

2019

Mimbres Painted Pottery: Art, Artifact, or Ancestor? Conversations Concerning Repatriation, Treatment, and Considerations for Contested Collections in Museums

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*MIMBRES PAINTED POTTERY: ART, ARTIFACT, OR ANCESTOR?
CONVERSATIONS CONCERNING REPATRIATION, TREATMENT, AND
CONSIDERATIONS FOR CONTESTED COLLECTIONS IN MUSEUMS*

By

Rachel Vang

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science
In Applied Anthropology

Minnesota State University, Mankato

Mankato, Minnesota

April 2019

Date: _____

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This thesis has been examined and approved by the following members of the student's committee.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Dass of the Anthropology Department at Minnesota State University, Mankato. From planning and prioritizing the objectives of this project to the final edits, Dr. Dass provided continual support and invaluable guidance. I would likewise like to thank my Graduate Thesis Committee members Dr. Schirmer, and Dr. Blue for all their time, advice, and support. I am extremely appreciative of the many hours my committee members dedicated to discussing each step of this research and addressing challenges as they arose.

I must express my profound gratitude to the interviewed participants, without whom this research would not exist. I would like to thank each participant for their time and for the candor in which they provided their perspectives on the topics investigated in this research. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Reser of the Museum of Natural History at the University of Stevens Point Wisconsin and Dr. Mead of the Anthropology Department at Minnesota State University, Mankato. I am deeply indebted to Dr. Reser and Dr. Mead for their thoughtful insights and valuable comments on this thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their continuous encouragement throughout my years of study and pay a special thanks to my parents and husband who always provided patience, understanding, and unflagging support at every turn in the process of researching and writing this thesis.

This accomplishment would not have been possible without any of you. Thank you.

Rachel Vang

ABSTRACT

Mimbres Painted Pottery: Art, Artifact, or Ancestor? Conversations Concerning Repatriation, Treatment, and Considerations for Contested Collections in Museums

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This research explores current perspectives on the placement and treatment of Native American funerary materials in museum collections, as well as how museum professionals navigate the associated legal, ethical, and cultural considerations of these collections. Of primary concern for the present study is the Mimbres painted pottery vessels from the American Southwest and their associated burial context. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews with various professionals working within and with museums that either have Mimbres collections or those that have relevant experience with Native American materials in museum collections. Patterns of meaning within discussions concerning Mimbres pottery were captured and organized using qualitative content analysis. The findings of this research are largely consistent with issues discussed in the literature review, although additional factors related to the ability of museums and Indigenous communities alike to engage in consultation necessary to repatriation and/or ethical and cultural considerations concerning funerary materials were also evident and were arguably of greatest concern relative to Mimbres collections.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

From the moment of their unearthing Mimbres painted ceramic bowls have captivated the interest of the general public and professionals, inspiring a plethora of research across multiple disciplines including museology, archaeology, anthropology, and art. Of particular interest to research and museum display are the ceramic bowls created between 1000 and 1150 A.D., a period referred to as Classic Mimbres or Style III Black on White (S. LeBlanc 1978, Trask 2016). Although the creators of these vessels, contemporarily referred to as the *Mimbrenos*, practiced a subsistence economy that typically is not associated with high levels of artistic development, the *Mimbrenos* painted the interior surfaces of their bowls with a vast array of motifs that arguably display a clear level of skill and style (Brody, *Mimbres Painted Pottery in the Modern World* 2003). Among the many studies pertaining to Mimbres materials, a preponderance of these have focused on Classic Mimbres ceramic bowls, specifically their artistic and stylistic characteristics and connections to the lifeways of the *Mimbrenos*.

In addition to the interpretation of the *Mimbrenos* lifeways and ceramics developed through academic and scientific research, museum display and curation of the Classic Mimbres ceramic bowls have also significantly contributed to how modern viewers simultaneously perceive and transform these materials. Yet aside from the extensive interest of the Mimbres Classic pottery in research, as well as their continued exhibition and placement in museum collections, conversations regarding these materials are often highly contentious for a number of reasons. Top among these is the multifaceted

interpretation of the intent and meaning behind the Classic Mimbres vessels considering the burial context from which many of these bowls were removed. From the time of their interment to their excavation nearly a thousand years later, Classic Mimbres bowls remained virtually unseen and untouched by modern viewers. Yet now Classic Mimbres pottery resides within museums and private collections across the United States, not counting those that have been bought, sold, or traded across international borders.

In accordance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation (NAGPRA) legislation enacted in November of 1990, the Mimbres materials removed from burials are designated as associated funerary objects and, thus, subject to repatriation. However, a number of factors obfuscate the matter of repatriation as it pertains to Mimbres materials including the requirements outlined by NAGPRA such as determination of cultural affiliation, and the ways in which the materials subject to repatriation are defined under the law. Mimbres painted pottery represent one of numerous examples of funerary materials in museum collections. These materials were chosen as a vehicle for discussing the related topics of curation, display, and repatriation of funerary materials based on the numerous perspectives on these collections, the highly debated nature of these materials in collections, and the interest the Classic Mimbres pottery has generated.

This research was designed to explore the various designations and meaning ascribed to Mimbres collection materials, as well as the ways in which museums navigate the legal, ethical, and cultural considerations required or associated with contentious Native American collections. To that end, I interviewed professionals working with and

within museums to garner their perspectives on Mimbres collections, or those comparable to them in terms of their burial and/or Indigenous context. Originally the scope of this project aimed to interview museum staff and academics working with Mimbres collections in the Midwest and New Mexico, as well as Indigenous community members descended from and/or that claim cultural affiliation to the *Mimbrenos*. The intent of this approach was to compare and contrast the perspectives between those living and working within the American Southwest, and those who are geographically distanced from the Mimbres sites. There are collections of Mimbres vessels spread across the nation, some of which are large and associated with major institutions while others are small and less well-known. Midwest museums were initially chosen based on collections discussed throughout the literature review that either are or were previously housed at Midwestern institutions. In addition, my proximity to Midwestern museums and ability to visit them played a role in originally contacting these particular institutions.

The response rate to the initial contacts equaled nearly 13% of the thirty-one institutions and communities contacted. All of these contacts, however, were non-Indigenous museum professionals or academics in Midwest institutions. As such, the project was then expanded to increase the potential range of perspectives as much as possible. In doing so, additional institutions and persons were contacted based on recommendations made by participants previously interviewed, some of which worked with or at institutions outside of the Midwest and New Mexico. This expansion also included Indigenous cultural centers and Indigenous professionals in the Midwest. Finally, supplementary Southwestern Indigenous community, government, and

preservation offices were contacted, first via email and then by phone if there was a response to the emailed communication. Two Southwestern Indigenous communities were contacted in addition to the Puebloan communities in New Mexico that were initially contacted. The decision to include these two additional Indigenous communities was based on their inclusion in NAGPRA notices of intent to repatriate. The expanded scope of the project resulted in a total of seventy-eight contacted institutions and persons, with a participation rate of nearly 18%. Participants were categorized into seven categories of perspective and background based on their professions and the current role they occupy within their discipline. These categories and the representation of perspectives in this research are outlined in Research Design and Methods.

The language used to reference the Mimbres painted pottery and their creators mark a significant issue within this and related research. Some participants within this study pointed out objectionable terminology such as “objects” in reference to Mimbres pottery. Similarly, a few sources within the literature review identify appropriate names and terms when speaking of the makers of the Mimbres pottery and the end of the Mimbres cultural traditions. It is, therefore, necessary to briefly discuss how the present research will attempt to address these issues. Used synonymously throughout the subsequent sections of this research are terms such as Native American, Indigenous peoples or communities, and tribes. These designations are largely used in reference to contemporary groups and are assumed acceptable based on their usage in related literature. Consonantly, the terms Mimbres people or *Mimbrenos* are used in reference to the peoples whereas Mimbres is used to discuss the pottery or pottery making tradition.

As the term “objects” has such objectional connotations, instead terms such as vessels and bowls are used as much as possible to discuss the Mimbres pottery. At times the terms materials and items may also be used to discuss Mimbres pottery in collections due to their usage in NAGPRA. It is important, however, to recognize that these terms are not devoid of their own potentially problematic connotations.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

Nothing exists within a vacuum. It is no different for the present conversations concerning Mimbres painted pottery in museum collections. Therefore, before an earnest and fruitful discussion can be attempted, it is necessary to first understand some of the history leading up to their present placement within museum collections. To provide a contextual understanding of Mimbres collections as they currently exist, three areas encompassing historical, archaeological, and legal histories relevant to Mimbres collections will be provided. First, a brief history of collection and museum practices as they pertain to Native American cultural heritage outlines the historical contexts into which Mimbres pottery was introduced to museums and the public. Secondly, an archaeologically-derived accounting of the lifeways and culture of the *Mimbrenos*, the creators of the Mimbres pottery, will be provided to aid in understanding why Mimbres pottery has garnered so much interest and maintains such contention over their placement and treatment in museums. Finally, consideration of how Mimbres materials apply to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act will also be discussed. Together, these histories will set a framework for the objectives of the present research.

A Brief History on the ‘Collecting’ of Native American Heritage

Viewed as a universal trait of human nature, the collection of things, whether they be tangible materials or those more elusive such as stories, has existed from the onset of our species. The choices in how to arrange and rearrange these collections reveal something about how the collector perceives those materials or the reality in which they exist (Cameron 2004). The collection and display of Native American cultural heritage and peoples have roots reaching back to sixteenth-century Europe when it was fashionable for wealthy members of society to collect natural and man-made materials considered exotic, wonderful, and beautiful. Amassment of these collections was a reflection of prestige amongst the collector’s peers and separating them from the lower classes. While these so-called “cabinet of curiosities” were held within private collections for the pleasure and benefit of the affluent, they provided a foundation for the earliest forms of museums. A proclivity for Native American materials remained popular amongst collectors throughout the ensuing centuries as formal museums began to take shape (Maurer 2000).

While the sociopolitical contexts of museums and uses of museum collections have undergone many shifts, the interest and display of Native American cultural heritage has endured the ages and remains a present force within today’s museums. With the advent of anthropology as a discipline came an amplification and intensification of the collection and display of Native American cultural heritage. Collection practices and popular imaginings of Indigenous peoples greatly influenced the ways in which Native American heritage was displayed in museums. In turn, these representations shaped how

the American public viewed Indigenous peoples. The sociopolitical contexts in which these collections occurred had great, often devastating effects on Indigenous communities. The systematic disenfranchisement of Indigenous peoples in North America greatly contributed to the collection of Native American materials and by the early twentieth century, museums had amassed Native American collections of enormous size and breadth (Fine-Dare 2002, Lonetree 2012).

Collection practices during this time involved private collectors as well as those conducted for public institutions such as universities and museums. Archaeologists and anthropologists played a significant role in procuring large collections of material and human remains of Indigenous peoples under the presupposition that Indigenous peoples and their cultures would inevitably and naturally disappear. This imagining of the “vanishing Indian” pervaded the objectives of collection practices, eliciting extensive documentation of Indigenous cultures and preservation of their material culture prior to their presupposed extinction. In this pursuit, it became common practice for materials to at times be purchased, traded, or confiscated from Indigenous communities as well as looted from ancestral and historic burial sites. Even battlefields were rife with the collection of the bodies and possessions of recently fallen Indigenous peoples (Cooper 2008).

In the ensuing decades, the human remains and material culture of Indigenous peoples have been stored away on museum shelves or in private homes, displayed to the public, used in countless scientific studies, and sold as souvenirs. Despite the loss and separation from their cultural heritage, Indigenous peoples have endured these practices

and impact that museum representation has had on public perception. Several factors have significantly contributed to shifts within museums and related disciplines (viz. archaeology and anthropology) and the frameworks through which Indigenous peoples and their cultural heritage are viewed. Particularly salient to the current discussion is the enactment of legislation affecting the acquisition and disposition of Native American material culture and human remains. Namely, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) enacted in 1990.

Federal legislation prior to NAGPRA such as the Antiquities Act of 1906, National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 aimed to protect Native American archaeological resources. These laws, however, largely relegated Native American ancestral sites, human remains, and cultural heritage to objects and resources of national heritage. Such classifications highlighted an epistemological divide between Western and Indigenous perspectives as these sites and materials have never been thought of as mere objects or specimens by many Indigenous communities. As opposed to past legislation, which some felt were weighted in favor of scientific and public interests, NAGPRA was established as Indian law (i.e., it was placed under the United States Code Title 25, titled “Indians”) with the intention of retroactively redressing past wrongdoings against Indigenous peoples and providing the means through which their cultural heritage could be reclaimed (Colwell-Chanthaphonh, Maxson and Powell 2011, Durmont Jr. 2011, Midler 2011).

NAGPRA essentially entitles lineal descendants, culturally affiliated tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations to request the return of Native American cultural items

removed from Federal or Tribal lands (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), 25 USC 3005 (f), 25 USC 3009). Cultural items subject to repatriation include Native American human remains, associated or unassociated funerary objects, sacred objects, and cultural patrimony (see Appendix F). Furthermore, NAGPRA regulates the compliance of any federally funded museums, agencies, or institutions. A major issue since the inception of NAGPRA has been the limitation of repatriation to materials deemed culturally identifiable and connected with a contemporary, federally recognized Indigenous tribe or traceable to a direct lineal descendant.

Nearly twenty years after its enactment, NAGPRA was amended in March 2010 with the addition of Section 10.11 (Disposition of Culturally Unidentifiable Human Remains) to address issues concerning the repatriation of culturally unidentifiable remains. Up until this change occurred, only 27% of remains in U.S. museum collections were deemed affiliable and therefore repatriable. While some cases of repatriation of unaffiliated remains have occurred prior to the establishment of Section 10.11, “...the unaffiliated remains of more than 115,000 individuals and nearly one million associated funerary objects have sat on museum shelves in legal purgatory” (Colwell-Chanthaphonh, Maxson and Powell 2011, 27). Although questions have been raised regarding the appropriate use and application of the culturally unaffiliated category, a preponderance of Native American human remains and funerary items have been consigned to this category and therefore outside the scope of NAGPRA; that is, until Section 10.11 (Colwell-Chanthaphonh, Maxson and Powell 2011, Durmont Jr. 2011, Midler 2011). Demonstrated by the sheer volume of Native American human remains

and funerary items still in the possession of museum collections, determination of cultural affiliation has historically been vitally important to repatriation (Anyon and Thornton 2002).

A few things should be noted regarding Section 10.11 and cultural affiliation as it concerns collection materials of Mimbres pottery. First, Section 10.11 specifically addresses the disposition of culturally unaffiliated *human remains* and does not currently apply to funerary objects (associated or unassociated), sacred items, or cultural patrimony. Secondly, the concept of cultural affiliation has long been a contentious gray area within NAGPRA, with a wide range of sources applicable to its determination but an equally wide range of interpretations of what constitutes a preponderance of evidence establishing cultural affiliation. The power and responsibility to make these determinations are entrusted to museums, federal agencies, and institutions. While these institutions are required by law to consult with Indigenous tribes in determining cultural affiliation, in practice that is not always the case (Anyon and Thornton 2002). The enactment of Section 10.11 may result in the repatriation of Mimbres human remains should tribes file a claim. For now, the topic of repatriation as it may apply to the Mimbres Classic pottery and other cultural items within Mimbres collections remains uncertain and controversial.

Almost three decades after its passing, NAGPRA has proven to be a continually evolving legislation. Many would agree on NAGPRA's influence on repairing some of the relationships between archaeologists, museums, and Indigenous communities, and in fact, would argue its requirements and outcomes of consultation have enriched these

disciplines. Despite the positive results of nearly thirty years of NAGPRA, the passing of Section 10.11 brought with it a resurgence of intense conflict and fear that this ruling would empty museum and institutional collections of materials that aid in our reconstruction and knowledge of the past; these arguments are virtually identical to those first expressed in 1990 with the passing of NAGPRA.

It should be further noted that opposition to NAGPRA's initial enactment and newer additions such as Section 10.11 come from all sides, including Indigenous communities and organizations. Even the interpretation of intention behind NAGPRA illuminates a divide between the various factions involved in the debate over who owns the past. Some contend that NAGPRA was established to negotiate a "balance" between the divergent interests of scientists, Indigenous peoples and communities, collection holders, and the public. Nowhere within NAGPRA, however, is any mention of achieving a balance. Rather, the law was established in the presence of ever-increasing protests and activism centered around civil and religious rights to protect the rights and interests of Indigenous peoples, and ameliorate past injustices and historical racism with which Indigenous cultural items and remains were treated (Colwell-Chanthaphonh, Maxson and Powell 2011, Cooper 2008, Durmont Jr. 2011, Midler 2011).

In addition to NAGPRA, a series of shifting paradigms within the museum world and related disciplines (viz. archaeology and anthropology), and the changing demands and wishes of public audiences correspond with changes in how Indigenous peoples are represented within museums. Moreover, the engagement of Indigenous peoples within conversations of repatriation, representation, and protests over the placement of their

cultural heritage in collections has significantly impacted how Indigenous peoples are perceived and treated by archaeologists and museums. Relatively recent within the museum world, and particularly germane to the research presented here, are movements such as decolonization, the decentering of object-centered exhibits, and the increasing number of Indigenous-focused and/or run museums. These movements within contemporary museums provide a useful framework for the ways in which many of the participants in this study discuss the conceptualization of Mimbres Classic pottery and the negotiation and navigation through the legal, ethical, and cultural considerations provided to collections of funerary materials (Cooper 2008, Lonetree 2012).

Mimbres Life and Culture: Archaeological Perspectives and Interest

Archaeological analysis of the American Southwest reveals a human presence for several millennia. Nearly two thousand years ago marks the beginning of the cultural group commonly referred to as Mimbres-Mogollon. The Mimbres is considered a subdivision of Mogollon, one of three archaeologically defined cultural areas in the Southwest including Ancestral Pueblo (also called Anasazi) and Hohokam (Isabella 2013). From 200 A.D. to approximately 1130 A.D. the peoples recognized as the *Mimbrenos* or the Mimbres peoples, a name derived from the Spanish word for the willows that grew along the river in their valley, lived and flourished in the Southwest region of New Mexico (Nelson and Hegmon 2010). After this point, archaeological evidence suggests a period of social reorganization as the production of Mimbres material culture is no longer visible within the surrounding social or physical landscapes of the Southwest (Gilman 1990, Hegmon, Nelson and Schollmeyer 2016).

Of particular interest to archeologists working within the Mimbres region is a type of pottery made and used by the *Mimbrenos* in what is deemed the Classic period. While pottery production was part of the Mimbres culture from the start, it remained largely unchanged for over three centuries. Between 550 A.D. and 950 A.D., the Mimbres pottery tradition underwent a series of three phases, as identified by stylistic analyses, eventually leading to what is commonly referred to as Mimbres Classic Black on White or Style III. It is the Mimbres Classic painted pottery made between 1000 and 1130, comprising only 130 years of a cultural existence spanning nearly a thousand, that has so greatly captured the interest of modern viewers. Mimbres Classic pottery has been the subject of copious amounts of research and a source of inspiration and admiration from a diverse range of audiences. While the Mimbres Classic period is accompanied by a range of ceramic wares including small seed jars, effigy jars, and larger jugs presumably for water, bowls were the most common form produced. Moreover, the elaborate paintings central to modern interests were predominantly reserved for Mimbres Classic bowls. Thus, it is decidedly the Mimbres bowls that occupy the focus of interest (Brody and Swentzell 1996, Scott 1983).

The technologies and methods of pottery production, at least in terms of form, remain largely the same between the Classic period and previous traditions. Mimbres pottery was predominately formed by a coil and scrape technique where at least one surface was scraped smooth (typically the interior surface), and a wash of watered-down clay was applied to the smoothed surface (Becker 2003, Hegmon, Nelson and Schollmeyer 2016, Trask 2016). In the earliest Mimbres pottery traditions vessels were

fired in oxygen-rich environments, producing a reddish-brown clay body after firing and were often left undecorated. Whereas in earlier phases of Mimbres pottery traditions surfaces were sometimes coated with a reddish-hued wash, Mimbres Classic pottery was distinguished by the use of a thick white slip coated on the interior surfaces and an oxygen-reduced firing. These changes produced bright white interiors and a brownish-gray of the fired clay on exterior surfaces that remained untreated. As painted motifs became increasingly incorporated, the interior of the Mimbres bowls remained the most widely decorated surface with black paint created from iron-ore and a plant-based binder (Becker 2003, Isabella 2013, Hegmon, Nelson and Schollmeyer 2016, Scott 1983).

By the Classic period, Mimbres potters had developed a specialized style, high degree of skill, and a wide range of geometric and figurative motifs. As opposed to the geometric designs that evolved from earlier traditions of Mimbres pottery, the figurative motifs of animals, humans, and other creatures are a product found solely within the Mimbres Classic period and are, in fact, rare among other pottery traditions of the ancient Southwest. While representing a smaller percentage of design elements used, the figurative motifs, in particular, set Mimbres Classic pottery apart from the geometric designs seen throughout the American Southwest (Becker 2003, Isabella 2013). Review of Mimbres pottery and the unique painted motifs proliferative in the Mimbres Classic period illuminates why these vessels are so renowned within modern audiences.

