in the museum representations, however, as long as the representations do not penetrate the narration of the museum comprehensively, including the permanent exhibitions, the work is still unfinished. As research has also shown

(Laskar, 2017; Lleras, 2011), *adding* representations of minority and marginalised identities to the museum programming does not equal an in-depth structural change in the overall conception of the national identity which the museums constructs.

## **6.2 Generalisability**

As a single case study, the main aim of this research is to examine and illuminate a specific phenomenon, however, there are possibilities in repeating the research methods for similar settings. The generalisability of the study can be considered from three approaches. Firstly, from the approach of my argument that humanity, humanness (*ihmisyyys*), is not an inclusive enough a concept to act as the point of identification for every visitor in a national museum's permanent exhibition including various minority and marginalised groups. This can be considered widely in the global context, as classification and oppression of the *other* is disappointingly common.

Secondly, while each nation is unique, they share similar struggles on identity formation, social inequity, oppression and tension between citizen groups. Through a multidisciplinary and intersectional approach a museum anywhere can examine its representations and reach for more diversely understood audience segmentations to engage in their activities.

Thirdly, the reach for equal representation is and will be an ongoing process for most museums. In this sense, the findings of the thesis can be put to use in most museum institutions, specifically following the Western museum tradition, which have not yet extensively started a process of decolonisation, norm-critical examination and diversification of its representations.

## **6.3 Further Research**

The multidisciplinary of the thesis points to many possibilities of further research. One research possibility is to conduct an in-depth intersectional multilevel analysis according to Gabriele Winker and Nina Degele (2011) on the categories and constructions of the representations of national identity.

A useful subject of examination in the field of participatory museum audience engagement would be to interview the stakeholder groups of the participatory workshops for the permanent exhibitions and how the groups perceive the finished exhibitions. Indeed, that would further reveal whether the expectations of the participatory working methods were met and if, particularly those stakeholder groups who represented minority or marginalised groups, saw their input in the end-result. This would foster the progress of the museums' participatory methods, as Director Elina Anttila mentioned, the museum should constantly develop its methods of participatory work (2021). I argue that in the future through intersectionally understood facilitation processes, a more concrete participation and sense of ownership could be achieved, and make the participation turn into veritable co-creation.

My hope and suggestion for further research is a multidisciplinary intersectional feminist research to further examine the absences of groups considered representing minority and marginalised identities in the permanent exhibitions, examining the collections from a queer perspective and as a result forming a suggestion for re-imagining the representations of minority and marginalised groups in the permanent exhibitions.

This would be implemented by amalgamating them into the permanent exhibitions rather than adding them on top of them, and adding information for the visitor how to critically examine the knowledge production the museum presents. This could be considered also in the coming New National wing, following in the steps of many museums, like the Swedish History Museum and the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington D.C. and their thinking of introductory entrance rooms which offer reading guidance for the visitor be able to understand and participate critically in the meaning-making of the museum.

*"Pushing against that which is taken for granted, feminist inquiry probes absences, silences, omissions, and distortions and challenges commonsense understandings that are based on inadequate research."*  
(McHugh, 2014, p. 139)

The final suggestion for further research is to conduct a multiple case study on several national historical and ethnographic museums with the methodology and theoretical framework developed for this thesis. Having comparable results from different institutions would lead to more generalisable results further enhancing the understanding of the global systems of oppressive structures and layers of identity representations in the national museums. The

results could enable the developing of an intersectional strategic framework for museums to implement, to foster a future of museum institutions and memory organisations where each and every visitor finds traces of themselves represented inclusively in the national identity which the museums construct, preserve and display.



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# APPENDICES

**Interview questions for Päivi Roivainen (14.4.2021), Elina Anttila (20.4.2021) and Hanna Forssell (20.4.2021). Scroll for English translations.**

## **Johtaminen & Strategia**

- Kansallismuseo on osa Museovirastoa. Onko Kansallismuseolla Museovirastosta erillinen oma strategiansa, kokoelmapoliittisen ohjelman lisäksi?
- Kuvailisitko, miten strategiatyö on järjestetty: ketkä osallistuvat strategiatyöhön? Miten strategia jalkautuu museoon?
- Näkemyksesi mukaan, sisältyvätkö näyttelykuratointi ja näyttelysisällöt olennaisesti strategiatyöhön?