Archaeological findings provide further explanation for why the Mimbres Classic bowls have become so widely studied and highly valued. Analysis of archaeological evidence from Mimbres sites informs us that the *Mimbrenos* lived a sedentary lifestyle in villages

of varying size and depended on a subsistence economy of hunting, gathering, and cultivation. What makes Mimbres Classic pottery so unique, in part, is the rarity in which the skill and artistry evinced in the interior motifs is found within subsistence economies due to time and energy required of such lifeways (Brody and Swentzell 1996).

Although Classic period pottery sherds are ubiquitous throughout Mimbres sites, the majority of whole vessels were “rediscovered” in burials. The inclusion of pottery or other grave goods is not limited to the Classic period or Mimbres culture. A few things, however, distinguish the burial of Mimbres Classic bowls from other funerary practices. Inclusion of at least a single bowl was fairly standard for burial practices throughout much of Mimbres history (Scott 1983). Continuous throughout multiple phases of Mimbres burial practices is the disposition of the deceased in a flexed position. In contrast to previous eras where burials are largely extramural, Classic period burials are often intramural and located beneath the floors of the living spaces. Moreover, the Mimbres Classic bowl interred with the deceased is often inverted over the head of the deceased and exhibits a “kill hole”, an intentional puncture through the base of the bowl. This “kill hole” has been broadly interpreted as a means of ritually killing the bowl to release its spirit, or to allow the spirit of the deceased to more easily pass through. As a member of the Santa Clara Pueblo, Rina Swentzell provides a modern Puebloan understanding of these kill holes as a means of allowing the breath of the bowl to flow back to the cosmos, as these bowls are believed to be as alive as humans, plants, and animals (Brody and Swentzell 1996, Gilman 1990, Hegmon, Nelson and Schollmeyer 2016).

Proportionally, a significant number of the Mimbres Classic bowls now in museum collections were excavated from definite burial contexts. Analysis of the interior surfaces of the bowls, however, revealed use-wear marks, indicating that despite the incredible paintings applied to these surfaces they were used in everyday activities before their placement within burials. Between 1130 and 1150 A.D. dwindling archaeological evidence of materials recognizable as Mimbres signifies an end to the Mimbres Classic Period and its spectacular pottery tradition. As there is no evidence of violence or warfare, debates raged over what caused the Mimbres disbandment and what became of *Mimbrenos* peoples following this social transformation (Hegmon and Nelson 2003, Hegmon, Nelson and Schollmeyer 2016, Isabella 2013).

Many archaeologists posit that environmental stress and degradation caused by continual population growth throughout the Mimbres-Mogollon occupation and a period of drought caused the peoples recognized as the *Mimbrenos* to leave their villages. It is further speculated that after dispersing, these peoples joined various other neighboring cultural groups, adopting their traditions rather than carrying on those practiced at the end of the Mimbres Classic period (Hegmon, Nelson and Schollmeyer 2016). While these theories help explain, in part, why the cultural traditions recognized as Mimbres came to what appears as a relatively abrupt end, the social reorganization of the *Mimbrenos* led to popular speculations and notions reminiscent of the “vanishing Indian” stereotype. These notions often distort the Mimbres reorganizational period as a “mysterious” end, “lost culture”, or “vanished race” (Giammattei and Reichert 1975, S. A. LeBlanc 1983).

A significant shift within archaeological thought has been a redress to problematic language prevalent in past conversations regarding archaeological or ancient cultures. For instance, instead of calling the people *and* the pottery Mimbres, the terms *Mimbrenos* or Mimbres peoples are considered better suited and more appropriate when referencing the makers of Mimbres Classic vessels. Perhaps the popularized mystery surrounding the dispersal of the *Mimbrenos* is partially a result of terms such as “abandonment” that archaeologists used to discuss the end of the Mimbres cultural traditions. As many within the related disciplines now recognize, the end of the pottery does not equal the end of the people. Moreover, the words we choose to use in discussing past and present cultures and peoples hold power. Therefore, it is important to recognize that despite the value placed on Mimbres Classic bowls, the pottery is not synonymous with the people who made them (Nelson and Hegmon 2010). Similarly, terms such as “abandoned” or “lost” in reference to the *Mimbrenos* and their culture presents an issue for many archaeologists, and particularly for descendant Indigenous communities. These peoples did not “disappear”, and perspectives from some Indigenous peoples on the ancestral past and their connection to it would certainly oppose such language in reference to their ancestors (Colwell-Chanthanphon and Ferguson 2006, Dongoske, et al. 1997).

Mimbres Archaeology and Museums Collections

Mimbres Classic pottery was first introduced to the world of museums in 1914 when J. Walter Fewkes returned to the Smithsonian with the first collection of this inimitable pottery. Although Southwestern archaeologists were aware of Mimbres sites at least by the last few decades of the 1800s, interest in Mimbres Classic painted pottery did

not spark until after E.D. Osborn from Deming, New Mexico wrote to the Smithsonian where Fewkes worked as a senior ethnologist, enclosing descriptions and photographs of Mimbres pottery. It was this letter and its contents that inspired Fewkes to travel to New Mexico within a year of receiving it from Osborn. Early excavation of the Mimbres sites was heavily centered around the collection of Mimbres Classic Black on White pottery. Nascent interest in Mimbres materials began with the excavations carried out by Walter Hough and J. Walter Fewkes, all within the first decade of the twentieth century. The addition of these materials to museum collections at the Smithsonian, the Heye Foundation, and the subsequent publications formally introduced Mimbres culture to archaeological interest (Brody 1989, S. A. LeBlanc 1983).

Extensive archaeological excavations were conducted between the 1920s and 1930s, amassing collections of Mimbres Classic painted pottery, as well as other materials. As a majority of whole vessels were interred with the deceased, burials were consequently the intended target of excavation in order to retrieve the bowls. As such, human remains and other grave materials were pulled from the ground alongside the Mimbres bowls and transferred to museums. Albert Jenks, a professor at the University of Minnesota, was among those contracted to secure collections of Mimbres painted pottery for museum collections. The fervor in which Jenks searched for Mimbres painted pottery matched the interests of many others of the time. Unfortunately, this intense focus on recovering “museum quality” Mimbres Classic pottery meant the collection of data and forethought of research objectives related to understanding the lifeways and culture of the *Mimbrenos* was secondary, if present at all. Moreover, documentation of details

now considered vital in archaeological work such as provenience is absent or poor at best by today's standards (Zimmerman 1992, Brody and Swentzell 1996).

The appreciation and awe of Mimbres Classic bowls expressed by archaeologists were undoubtedly shared by a wide range of other audiences, and arguably archaeological interest played a significant role in eliciting interest from other audiences. Consequently, looting became common practice alongside archaeological excavation and the monetary value of Mimbres Classic pottery skyrocketed due to ever-increasing appetites of private collectors for these painted vessels. Archaeological excavation of Mimbres sites waned in the 1930s; however, looting of these sites continued on through the 1970s, spiking between 1960 and 1970 when looters began using heavy machinery in search for Mimbres painted pottery. The value ascribed to Mimbres Classic pottery led to devastating destruction of Mimbres sites and arguably made the Mimbres area the most looted within the United States. While a large number of Mimbres Classic pottery, human remains, and other materials (funerary and otherwise) were brought into museum collections, an unknown yet undoubtedly vast number of materials went into private collections. The rarity and beauty of Mimbres painted pottery has rendered them highly commoditized, fetching prices upwards of \$60,000 to \$70,000 for a single vessel in the black market (Gunn 2010, S. A. LeBlanc 1983).

The duality expressed in their utilitarian use and funerary contexts significantly contributes to the controversy over Mimbres Classic bowls in museums and their application to NAGPRA. Despite their display in both traditional museum settings such as exhibit spaces, as well as in scholarly and publicly accessible publications, some

Southwest Indigenous peoples have expressed dismay over such treatment, “...believing that Mimbres Classic bowls from a funerary context should not be exhibited, and handling and use of the bowls, if any, should be extremely limited” (Thompson and Elliott 2013, 117). In addition to contentions over the funerary context and the use of these materials in museum display and research, the question of cultural affiliation is both fiercely debated and inconsistently determined for these materials (Anyon and Thornton 2002). Arguably, materials that are of greater antiquity and more highly valued (e.g., for their monetary, scientific, artistic values) are more contested with regard to determinations of cultural affiliation.

Divisions of archaeological materials into cultural groups or areas has commonly been applied to ancestral Indigenous groups (e.g., Mogollon, Hohokam, and Anasazi). Such designations often determine these groups through ceramic and architectural styles and technologies, as well as burial practices. However, the spatially and temporally distinct divisions in which these groups are arranged does not match with or take into accord the perspectives that Indigenous peoples have on their own past. For some Southwestern Indigenous communities, such as Hopi and Zuni, the past is understood through the retelling of oral histories that recount the emergence and migrations of the ancestors (Bernardini 2005, Dongoske, et al. 1997). These migrations were continuous and complex, involving multiple instances in which various groups split from one group and either joined others or created their own. Moreover, some modern Puebloan groups are not necessarily representative of distinct cultural or ethnic units, and certainly not homogenous. For instance, the Hopi refers to a large cultural group that encompasses the

various clans of Hopi peoples, each with their own distinct identities. Conceivably, the same could be said for ancestral groups such as the *Mimbrenos*. With the inclusion of oral histories and Indigenous social organization, it is not only possible, but probable that multiple modern Indigenous communities are simultaneously affiliated with the archaeological cultures of the Southwest (i.e. Anasazi, Mogollon, and Hohokam) (Colwell-Chanthanphon and Ferguson 2006, Dongoske, et al. 1997).

Evidence of shared material culture such as pottery styles and traditions, burial practices, and architecture may distinguish the *Mimbrenos* from other archaeological groups, but it may not be enough to inform us about how those peoples identified themselves in relation to one another. As previously indicated, “pots do not necessarily equal people” (Dongoske, et al. 1997, 604). While archaeological analysis often categorizes Mimbres culture as unconnected to modern Indigenous peoples, both the Hopi and the Zuni peoples claim cultural affiliation to all Southwestern ancestral groups. Within understandings of the past derived from oral histories, traditional Indigenous perspectives are considerably different from the unilinear timeframe and spatial-temporal organization employed in archaeological research. Furthermore, not all Indigenous communities express or identify their ethnicity in terms of material culture, but more so in terms of religious beliefs and language. This, of course, poses a considerable challenge to archaeological research but is nevertheless an important aspect of Southwestern Indigenous identity to recognize. Terms such as “abandonment” when referencing ancestral or archaeological sites are misrepresentative of these places as traditional Indigenous peoples express the maintenance of spiritual connections to those places

(Colwell-Chanthanphon and Ferguson 2006, Dongoske, et al. 1997, Welch and Ferguson 2007).

The value given to Mimbres painted vessels is as wide-ranging as the audiences that admire them. The Mimbres Classic bowls have been many things to many different people since the time they were introduced to modern viewers. The values and meanings imbued in gazes directed at Mimbres painted pottery is just one facet of the complicated sociopolitical space within which Mimbres collections arguably exist. Additional factors include divergent perspectives within and between scientific and Indigenous communities on how the past is understood, and how those perspectives differentially determine modern connections to the past. Together, these factors situate Mimbres materials in a controversial and contentious place within current collections. Most Mimbres Classic bowls are unquestionably associated funerary objects as NAGPRA defines that category. Others have designated these vessels as cultural patrimony, and arguably if they are considered alive by Indigenous peoples there is not much that separates them from the human remains they were interred with. The application Mimbres Classic bowls have to NAGPRA, however, competes with modern designations of these materials such as art objects and important scientific artifacts (see Appendix F for NAGPRA definitions). While the issues surrounding Mimbres Classic vessels are complex, conversations with those on the frontlines of negotiating the current placement and future of Mimbres collections allows us to begin untangling these issues.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

In an effort to uncover current and broadly accepted perspectives and discourses surrounding Mimbres collections in museums, interviews were conducted with individuals whose professional roles and responsibilities have brought them in contact with Mimbres materials and associated conversations surrounding their place in museums. The general framework for this research consisted of building contacts of relevant potential participants, conducting the interviews, transcription of the audio recordings taken during each interview, and finally an analysis of the textual data generated from the transcription process. Each segment of the research design will be discussed in turn; however, a key component of this project was the flexibility and reflexivity of qualitative content analysis as each participant brought with them a different depth of experience and involvement with Mimbres collections and related topics such as repatriation.

Directly following the completion of transcription for the first interview, the subsequent process of interviewing, coding, and analysis became cyclic and a continual undertaking of refining and modifying the coding framework. While there are numerous ways in which data generated from qualitative interviews can be analyzed, a content analysis approach was chosen as it fit within the goals of this project to identify trends and patterns in how Mimbres and other comparable collections are discussed and perceived by individuals involved in the curation and care of these materials, as well as in both successful and unsuccessful repatriation conversations, attempts, and efforts.

Developing Contacts

Initial contact with potential participants was made by sending letters of intent to relevant institutions and communities including museums, cultural centers, Tribal Historic Preservation offices, Tribal government offices, and Puebloan communities, cultural preservation and administrative offices. Although all Mimbres collections originate from the American Southwest, letters of intent were also sent to Indigenous governing offices in Minnesota to allow for any concerns from local Indigenous groups to be brought forward. This consideration was deemed relevant and appropriate given the history of Indigenous activism and engagement with matters concerning Indigenous rights in Minnesota, and as the bulk of the collections accessed reside in the Midwest in general, and Minnesota specifically. In these initial letters, potential participants were given a chance to review the scope and intent of the project and were provided contact information to allow for any questions or concerns to be addressed prior to providing consent of participation. In some instances, individuals within the contacted institutions were approached directly as they were either recommended as a good potential source or were the main contact for that institution and/or relevant department within an institution. Otherwise, letters were sent to the main offices for each respective contact.

After receiving approval to commence this research from the Minnesota State University Mankato Institutional Review Board, follow-up letters were sent along with informed consent forms. At the start of this project, the focus was on comparing and contrasting the potential range of perspectives on Mimbres collections in museums in New Mexico, where these materials were sourced and excavated, and those currently held

in Midwest museums. A total of thirty-one potential participants between these two locales were contacted, including museums, cultural centers, and Puebloan communities in New Mexico. Due to limited participant response from some of these original contacts, the scope of this research was expanded to include additional museum contacts, artists, Indigenous museums and cultural centers outside of the Southwest, and any subsequent contacts recommended by participants. Seven of the participants interviewed in this research were contacted based on the recommendations from participants already interviewed. Ultimately a total of fourteen participants agreed to be interviewed, representing 17.9% of the total seventy-eight contacts that were attempted.

Interviews

With one exception, each interview was conducted in a one-on-one session with the participant. Two of the fourteen participants were interviewed together due to their availability and as these participants worked for the same institution with often interrelated roles. Each participant was interviewed once, with the duration of the interview ranging between thirty-nine minutes and two hours and twenty-four minutes. To reflect the diversity represented by the participants and their respective experiences the interviews were semi-structured, consisting of a broad list of questions and topics relevant to Mimbres collections and repatriation. Considering the different degrees to which participants had experience with Mimbres collections, the focus of the interviews was more conversational in nature and the questions were left open-ended to provide participants a wide range of options in how they chose to respond.

While each participant contributed their own unique perspective, the fourteen interviews conducted represented seven broad types of perspectives including academic, non-Indigenous museum, archaeology, legal, artist, Indigenous community member (Midwest Nation), and Indigenous museum/cultural center. It is further important to note that one Indigenous museum, one academic institution, and two non-Indigenous museums were each represented by two participants, comprising eight of the total fourteen participants interviewed. Perspectives from a total of ten institutions and/or professions are represented by the interviews conducted. Finally, three of the fourteen interviews were conducted via phone call due to participant availability and limited resources of the researcher that would support travel for an in-person meeting.

Factors of institutional type and mission, the participant's training and background, the way in which the interview is conducted, and the environment where the interview takes place, all play a potential role in shaping the interview and directing the flow of conversation between the participant and the interviewer. While it may be difficult to untangle exactly how these factors impact the data generated from the interviews, it is nevertheless important to recognize their influence. To help counter these influences and foster consistency, all interviews but one took place in private spaces such as offices or meeting rooms. The phone interviews were scheduled at times that worked within the availability of the participant, allowing for them to choose the space in which their side of the interview took place, and the interviewer ensured privacy was maintained from their end during the conversation. For reasons that were not discussed

or disclosed, one participant chose to be interviewed in a common space within their institution.

Due to both the relatively small sample size and the networks that connect the individuals and institutions involved in this study, additional efforts were undertaken to ensure response confidentiality and comment, between various participants and their parent institutions, which may, or may not share their views. Steps were taken as well to maintain confidentiality between individual participants who work in a relatively restricted discipline and possibly at institutions within close geographic proximity or with strong interinstitutional connections. The actions taken towards confidentiality include the exclusion of participant names and institutions, including the removal of such information in participant examples and comments. These measures are of particular importance in ensuring the current research does not negatively impact any relationships between participants, their departments or institutions, or between the institutions themselves. In addition, the withholding of particular information in this research was done in consideration for any current conversations or efforts made towards repatriation that may be affected by comments made in this research. In large, confidentiality was assured through the coding process.

Transcription and Analysis

Essential to the definitive objective of capturing the treatment and discourse surrounding Mimbres collections through a content analysis was the transcription of all interviews. To enable a qualitative content analysis, all interviews were recorded and later transcribed with all efforts made to ensure the transcription reflected the

conversation as closely as possible. Throughout the process of transcription, notes were made on emerging themes, correlated with previously determined codes, and categories and potentially important segments of text. Additionally, each interview was reviewed multiple times for relevant or reoccurring themes, topics, and responses, a technique referred to as “pawing” through the text (Bernard, Wutich and Ryan 2017, 104-105). The process of discovering themes in the text consisted of a combination of induced themes that emerged from the data, as well as themes deduced and previously identified from the researcher’s understanding of Mimbres materials. Notably, these *a priori* themes were supported by those discovered inductively. While the overarching themes are important, for analysis purposes, greater significance was placed on the categories and codes that fall within the themes.

A total of 622 pages were transcribed from the thirteen interview sessions, from which the data were first broken down into meaningful units of text. Initially, 425 text units were identified as potentially meaningful and relevant, and then further refined to 406 condensed meaning units using a cut-and-sort method. These ‘meaning units’ were then organized into codes and categories. To assess the validity and consistency of the coding process, the coding frame was routinely applied to the condensed meaning units to discover inconsistencies or areas within the coding frame that required clarification or refining. From this process, four separate categories were discovered that relate in some way to conversations regarding or efforts made towards consultation and/or collaboration, repatriation, curation and care, and display of Mimbres collections or comparable materials participants used as examples.

The categories derived through the coding process are broken down into:

- factors that aid or hinder museums and Indigenous communities in these conversations or efforts
- factors that influence or guide the ethical treatment of the collections
- cultural considerations given to collections
- the ways in which participants conceptualize and categorize these collection materials
- remarks that reveal divergent worldviews between the parties involved (i.e., Indigenous communities and peoples, archaeologists, museum staff, artists, etc.).

Examples of these categories and their respective codes shown in the following results were chosen based on consistency in, and correlation with, the coding process, and the ability for units of text to both accurately capture the essence and demonstrate the range of participant responses for each. Particular focus was given to the ways in which participant responses compared and contrasted on any given point or topic.

Whereas identifying information such as names of individuals and institution were included in the transcription of interviews, this information was subsequently removed or modified in the coding process to ensure confidentiality of the participants and their parent institution. Furthermore, transcripts were encrypted with a password unique to each participant for an added layer of security and any hard copies of these materials were kept at all times either with the researcher or in a secured room and cabinet located within the Anthropology Department at Minnesota State University,

Mankato. The coding framework refers to participants by interview number. The tables below provide a reference to the perspectives provided and each participant's background and related profession.

| Participant Category | Code | # of Individuals/Category | % Represented |
|-----------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Academic | AC | 5 | 20% |
| Archaeologist | ARC | 2 | 8% |
| Artist | ART | 1 | 4% |
| Indigenous (Midwest Nation) | I | 1 | 4% |
| Legal | L | 2 | 8% |
| Indigenous Museum | IM | 2 | 8% |
| Non-Indigenous Museum | NIM | 6 | 24% |
| Dual | -- | 6 | 24% |

| Interview # | Code | Participant # |
|--------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| 1 | AC | I |
| 2 | AC/NIM | II |
| 3 | AC | III |
| 4 | AC | IV |
| 5 | ARC/NIM | V |
| 6 | L/NIM | VI |
| 7 | NIM | VII |
| 8 | L | VIII |
| 9 | NIM | IX |
| 10 | NIM | X |
| 11 | ART/I | XI |
| 12/13 | IM | XII/XIII |
| 14 | AC/ARC | XIV |

Presentation of Participant Responses

Participant responses are presented within tables and organized sequentially by interview and participant number. Typographical emphasis was added in the form of bolded, italicized, and uppercase text to highlight words or segments of participant responses that exemplify the codes discussed within each table. Anonymization of participant responses was ensured by replacing the names of individuals, communities, or other institutions that qualify as personally identifiable information with general descriptors; these general descriptors are written in uppercase and placed within brackets. Text that is italicized and placed within brackets are added descriptors that help clarify participant responses. Segments of participant responses that directly pertain to the categories and corresponding codes discussed within each table are identified by bolded text. Additional segments of participant responses that are supplementary to the bolded text are italicized. Interjections or comments made by the interviewer that the interviewee either responded to or were deemed to be relevant to the overall context of participant responses are identified by the initials “RV” and placed within brackets. As Participants XII/XIII were interviewed together, the initials “PXII” and “PXIII” were used to identify the main speaker and placed at the beginning of each text segment; any interjections or additional comments made within those segments were again placed within brackets. Except in cases where gender was pertinent to participant responses, gender-neutral pronouns were used throughout the tables in lowercase and within brackets. Finally, asterisks were used within the tables to signify separate text units within a given interview that are pertinent to the corresponding codes discussed within each table.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS/DISCUSSION

Nationally, there are many institutions that curate and display Mimbres materials. Mimbres collections additionally represent one of multiple examples of collection materials derived from funerary contexts. At the start of this research, there were essentially two major objectives that were intended to be explored through the interviews with museum professionals and Indigenous communities: to analyze the ways in which current designations assigned to Mimbres pottery influence how they are interpreted and treated by museums and affiliated Indigenous communities; and to develop an understanding of how museums currently navigate the legal, cultural, and ethical considerations that accompany collection materials subject to NAGPRA. In addition to those objectives, two other categories were investigated that are pertinent to this research. The first concerns factors that either pose as roadblocks or those that participants note as necessary for the success of processes, conversations, policies, or efforts made towards consultation, collaboration, repatriation, curation and care of collections, or the display of collection materials. Following the theme of varied perspectives on Native American collections, particularly those with sacred or sensitive contexts, the second additional category that was addressed by participants concerned divergent worldviews.

It was presumed from the literature review that the bulk of the results would generate discussion regarding the original two research objectives. During the analysis of these data, however, it was discovered that equal, if not greater, concern centered around factors that either aided or hindered an institution's ability to engage in or accomplish

legal requirements and ethical or cultural considerations. In light of this finding, the subsequent results pay special attention to areas in which participants' perspectives concur and where they conflict. These comparisons will be broadly broken down by the categories discovered through the coding process: Aids and Hindrances, Treatment and Considerations, Conceptualization and Categorization of collection materials, and Divergent Worldviews. Additionally, a number of participants shared solutions that their institution either has at present, or is planning on implementing, to help navigate and counteract these limitations.

Aids and Hindrances

The category of Aids and Hindrances emerged from participant remarks that referenced factors which directly or indirectly influenced their ability to engage in processes, conversations, or efforts concerning consultation and/or collaboration, repatriation, curation and care, or the display of Native American material culture subject to NAGPRA. Overall, thirteen codes were applied to text units that displayed a remark or references to any factor of Aid/Hindrances. Most participants noted in some way that resources were a major influence on their ability to carry out their necessary and desired functions as a museum. Many of the responses revealed concerns related to the availability of funding, time, and staff that allow for museums to comply with the legal requirements of NAGPRA, let alone implement additional considerations to sensitive Native American collections.

As it applies to financial resources, Participant IX noted NAGPRA is a largely unfunded mandate. Even when funds are available (often in the form of grants) they are

highly competitive, limited in availability, and as Participant IV stated they typically go to academics who are working towards repatriation. Another participant commented on funding in regard to consultation, what they termed as “true collaboration” in that Indigenous parties are involved in the process from start to finish. In the example given for this type of consultation, the participant stated the additional cost to the project at hand was \$800. As Participant V responded, in the grand scheme of these efforts, the added expense is inconsequential compared to the institutional responsibilities to conduct meaningful consultations. Yet, the manageability of expending an additional \$800 is arguably dependent on the size and resources available to the institution in the first place (Table 3).

| TABLE 3 – Financial Resources | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| IV | --Elders. It seems that NAGPRA grants, though it takes the effort of communities to apply for them...I don't know if I could say whether the federal government has done enough, but there is some attempt to take on that responsibility and provide tribes with the resources. And a lot of it goes to academics who are putting everything together to get the remains returned. |
| V | And they said this is the first one [consultation], and this is the [INDIGENOUS GROUP]. They've been actively collaborating with all kinds of folks including mentors, people I respect. But the fundamental thing in people's heads again, is it true collaboration when all you do is come in and say-- It's like, remodeling your home without telling your spouse, and they come home to say, "Hi honey, do you like what we've done?" We didn't do it. but what do you think? Shocking. It's shocking to me. And made me— **Yeah! And made me feel really happy about what we had done. It cost us an extra \$800 to get them down there at the start. You know, the gas, food, per diem hotel rooms, whatever. [RV But in the grand scheme of things—] It's nothing. It's responsibility, it's true collaboration. |
| IX | ... the other part of that is that NAGPRA is an unfunded mandate NAGPRA requires a willing curator. Meaning you can--to me, I understood it as museum ultimately still has the power and we can make it hard, or we can make it easy. |

Institutions that have begun to implement policies or protocols aimed at incorporating cultural considerations into the curation, care and display of their collections also noted that staffing was a key component to their success. Participants XII/XIII and IX, for example, remarked that they take into consideration some Indigenous communities' beliefs regarding menstrual cycles. During such times it is considered inappropriate for female staff to handle or even be near certain sensitive or sacred materials. In such cases, male staff may be asked to assist. Based on the comments made by these participants, these cultural considerations can simultaneously act as an aid in some respects, such as building trust and relations with Indigenous communities, and a hindrance as they pose additional challenges to staffing resources. In the matter of repatriation Participants XII/XIII also noted that in some instances Indigenous communities may choose to keep the materials within museum collections. In part, this choice may reflect a lack of resources or facilities with which Indigenous communities have at their disposal to care for those items rather than disinterest in repatriation. Moreover, it may be that larger institutions have more adequate resources compared to Indigenous communities to care for collection materials. As Participants XII/XIII further noted, however, the presence or absence of cultural care protocols at a given institution may also influence an Indigenous community's decision to allow sensitive materials to remain within those collections (See Table 4).

| | |
|--------------|--|
| III | <p>....first of all, if they don't have somebody who is capable of handling them correctly, they don't want them.</p> <p>**This is actually true from what I understand of certain items that even when they can be associated with a burial, if they don't know how that burial is connected to their own ancestry then they may be considered too spiritually dangerous to handle.</p> |
| IX | <p>...you know that deal with menstruation and like when you can be around things, and so there are certain times when [FEMALE CURATOR/COLLEAGUE] won't go near certain objects, and that's just her personal beliefs, but it's also something that is really important to the community, and that is something that can be included in a cultural care plan, for instance.</p> |
| XII/ XIII | <p>PXIII - Yeah, and then also for women, like if they're on their cycle they can't be in the collection area. So, obviously, you know, [FEMALE COLLEAGUE] being the collection manager [PXII it's difficult] it can be difficult when you have tasks to do and you don't have access to your [PXII the inventory] --Yeah, and you don't have access to your collection. So, that or it's not like appropriate for like her to handle [PXII certain--] like the pipes or you know ceremonial items and so that can be a barrier as well to making sure that she can do her job effectively.</p> <p>[PXII Yeah, I sort of just defer some of the responsibilities to him. So, you know, I can't do this right now, so he'll have to take on that role and sort of handling the objects and taking on sort of that]...Sometimes I'm just a pair of hands.</p> <p>**PXII - And I think as long as the appropriate tribes know, and you know, if the tribes want it back they should take the steps to repatriate those items and you know, if they have the facilities to keep it, or you know have ways of using it again. But, you know, and if the tribe--you know, they contact the other--the tribe and they say well no, it should stay there because they don't have the facilitates to take care of it, or the means to use it anymore.</p> |
| XIV | <p>But sometimes they'll--you find out this, and in a couple of places this has happened where the tribe definitely cares, but they don't want to repatriate it because it comes with a lot of responsibilities...it's happened to other cases, I've heard about it. You guys [<i>museums/archaeologists</i>] dug it up, it's your problem now. Meaning that it comes with various obligations.</p> |

Staffing as a resource elicited a few additional variables across participant responses. For instance, some participants commented that their level of action or proactiveness in fulfilling the legal, ethical, and cultural considerations for their collections was impeded by limited staff available to work on such projects. In this case, Resources correlated with other Aid and Hindrance factors such as documentation, and in turn accessibility to such documentation necessary for Indigenous communities to discover and record what materials are located at various museums. According to numerous remarks by participants, components of Accessibility and Documentation were of vital importance to carrying out both the letter and the spirit of NAGPRA. A number of participant comments indicated a strong connection between Accessibility, Documentation, Distance and Proximity, and particularly the Division of Materials in regard to museums spatially, culturally or intellectually distanced from the origin of their collection materials. For many museums with Mimbres collections, a lack of adequate documentation of provenience is a considerable issue.

A large part of this documentation issue directly results from the manner in which cultural materials were initially amassed and treated within collections. This is a particularly keen concern for Mimbres collections, as many Classic Mimbres bowls were accessioned into collections during the 1920s to the 1930s when archaeological interest was geared specifically towards the pottery, ignoring both the burial contexts and often the osteological material directly associated with these vessels. As a result, the records reflect very little in terms of systematic documentation or research objectives beyond the appreciation of what was deemed a rare and desirable example of ancient Southwestern

pottery. Moreover, a few participants asserted that the challenges now faced in regard to documentation extend beyond initial collection practices. Principally, these participants noted the prevalence of trading collection materials with other institutions in past collection practices, which again was often accomplished in the absence of, or with inadequate documentation. In turn, these institutions are charged with the exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, task of reassociating Mimbres vessels and other materials with the human remains with which they were interred, as well as identifying the specific burial location each individual and their associated funerary materials were pulled from.

| TABLE 5 – Division of Materials | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| III | Well partly, but one of the biggest factors is the separation of grave goods from the human remains and that's... so all the human remains are being curated at [INSTITUTION]. The grave good are, the biggest portion I believe is in the [MUSEUM] but there are other bits of that collection that are now scattered across the country. **So, it may come down to when the documentation is completed, we may come down to a case where there's only a certain percentage of the human remains that have associated grave goods, that they can make a claim to. And I don't know what they will do. But the point is that [REGISTRAR] did get an agreement from them that if this documentation was provided that one of the tribes would act as a kind of lead on putting in a claim for the materials provided that everything could be re-associated. |

As it specifically pertains to Mimbres pottery, the ability or desire for Indigenous communities to have these materials returned is contingent upon their reassociation as stated above, further compounding the issue (See Table 5). These factors of Accessibility, Documentation, and Division of Materials cycle back to the issue of resources. Museums and other institutions now must look for ways to staff and fund the efforts to reassociate materials like the Mimbres assemblages that experienced not only a separation between their final resting place, but also one between the human remains,

personal adornment items, secular tools and implements comprising the material remains of a rich and complex existence, and pottery that were laid to rest together. The continuation of current efforts made to assemble and publish documentation of Mimbres collections and others subject to NAGPRA remains a priority for many of the institutions (See Table 6). A few participants stated that this priority is founded on the need to make their collections as accessible as possible. Furthermore, participants noted that it is through this component of Accessibility that they can attempt to take the next steps in their considerations towards the relevant collections. Namely, this next step involves consultation and collaboration with Indigenous communities, pending the availability of funding for those meetings to take place.

| TABLE 6 – Documentation and Division of Materials | |
|---|--|
| II | <p>**So, these are collections that came in starting in the turn of the century, if not earlier. So, these aren't human remains that were excavated in 1980 and therefore have detailed site reports and you know all of the information you would need for much more efficient at NAGPRA compliance.</p> <p>**so, these are like, there's nothing in the file, there's no documentation. So how can I reconstruct what might have happened, or who might have brought this in, and the strange number written in red on a skull, like what does that mean?</p> <p>**And so, it's sort of the Sherlock Holmes registration hunt which exacerbates a problem because it means it takes longer. It's not as easy as, like here's the catalog card, here's the information. There's research that needs to be done to try to reconnect these pieces of information to see if we can better understand them. Sometimes we can and sometimes we can't.</p> |
| XII/ XIII | <p>PXII - Yeah. And sometimes when they excavated the burials the items were separated and so, it's hard to associate them back to where they were found. Like there was loose documentation.</p> |

| TABLE 7 – Distance/Proximity | |
|------------------------------|--|
| II | yeah. So, we have had --[the] [PUEBLOAN GROUP] has come for a consultation but that was regarding an Ethnographic piece, having nothing to do with archaeological collections. So those groups have not come and that's generally the way in which that information gets conveyed to us. If we were in a museum in the Southwest where we had more regular consultation with Southwestern tribes I suspect our practice in terms of cultural sensitivity and storage and exhibition of Southwestern archaeological human remains and funerary and unassociated funerary objects would be different. |

Distance or Proximity as a factor was initially introduced by Participant II (see Table 7) and was subsequently posed as a consideration to other participants. Participants from different institutions provided a range of responses to the question of whether or not, or the degree to which, Distance/Proximity plays a role in their institution. Some participant remarks indicated Distance/Proximity as a hindrance in terms of the additional costs and burden for Indigenous communities who have themselves been displaced or otherwise separated from their cultural heritage, or museums that are spatially distanced from the origins of their collections. Contingent to this, Participant II further expressed that the spatial distance between their institution in the Midwest and the Mimbres sites, in a way, made things somewhat easier as it currently equated to a lack of contesting claims or requests regarding considerations provided to these collection materials. While this complication was reiterated by some other participants, a few participants remarked on the historically good relations between Southwestern Indigenous communities and their tendency to work in accord, particularly in matters of repatriation (see Table 8). For now, it seems the effect that intertribal relations may have on curation and care of Mimbres materials in museums outside the American Southwest remain dependent on if, and when, such consultations take place.

| TABLE 8 - Indigenous Relations and Repatriation | |
|---|---|
| II | I mean, and in some ways you know we are, and then this might come off the wrong way but I mean in some ways we're fortunate that we're not in the Southwest from the standpoint of if we had let's say four separate Southwestern groups come in who claimed ancestry to the Mimbres material and each one said they wanted it stored differently or wanted a different kind of approach. That would be a really difficult scenario for the collection's manager. I don't know what I would do... |
| VI | I think it depends on the region you're talking about and the specific tribes. Even that's hard to generalize. So, in the Southwest, generally, the Pueblo tribes are unified and have a good working relationship. There are a few public tribes that don't get along with each other and will dispute different claims, and then generally, even with them, the [PUEBLOAN GROUP] again don't always agree and fit within the framework but generally, they don't hold things up too much in my experience. **But the point is like in the Southwest, a lot of those tribes have worked together now for a long time. They're good working relationships. I would say all in all. Whereas when we brought together for example, all the Plains tribes, there's something I think around 76-80 tribes, a lot of them are historic enemies, a lot of them haven't worked together a lot, therefore various reasons, there's turnover, so people don't have deep working relationships with each other, so there's going to be challenges— |

For other participants, Distance/Proximity issues were weighted more heavily in terms of cultural distance as opposed to geographical space between the institution, origin of their collections, and affiliated Indigenous communities. Participants VI and XI emphasize this point in the comments seen in Table 9. Responses to the question of Distance/Proximity were similar between these two participants in terms of the cultural connectedness and understanding held by a given museum or institution. Participant VI noted that this awareness and understanding may be related, in part, to geographical distance with respect to the presence and representation of Indigenous peoples who visit and interact with the museum. Similarly, Participant XI remarked that as an artist who creates work that has found a home in both Indigenous oriented and non-Indigenous focused museums, geography played less a role than did the degree and ways in which an institution “embraces” cultural materials.

| TABLE 9 – Geographical versus Cultural Distance/Proximity | |
|---|--|
| VI | <p>**I'm not sure geographic distance matters so much.</p> <p>**I mean, maybe it's more the cultural distance more than a geographic distance for some people. I think it is different. For example, if you live in a state, say like Arizona where there are 24 tribes or Oklahoma where I think it's 36-37 tribes versus a state where you might only have one or two federally recognized tribes and maybe they live far away from the urban centers where these museums tend to be, then I think that distance is a geographic distance but to me, it's more of a kind of cultural distance because—</p> <p>**I guess if you live in Arizona, and you work, say at the Museum of Northern Arizona, I don't know the numbers, but there must be 10, 15, 20% of the community must be Native American and you have multiple, dozen reservations within a two-hour drive. You have native visitors to your museum. That creates a different kind of a sense of the meaning of those cultures and importance of those cultures within the institution compared to a place where maybe you have no native representation in your community. There are no native visitors, there's not a local powwow that takes place. You just don't have any kind of exposure and experience with Native Americans.</p> <p>**...So, it's in part geographic distance, but I think the bigger point is probably, do museum professionals feel, do they feel a deeper understanding of native culture and the native experience within their institution and within their community.</p> |
| XI | <p>**A lot of Native communities, both North American and South American, and Indigenous communities all over the world have been subjected to displacement.</p> <p>**community is more connected to cultural content and maintenance of that.</p> <p>** So...I don't know if it's geography so much as it is culture has to be in the place, and that that place fully embrace the cultural object.</p> |

Another factor that intertwines with the roles that Accessibility, Documentation, and Distance/Proximity play in the success and ability of museums to engage in meaningful collaboration and consultation is that of Relations. Participant remarks shown in Table 10 provide examples highlighting not only the importance of these relationships but also the efforts and methods employed that build them. While face-to-face communication between Indigenous communities and institutions remains important, technology has helped open doors that engender trust and build the foundations necessary for those consultations to take place as evinced in Participant III's response. While geographic distance was previously mentioned as a hindrance to consultation, technology

was provided by another participant as a means of consultation to allow participation between spatially separated parties by Participant VI, lessening the potential effect that distance can have on these activities. Allowing that the intent behind contemporary Indigenous art is easier to discern than in materials like Classic Mimbres pottery, Participant XI's comment reveals a deeper cultural and temporal connection to the past through that artwork. Arguably, these artworks hold similar weight, agency, and sensitivity in their display, and relationships with a museum helps assure the appropriate care for those pieces. Finally, while seemingly an offhand comment, Participant IX's remark reflects not only the importance, but the investment of resources (e.g., time), required to build meaningful relations with Indigenous communities.

| TABLE 10 – Relations and Resources | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| III | <p>Oh yeah, I think so, I mean nothing's going to replace... it's always going to be necessary for us to be doing face-to-face communications, but even just locally the work to create digital archives that can be accessed by communities that are kind of spread out of a really large area is helping to improve relations with different public institutions in ways because there's just a whole lot of distrust, when it's like, "Oh, well we have these records. But you have to come here to access them"-- --Well, if they can look at the records themselves, then that's going to engender a lot more trust and willingness to collaborate.</p> |
| VI | <p>**I'm not sure geographic distance matters so much. You can look at a paper that I published talking about some of this work where we used basically with satellite technology. Now we would use Zoom or go to meetings or something, but at the time, we used satellite technology to connect multiple nodes so the people didn't have to come here, they could talk to us just basically much closer to home.....</p> |
| IX | <p>-but really it's about the trust with the community, which I think we've built in a number of ways over the last...five, six, seven, eight years</p> |
| XI | <p>** In all seriousness here Rachel, the reason I do this work is to maintain a cultural connection between our ancient past and our unending future as [INDIGENOUS PEOPLES] people. And one way to do that is to continue to repeat those old stories that have been existed as long as we have existed. And I repeat those stories by expressing them in beadwork. And so, the goal is not for me to garner fame or notoriety as an individual artist, but the goal of the work is to continue to transmit these cultural contents. And to do it in such a way that the beaders before me will be proud... **It is one of the biggest factors involved in my decision to let a piece out of my embrace and into the embrace of an institution. If I don't feel there's a right place, then I'll just keep it with me. **I'll give you an example. There is a museum that I respect very highly and it's not a Native museum, but it is the [MUSEUM] As time went on I developed a relationship with some of the curators there, and...I chose the [MUSEUM] to be a permanent home for one of my pieces.</p> |

Further interwoven with factors of Aid/Hindrances discussed hitherto are those concerning Priorities. Recognizing that both museum professionals and Indigenous communities have multiple responsibilities and finite resources with which to address them, the matter of priorities varies in terms of engagement in conversations or efforts of consultation and repatriation and what items are of greatest concern. For those institutions represented by the present data, priorities largely reflect the need to complete documentation, improving the accessibility of collections, and building relationships with the relevant Indigenous communities (see Table 11). These priorities seem to be particularly relevant for Midwest museums. One area in which participant remarks diverged concerned the priority given to repatriation of Mimbres materials or those comparable to them.

| TABLE 11 – Priorities Prior to Repatriation | |
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| II | So, I would say the primary reason why we haven't forged forward with those consultations is just because of the staff resources, because it is not a priority right now from the standpoint of the priority was getting the CUI inventories done getting them submitted , because if we don't submit the paperwork nobody can have a conversation about anything, the tribes don't know the material is here, so that's the vital first step, is to be forthcoming with the information and make it accessible, and then to continue the conversation. |
| IX | And I think that the exhibit could have been better with objects, but it was much more important, to me, the relationship was much more important than the exhibit. |

To a potentially great extent, these divergences may be dependent upon which Indigenous and Puebloan communities are currently being consulted and their individual perspectives on the importance and priority of these materials. Participants V and VI, both of which operate out of a museum located in the West (though not the Southwest) remarked that their priorities reflect those of the Indigenous communities with whom they consult. Based on those communications, priority is given to human remains over material culture, including funerary items such as Mimbres bowls. In contrast, Participant III's response revealed a potential for repatriation of a Mimbres collection if, and when, those materials can be reassociated with the human remains. The collection Participant III referred to consists of a considerably large number of Mimbres Classic bowls, many of which exhibit a "kill hole"; this particular collection was especially affected by a division of materials after their excavation and accessioning into the collection. Participant III goes on to comment that reassociation is of vital importance, if it can be achieved, as these materials may pose a spiritual danger to Indigenous community members if they were to be accepted without assurance that they are in fact connected with that particular community's ancestry.

| | |
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| III | <p>So, it may come down to when the documentation is completed, we may come down to a case where there's only a certain percentage of the human remains that have associated grave goods, that they can make a claim to. And I don't know what they will do. But the point is that [REGISTRAR] did get an agreement from them that if this documentation was provided that one of the tribes would act as a kind of lead on putting in a claim for the materials provided that everything could be re-associated.</p> <p>** This is actually true from what I understand of certain items that even when they can be associated with a burial, if they don't know how that burial is connected to their own ancestry then they may be considered too spiritually dangerous to handle.</p> |
| V | <p>But the Mimbres bowls just aren't very high up on anybody's priority list, radar screen, whatever you want to call it.</p> |
| VI | <p>no, it's mostly because the tribes have told us that their primary concern are the human remains, or the skeletal remains.</p> <p>So, we're taking their lead. And so, we're more proactive in addressing those because that's what they told us to address.</p> |

As indicated by Participant III, the task of reassociating burial items with related materials (including human remains), provenience, and descendant groups is often a prerequisite to repatriation. This brings forth another factor discussed throughout the interviews pertaining to cultural connection and continuity between Mimbres materials and present-day Indigenous communities: issues of cultural affiliation. Cultural affiliation is arguably the most contentious concept within these discussions of Mimbres materials, as well as within the broader context of NAGPRA in general. Positions are generally divided when it comes to whether or not Mimbres materials are affiliated with any modern Indigenous group. Further apparent from some participant responses is a varied understanding of what constitutes a claim and the requirements of claiming cultural materials. As evident from the samples shown in Table 13, some participants view Mimbres as culturally unidentifiable in that there are no lineal descendants. In connection with the text shown in Table 13, Participant II further described Mimbres materials as

existing in a kind of cultural limbo because of the current inability to connect them with any contemporary Indigenous group.