## **Kuratointi**

- Kertoisitko prosessista, miten pysyvät näyttelyt kuratoidaan? (Kenellä on päätösvalta, ketkä osallistuvat prosessiin)
- Uudessa Toista maata -näyttelyssä (2021) on käytetty osallistavia metodeja (mm. Ruskeat tytöt). Onko tämä yleinen työtapa? Kertoisitko miten ja missä vaiheessa tämä työ tehtiin? Käytettiinkö osallistavia metodeja Suomen tarina -näyttelyssä (2017)?
- Ovatko käsitteet kriittisestä kulttuuriperintötutkimuksesta tai aktivistisesta tai feministisestä museologiasta käytössä työssänne? (Esimerkiksi tieteen ja tiedon historiallisen luonteen "objektiivisena, luonnollisena ja ei-poliittisena" kyseenalaistaminen, historian uudelleentulkitseminen, merkityksen ja arvon uudelleen muodostaminen, valtahierarkiat, post-nationalismi, post-humanismi, tyypillisuus ja normatiivisuus)
- Miten tehtyihin kuratoinnin päätöksiin suhtaudutaan sen jälkeen, kun pysyvä näyttely on pystytetty? (Voiko sisältöjä muuttaa jälkikäteen, alttius hyväksyä toisenlaista tulkintaa, kuinka kauan näyttelyt ovat voimassa?)

## **Identiteetti**

- Minkälaisena näet Kansallismuseon esittävän suomalaisen kansallisen identiteetin ja mistä elementeistä se koostuu?
- Näkemyksesi mukaan, miten Kansallismuseo (uudelleen)rakentaa suomalaista kansallista identiteettiä nyt 2020-luvulla?

## **Intersektionaalisuus**

- Näkemyksesi mukaan, onko intersektionaalisuus käsite, jota käytätte ja käsittelette työssänne?

- Sanoisitko, että intersektionaalisuus on ollut (tärkeä) näkökulma näyttelyjen tuotannossa 2010-luvulta lähtien?
- Kertoisitko hieman Uusi Kansallinen -hankkeesta: onko Uuden Kansallisen sisältösuunnittelu aloitettu? Miten sanoisit, että intersektionaalisuus näkyy tulevassa uudenaikaisessa näyttelysiivessä ja sen toiminnoissa?

### **Representaatio ja samastuminen**

- Näkemyksesi mukaan, kuinka merkittävästi käsitteet representaatio ja samastuminen olivat osa pysyvien näyttelyjen suunnittelua? Mistä näkökulmasta näitä mahdollisesti tarkasteltiin?
- Cuporen Avaus-tutkimusraportin (Lahtinen et al., 2020) tuloksista huomattiin, että usean suomalaisen kulttuurilaitoksen (mm. Kansallismuseo) rekrytoitavat eivät tukenet ulkomaalaistaustaisten työntekijöiden mahdollisuuksia löytää ja hakea työpaikkoja näistä instituutioista. Minkälaisia ajatuksia tästä heräsi? Miten näette tämän mahdollisesti vaikuttavan museotyöhön, suhteessa museon päätöksentekoon ja sen sisältöjen intersektionaalisuuteen? Kuinka esimerkiksi tasapainoilla suomen- ja ruotsinkielisten arkistoaineistojen ja henkilökunnan potentiaalisen kansainvälistymisen välillä?

## **IN ENGLISH**

### **Directing and strategy**

- NMF is a part of Finnish Heritage Agency. Does the NMF have its own strategy apart from the strategy of FHA, in addition the collection policy program?
- How was the strategic process organised: who participated in it? How is the strategy put in use in the museum?
- In your opinion, are curation and exhibition contents a significant part of the strategy process?

### **Curation**

- Please describe the process how the permanent exhibitions are curated? Who has the authority, who participates?
- In the process of the new Otherland exhibition (2021) participatory methods were used. (Brown Girls etc.) Is this a common work method? How and when was the participatory work done? Were participatory methods used in the process of the Story of Finland (2017)?
- Are concepts from critical heritage studies or activist and feminist museology in use in your work? For example, the questioning of knowledge as objective, natural and non-political, re-examining history, meaning and value reconstruction, power hierarchies, post-nationalism, post-humanism, typicality and normativity.

- Can the curatorial decision be challenged after the permanent exhibition is opened? Alternative interpretations, how long are the exhibitions meant to be presented?

### **Identity**

- How do you see the NMF presenting Finnish national identity and which elements it consists of?
- In your opinion, how is the NMF reconstructing national identity now in the 2020s?

### **Intersectionality**

- In your opinion, is intersectionality a term and a concept you are using in your work?
- Would you say that intersectionality has been an important approach to exhibition making since the 2010s?
- Would you describe the New National project: has the content planning started? How would you consider that intersectionality is utilized in the new wing and its functions?