Participant X further commented that, in part, this inability to trace a continuous and direct lineage to a contemporary tribe lies in the antiquity of the materials. According to NAGPRA, however, a claimant of cultural materials may be a lineal descendant *or* American Indigenous tribe. That is, a contemporary American Indigenous tribe that is shown to be culturally affiliated with a past or ancestral Indigenous group through proof of shared group identity. To this point, Participant VIII commented that these disagreements on cultural affiliation can often be attributed to inherently different understandings of heritage and ancestry. Moreover, Participant VIII proclaims that to dismiss claims of cultural affiliation based on a disregard or disconnect from how Indigenous peoples view their own history is “...to perpetuate colonialism on those tribes” (Participant VIII, Table 13) Reiterating an earlier comment made by Participant I (Table 12), Participant XIV (Table 4) makes the point that some Indigenous communities may not want some materials returned due to the responsibilities, spiritual or otherwise, that come with these materials.

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| II | Well, so the Mimbres material is different from the standpoint that it's culturally unidentifiable. So, with the culturally identifiable material, we will be consulting with tribes that have Aboriginal claims to that territory or are currently located on the same territory in which these particular sites. Because there are no direct lineal, descendants and that's based on the literature and what current research in the field says, so we are adopting that same stance from the standpoint of considering these CUI rather than culturally affiliable. |
| VII | You could only make a claim if you are a tribe member. Right. Which is a problem for Mimbres. So, there's always this sense, like there is nobody who can make that claim. Now, that's changed. Right? And then they're like, "Oh yeah". So, people are trying to come and say, "actually, we want to rebury. We want these repatriated." |
| VIII | And to say that Mimbres is culturally unidentifiable is somewhat disingenuous because there are a lot of Pueblo groups that claim heritage to the Mimbres culture. So, if you say they're culturally unidentifiable then you consciously...disavow those claims by tribes, contemporary tribes, that that's their heritage. And in doing so, then you continue to perpetuate colonialism on those tribes. |
| X | But it's very hard to deal with this period-- the artifacts of this antiquity because right now calls for the establishment of direct descendancy, and that's just really at this point not possible with this kind of material. So, if you're going to repatriate something you want to repatriate it for the right reasons and to the right people, and so for that reason, I don't see that happening in the near future, unless standards and laws change. **We've had no official requests for repatriation... And registered it as unaffiliated because there are no--we don't know who the direct descendants of the Mimbres people are. So, there have been no registered claims. **The [PUEBLOAN GROUP] people have sent a letter saying that they would claim it, but there was never any follow up on that. We asked--we followed up and asked for some documentation to support their claim, and we never received it. |

As a few participants noted, the concept of cultural affiliation is complex and often extremely difficult to untangle. In response to notions of Mimbres being culturally unidentifiable, a few participants offered potential solutions that have been attempted or may be applicable to future claims made for Mimbres materials (see Table 14).

Participant I advised that there is a discussion of having Indigenous groups from the Southwest file a single claim in an attempt to circumvent the issue of lineal descent.

There are several potential barriers to that solution, however, such as the reassociation of

materials, and navigating any political issues involved in getting to the point of filing a claim.

Additionally, Participant I remarked that it remains to be seen if such a solution will be accepted as a valid claim. Regarding the same collection of Mimbres materials, Participant III let on that one of the registrars of the collection had done some work with Indigenous groups to establish a cultural connection by linking iconography of the Mimbres vessels to modern groups that still recognize and use such symbols and/or motifs. Although not directly pertaining to archaeological materials, Participant XI's remark demonstrates the connection and recognition of such symbols and artistry within an Indigenous community. Based on the premise of iconography as a means of cultural affiliation, such recognition can arguably extend to the distant past. Finally, Participant XIV also noted that oral histories may be a useful means of demonstrating cultural connections, though, in conjunction with Participant X's comment in Table 13, the antiquity of the Mimbres materials may pose a challenge to that avenue.

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| I | the Tribes to establish, yup. The tribes have to establish a claim. And, this is all my personal opinion. But I feel like it's baloney, in a lot of this sense, and that one of the ways that they're trying to work to get around that lineal descent claim is trying to get all the tribes in the area to work together on a single claim. And I have no idea if that'll fly, or not. But, I mean there's a lot of political issues on that side to even get to the point to make a claim. |
| III | One of the things that [the REGISTRAR] did though, and other archeologists have done this with tribes, have been going through the iconography on certain vessels, and people who are elders or spiritual leaders , or whatever, saying these are Icons that we recognize, they are still significant to us today. For them that counts as a cultural connection. |
| IV | I wrote a NAGPRA grant that was going to bring tribal members from the tribes-- So, it was primarily a travel grant, it would pay for their travel....there was a difficulty with the [MUSEUM] signing on to it. Yes, the director of the museum, right. [the DIRECTOR] would never... I could never see [him/her] (laughs). [He/she] would never respond. So, I remember I went over there and sat outside [their] office. I said I'm going to sit here until you let me come in. [RV Did you finally get to talk to him/her then? Or...?] Well, not substantively. Maybe [he/she] kind of said, "Hello, but I don't have time to talk to you." Yeah, it was a little adversarial, actually." |
| XI | And this is a little offshoot, but inside of our [INDIGENOUS GROUP's} beadwork community, we used to--or like, we can identify work that was done by members of our community , as opposed to work that's been done by the people that we've taught, because of those followed worldview things come out in their artwork [RV oh, interesting]. |
| XIV | Unless it's something that is really recent and they've got good oral tradition about something, if they've got that kind of thing then it's pretty easy to repatriate something [like] that if they want it back. |

Difficulty in determining cultural affiliation is nothing new to NAGPRA and has involved debates over this concept since its enactment. Table 15 demonstrates a variety of issues that participants expressed with respect to the determination of cultural affiliation. As described by Participant II, Mimbres collections that are deemed “culturally unidentifiable” remain in “cultural limbo”. Even as a recent amendment to NAGPRA in March 2010 attempted to readdress cultural affiliation, Participant VI pointed out this added regulation applies specifically to human remains, not cultural materials, regardless of whether they are associated funerary items. Undeniably tied to

Cultural Affiliation is the factor of Power and Control. When a claim is received by an institution holding NAGPRA materials, it is the museum staff that reviews the claim and makes the determination of validity. As such, a few participants remarked that repatriation requires a willing museum since ultimately they hold considerable power and control over those collections as long as they are compliant with the requirements placed upon them under NAGPRA.

Participants III and XIV refer to the argument of Culturally Unidentifiable remains as a tactic that museums, past and present are provided under the law to retain collections. Participant III further commented that the very conditions and displacement (i.e., those of colonialism) imposed on Indigenous peoples places them at an added disadvantage as it complicates the ability to trace ancestry. And as many participants noted, the burden of making those cultural connections are often thrust upon Indigenous communities (Table 15, Participants VIII, IX, and XIV). Both Participant VIII and IX also recognize the bias inherent in these power dynamics as certain lines of evidence germane to Cultural Affiliation, such as oral histories, are not always well understood or appreciated by those approaching these matters from a Western and/or scientific perspective (see Table 15).

| TABLE 15 – Issues with Cultural Affiliation | |
|---|---|
| II | <p>**yeah, it absolutely does from the standpoint of you're not as well connected. So I did graduate school in [WESTERN STATE], and there, I mean that was many years ago now, but even then you know 18 years ago now, the topic of who or which tribes were culturally affiliated with Mimbres was a hot topic then. So I mean it's been a decade's long conversation in terms of archaeologists trying to use their tools to better understand affiliation, and tribes with their ways of understanding, both using tribal archaeologists and origin stories, and when you think about affiliation there's this whole matrix of different criteria and different factors that you can use, there's not just one thing that says the archaeologists say it's related to the [INDIGENOUS GROUP] so, therefore, it's the [INDIGENOUS GROUP] and that's what makes it so fraught, that's what makes it so complicated.</p> <p>**And in the Southwest when you've got multiple tribes saying that no we think were affiliated, no we think we're affiliated, and then archaeological evidence may say something else that's a problem, that's really challenging.</p> |
| III | <p>And so, it's a convenient excuse. I think a lot of times to say, "Well if they're unaffiliated", or the other one that I hear is, "Yeah, they'll just crush them up or they'll re-bury them, and somebody else will dig them up", which is incredibly patronizing and sort of insulting to think that, if there's anybody out there that knows how to deal with the fact that somebody would like to steal their cultural heritage, it's going to be the tribes, they know how to protect this stuff.</p> <p>** The very conditions that have disadvantaged tribes in the first place have also, very conveniently, made this issue of cultural affiliation extraordinarily difficult to disentangle it. So even if they're not subject to the conditions of colonialism, its well acknowledged that the Mimbres of area was depopulated by number was 1400 AD, but the fact that people move around and then they get moved around even more during colonization and removal periods, and so on. and so forth. It makes it really easy to say, "Well, there's nobody there now so we can't affiliate it." Who are we to say what counts as a cultural connection or not.</p> <p>** Yeah, I mean the culturally unidentifiable bit is... that's a...I have very strong opinions about this, I'm just going to tell you this...That's a line that museums and other kinds of institutions lean really heavily on and again, they have all the resources to be able to protect that domain.</p> |
| VI | <p>...but the CFR itself is law. So, under the CFR, what's called Section 10.11 museums are required in some cases to return even culturally unaffiliated remains, but they're not required to return culturally, excuse me, funerary objects from culturally unaffiliated tribes.</p> <p>**So, you know a few of the harder ones where, in one case we had culturally unaffiliated remains and so it's really hard to get dozens of tribes to all agree on a process. I also talk about this in my paper about culturally unaffiliated remains with the [COAUTHORS] where we were ready to identify remains as unaffiliated and return them through that designation. But the tribes really wanted us to work to affiliate them. So, we had to sort of step back and do that. Either--in either case, they would have been returned, but they really wanted them to be--to do the work to see if we could find the right tribe.</p> |

| TABLE 15 – Issues with Cultural Affiliation Continued | |
|---|---|
| VIII | <p>The law puts the burden of making that determination on the museum and on federal agencies. And in most cases, with federal agencies, it's the agency archaeologist that is left to make that claim. Usually, it's their own personal bias.</p> <p>**Especially if they're determining cultural affiliation from a Western science perspective. Which is...different from say how the [PUEBLO COMMUNITY] would view their heritage. And so, there's not commensurate consideration given to Native American perspectives of their own heritage and their association to those sites, that culture and material remains of that culture.</p> <p>** I think....the idea of cultural affiliation in NAGPRA is somewhat problematic. I think NAGPRA was intended...was well intended but the way it's written, yeah in my view it puts the burden of proof on the tribe whereas I think it would be more appropriate for the museum or the federal agency to...prove why they legally and legitimately have those objects, because a lot of the objects that were collected in the late 19th were stolen.</p> |
| IX | <p>...there's a power dynamic. There is. I mean a museum can say no, and they say no again, and they can say no again, and they can eventually basically just be sanctioned, like a bit, and pay some fines, if it's elevated to the review, the National Review.</p> <p>**There are those seven categories to prove cultural affiliation in NAGPRA, and they are all supposed to be equally weighted. And some of them are oral traditions, and you know, things that aren't necessarily what we understand as Western lines of evidence, really.</p> <p>**--but I think it's terribly improper to be like, well archaeologically this, and ethnographically that. And I'm going to tell you that you're not a descendant of this per-- or something like that. I think that's inappropriate because that just--....holding on to that authority.</p> <p>**..director there, [has] been writing about this since the 90s. I just have read some of [DIRECTOR'S] stuff, I know what [DIRECTOR's] position is, and...and the argument that there are no descendant communities. Although I think some communities would argue that that's not the case.</p> |
| XIV | <p>But sometimes they'll--you find out this, and in a couple of places this has happened where the tribe definitely cares, but they don't want to repatriate it because it comes with a lot of responsibilities...it's happened to other cases, I've heard about it. You guys [<i>museums/archaeologists</i>] dug it up, it's your problem now. Meaning that it comes with various obligations. The museum controls all the power and all the interaction on it as long as they comply with the detail of NAGPRA as a law in terms of publishing their inventories, publishing their desire to repatriate--notice of repatriation.</p> <p>As long as they [museums] dot the I's and cross the T's, it's up to the tribe to demonstrate that they have a right to it.</p> <p>In the old days, they wouldn't even listen. The tactic that was used and is still used in some cases is--until the 2010 regs came out-- to say oh, this is culturally unidentifiable, therefore it's ours unless you know you can provide an identity, which is, of course, is in our lack of good records keeping [laughs] is almost impossible sometimes.</p> <p>And so, it was used as a tactic to keep materials. But that got stressed a little bit when the 2010 regulations about culturally unidentifiable human remains and buried goods and other kinds of things got spelled out in a way.</p> |

Leadership and Institutional Structure was another means through which some participants framed their institution's ability to address concerns raised in both professional (i.e., academic, including students, and/or museums) and public spheres (i.e., visitors, community members, etc.). Two participants remarked on recent comments made through social media, one regarding the display of a Mimbres collection and the second regarding another artwork with a non-Euromerican subject. These remarks further revealed the type of institutional response or lack thereof, that was generated from these public comments (see Table 16). An even wider range of participants mentioned the way that Leadership or Institutional Structure factored into their institution's ability to address the concerns and attitudes of their professional peers and public audiences. Five of the seven participant remarks shown in Table 17 reflect notions of power and control that are provided to, yet divided within institutions containing Mimbres collections. Of those five comments, four further mention limitations or hierarchical divisions of power and the effects that those divisions have on the institution's ability to discuss, address and implement changes in their engagement with the public, their collections, and Indigenous communities/claimants. Contrary to Leadership/Institutional Structure as a hindrance, Participants II, III, and IX's comments reflect the effects of support received within their departments or institutions in providing inter-departmental/institutional Accessibility or upholding not just the letter of the law, but the spirit of NAGPRA as well.

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| I | <p>...I was talking with [REGISTRAR], and there's been push back about some of the way things are done there as far as display, and what objects are on display, and....there was one [ARTWORK] over there of an [SUBJECT], and there was some [ACTIVIST MOVEMENT/GROUP], or protests on [SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM]. Just some comments on [SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM], like nothing major, just like "why is this on display?" from just the general community, and they haven't answered, and their [SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM] account never responded, but it fostered a lot of debate and discussion amongst the staff over there. "</p> |
| VII | <p>Yeah, people have written--we've seen...we have a [SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM] feed, the [MUSEUM] does, and recently some of them are like "do not go to this museum. They show burial goods of Mimbres people, and you shouldn't go to this museum". And there was this kind of conversation we had about what do we do?... And this became another big push of this discussion...which has kind of....fled away. I'm not sure exactly what was said. I think in the end, we didn't respond. But you know, when you have that on your public [SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM].....not a good thing.</p> <p>**Yeah. I mean, I think you--our communication's director is like, it's not going to stop, it's only going to get worse.</p> <p>**People saying, we just want it off. You know, so many people, the staff saying we want it off view because of this, we want you to take it off view.</p> <p>** Oh yeah, public opinion. Public opinion, Native opinion. I mean, not having that information, and not engaging that information is a hindrance...but to me, it's kind of a hindrance of those that we as a museum have not committed to a new way of thinking about those objects in our collections.</p> |

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| I | <p>But, I know there's been some pushback. It really comes from the top down over there, from the director down, and the way things are done.</p> <p>**I know there's been past efforts by our department to get more information about the Mimbres stuff, and to do things, and we have been denied access by the director over there because [the DIRECTOR] doesn't want these objects repatriated. So, yeah.</p> |
| II | <p>We have a human skeleton on display in our gallery. It's a human skeleton from India, you know, so these are great actually teaching moments and great conversations we have with our students. So why is that different, how is that different, and very, this derives from our respect and our work with Native American communities, who not all feel the same way about human remains, but you know the academic and professional communities acknowledge their belief and desire to not have these publicly accessible, so, therefore, those are removed from storage, and sort of applying that same philosophy, that same understanding and respect to the teaching collection. So yeah the law doesn't say you can't use them in your teaching collection, so that's an internal decision that we made, that the anthropology department supported me. They could have easily pitched a fit and said, "no these are our teaching collection, you can't remove it", but they were totally respectful of that and, like we understand why, this is a good thing to do. No problems. So, I feel really fortunate that our faculty are very sensitive and very respectful of that and worked with me rather than against me. so, we've had no internal conflict or difference of opinion on this, which has been super.</p> |
| III | <p>And there are staff members who are totally sympathetic, and who feel...I mean we wouldn't have gotten as far with this project as we have <i>if there weren't people in there who were willing to help facilitate access to those things.</i></p> <p>Even though...I mean it's like archives, right? Everybody knows that archives are <i>supposed to be open to the public,</i> but an archivist or a curator, they hold a lot of power and their ability to open doors or to throw roadblocks in your way.</p> |
| IV | <p>I wrote a NAGPRA grant that was going to bring tribal members from the tribes-- ... I can't remember, there was a difficulty with the [MUSEUM] signing on to it. Yes, the director of the museum, right. [the DIRECTOR] would never... I could never see [him/her] (laughs). [he/she] would never respond. So, I remember I went over there and sat outside [their] office. I said I'm going to sit here until you let me come in. [RV Did you finally get to talk to her then? Or...?]</p> <p>Well, not substantively. Maybe [he/she] kind of said, "Hello, but I don't have time to talk to you." Yeah, it was a little adversarial, actually."</p> |

| TABLE 17 – Leadership/Power and Control Continued | |
|---|---|
| VII | <p>It just is so gut-wrenching, for me to see that happen, to have your own colleagues have to call you out like that, it's not even discussed, you know, at the higher levels.</p> <p>**Yeah. So, it's a problem of leadership here. And, you know, [the DIRECTOR] an unusual--that's an unusual amount of time. That's--boards are getting smarter about that. They're getting a little smarter about, we probably...I mean, you know, corporations do that for a reason....it's too much power is never a good thing</p> <p>**We don't have any power to address [the DIRECTOR's] concerns even though we're a public museum. We don't really have any power. You know, when people bring up ideas, we should do this, we should do that, it's like...that's not going to happen...yeah, and then you have kind of--you're deafening your own people...theoretically you've hired them because they have something to bring to the table—</p> <p>**You know, it's a very much a top-down kind of...we're the stewards of this, and we want to--we want people to know this, otherwise we wouldn't know this about the past. And I think that that is a pretty straight forward 1950s museum sort of sensibility.</p> |
| IX | <p>When they are objects a lot of times they were, they're not from our collection. They were purchased to be basically props for that exhibit. And, we have new leadership here and it's kind of--the pendulum is just sort of swinging back a little bit. And I think if you surveyed the museum field you'd see that. Like people are kind of coming back to that drawing their own collections and focusing on that.</p> <p>**NAGPRA requires a willing curator. Meaning you can--to me, I understood it as museum ultimately still has the power and we can make it hard, or we can make it easy.</p> <p>**it's my opinion that repatriation requires a willing museum to participate.</p> <p>As a museum you can make it difficult or as easy on the community as you want. Basically, there's still a power dynamic involved.</p> |
| X | <p>[I do] all of the things that a [TWO DIRECTOR TYPES] would do because in the museum world the tradition is not to split them as it is in the [DISCIPLINE] world, where they usually have a [DIRECTOR TYPE] director who decides on the [TYPE] programming and a [DIRECTOR TYPE] director who manages the money. And so, I'm in charge of both. But in the museum world that's not the tradition, the tradition is that is in one person, and so, I manage the money and help set the [DISCIPLINARY] vision. With staff, of course. Not single-handedly.</p> |

The final of the thirteen codes discovered throughout the interviews deals with Differential Treatment/Discrimination towards Native American materials in museum collections. As seen in Table 18 numerous participants remarked on the differential treatment given to Native American collections, both past and present. Participant V specifically referred to the differential treatment in regard to the proportion of Native American materials held and used in collections, research, and display as discrimination. Participants IV, V and XI specifically note the ways in which Native American remains or other funerary materials are used differentially compared to other groups of people. Notably, elements of power dynamics between dominant and marginalized peoples run throughout these comments. When asked if they believed Native American burials and associated remains were treated differently than non-Native peoples, Participant XI provided an example that highlights the tendency for museums to use the bodies and funerary materials of less powerful peoples differentially compared to members of the dominant society.

A preponderance of these responses further refers to examples of other burial materials frequently found in museum collections and on display, most commonly citing Egyptian burial remains. Participants II, VI and X's comments arguably best reflect the perspective of differential treatment or consideration given to Native American remains versus other marginalized or past peoples outside of North America. The ways in which these perspectives on differential treatments were wielded within the conversation or the effect Participants mentioned they had on the institution's treatment of collections varied across the participants. Participant VI, for instance, referred to "gray areas" in the ethical

considerations given to different contexts of funerary materials on display, such as Egyptian remains or those chosen and displayed by their own descendants. Participant X provided examples of non-Native burial materials in museum displays and collections, arguing that much of what we know of the past and what archaeology depends on to study the past comes from burial contexts. In contrast, Participant XII characterizes the display of mummies (possibly Egyptian) as eerie and culturally disrespectful. Furthermore, Participant XII/XIII equates the effects that display of burial items such as mummies to Mimbres pottery, in that the context of the vessels seems to suggest some kind of association with the spirit of the individual they were interred with.

| TABLE 18 – Differential Treatment/Control | |
|---|---|
| II | <p>so that was a really important thing to do, to segregate those collections and that kind of, it gets at what you're asking about from the standpoint of we felt, you know, due to the passage of NAGPRA, that it was very clear, the ethical considerations regarding how we understand and think about Native American human remains has changed....and we could have a separate conversation about whether those ways of understanding and knowing apply to other human remains because there is this very interesting line in the sand that we draw with Native American human remains but yet there are Egyptian human remains display in museums all over the world.</p> <p>I mean I think that's pretty common too in museums, treating human remains collections, Native American human remain collections differently. But in terms of the pottery, there are probably, maybe three or four pieces that are on permanent display, and we can look at those in the gallery at some point –</p> |
| IV | <p>[Burial Laws] and it came in part...I mean it's related in part to the extent to which states have active Indian communities. So, Iowa had... and in fact, there's was occasioned by one of those crises where a cemetery was disturbed and so it would be moved by undertakers and all the burials went to a funeral home, except that there were two Indian burials, and they went to the university.</p> |
| V | <p>As a museum person, as a scholar, I know doggone well that we can learn from these bones. We learn from your bones, we learn from my bones. So, under that rationale, let's curate everybody, and if we're not curating everybody, then we can't curate specific groups of people, Because that's discrimination. I mean, there's enough stuff in museums that archaeologists could stop digging, analyze the stuff that's just in museums and be just fine decades. And yet we want to keep digging, and that's destructive. So, my whole shtick is statute limitations is up. You can't preserve forever, you can't hold these people hostage forever. You've had your chance.</p> <p>** Quite honestly, the biggest challenge for me, it was conceptual.</p> <p>it was coming to the point where I realized that <i>the whole reason NAGPRA exists was that its human rights laws, it's not property law, it's human rights law</i> and that the whole reason that this... that we were having this discussion was because of discriminatory things that had happened over the years in museums, and that we were part and partial to this... it was realizing that the museums are full of Native Americans, not because we're interested in world heritage or the history of humankind. It was because of a discriminatory practice by the disciplines that I know and love...So, yes, I totally get that we can learn from the study of ancestral Puebloan, but it's discrimination, right? I mean we're not digging up anybody else's grave.</p> |
| VI | <p>People here I think are pretty in tune with the concerns of Native communities and the main I think debates have been around the gray areas of like, are mummy's, are Egyptian mummies, do those count? What sort of concerns should we have there? ...We had an exhibit...a traveling exhibit, which had some human remains....like their own descendants are putting their ancestors on display. So, what are the ethics of that? So, there's always been a conversation, I think, whenever the question of human remains or funerary objects has come up. In terms of whether or not to put them on display, or how to display them, typically...<i>we typically just put up signs at the entrances.</i> So, we're letting people know that that there are going to be human remains there, and it's their choice to see them, if they want.</p> |

| TABLE 18 – Differential Treatment/Control Continued | |
|---|---|
| VII | <p>And that's a much bigger conversation than what we're having, but why is someone's culture like that? Why are someone's grave goods being looked at as opposed to another person's?</p> <p>Right. Yeah, <i>and of course that has to do with power</i>. I think that books Skull Wars really lays it out when they talk about Thomas Jefferson was, he loved museums, he loved the idea of keeping all this stuff, this is a record, plus this is us seeing the past. Or even talking about Anthropology itself, the beginnings of anthropology and archaeology, and how did those things come up in the same place settings. One set of people for observing the dead, the past they killed. And I think that's kind of too simplistic, but not really.</p> |
| X | <p>Well, you know there are always ethical issues, and certainly, things that have come to--that have come up more recently.</p> <p>NAGPRA, I know, deals--and there have been a lot of issues that deal with historical objects that have been--historical and sacred objects that are still used or similar objects still used in rituals by Native Americans. These are basically prehistoric objects and they were removed from burials. There are all sorts of ethical issues about whether museums should show material removed from burials. There's a lot of material in museums that was removed from burials. Most all of our Greek antiquities, or at least vases were removed from burials and Egyptian material that's on display in museums was also removed from tombs. So, when you really start to look at it carefully there's an awful lot of material in museums that was removed from burials, and what we know about past cultures, a lot of it depends on that kind of material actually. And that's really what archaeologists in a certain sense depend on for a lot of what they study.</p> |
| XI | <p>**But I hear people talk about how you can't really say who made the mounds. And I get that. It was long time ago. And I mean I completely understand that. But I don't think that divorces anybody from their responsibility to respect the intent of whoever it was that built that mound. Just because you don't see Jackson Pollock's name on a piece doesn't mean that it's meant for use as a target.</p> <p>** I've heard people make that similar comment for a long time and it rings true to me when I look around museums and I see that it's typically people with less power who's bodies and bones are on display. And so, I see very few bodies of our early presidents here in the United States, their bodies or their family's bodies displayed. See very few--I see lots of objects from the Civil War and some of them come people who have power, but I don't see their bodies used in the same way that less powerful people's bodies are used. And by that, I include the dead Egyptians and Maya and North American Indigenous and have less power. And so, we are used in ways that other people are not.</p> |
| XII/ XIII | <p>PXIII - yeah, and first and foremost it's got to be culturally appropriate. I think that has to be the number one priority as far as displaying. Yeah.</p> <p>PXII - Like, I don't feel it's right for museums to display mummies, or any sort of burial items, or anything that's associated with mummies. And I think it's kind of--it's eerie to feel. You get sort of that eerie feeling, and I think that's the same thing with these kinds of bowls. If they're associated with a burial and they're supposed to represent this person's spirit, I think that's kind of disrespectful "</p> |

Conceptualization and Categorization

While all of the components within the coding frame are deeply intertwined, reflecting the same complexity and relationships in their application, it is necessary to define the category of Conceptualization and Categorization as used in the research. Participant comments indicative of meaning, value, or significance perceived in or assigned to Mimbres pottery and those comparable to these materials reveal how the involved parties conceptualize and categorize these collections. Principal to decisions made in ordering the sections of results is to follow a recognizable and comprehensible course that connects related codes and categories together. In this instance, the Treatment and Considerations of museum collections to be discussed in the succeeding section is often impacted and influenced by both the conditions that ‘Aid or Hinder’, and the ways in which those collection materials are Conceptualized and Categorized by their respective institutions, curators, and audiences. It should be noted, however, that each section of results is connected and mutually influential, with many codes within one category affecting those in another category.

Five codes emerged from the data concerning Conceptualization and Categorization including Art, Artifact, Education/Knowledge/Experience, Spiritual/Religious/Sacred, and Market/Commodity. Each of these codes reflects some sort of value participants discussed or ascribed to Mimbres collections, or others with comparable funerary contexts. Two of these codes, Educational/Knowledge/Experience and Market/Commodity, occurred simultaneously with one or more of the other three codes in some participant remarks. Educational/Knowledge/Experience frequently

corresponded with codes that influence what knowledge is sought or valued, how it is made available or inaccessible, and whom it is serving. The appearance of Market/Commodity most frequently appeared throughout the interviews in direct relation to questions asked regarding the participants perspective on a connection between commodification and the display or use of Mimbres pottery. Additionally, Market/Commodity appeared in reference to the range of values assigned to Mimbres pottery or comparable materials in museum collections, particularly those associated with art and archaeological artifacts.

Table 19 displays a cross-section of participant responses that demonstrate connections between Art, Artifact, and Market/Commodity. In respect to repatriation, Participants III and IV remark on the extrinsic value placed upon Mimbres pottery that has contributed to the resistance to the repatriation or re-interment of these materials. A few participants also commented on the display, particularly in art venues and the resultant monetary and aesthetic value that is associated with Mimbres vessels. While participants generally recognized the varied ways in which value is perceived and assigned, Participant I's comment links the rarity of Mimbres pottery as a contributing factor of their monetary value, particularly in connection with the art market. Similarly, Participant II noted that the aesthetic value of Mimbres pottery has been a part of their assigned value from the time of their introduction into the archaeological and art worlds; a value assigned from a distinctly Western perspective of art and value. Moreover, Participant II distinguishes Mimbres pottery from other examples of archaeological

ceramics in that these materials “...have always bounded that line between art and artifact”.

Mimbres artifacts have historically often been introduced to collections through means of purchase or looting by private collectors, a point provided by Participant XIV. In an example of past acquisition with their museum, Participant XIV shared an instance where Mimbres materials were accepted as a donation in an effort to remove them from the market. This comment is perhaps relatable to one made by Participant X, positing the increased commoditization of Mimbres materials pending changes in NAGPRA regulations that would lead to the repatriation of Mimbres pottery from public, but not private, collections. While certainly bound within its influences, Mimbres pottery is not the only means through which commoditization is seen in museums. As observed by Participants IX and XII/XIII, commoditization is deeply embedded within American culture. Participants VII and IX go so far as to term this tendency to commodify culture as a fetishization.

In addition to any value ascribed through placement in museum collections and interest garnered from archaeological research, two participants commented specifically on a connection between the display of Mimbres pottery and their commoditization. Participant VII described a display of Mimbres pottery as akin to a department store display of shoes for sale, emphasizing aesthetic qualities to audiences over cultural or funerary interpretation and context. Further, from Participant VII's viewpoint museums are generally modeled after department stores. As noted by some participants, the gaze of the viewer is often influenced by the type and underlying mission of a given museum. For

instance, an anthropological or science museum will have a different goal and intent in displaying materials than an art museum. Arguably, these differential missions will, in turn, affect the perceived value of materials put on display. Therefore, it is important to understand the display Participant VII referred to is an art exhibition. Participant VIII remarked that when materials such as Mimbres pottery are displayed as art, they are transformed into commodities, and divorced from their cultural funerary contexts. As Participant III observed, even when collections are not sought or used for monetary purposes, they nevertheless drive a market. Compounding the case for Mimbres pottery is the fact that they are “highly prized” (Participant III, Table 19).

| | |
|-----|---|
| I | <p>There's just so many different ways to define value, right. There's the monetary value that these objects have obtained due to their rarity, and due to being in museum collections. Like if you look at the art market, it's insane for everything, for old masters for whatever people are spending millions and millions of dollars on works of art. You know. And there's the issue of how rare these objects are, and how that contributes to their value and cultural value. Yeah, I don't know. I'm not a good person to answer that question. There are all kinds of different perspectives as to why we value these things, and how we value these things.</p> |
| II | <p>I mean I think that sort of, that issue relates to the fact that unlike many other archaeological ceramics, Mimbres ceramics have always bounced that line of art and artifact. Because they are beautiful paintings the interior of these bowls. Geometric or figurative, and they have been for at least a hundred years really valued for their aesthetics. And that's a Western value system placed on them. So, because they have been understood as art objects they have a value on the art market which is really different than the kind of value that other archaeological ceramics have on the art market. Most of them have none, like undecorated ceramics.</p> |
| III | <p>To me, it wouldn't surprise me if the value of that collection constitutes a fairly good chunk of what the collections there [at Museum] are valued. But where does that value come from? It comes from a market that is driven by materials that are not sold by those tribes. They....this is archaeologists are thought of as gravediggers, right? Looters--not as scientists because even though we don't necessarily use them for monetary purposes, they drive a market. So yeah, I think that's a deeply situated difference in the way that the collections are valued. And until we can get past that, there's going to be a lot of resistance to giving up those collections. **Yeah, well and it's a difficult one because commodities are things, speaking from an anthropological perspective, commodities are things that have an abstract exchange value to them, and art museums pretty much traffic in materials that are singular, that have...that theoretically should have no exchange value because they are. But of course, every museum, art or otherwise, has to insure their collections, so they are assigned a monetary value in some sense. So yeah, I think underlying that there's always the sense that this, these things have been valued a certain amount, even if it's just for insurance purposes, and that raises the stakes dramatically for those institutions when it comes to the idea of repatriation. **But that compounds the problem and Mimbres materials are highly prized.</p> |
| IV | <p>Or, it just seems-- it's that other issue of, it has eternal monetary value----that made many museums slow to respond, but I think it's probably part of the...I don't know that I've seen any Mimbres pots go back in the ground. **And [he/she] has a very nice piece in it that talks about....what are they...I think the one kind of artifact of, I don't know. Oh, the Zuni war gods and the whole -- of how they got returned in it and they had external value, like Mimbres pots did. These Zuni war gods. And it's particularly hard it seems like for museum people to see something that has that external value being put in the ground or something like that.</p> |

| TABLE 19 – Art, Artifact and Market/Commodity Continued | |
|---|--|
| VII | <p>Especially when someone is not an expert. Doesn't know anything about it. Who's leading that charge? It seems completely commodity fetish.</p> <p>**To me the Mimbres collection looks like shoes for sale. You know what I mean? Looks like Dayton's or something, the old Dayton's store or Macy's. Yeah, we put them up on things like they display shoes or jewelry. That's how those displays are unboxed. Or just like, wow shiny objects and we need you to see them on these angles so you get--you know...Museums really come out of stores. The department store model--</p> |
| VIII | <p>They do when they're displayed as art objects. The value of art objects. I mean, how much is a Mimbres bowl, a nice whole vessel gets in the black market. I mean they can go for \$20,000-\$30,000. Yeah. And so, yeah. All of a sudden they are a commodity.</p> |
| IX | <p>They also, you know, if there became a market for these objects then the--which is not strictly a museum or an anthropology thing, that's a larger economic issue, but material culture that had once been for themselves became marketable and it changed it in certain ways. And so, it changed the meaning of it, it changed, you know, there are things that...a basket at one time had a function like an Ojibwe makak had a function as a storage basket. Over time because there is a market for it, it's become a decorative object and sold as a gift.</p> <p>** I think that there's this--we also live in a culture of it, and that shows like Antiques Roadshow and that kind of stuff where everybody just thinks they're sitting on a goldmine. And I've seen it too, where somebody brought in a pipe, a Čhañnúřpa, onto that show and the guy was like, this is worth \$30,000. And it wasn't-- the market value of it was clearly wasn't that. It was a lot less than that. But that just also contributes to this, I don't know, fetishization or this like...yeah, romanization--</p> |
| X | <p>Unless the laws change drastically, I don't see repatriation...</p> <p>If they [<i>the law(s)</i>] do then that could happen to all Mimbres collections, except that in private hands, which is kind of the irony of the whole thing because then it's not there to be seen by anybody except the private--and then it becomes even more commoditized [RV that's true], I think.</p> |
| XII/ XIII | <p>PXII - ...commoditizing can be a material culture of a group of people. Yeah, definitely.</p> <p>I mean we do it to ourselves, our own culture as you know...United States of American, we commoditize our culture.</p> |
| XIV | <p>Only by accident. And it raises an interesting point, and that's the point of Mimbres material that shows up in collections bought, purchased, or looted by private citizens. For example, at the [MUSEUM] we got a telephone call one day from a family who was in dispute over inheritance, and they decided that they wanted to donate the collections to a museum instead of getting into a big fight over materials and trying to sort out who got what, and all that kind of stuff. And the [MUSEUM] sent me and the Native American curator out to look at it, and we looked at it, and there were probably four or five Mimbres bowls in the collection that were in very good shape. And the [MUSEUM] agreed to take those...</p> <p>**They have never been put on exhibition, nor will they probably be. The main idea was to get them out of the market.</p> |

The concept of Education/Knowledge/Experience emerged in two main ways throughout participant responses. The first of these is Education and Art (see Table 20). In examples provided regarding Mimbres materials, or comparable archaeological or historical Native American collections, several participants discussed the revitalization of art forms through museum collections. Participants III, X, IX, and XI discuss investments that Native peoples have in museum collections as a source of artistic inspiration or revitalization. Additionally, these participants agree that museum collections can be viewed and serve as a source of knowledge and experience to Indigenous communities, Participants III and IX touch on the conditions that led to the placement of these materials in collections in the first place. Namely, colonialism and removal of materials from their communities, and with them the knowledge and agency they carry. In addition to the value of artistic revitalization, Participant X shared that the Mimbres collection in question provided great personal inspiration, imparting a connection to the world through shared humanness between the past and present.

| TABLE 20 - Education/Knowledge/Experience and Art | |
|---|---|
| III | <p>**a lot of native artists are very invested in collections because that's a primary source for them and that means having to work with a lot of colonial institutions.</p> |
| IX | <p>...what we try to do with that artist program, and that artist exhibit was to show how--that these objects were more than just objects to Native people, and especially this group of Native artists...</p> <p>**And there have been...efforts relatively recently, especially within the last ten years to revitalize art, to revitalize Native languages, to revitalize Native foodways, but the idea is that--and at least it's also held among the certain communities, is that, well if the anthropologists came in and took all this stuff they also took knowledge with them.</p> |
| X | <p>The value for us is intellectual, it's emotional, it's other values than how much money it's worth.</p> <p>**And [AUTHOR's] right, that if these had never been excavated the sites would never have been looted and they wouldn't have a value. But they were and they do, and that applies to a lot of things, not just these. So, you know, and the question then becomes...philosophically perhaps, is it better not to know? Not to have ever seen them?</p> <p>** And, yeah. I'm sorry they've been looted. And I'm sorry for all that. I also know that they were--the excavations of this kind of material, not just the Mimbres, but Anasazi and other material was a great inspiration and a revival of Native American pottery making in the Southwest in the early decades of the 20th century when it was happening and that there were a lot of Native Americans who started seeing--who were inspired by these things that came out of the ground, and still are making--are inspired as artists and selling them.</p> <p>**Personally, again, please understand I'm speaking only personally, but for me, they make me feel like I--these people are like me, the people who made these... that they observed the world around them in a very keen and discerning way, and that emphasizes my connection to them and makes me feel connected to the world in a way that nothing else quite does....looking at these objects gives me a sense of our common humanness. So, that's what I think is their value. And a lot of art, I think that's the value for human beings. But again, it's my personal view.</p> <p>**I mean, my opinion is--and I am just speaking personally for myself...I'm a product of education. I work at a university. Should we stop researching? I mean, it's the question of should we stop DNA research because there are things we shouldn't know? It becomes in a certain sense an issue of spiritualism versus science. And, I don't want to go there, but for me I...I take great inspiration from looking at these objects, personally. And I'm not a Native American. So, maybe I'd feel differently about it if I were. But for me, they give me great inspiration and they give me a great way to...they give me a great sense of value of humanity and the belonging to a much larger group than my individual tribe...</p> <p>**Which tells us about--helps us understand about people of the past, that's more of an anthropological view, I guess. Also, inspires us as a beautiful object and helps us learn about other cultures and how they made and used--how they defined art, how they made it.</p> |
| XI | <p>And so, there were people who had beaded all along, Rachel. Do you know what I'm saying? But [TEACHERS] really reminded us of the amazing work that was possible to learn...and re-introduce that to us.</p> |

What can be termed a transference or repatriation of knowledge forms the second way in which Education/Knowledge/Experience materialized in the analysis of Conceptualization and Categorization. A few of the Mimbres collections within the institutions involved in this study are categorized as teaching collections. This appears in remarks made by Participants II and III. Differentiating these two participants views, however, is how those materials are used for teaching purposes. Participant II noted that while the Mimbres pottery is part of their teaching collection, generally the human remains are more restricted in their accessibility to research compared to “object collections”. Participant III offers questions that, arguably, should accompany all research proposals, and pertain to the purpose and beneficiaries of any research conducted. Somewhat contrasted to Participant II’s remarks on their institution’s use of Mimbres in teaching collections, Participant III shared that their use of these materials as a teaching collection is strictly for students working on efforts made towards furthering the claims case for repatriation.