### **Representation and relatability**

- In your opinion, how significantly the concepts of representation and relatability were in the planning of the permanent exhibitions? From which approach were these handled?
- In Cupore's Opening-report (Lahtinen et al., 2020) it was stated that there is a lack of inclusionary recruitment practices in Finnish cultural institutions such as the NMF. What thoughts did this awaken? In your opinion, does this have an effect on the museum work, the decision-making and the intersectionality of the contents? How to balance internationalisation in relation to the language requirements with the national archives in Finnish and Swedish languages?

### **Interview questions, Rita Paqvalén (22.4.2021): Scroll for English**

- Onko sinulla kokemusta Suomen Kansallismuseon kanssa tehdystä yhteistyöstä moninaisuuden, marginalisoitujen ryhmien, vähemmistö- tai queersisältöjen parissa?
- Miten koet, että Suomen Kansallismuseo on esittänyt suomen kansallisen identiteetin?
- Miten koet, että Suomen Kansallismuseo rakentaa suomalaista kansallista identiteettiä nyt 2020-luvulla? Miten sen pitäisi mielestäsi sitä rakentaa?
- Näkemyksesi mukaan, onko taidemuseoiden ja kulttuurihistoriallisten museoiden suhtautumisessa queer- ja vähemmistösisältöihin ollut eroja?

- Miten koet, että lähivuosien lisääntynyt keskustelu intersektionaalisuudesta, ja globaalit liikkeet #Metoo ja BLM ovat vaikuttanut queer- ja vähemmistösisältöjen esiintuomiseen museoissa?
- Kansallismuseo laajenee Uusi Kansallinen -lisärakennushankkeella (2025-26), joka tulee olemaan tila, jossa nähdään sekä näyttelyjä että tapahtumia. Moninaisuuden näkökulmasta, mitkä ovat näkemyksesi mukaan tärkeitä toimenpiteitä, että hanke vahvistaisi intersektionaalisesti ajatellun kansallisen identiteetin rakentamista?
- Kriittisessä kulttuuriperintötutkimuksessa sekä aktivistisessa ja feministisessä museologiassa kyseenalaistetaan tiedon historiallinen luonne absoluuttisena totuutena ja ehdotetaan että museoesineitä tulisi tulkita uudelleen mm. marginalisoitujen ryhmien näkökulmista. Näkemyksesi mukaan, miten esimerkiksi queer-sisällöt voisi nostaa esiin Kansallismuseon perusnäyttelyissä, näissä näyttelyissä, jotka melkein jokainen kävijä näkee?
- Näkemyksesi mukaan, minkälainen merkitys tunnistamisella ja samastumisella on museokävijälle?
- Cuporen Avaus-tutkimusraportin (Lahtinen et al., 2020) tuloksista huomattiin, että usean suomalaisen kulttuurilaitoksen, mukaan lukien Kansallismuseon, rekrytointitavat eivät tukeneet ulkomaalaistaustaisten työntekijöiden mahdollisuuksia löytää ja hakea työpaikkoja näistä instituutioista. Miten näet tämän vaikuttavan Kansallismuseon esittämiin sisältöihin ja museon päätöksentekoon?

## IN ENGLISH

- Have you collaborated with the NMF considering diversity, marginalised groups, minority or queer contents?
- In your opinion, how has the NMF presented Finnish national identity?
- In your opinion, how does the NMF construct Finnish national identity now in the 2020s? In what way do you think it should construct it?
- In your opinion, are there differences in how art and cultural historical museums consider queer and minority contents?
- In your opinion, has the increased discussion on intersectionality and the global movements such as #Metoo and the BLM influenced the representation of queer and minority contents in museums?
- NMF is expanding through the New National building process (2025-2026). It will be a space for both exhibitions and events. From the perspective of diversity, what are important actions to consider for the process to enforce the construction of intersectionally understood national identity?
- In critical heritage studies and activist and feminist museology the historical notion of knowledge is contested as absolute truth and it is suggested that the museum object should be reinterpreted from the perspectives of eg. marginalised groups. In your opinion, how could queer-content be shown in NMF's permanent exhibitions?

- In your opinion, what is the relevance of identifying and recognising for a museum visitor?
- In the report of the Opening-research by Cupore (Lahtinen et al., 2020), it was noted that many of the recruitment processes of Finnish cultural institutions, NMF included, did not support the possibilities of foreign-born workers to find and apply for work in these institutions. How do you see this affecting NMF's decision-making?