Also evident in Table 21 are participant perspectives on essentially the value of collections in terms of education, transference of knowledge, and experiences gained through interaction with the materials. Participant IX commented in several ways how, in their experience, Indigenous peoples interact with, view, and utilize museum collections. Markedly, these comments reflect a mixture of common emotions or those regularly experienced by Indigenous peoples such as finding value in the preservation of the materials and knowledge contained therein, as well as anger and confusion regarding the separation caused by their placement in these collections. A continuous notion running

throughout Participant IX's remarks is the various ways in which repatriation can occur when Indigenous peoples interact with museum collections. Beyond repatriation of the materials themselves, Participant IX noted how teachings and knowledge are "still alive" within collection materials and can be interpreted and derived from them. According to this view, museum collections can benefit Indigenous communities by providing a means of repatriating traditional knowledge and agency. Similarly, Participants XII/XIII comment on how their institution focuses not just on display, but rather an educational experience about and with the materials, and fundamentally the *people* they are connected with.

| TABLE 21 – Education and Transference of Knowledge | |
|--|---|
| II | But I mean so we're a teaching Museum so all of those collections, with the exception of the human remains... so we do segregate that material physically and access to that is very tightly controlled from the standpoint of it's not used in any of the osteology laboratory courses and it has not been used by students doing special research projects for quite some time. There have been isolated incidents where researchers have come in, but as a general rule, it's not accessible in the same way that the object collections are. |
| III | ... and in terms of them being objects for research purposes the question always has to be asked, research for whom, for what purpose, to serve what ends? **Well, we think it's safest generally, just to not use the collections for teaching, even though they're considered to be part of the teaching collections, but we've had individual students working with those collections, but it is explicitly for the purpose of furthering the claims case, preparing things to be repatriated. |
| VII | ***-although museums can be like a book, and I think they can be more like books. That's what I think. We can be just as ways you can enter into things and learn things, not just by getting information but learn things by having some experience with objects... |
| IX | **And so, there's this intimate connection to the objects and the material. It's my opinion that that is...that the people I've spoken with, they find value that has been preserved...they are also...confused about why it was taken from the community in the first place, they also ask if this knowledge hasn't been retained in the community, maybe it went with this anthropologist....a lot of times it's an incredibly emotional thing for Native people, I think, to interact with collections because it's to some people it's very bittersweet. They're happy it's been preserved. They're upset that it's not in their community, or that the knowledge isn't in their community. And they're angry too, a lot. And I think that trauma and inherited trauma and all of those things can manifest... **I think that's a long way of saying like there is a role, whether it's perceived or real that anthropologist's removed stuff from the communities and the "stuff" is here and from that knowledge can be gleaned and community members really benefit from...studying museum collections. **There can be intellectual repatriation, there can be artistic repatriation, there can be these things that aren't just the return of objects to communities, but it's the repatriation of knowledge, understanding. And so, that is this transference of knowledge from generations ago to contemporary people. So, that's the whole point. ** The idea was about that those teachings and those learnings and those cultural things are still alive inside of those objects that were made a long time ago, and that they can be interpreted back out of them. |
| XII/ XIII | PXII - Yeah, total education experience from display to hands-on work so that people can learn about it and also experience it as well. PXIII - ...I mean culture is people and they have to be the ones really research, present it, and go out there and educate people if they want people to be educated on those matters... I mean, ultimately there are people behind those objects and just humanizing, more or less. And that goes back to decolonization... |

Reflecting published perspectives in Mimbres-focused literature, a final classification applied to these materials concerns Spiritual/Religious/Sacred aspects (see Table 22). This category derives directly from the burial context from which Mimbres pottery was excavated. Several participants remarked on the Spiritual/Religious/Sacred in connection with their views on the treatment and considerations of Mimbres materials, which will be discussed further in the subsequent section. Participant II, while recognizing a spiritual component of Mimbres materials, divulged their personal approach was to recognize the wide range of views on this aspect and keep their personal feelings or spiritual understanding about these types of collections separate from their professional beliefs and actions. Negotiation of and navigation through these varied opinions of best practices, as well as appropriate and applicable cultural considerations pose considerable challenge and contention for Indigenous and non-Indigenous museum professionals alike. In conjunction with this approach, Participant II advised that any cultural considerations provided for collections within their institutions are established, when possible, upon request and in consultation with affiliated communities. At present, Participant II further shared that no cultural considerations have been requested by any Indigenous communities that claim cultural affiliation with Mimbres culture; the cultural considerations currently integrated into the curation and care of Native American cultural heritage within collections at Participant II's institution pertain to materials affiliated with Indigenous communities within the same locality as their institution.

Understandings of Mimbres materials as animate living beings or possessing a spiritual component were expressed by Participants III, XI, and XII/XIII. Participants

VIII and XI further included that these spiritual understandings are accompanied by special needs and ways in which such materials are cared for. In connection with this, Participant III and XII/XIII commented on the spiritual danger associated with material remains that have been removed from their resting place, and therefore require special considerations and responsibilities. Based on comments made by participants elsewhere, these needs and responsibilities are most appropriately addressed by those that possess the knowledge and ability to care for these beings (i.e., cultural insiders). In situations where Indigenous communities have no established ways to deal with excavated funerary materials, however, or when their beliefs prevent them from engagement with these materials, it is often considered to be the museum's responsibility due to their role in separating the materials from their interment. Moreover, Participant III reasoned that when viewed as sovereign and living beings, care needs to be taken in the language used to discuss these vessels. Specifically, the non-animate term "objects" is considered inappropriate when talking about living beings.

Giving an example of comparable burial materials, Participant VIII related that for the Indigenous community they work with, burial remains (cultural or osteological) are indivisible from the archaeological sites where they were interred. That is, those burials are the eternal home of the ancestors that are connected with those remains. For Participant XI, the perspective of Mimbres pottery as living beings erases any separation between the vessels and the person they were interred with. Additionally, Participant XI stated that regardless of how they may have been perceived by their makers prior to burial, death has a transformative effect. Perhaps that transformation is evinced through

the “kill hole” punctured through the base of so many of the Mimbres vessels that came from burials. As Participant XIV asks, is this “kill hole” in effect killing the bowl? Furthermore, can and should this “killing” be viewed as symbolical or literal if these vessels are considered living?

| TABLE 22 - Spiritual/Religious/Sacred | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| II | So, you start to get into some of the spirituality aspects of this, and I think, I know within the field of collection, specialists who are involved in these collections, there's a wide variety of different beliefs . And for me, I have my professional way of understanding and working with these remains, and then what I feel personally, and what I think spiritually personally is totally separate . And for me I don't allow, I don't let, I don't want whatever my personal beliefs to impact my professional . |
| III | Yeah, I'd say they're cultural patrimony. I think that they have value as much as the descendants give them value. Yes. Well, and the cultural has become political, right? So, there's a way in which these are sovereign objects, there's even some objection to calling them things like objects or resources, there's some literature about how tribes will consider them to the living entities that have to be cared for in certain ways. Using the term object is objectionable. **....talk about how artifacts that are found can be spiritually dangerous . |
| VIII | **[PUEBLO COMMUNITY's] ancestors that are interred at archaeological sites, those burials, that's their eternal home . And even though the [PUEBLO COMMUNITY's] ancestors don't exist in the material world anymore, they still reside at those places in the spiritual realm , the spiritual sense. |
| XI | ...but in terms of these objects... I believe they are living things . You know I see that there shunted back and forth and breaks my heart. And I know everybody tells you they want what's best, but sometimes it's just ego that's just rolling. ** I find that sad because we lose the idea that the object is, in my view, a living thing . And that living thing deserves respect and a voice, and if it says leave me be, leave it be. **[TEACHER] went in there and [he/she] did whatever it is that [he/she] did, you know, what those masks --you know, that's where [he/she] knew that they were living things and they needed a little time of somebody who cared for them, about them. **Yeah, I think so too. And then you know, that just takes me back to my views that many of these objects are living things, and so there's not that much difference in my view between a burial Mimbres bowl and the person next to whom it was buried . **And so, I believe that objects can transform from everyday utilitarian, especially when death is involved . |
| XII/ XIII | PXII - Just sort of like that spiritual aspect of it . I know it was mentioned to us by [CULTURAL RESOURCES DIRECTOR] that [he/she] could feel that there was a spirit that was trapped sort of in the storage area and [she] believed it came--it was that spirit that was from that bowl cause it was put back together. Supposedly it had a kill hole and it was put together, and so, it sort of negates the spirit from being released, and it's not in its appropriate place for the spirit to move on. So, culturally, I think that could be an issue. |
| XIV | **...it's stuff that's so, so important I think that we don't see. And I saw you kind of elude to that notion that things are often seen as being alive still, and that's something that-- even that notion of a kill hole in Mimbres pottery has always been problematic. Are you killing the object? |

Treatment and Considerations

Organized under the category Treatment and Considerations, participant responses regarding personal or institutional perspectives and policies on the treatment and considerations given to Native American collections were largely broken down into four aspects. These include Curation and Care, Display, Responsibility/Obligation, and Shifts. Further, the code Shifts was further divided into those considered Disciplinary (i.e. referring to or concerning shifts within the related disciplines of anthropology, archaeology, museum studies/museology, etc.) and Generational (i.e. relating directly to generational differences in perspectives or practices outside any given discipline). A particular focus for the ensuing results will be how these considerations relate within the category of Treatment and Considerations, as well as how these codes broadly connect with the codes and categories thus far discussed in the preceding sections of Aid/Hindrance and Conceptualization/Categorization.

Curation and Care of collections was found to most directly relate to codes in two categories. The first of these categories is Aid or Hindrance. Examples shown in Table 23 demonstrate the bearing that factors of Relations, Differential Treatment/Discrimination, as well as Power and Control have on how museums think about and approach the curation of their collections. Just as there is no one perspective that encapsulates any of the topics discussed in this research, Participant II notes that there is likewise no one right way to be culturally sensitive. This is especially true when there are potentially many affiliated groups that are connected with a given collection. As such, the relationships and

conversations that allow for consultation (i.e. Relations) are imperative for museums to develop and implement cultural considerations (Participants II and IX).

Participant II and IX further demonstrate some of the considerations that can be applied to museum collections and those that conflict with the Western notion of Curation and Care standards. For instance, Participant IX mentioned the inclusion of religiously or spiritually significant natural substances like sage in their storage areas (Participant IX). For conflicts between culturally significant or appropriate ways of treating materials and those deemed appropriate by curators, some considerations are rejected by the museum such as Participant II's remark on the exclusion of strawberries in their curation; the exclusion was over the concern for molding and pests and was only one of other cultural protocols requested (i.e. bundles of sage, sweetgrass, etc.) which the museum did allow to be placed in their storage areas. Participant IX also shared their institutional policy for cultural protocols viewed as more problematic to the preservation of the materials or those they are stored with; in such cases, conversations and negotiations take place between museum staff and Indigenous communities in an attempt to find a middle ground. Contrary to Participant II's example of exclusion of certain cultural care protocols requested by Indigenous communities (e.g. offerings of strawberries included in storage), Participant IX's institution poses solutions such as encapsulating perishable materials. To ensure the meaning or significance of including these materials is not altered or impeded, such solutions are offered to Indigenous advisors and the requesting parties for their consideration.

Participants II and V also bring up a point made previously, that of Differential Treatment/Discrimination and the propensity of museums to curate peoples placed outside of dominant society. So, while there may be no one right way to be culturally sensitive, Participant V's remark can be seen as a means of cultural sensitivity in the call to either curate remains and materials from everyone, or release and return those that have historically been "hoarded" or "held hostage" (Table 23). Connected to this and reiterated by other participants in some of the following tables and examples, Participant V notes that despite the long-standing museum practice of continued collection acquisition, many museum collections are robust enough to sponsor decades worth of museum work and research. However, Participant V further referred to a sort of statute of limitations that presumably should apply to collections considering the length of time many Native American materials have been in museum collections.

Two other factors pertinent to the Aid/Hindrance category are Accessibility and Resources (Table 23). Both Participants III and XII/XIII mentioned the connection between the resources needed to curate and care for collections. For instance, Participant III notes that a large portion of Mimbres materials once held in collection by the Anthropology department of their institution was eventually transferred to a museum with the resources (i.e. staff, facilities, funding, etc.) to better care for those materials. After all, as Participant II remarked, "it does not cost nothing to curate collections." Similarly, Participants XII/XIII point out that some Indigenous communities may elect to keep materials of their cultural heritage at museums simply because they currently do not have the facilities and other resources to care for them. Regardless of where collections

are, remarks made by both Participants II and XII/XIII demonstrate the influence of resources in terms of funding, staffing, and facilities to care for collection materials.

Also evident in Table 23 are different ways in which Accessibility affects the Curation and Care of museum collections. Participants XII/XIII shared that for them, some of the cultural considerations they observe in their curation poses a few challenges in terms of accessibility to the collections. Specifically, observance of their source community's beliefs regarding menstrual cycles in effect makes the collections or specific materials within them periodically inaccessible to female staff. While not affiliated with their institution, Participant III provided as an example a well-known figure within the museum world, representing the argument that to curate collections is to preserve (universal/human) heritage and make it publicly accessible, whereas return of museum collections will make that heritage inaccessible. In contrast, Participant XIV shared a policy from their museum that intentionally made NAGPRA materials inaccessible to the general public by storing them in a vault *because of* their institution's consideration for the sensitivities of these materials. In this case, only certain individuals (e.g. affiliated Indigenous communities) had access to them.

| TABLE 23 – Curation Care and Aid/Hinder: Relations, Policy, Differential/Discrimination | |
|---|--|
| II | <p>So, there's no one right way to be culturally sensitive. And I could never know what that would be, so I'm not going to apply any one standard across the board, I guess is what I'm trying to say. So, for me personally, <i>it's all about the tribal consultation</i>. And the only thing we didn't was the strawberries.</p> <p>**I am not a Native American person. Even if I were a Native American person, I would be affiliated with maybe one or two different groups, and in the capacity of a collections manager who is dealing with human remains that span thousands of years of human history from many source communities around the world, really. I mean <i>we've got North African human remains, Peruvian human remains, Egyptian human, you know all over the place. Mostly Native American, obviously</i>. There is there's no way I could ever come up with one correct way to approach those. So, my way of dealing with that professionally is to <i>defer to the source communities</i>.</p> |
| V | <p>** If they [E.G., MUSEUM] stopped collecting today, which they won't, but if they stopped collecting today, and if they started dealing with their priority list of uncatalogued material, it would take them seven decades to catalog it. So how do you <i>maintain any moral authority</i> to talk about anybody else's history and background when you are curating stuff, when your sole job is an institution is to curate stuff, when you're not curating it you're just hoarding it.</p> <p>**As a museum person, as a scholar, I know doggone well that we can learn from these bones. We learn from your bones, we learn from my bones. So, under that rationale, let's curate everybody, and if we're not curating everybody, then we can't curate specific groups of people, <i>Because that's discrimination</i>.</p> <p>**I mean, there's enough stuff in museums that archaeologists could stop digging, analyze the stuff that's just in museums and be just fine decades. And yet we want to keep digging, and that's destructive. So, my whole shtick is statute limitations is up. You can't preserve forever you can't hold these people hostage forever. You've had your chance.</p> |
| IX | <p>I'd really like to work with different communities to develop cultural care plans that are specific to objects here.</p> <p>**So, there are sorts of cultural...considerations that we try our best to--I'm trying to avoid the word accommodate....we are trying to get those kinds of protocols, at least in practice, taken care of.</p> <p>**...when we started conversations about what would that look like? What if, you know--would it still have as much significance if we put it in like a sealed container, or if it's in some way encapsulated? ...and so, we've had those conversations and we've--and in part put those practices into place. But, I would really like to see a formal--and there are museums that are incredible museums that have that. And usually they're non--usually they're Native museums.</p> <p>** you know that deal with menstruation and like when you can be around things, and so there are certain times when [FEMALE COLLEAGUE] won't go near certain objects, and that's just her personal beliefs, but it's also something that is really important to the community, and that is something that can be included in a cultural care plan, for instance.</p> <p>**So, informally we've really tried to, for pipes, we definitely--we can do simple things. So, we cannot store the pipe and the stem, the bowl and the stem together, we can plug...some of the pipes with sage. When visitors come in they often times leave tobacco or sage, or sweetgrass or cedar in the drawers.</p> |

The second category that seemed most influential on the Treatment and Considerations of Mimbres collections is Conceptualization and Categorization. As pointed out by Participant I in the text displayed in Table 24, the ways in which collections are cared for and displayed is often in direct relation to the type of museum in question and their particular mission. Beyond the type of museum, Participant III comments that it further matters how you conceive of the materials within those institutions. Made clear by the background to this research and the conceptualizations shared by some participants, Mimbres have certainly been classified by many as artworks. Moreover, some of the anti-repatriation and reburial arguments center around concerns that the return of these materials will end in their destruction (e.g., ground or broken). In the example provided by Participant III, however, conceptualizations of “art” and “destroy” influences how one perceives the destruction of art.

The understanding of Mimbres vessels as living beings was further offered as a source of special considerations by Participants XI and XII/XIII. Participant XI shared that during a visit to a museum, an accompanying mentor on the trip spent time with some False Face masks they came across in the collection to provide for the masks’ needs. Furthermore, Participant XI explained that as living beings these masks have needs and wants that are not necessarily provided for or understood in the context and care of a museum collection. Likening this to animals locked in cages and enclosures in zoos, Participant XI expressed concern over these types of materials being “shut away and inspected” (Table 24). Comparably, Participants XII/XIII advised of a probable Mimbres vessel in their collection which at a past point had been repaired, filling in the

kill hole that had released its spirit. As a result of this treatment, the Cultural Resource Director and Indigenous advisor felt that the spirit became trapped in the storage area, negating its release when it was “killed” and preventing the spirit from moving on. Although the display of Mimbres pottery is still common in museums across the nation, one solution to these sensitivities and other cultural considerations adopted by Participant XIV’s museum was to make the withholding of these materials from exhibition part of their formal policy.

| TABLE 24 - Curation and Care, Conceptualization and Categorization (spiritual/art/artifact) | |
|---|---|
| I | <p>...it's a different outlook on what they value, I guess. Cause like a museum is a public institution, we hold these collections for the public's benefit, for everybody, for forever. So, that affects how we care for them and display them, and everything. But an academic institution you're concerned about teaching your class this semester, so we're going to bring in these objects and pass them around, and let students handle them. And do that types of things for these courses.</p> |
| III | <p>Yeah. There are all kinds of ways in which museums are motivated to protect those collections, and then there's not a whole lot of a... there's lots of carrot and no stick, let's put it that way. [RV Well, and it's a very different perspective of what it means to protect something too. Right? Depending who you're talking to.] Right? Yeah. People feel very strongly about the fact that you shouldn't destroy a work of art or what they consider to be just drawing a work of art. So, I think you end up feeling really weird when you're like... Well, depends on what you mean by destroying, and it depends on what you mean by art.</p> |
| XI | <p>**[TEACHER] went in there and [he/she] did whatever it is that [he/she] did, you know, what those masks --you know, that's where [he/she] knew that they were living things and they needed a little time of somebody who cared for them, about them. And whatever happened between them and [TEACHER], I don't know, it's not my business. But you know I know it has importance, and I know that it's something that is all too rare in the caretaking of these things. This knowledge that they're living, and they have to breathe, they have to eat, they have to sing, they have to, you know, whatever it is that the objects wants.</p> <p>They deserve it. But I don't like zoos either...They put living things in cages and just give them the minimal amount of care. I don't like that either.</p> <p>** I need the [MUSEUM] that will far surpass my lifetime, to protect these objects. But, the sticky wicket comes I think when you start really talking about objects that maybe would be better off dead as opposed to locked in a back room. And so, for the [INDIGENOUS GROUP] I think about certain religious things that, or maybe false face masks, come to mind... and I feel funny about those living upstairs at the [MUSEUM], shut away and inspected and...I feel funny about that.</p> |
| XII/ XIII | <p>PXII - Just sort of like that spiritual aspect of it. I know it was mentioned to us by [CULTURAL RESOURCES DIRECTOR] that [he/she] could feel that there was a spirit that was trapped sort of in the storage area and he believed it came--it was that spirit that was from that bowl because it was put back together. Supposedly it had a kill hole and it was put together, and so, it sort of negates the spirit from being released, and it's not in its appropriate place for the spirit to move on. So, culturally, I think that could be an issue.</p> |
| XIV | <p>In fact, our policy when we had materials in the [MUSEUM] that we thought might be repatriatable they went into a particular vault, and I--even my job, I was never allowed to go in and see those...the idea from the collections department staff was that if they are potentially subject to repatriation--they <i>have them on their online passworded catalogs so that people can see them if they have the credentials from their Nation,</i> or if they come in for consultation they can look through that and then those things can be pulled out.</p> <p>**They have never been put on exhibition, nor will they probably be. The main idea was to get them out of the market.</p> |

Concerning the display of Mimbres pottery, a few participants commented that their policy is to continue doing so, either until they are asked not to by consulting Indigenous communities or a consensus is reached across museums (Table 25). Participant II, for example, advised that while the display of human remains is generally understood as inappropriate, there is a broader range of interpretation regarding the display of funerary materials. So, while attempting to be thoughtful of funerary context, their institutional policy is to continue displaying these materials until such a time they are informed that it is “unethical or insensitive” (Table 25). Moreover, Participants II and VII remarked on less conventional, but highly visible and disseminated types of display, that contribute to the consensus felt within the museum world to display these materials. From Participant II’s perspective, there is no difference between publications and merchandise sold in museum gift shops, including photographs or illustrations of Mimbres pottery and motifs, and the display of those materials in museums. Paralleling this viewpoint, Participant VII shared the perspective of their director to continue displaying Mimbres materials based on the same practices occurring in other museums.

Just as viewer and institutional conceptualization of exhibited collections are shaped by the type and mission of a museum, so too is the display of those materials. As Participant X shared, the treatment of Mimbres pottery is aligned with their mission as an art museum, thus the Mimbres bowls are treated the same as any other work of art within the museum. Although Participant X stated they felt their display of Mimbres pottery is done respectfully, they also advised that their institution plans to address recent concerns brought forward regarding their display through revised text panels and potential for

viewers to leave comments. It remains to be seen how the display of Mimbres pottery in Participant X's institution will change depending on the feedback received from the additions planned for that exhibit.

Participants III, VI, XII/XIII, and XIV offer a few solutions and alternatives attending to the concerns and cultural considerations for funerary or otherwise culturally sensitive materials. Trigger warnings or means of advising visitors before an exhibit containing funerary materials were discussed by Participants VI, XII/XIII, and XIV. Participant III also shared an example of an exhibit regarding the history of the Mimbres collection in which photos of the excavators were shown, but no photographs or examples of Mimbres pottery were included. This exhibit was used as a way to inform viewers of cultural sensitivities, including explanations of *why* the Mimbres pottery was not shown. Though it does not necessarily entail exhibition or publicly accessible display, Participants IX and XII/XIII commented on considerations given to possible sources of display and exposure of sensitive materials in their documentation of collections. Participant IX advised, per their institutional policy, they do not include a photograph of culturally sensitive or NAGPRA materials. Participants XII/XIII similarly indicated that they consider whether or not a photo of certain materials is appropriate for some of their more sensitive collection materials.

| TABLE 25 – Display | |
|--------------------|--|
| II | <p>Well, we don't have a label copy that accompanies the objects that identifies them as funeral objects and addresses those tensions. We haven't done that. But I guess the point I was trying to make is that the fact that you know that book was published in 2018, 17, whatever it was—you know not to say that that won't change, but again it's sort of, that's an indicator to me that if [AUTHORS] felt it was okay to publish this book, it's broadly understood...so what's the difference between putting something on display and making a postcard that you're going to give to people for selling your gift store?</p> <p>So I mean in my mind you know there's no difference between, in fact, it's more visible to a much wider community in a published book than it is in my gallery that you know six thousand people come to a year.</p> <p>**We have not drawn a line in the sand that says regardless of what tribe we will not display funerary objects. We do display funerary objects. If there was consultation that asked us not to we absolutely would not. So, our practice has been until we are informed or learn that it's an unethical or insensitive practice, we are doing that.</p> <p>**I mean it is widely understood that human remains are not appropriate, but I think there is a much broader interpretation of how museums deal with funerary objects. And so, we have not made a policy against that. But we're thoughtful about it, we're cognizant of it, but we still do.</p> |
| III | <p>This was a weird exhibit that went into the libraries and they wanted to talk about the history of archaeology and anthropology, and the Anthropology Department, so we used historic photos of the excavators but none of the materials that were shown and then had some explanations of why we opt not to show, so that we can be mindful of cultural sensitivities but also use it as a teachable moment for visitors to the exhibition.</p> |
| VI | <p>So, there's always been a conversation, I think, whenever the question of human remains or funerary objects has come up. In terms of whether or not to put them on display, or how to display them, typically...we typically just put up signs at the entrances. So, we're letting people know that that there are going to be human remains there, and it's their choice to see them, if they want.</p> |
| VII | <p>And it came up, some people were questioning - including [the REGISTRAR] - should you be showing these? And [the DIRECTOR] said yes, it's fine, other museums do. So, that's sort of the policy that I've heard it, like verbally.</p> |
| X | <p>I think it's displayed respectfully and...I mean I'm doing--we are doing the new text label that will bring the concerns to the forefront, because they've come recently to the forefront.</p> <p>**...and if we can, I'm going to try to have it [new text panels] be interactive and have a place for people to make comments [RV okay] and leave comments to stimulate discussion</p> <p>**It's the same as it would be in display of any other object in the museum. And we are an art museum, so we are treating them as art objects. If we were an anthropological museum we would probably be treating them as specimens, if you know what I mean. Artifacts, something like that. But, we're not. And so, we treat them as the same as we do any other work of art.</p> |

| TABLE 25 – Display continued | |
|------------------------------|---|
| IX | <p>We're trying to digitize a lot of stuff too, so it's just that it's there, it's available, we can point people to the digital resources. And when we digitize a sensitive object or NAPGRA object we don't include a photo. You know, we were sort of advised to be transparent, say that it's here, but don't, you know, it's sensitive, don't include photographs of it.</p> |
| XII/XIII | <p>PXII - There are also different opinions on specific things like if a woman is on her cycle if she can be in the collection but don't touch certain objects or be around certain objects, or if she can't be in there at all. Those kinds of things, you know, what kind of--what pipes can be displayed and what pipes can't be displayed, or kept--[PXIII can we take a picture of them?] Or can he take a picture of it? **PXIII - Well, and you know that kind of opens up the, you know, the collection won't be accessible. They won't be accessible for, you know, people to come and see and to learn about. But I mean it's one of those things, it's more--the damage would be more to display it than it would be to not. And just take special care of it and leave it to other means of learning about those types of objects **PXIII - Yeah, and first and foremost it's got to be culturally appropriate. I think that has to be the number one priority as far as displaying. [PXII - Like, I don't feel it's right for museums to display mummies, or any sort of burial items, or anything that's associated with mummies. And I think it's kind of--it's eerie to feel. You get sort of that eerie feeling, and I think that's the same thing with these kinds of bowls. If they're associated with a burial and they're supposed to represent this person's spirit, I think that's kind of disrespectful. **PXIII - The only thing, and more of an ethical...not concern, but consideration I suppose is that we will be having a trigger warning for our display. So, it will--when it comes to the part where they're going to be talking about the [U.S.-INDIGENOUS HISTORICAL CONFLICT] there will be a, you know, a sign that says that this may--you know, about historical trauma. And so, we give that consideration in case anybody has--anyone is, you know, experiencing historical trauma, just so that they can prepare themselves or avoid that part of the exhibit altogether.</p> |
| XIV | <p>...walked in this area about Southwestern archaeology and the first thing you hit when you go to the door is two audios that you're supposed to listen to before you go in. And one of them says, "We're Puebloan people, this is about our ancestors. You can go in and see things, but we need to warn you that there are some...exhibits of fake skeletal remains, burials, and some burial materials that show there, and you might want to consider that before you go in, but we really want you to know about our people and our heritage and everything else". And on the opposite side, you listen to that and it's a Navajo person talking saying we really don't advise you to go into this because there are a lot of things in here that are dangerous and ritually polluting and you have to make a choice. **They have never been put on exhibition, nor will they probably be. The main idea was to get them out of the market.</p> |

A few participants expressed opinions regarding Responsibilities or Obligations that come with the management and care of collections. Participant IX locates this responsibility in the role that museums played in cultural interruption. Past archaeological and museum practices that were used to amass collections resulted in the separation of many materials, knowledge, and traditions from their communities. As such, Participant IX remarked that museums are now responsible for making their collections accessible to these Indigenous communities. If collections are, in fact, held in public trust, Participant V commented that the curation of these materials is attended by responsibilities not always recognized by others within the related disciplines. Indicated in this response is the tendency for museum professionals and archaeologists to conduct their research without recognition or consideration for the context of their particular institution. As evinced in Participant V's comment on collaboration, the fulfillment of these responsibilities is not uncommonly accompanied by added costs. Yet these expenses are the price of "true collaboration" (Table 26). Participant III stated that all museums and professionals need to be aware that these types of collections are never neutral. Rather, they are politically charged with values and motivations from many different sources. As such, Participant III asserted that researchers and museums need to be accountable for these aspects of their work as well.

Beyond professional responsibilities pertaining to accessibility, collaboration, and curation of museum collections, Participants III and XI both expressed views explicitly on ethical responsibilities. The continuation and contribution towards the efforts already made to repatriate the Mimbres materials in their collection are an ethical obligation,

which Participant III argued is a duty to which the entire institution is or should be accountable. This is arguably a parallel to Participant IX's comment on the responsibility museums have in regard to their role in cultural interruption. Finally, Participant XI conveyed a responsibility to be respectful of the intention of the peoples who created what are now considered archaeological sites or materials. Despite the antiquity of archaeological materials and any resulting difficulties in determining who the makers were, Participant XI maintained these unknowns do not divorce anyone from the responsibility to be respectful.

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| III | <p>Again, it's like asking the tribes to have to do all of this research and documentation piece, it's just not going to happen. ...we have an ethical obligation to continue to contribute to the [<i>claims/repatriation</i>] process there. **Yeah, so in a sense, you know it feels a little bit weird, but my role as an archaeologist, <i>the more I've gotten into the arenas of preservation and Public interpretation, the less inclined I am to think about things in terms of preservation for a universalized public, and more into understanding how specific stakeholders and public audiences, what the value of those materials is....these are always political issues,</i> they're never, they're never neutral, so we have to be accountable to that in the work that we do, and I think the museum world is coming to that as well.</p> |
| V | <p>It cost us an extra \$800 to get them down there at the start. You know, the gas, food, per diem hotel rooms, whatever. [RV But in the grand scheme of things—] It's nothing. It's responsibility, it's true collaboration. ** Anyway, so coming back to the role and all of that kind of stuff, my role is to be a champion of this resource. And serving the discipline. I firmly believe that museum curators can't just be involved in their own research. They are curating a collection that they hold in the public trust and with that comes great responsibilities, and unfortunately a lot of my... a lot of folks in this business don't believe that. They just do their research in an institution while ignoring the context of that institution. And that's not good.</p> |
| IX | <p>...I think museums played a role in cultural interruption, they have a responsibility to make their collections accessible, and as best as they can, and that Native people find value in collections in different ways.</p> |
| XI | <p>**But I hear people talk about how you can't really say who made the mounds. And I get that. It was long time ago. And I mean I completely understand that. But I don't think that divorces anybody from their responsibility to respect the intent of whoever it was that built that mound. Just because you don't see Jackson Pollock's name on a piece doesn't mean that it's meant for use as a target</p> |

Cultural care policies or protocols mentioned by a number of participants constitute just one area in which the world of museums is changing. Other Generational and Disciplinary Shifts were mentioned throughout participant responses such as how museums are viewed, the mission of museums to serve the public, the value of museum collections, and the involvement of Indigenous communities within arenas of repatriation and research concerning their cultural heritage. Participant I reasoned that increasingly observed changes in how repatriation issues are conceptualized and carried out are in part the result of educational shifts in how students within related disciplines are being taught. Another contributing factor of these disciplinary changes is a consequence of the sheer volume that many collections have reached, as noted by Participants III and V. Participant III refers to this as a curation crisis due to the lack of storage space for collections, particularly archaeological materials. In response to this crisis, Participant III mentioned “no collection” projects that excavate, analyze and record, and immediately re-bury materials *in situ*. Also citing the need to work with materials *already* in museum collections, Participant V shared their participation in an excavation for the first time in over twenty years, emphasizing their institution’s focus on curation and publication of their current collections as opposed to acquiring new collection materials.

Participant IX likewise discussed a disciplinary shift in regard to the use of collection materials in museum displays, noting the focus of these exhibits is shifting away from the objects towards learning experiences that are enhanced, rather than informed, by material objects. A typical exception to this, according to Participant IX, are art museums, considering the focus of physical and aesthetic qualities within the

discipline. In addition to Disciplinary Shifts, Participant IX commented on changes that are occurring within Indigenous communities, observing that whereas older generations more often than not focus on the return of the material objects, the younger generations are finding new ways of understanding and valuing museum collections. Perhaps, as Participant IX suggested may be the case, this change is influenced by the experiences these different generations have had with museums and the impact that collections have had on their lives. Participants XII/XIII also commented on a broader Generational Shift occurring within the general public that has mutually influenced a Disciplinary Shift. According to this perspective, museums are being shaped by the public's desire for museum experiences that extend beyond exhibits and pull away from past museum models. In response, museums are increasingly incorporating decolonizing policies, shifting the focus of their exhibits, and expanding their services to fulfill the changing needs of the public.

In a similar manner, Participants III and IV provide examples of corresponding shifts occurring between generations of Indigenous communities and museums in terms of authority, autonomy, and engagement. By forming their own Institutional Review Boards for research on Native American materials and establishing their own museums and archives Indigenous communities are in effect taking control of the process and accessibility that has historically been in the hands of scientists and museums. Participant IV also mentioned programs that have been established to train Indigenous community members as paraprofessional archaeologists, further shifting the grounds on which the field of archaeology and museum collections are established. Like all aspects of

conversations pertaining to ethical treatment and cultural considerations, Participant XIV remarked that respectful treatment is often situational and contextual. Following another comment made by this participant, archaeologists and museum professionals alike can and have learned from past practices. However, recognition of those histories and past wrongdoings is still essential to continue moving away from those practices and holding on to a sense of humanity sometimes lost within the discipline (Participant XIV, Table 27).

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| I | <p>There were others, yeah, there were tons of people who were super happy with it [<i>early NMAI exhibits</i>], that it was - this was before 'decolonizing' became a big term...And I just feel like there's been a change in how these types of issues are being taught to students and how culturally we think about these issues</p> <p>** And I've noticed that within our department, that sometimes it's the older faculty members who have the hardest time changing and...and there's, it's not like unanimous but there is, the department is more in support I guess. And I don't think would have been true even 10 years ago.</p> |
| III | <p>... it's interesting, I was just at a board meeting where, for a professional organization considering a sort policy guidelines thing about No Collections projects. There's a curation crisis, there's a real severe lack of storage space for archeological material in particular. So very often you have these projects that go out there and they do no collections projects, they go, they do the digging, they document what they find, and then they immediately rebury materials. And so one of the motivations for doing this is tribes actually prefer it, but another motivation for the companies that do it is that it saves a hell of a lot of money because they don't have to put in a lab time, they don't have to pay for storage, so on and so forth.</p> <p>**Yes. So, it makes complete sense that there should be now processes for doing, like dual IRB's in this fashion. And that's just another sign, you know, when I say that tribes are definitely taking control of the process there that's one of the ways that they're doing it, they're sort of...</p> <p>...when they establish their own museums and their own archives then they're the ones who are granting access, or not granting access to information as they see fit, as opposed to the institutions that they've been denied access to for a long time.</p> <p>** That's what they're figuring out. This is what we need to do in order to protect, protect our cultural heritage, our patrimony. So, I think that sort of reliance on a certain authenticity, that the grounds are shifting under that as well, which is a good thing.</p> |
| IV | <p>So, then we did some collaborative field schools, up on the [INDIGENOUS RESERVATION], and at that time [he/she] was working for the US Forest Services as an archeologist, and [he/she] started a paraprofessional program with tribal members of each like to train them as paraprofessional archaeologists.</p> |
| V | <p>So, I'm digging now. Well, this year is the first year I've put a shovel in the ground at 21 years, and I call myself an archeologist. Because our museums are full of materials that have already been excavated. You dig a site, you destroy it. We should therefore not dig any more non-threatened sites until the stuff in our museums and university is taking care of. And published.</p> |
| VII | <p>Yeah, I mean I think there's a lot of good sociology and a lot of good anthropology written about this, but I just think it's a constant, constant discourse that has to go on, and to ask that question, like hmmm, why? And right now especially--well, I shouldn't say just right now, but certainly the discourse on race and on...displaced peoples, is not a new dis--is not a new thing, but it has to be constantly thought about, and you need to stay up with what--not stay up, you need to be a part of that conversation, if you're a museum, it seems to me.</p> |

| TABLE 27 – Shifts Continued | |
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| IX | <p>** Collections objects are in there, but they're definitely not the focus.</p> <p>And then objects are just also just one collecting area that we have here.</p> <p>**I think they diverged in the museum field, not in the art museum. Art museums are kind of unique, and I think because the curator is always sort of been looked at as this authority that, you know, holds the knowledge and interprets it...I think at history museums, science museums, definitely children's museums, places that are engaging the public in learning in a different way that's not just object-based, that I think that they started to move away from each other in those scenarios.</p> <p>** And so, it's been my experience that some Native people are like, you need to return that, that all has to come back to the community...that's seems to be a little bit more common for the older generation right now, the sort of people who were active during the 60s and the Red Power and the AIM movements, and they take a really hard stance because also they've experienced this level of trauma and this level of frustration in working with institutions. And I think a little bit the younger generation, and I don't want to paint with such broad strokes, but I think they understand the nuances of it in a different way, and they are more apt to, like, yeah I want to come in and look at that thing and see what it can teach me. And so, that's what this program is trying to do.</p> |
| XII/ XIII | <p>PXII - I think it is changing. I know a lot of museums are starting to integrate those kinds of protocols and the whole decolonization movement that's been starting.</p> <p>**PXII - it's sort of a multi-disciplinary building.</p> <p>**PXIII - And I mean, you see museums really decentralizing that whole aspect too, where it's not just about exhibits. I mean, now pretty much every museum is starting to turn into like a community center for, you know, kind of use that word too...Because I mean people want more from those institutions than just to walk through and see an exhibit that hasn't changed in, you know, a year. It's like okay, well I'll go when they open a new exhibit. It doesn't really work that well anymore for museums. [PXII Yeah] So, I think a lot of institutions are starting to take that approach</p> <p>**PXIII - And I think that's another reason why museums are through these whole-- they're expanding their services so much because they're realizing just how limiting a trip to a museum every five years is---it's got to be more of a consistent experience [PXII accessible] yeah. [PXII accessible experience] Yeah, mmm hmm.</p> |
| XIV | <p>I guess my point was that a lot of the things of respectful treatment are situational, they're contextual. So, in the particular context, we were in, it didn't matter because they were going back in the ground, they'd been treated respectfully, and later on they'd be coming up and doing some ceremony there I suppose. But you know, it's like you just--we don't...</p> <p>**We need to be more respectful about all these things. The days are long gone for people like putting a cigarette in the mouth of a Native skull or seeing like I did in South Dakota, a Native skull in a back window of a car with the turn signals in the eye sockets. Those kinds of things, those days are long gone, at least in the professional world. So, anyway, so there is a humanity there that I think we lose somehow when we become archaeologists or museum people. And we've got to get away from that.</p> |

Many of the participants shared examples that demonstrate the shifting professional, relational, and conceptual frameworks and approaches initiated since NAGPRA's enactment. These remarks generally note the positive influence these changes have had on archaeology and the museum world, enriching the work produced and opening new avenues for collaborative and mutually beneficial research (i.e. benefiting science/academia *and* Indigenous or source communities). An important point, however, brought forward by a few participants is that these changes did not occur as a single event or without struggle, nor is there a defined destination that signals the achievement of all the goals. Beginning long before NAGPRA, these changes are continuous and have been since the inception of the disciplines. As Participant V points out, the world changes and the related disciplines cannot simply conduct research and carry on in the way that it "has always been done" (Table 28).

The trending changes in attitudes within the related disciplines remarked on by participants, as well as cultural and ethical understandings expressed by numerous participants in this research are by no means unanimous throughout the disciplines. Both Participant V and XIV mention instances where sentiments within the field of archaeology have revealed resistance to, or rancor felt and expressed, in regard to repatriation. Participant V remembered feeling shocked at seeing a statement released by the SAA regarding Section 10.11 in NAGPRA (concerning the Disposition of Culturally Unidentifiable Native American Human Remains); that despite the positive outcomes of over two decades of archaeology shaped by NAGPRA, the attitudes of some professionals within the field were not much different from those initially felt within the

discipline in 1990 when NAGPRA was first enacted. Participant XIV mentioned a survey conducted by the SAA in 2015, appearing in the 2016 issue of *The SAA Archaeological Record* that likewise revealed what the participant felt was a surprising number of negative sentiments felt by archaeologists in regard to repatriation. These sentiments it seems are especially strong when the matter of repatriation concerns materials of greater antiquity.

Although an archaeologist, Participant XIV noted that many persons working within archaeology or museum collections are “still fundamentally loners”. In turn, this inclination has led the discipline to “...remain profoundly stupid” in terms of the people or humanity that should be inescapably involved in any related work (Participant XIV, Table 29). Despite these continued hostilities and tensions, a few participants provided comments that dissuade forsaking these disciplines and institutions, particularly museums. As Participant VII’s comments reveal, matters such as repatriation require constant discourse, and museums must remain a part of these conversations. Moreover, Participant XI remarked that they are not willing to turn their back on museums, despite any issues related to past or current practices. Pointing out a history of transformation museums have undergone in response to shifting paradigms and needs of the peoples they serve, Participant XI maintained that museums can and will continue to change; the success of museums in the future, however, will be dependent upon how thoughtful they are in regard to concerns voiced by the public and source or affiliated communities, and arguably how museums choose to respond to these concerns and the ever changing needs of their publics (Table 29).

| TABLE 28 - Resistance to change | |
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| V | <p>[RV Yeah. Museums will be cleared out—] Yeah, museum people said the same thing. Twenty-five years later, when a comment is going around about the culturally unaffiliated human remains, the statement that the Society from American archeology put out was effectively the same that they had put out in 1990. It wasn't verbatim, but it was the same argument. As if nothing had changed in the ensuing 25 years, as if archeology wasn't better off by all of the collaboration and all of the ethical grounding, and all of the good stuff that's coming out of this. It was a shock to me to see that statement. It was as if nothing had changed. We had learned nothing in a quarter century, Unconscionable folks. By that rationale, we'd still have slavery. Well, we've always done it that way. No, you can't. The world changes.</p> |
| VII | <p>It just is so gut-wrenching for me to see that happen, to have your own colleagues have to call you out like that, it's not even discussed, you know, at the higher levels. Yeah. I mean, like I said, it's brought up then it dissipates. So, it's a problem of leadership here. And, you know, [the director] an unusual--that's an unusual amount of time. That's, boards are getting smarter about that. They're getting a little smarter about, we probably...I mean, you know, corporations do that for a reason. You can't--it's too much power is never a good thing **Yeah, I mean I think there's a lot of good sociology and a lot of good anthropology written about this, but I just think it's a constant, constant discourse that has to go on, and to ask that question, like hmmm, why? And right now especially--well, I shouldn't say just right now, but certainly the discourse on race and on...displaced peoples, is not a new dis--is not a new thing, but it has to be constantly thought about, and you need to stay up with what--not stay up, you need to be a part of that conversation, if you're a museum, it seems to me.</p> |
| XI | <p>yeah. And that's what I think about these objects, then to extend the analogy, then who's being benefited by their preservation? Them themselves, or me from the outside? If it's them or me, it should be them that comes first. ...Museums have been around for a very long time and, you know, I'm sure they're evolving, and there's new professionals that do come in who will bring these different sensibilities into the mix. And I expect that museums will continue to grow and morph and transform as time and people go along and have influences on them. So, I'm not willing to shutter all their doors and burn them to the ground. you know, I just think they have to be more thoughtful about the way we...let them be their best selves.</p> |
| XIV | <p>**as a discipline, archaeologically I think sometimes we have been and still remain profoundly stupid....I'm not talking about the science part of it. We're pretty sophisticated there by and large. But in terms of the people side of it, I think that you know, archeologists are still fundamentally loners, and I think a lot of museum collections people are too **about four or five years ago the SAA ran a repatriation survey and some Native Americans commented on it and the archaeological record. I wondered at the still negative on the part of a lot of archaeologists, especially when it came to the very early materials.</p> |

Divergent Worldviews

A final category prevalent throughout the current data covers Divergent Worldviews. Covered within this category are three codes, including the Impact and Value that Mimbres and other comparable materials in museum collections have on various communities, the meaning and application of Ownership/Property/Patrimony, and the appropriate or likely Placement and Action taken with Mimbres collections. Differing perspectives discovered through the analysis of the data are discussed in turn. Unlike the other categories that fall under a few of the overarching themes that broadly organize the data, Divergent Worldviews largely falls under the theme concerning perspectives of Mimbres materials and other comparable burial materials within museums. Undoubtedly, museum and archaeological perspectives on Mimbres pottery have affected how they are viewed. Referencing a book written on the history of American archaeology, Participant XIV noted that even the way that archaeology and the art world has at times viewed Mimbres pottery has influenced the way we view and value the *Mimbrenos* peoples and the rest of their material culture (Table 30). Illustrating this point, Participant XIV recited the following excerpt between the author and Southwestern archaeologist Steve Lekson:

“‘We find Mimbres art pleasing,’ Steve continues, ‘but Mimbres archaeology disappointing. A Mimbres site is a series of low, amorphous cobble mounds, pitted with hundreds of craters left behind by pot hunters. Mimbres ruins do not look like Mesa Verde ruins, Chaco Canyon ruins, or any of the other Ansel Adams/David Muench ruins. Anasazi is archetype for our Southwestern architectural aesthetic because Anasazi buildings look more like European (read ‘real’) architecture (capital A) than do other Southwestern traditions.’ In effect, the Mimbrenos are viewed as ‘artistic idiot savants who could paint a blue streak but could not stack three rocks up together.’” (Russell 1996)

Participants IX and X provided perspectives on the value and benefit that preservation of Mimbres materials has on both the general public and Indigenous

communities. Recognizing their perspective may be different if they were a member of a different (e.g., Indigenous) group, Participant X stated that while feeling apologetic that Mimbres sites have been looted, the excavation of these sites has also provided a source of inspiration and revival of Native American pottery. While also recognizing the value that many Indigenous peoples find in interacting with materials preserved through museum collections, Participant IX additionally commented on the mixed emotions that Indigenous peoples often feel in respect to these collections. Specifically, Participant IX noted the inherited trauma caused by those collections and what the forced separation of these materials from their communities represents. In their work as a Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Participant VIII remarked on the personal, psychological, and emotional impact that archaeological research and museum display can have on Indigenous communities. Also referring to this as a trauma for Indigenous peoples, Participant VIII expressed uncertainty that museums and archaeologists fully appreciate those impacts or take them into consideration.

In discussing the perceived value in Mimbres pottery, particularly in connection to the commoditization and destruction of Mimbres sites subsequent to archaeological “discovery” (Brody 2004), Participant X counterposed whether it would have been better if these materials had never been seen. Coming from an educational perspective Participant X further questioned if such considerations should also entail an end to DNA research, for example, because there are things we were not meant to know (i.e., knowledge gained from materials intentionally hidden away or buried). Contrasting this point, Participants XI and XII/XIII comment on the balance between learning from these

materials and the level of damage their display and use in research can cause. Participants XII/XIII note that their institutional policy is to not display sensitive materials that will cause damage, and instead look for other ways in which knowledge can be accessed. Similarly, Participant XI noted that there are other means through which the past can be understood and materials that can help tell a story about the past with less inherent danger in their display. As noted by Participant XI and others throughout the data, the question as always is who benefits from the preservation of these materials? Moreover, when considered living beings, it must also be asked what damage may be done to Mimbres pottery in their display and placement in museum collections (Participant XI, Table 29).

| TABLE 29– Impact and Value | |
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| VIII | <p>...and it's what I advocated. Was that the archaeological conservancy needed to consider co-managing this site with the [PUEBLO COMMUNITY] and that they needed to take into consideration the personal, psychological, and emotional perspectives of the [PUEBLO COMMUNITY] regarding any research proposal. And not just evaluate the research proposal from an archaeological science perspective. Cause from a [PUEBLO COMMUNITY] perspective further excavation at that site, any further ground disturbance at that site is a continuation of the insult that's already occurred to that site....and one of the things that isn't considered by museums putting that stuff on display, or even just the knowledge of Native people, where that pot came from. I mean, in our discussions with [PUEBLO COMMUNITY] this week, it has a very negative psychological impact. The [PUEBLO COMMUNITY] knowing that the ancestor's graves have been disturbed, destroyed, and grave ornaments have been taken away. Separated. It creates an emotional stress. It creates a psychological trauma for them. And I don't think museums or archaeologists fully appreciate that, nor has anyone studied in a quantitative sense to understand what the long-term, cumulative effects on Native people is, knowing that their heritage is being destroyed and then displayed in museums.</p> |
| IX | <p>...a lot of times it's an incredibly emotional thing for Native people, I think, to interact with collections because it's to some people it's very bittersweet. They're happy it's been preserved. They're upset that it's not in their community, or that the knowledge isn't in their community. And they're angry too, a lot. And I think that trauma and inherited trauma and all of those things can manifest at--you look at a museum as an institution, as an institution that has power, and you look at yourselves as, in terms of that relationship as being the people with less power. I think that's a...long way of saying like there is a role, whether it's perceived or real that <i>anthropologist's removed stuff from the communities and the "stuff" is here and from that knowledge can be gleaned and community members really benefit from...studying museum collections.</i></p> |
| X | <p>So, you know, and the question then becomes...philosophically perhaps, is it better not to know? Not to have ever seen them? ...and I know that if I were a member of a different group I might look at them completely differently and feel completely differently about them. And, yeah. I'm sorry they've been looted. And I'm sorry for all that. I also know that they were--the excavations of this kind of material, not just the Mimbres, but Anasazi and other material was a great inspiration and a revival of Native American pottery making in the Southwest in the early decades of the 20th century when it was happening and that there were a lot of Native Americans who started seeing--who were inspired by these things that came out of the ground, and still are making--are inspired as artists and selling them.</p> <p>**I mean, my opinion is--and I am just speaking personally for myself, for the field or for anyone, is that I mean, I'm a product of education. I work at a university. Should we stop researching? I mean, it's the question of should we stop DNA research because there are things we shouldn't know? You know, it becomes in a certain sense an issue of spiritualism versus science. And, I don't want to go there, but for me I...I take great inspiration from looking at these objects, personally. And I'm not a Native American. So, maybe I'd feel differently about it if I were. But for me, they give me great inspiration and they give me a great way to...<i>they give me a great sense of value of humanity and the belonging to a much larger group than my individual tribe.</i></p> |

| TABLE 29 – Impact and Value Continued | |
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| XI | <p>yeah. And that's what I think about these objects, then to extend the analogy, then who's being benefited by their preservation? Them themselves, or me from the outside? If it's them or me, it should be them that comes first.</p> <p>**So, and if you put them displayed and say oh, but look at the awesome things we got out of King Tut's tomb. You know, maybe, that wasn't a very thoughtful way to go about it. But, if you take objects that are more utilitarian and that are representative of a lifestyle, then you thoughtfully share that, look at this stuff that was made from natural material that's used to collect certain things, you know berries, or apples, or whatever it was used for. And this will tell you something about [today?] that this group lived its life. You know, maybe that's a story worth telling with a minimum amount of danger. That's where I would not want to be a museum professional, cause that's a sticky wicket. And that's why contemporary art is so much easier to deal with.</p> |
| XII/ XIII | <p>PXII - Just sort of like that spiritual aspect of it. I know it was mentioned to us by [CULTURAL RESOURCES DIRECTOR] that [he/she] could feel that there was a spirit that was trapped sort of in the storage area and [he/she] believed it came--it was that spirit that was from that bowl because it was put back together. Supposedly it had a kill hole and it was put together, and so, it sort of negates the spirit from being released, and it's not in its appropriate place for the spirit to move on. So, culturally, I think that could be an issue.</p> <p>**PXIII - Well, and you know that kind of opens up the, you know, the collection won't be accessible. They won't be accessible for, you know, people to come and see and to learn about. But I mean it's one of those things, it's more--the damage would be more to display it than it would be to not. And just take special care of it and leave it to other means of learning about those types of objects.</p> |
| XIV | <p>**published in 1996, and I think it's been reissued, but she has a fascinating conversation with Steve Lekson in it. I would--I made that comment a little bit ago about the--not being able to stack one rock on another. We, meaning the dominant society, finding Mimbres art pleasing, Lekson continues that "Mimbres archaeology is disappointing. Mimbres site as a series of low, amorphous cobble mounds pitted with hundreds of craters left by behind by pot hundreds. And these ruins do not look like Mesa Verde ruins, Chaco ruins, or any other Ansel Adams, David Muench...." And then he says, let's see, "...in effect, the Mimbrenos are viewed as "artistic idiot-savants who could paint a blue streak but could not stack three rocks up together."</p> |

As a couple of participants noted, NAGPRA, while intended as retroactive human rights legislation, was essentially written as property law. Ownership is, of course, inherently bounded within notions of power and control. However, the code Ownership, Property, and Patrimony focuses on differing views of heritage and ownership of the past, history, as well as the materials that represent these. Participant III commented that cultural patrimony is generally not well understood, even when a sympathetic and general understanding of the law is present. Participant III noted a difference in how cultural patrimony is understood between different kinds of museums, perhaps because so many of NAGPRA's definitions are written with a sense of vagueness. Yet, these varying understandings of cultural patrimony somehow commonly lead to the same notion of materials such as Mimbres pottery as human heritage (i.e., it belongs to all of us as opposed to one specific group).

Opposing the argument of a universal human heritage, Participants IX and XI share similar perspectives on differing cultural understandings of what is "knowable" and what can be shared. Whereas a notion of human heritage implies that all knowledge is accessible and available to everyone, Participant IX related that according to some cultures there is certain information that is not shared with outsiders. Participant XI stated that beyond what can be known to outsiders, knowledge is not equally available to everyone *within* Indigenous communities because "...everything is not for everybody" (Table 30). Additionally, Participant XI remarked that the notion of ownership is a colonial idea. That is, to "own" is not always necessary to understanding, nor is the concept of ownership universal.

An example provided by Participant VIII of Ahayuta (Zuni War Gods) in foreign museums demonstrates the sense of ownership and related feelings of possessiveness that sometimes become entangled with collection materials. Explicitly stating the permission gained to tell this story, Participant XIV shared a similar type of resistance a friend and colleague was met with when requesting materials to be returned from museum collections. Upon receiving requests for repatriation, most museums request proof of ownership and the right to claim collection materials, which as many participants noted is incumbent upon the tribes to provide. In response, Participant XIV relayed that their colleague would often use Euromerican materials, specifically Christian crosses, as an analog to notions of ownership and possessiveness over materials of Native American heritage. Participant XIV shared that this analog of ownership and possessiveness with respect to Christian crosses or crucifixes generally succeeded in breaking a barrier between Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of understanding Native American cultural heritage, and often led to the successful return of the requested materials.

Sharing some negative responses received after an exhibit on a historic U.S.-Indigenous conflict, Participant IX noted similar sentiments expressed when different perspectives of the past are highlighted or given a voice in public spheres (i.e., museums); yet history *is* additive and multifaceted. It is when ownership over that story is challenged that tensions rise. The idea of ownership and property also connects to decision-making rights. For instance, Mimbres pottery that is thought of as “property” of a museum lends the right to decide if and how those materials are displayed and curated. Participant VII commented that is certainly the case for the collection currently under

their institution's care. Participant VII also stated these decisions extend beyond ownership in that, "To have it and show it is to do more than just own it" (Table 30).

| TABLE 30 – Ownership, Property, and Patrimony | |
|---|--|
| III | <p>Yeah, that's true. And there's not...even when there's sort of sympathies and an understanding of the law, often there is a very poor understanding of the issues of Native sovereignty and cultural patrimony,...and those kinds of issues, it's ironically, from the art world perspective and from the world of science, Western science, the same sort of things get pulled on which is this universal notion of these materials are for all mankind...</p> <p>**But I mean in terms of like ethically acquiring things, so there's a really interesting tension there too between the way art museums think about cultural patrimony and the way natural history, anthropology, general museums, science museums, sort of all the other museums think about cultural patrimony.</p> |
| VII | <p>Like, what about...a notion of identity and who owns it, and who should show it. Cause showing something isn't, in my opinion, more powerful than just a negative, you know. To have it and show it is to do more than just own it</p> <p>**Ownership. It's all about ownership...and it's like when you really sit down and think about it, it's all about ownership.</p> |
| VIII | <p>I know that--and I've just heard this through word of mouth, so I have no direct experience with this, but with Zuni representatives in foreign museums, regarding the Ahayuta, lot of the museums are very possessive and don't want to turn over those artifacts because they consider them to be art objects, not sacred beings. And they just want to keep cause they add to the, I guess, legitimacy of the museum.</p> |
| IX | <p>And it can be viewed as--well and it should be viewed as, like, if you're not a cultural insider, there are definitely things that cultures do not share, that there is knowledge that they hold that is--that they have that you don't.</p> <p>**And I understand that it's hard, that it's really like--we have to talk about history being additive. That just adding more perspectives doesn't cha--it takes some power away from you. You're going to have to negotiate that. But it doesn't make your story less valuable. It just makes you have less power.</p> |
| XI | <p>Sometimes the people within my community say not everything is for you...not everything is shareable and that brings me back to the female again, and not everything is available to everyone all the time. She gets to choose. And, you know, even when you're inside a Native community, just generally speaking ...It's a very long vetting period where people just watch your behavior. Yeah, you know, it does take a long time to get inside. But that's because not everything is for everybody.</p> <p>**I think it's really important to say. Yeah. So, I don't think you have to own it, and I think that's an odd colonial idea of ownership anyway. Right?</p> |
| XIV | <p>I had permission to tell this story. [He/she] said that quite often that the curator would say well, how do we know it's yours? What right do you have to claim it? And [He/she] would say, you know, well, I understand your reluctance on this, [He/she] said I understand you want this in your collection and it's beautiful and said it's really intriguing. Said I've gotten really attached to Christian crosses. I'm not a Christian... [He/she's] going in and getting these crosses off the wall ...And [He/she] said that you know, I don't understand why you always them this one direction with the little arms up to the top. [He/she] said they're much better if they hang them upside down. And [He/she] said by that time the look starts to come over the curator or whoever's face going, uh, what am I into here? And suddenly they get the analog to Indian materials being stolen and displayed improperly and everything else. And [he/she] will say almost always when he has to go through that, [he/she] will end up getting the object back.</p> |

Participants were all asked towards the end of the interview what they envision for the future of Mimbres collections, whether that be repatriation, continued curation and/or display, etc. The responses typically fell within four groups including removal from display, repatriation, reburial, and what is essentially an opposition to these other perspectives. Participants I, III, and VII concurred that at the very least Mimbres vessels should be removed from display. Noting another museum that held an exhibition of Classic Mimbres pottery within the past year, as well as an instance at their own institution, Participant I stated such displays were inappropriate. Based on Participant I's remarks, this position is widely held by others within their particular department.

Participant III likewise felt that the Mimbres vessels should be removed from display as a first step, stating their display has been communicated as “deeply, spiritually problematic...” for both related tribes, and other Indigenous communities in general (Table 25). Agreeing with the position that removing Mimbres pottery from view would be a significant thing to do, Participant VII also commented that this action should include a greater intellectual engagement and explanation to the public as to *why* they are no longer displayed. Participants I and III also both took the position that in addition to removing Mimbres pottery from display, repatriation of these materials would be the ideal. Mirroring these perspectives, Participant XI expressed that the burial context of Mimbres pottery is a definite factor that necessitates a return to their resting place. Significantly, Participant XI commented that this return entails their reburial and not just a transfer into the care or ownership of another person or museum, whether Native-owned or not.

In contrast to these positions, Participant X expressed uncertainty regarding the prudence of reburial, questioning whether such action is realistic considering the commoditization of Classic Mimbres pottery. Even if a reburial location was private and undisclosed, Participant X's comment suggests such materials may still be excavated or looted at a later point due to the value assigned to Mimbres vessels. Participant X further stated they did not envision repatriation as likely for Mimbres materials unless the laws should change in the future, stating that when repatriation is undertaken it should be "...for the right reasons and to the right people" (Table 31). Participant III, however, remarked that the disposition of Mimbres materials after they are returned is ultimately up to their communities to decide, even if their decision entailed crushing the pottery to reuse as temper. It should be noted that all but Participant XI are speaking of the same collection, though from different departments and divisions within a broader institution or network of institutions. Therefore, their positions on this matter may be a reflection of general attitudes and tensions regarding Native American cultural heritage and museum collections within their particular sociopolitical environment(s). Other participants generally stated repatriation should occur if and when descendant or affiliated communities make those requests or indicate their return is a priority.

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|-----|---|
| I | <p>But I feel like it's bologna, in a lot of this sense, and that one of the ways that they're trying to work to get around that lineal descent claim is trying to get all the tribes in the area to work together on a single claim. And I have no idea if that'll fly, or not. But, I mean there's a lot of political issues on that side to even get to the point to make a claim. But, I don't know. It's clear that these objects shouldn't be held by a cultural institution, I feel like. And that they should be returned.</p> <p>**No, it should not be on display. But, I was also in LA a couple of months ago and went to LACMA and they had three or four Mimbres vessels with kill holes on display, with no contextual information, just Mimbres ceramic vessels. Like this is awful, like it shouldn't be on display here either.</p> <p>**And they [museum – not LACMA] had, if it was a student or a volunteer, you know an interpreter say, "This is the 'kill hole' and this means it was from a burial context", and all of us were like this shouldn't be out here at all. It shouldn't be on display, you shouldn't...like this is very, very inappropriate.</p> |
| III | <p>We will give them a complete inventory as we can and let them choose what they want to do. As far as I'm concerned, and [LAB TECHNICIAN] knows, is that any materials that we have here, it's up to them to do...they can take all of them, you can crush them up and use them for temper for new pottery if they want to, that's they're right.</p> <p>**We ought to be, they ought to be removed from display first and foremost, because it's been made pretty clear by tribes in general, but tribes that are specifically related that this is deeply, spiritually problematic for them.</p> <p>**... it makes me really unhappy, to, that nobo--that it's still there. Yeah. And I would like to see it repatriated.</p> |
| VII | <p>Yeah to take them off view. I think it would be a significant thing to do, and to tell people why we're doing it, would be significant. But it's not, it doesn't seem to be in the plan here from my experience working here.</p> <p>** And then, not just taken off view and hidden. But taken off view and engaged more intellectually.</p> |
| X | <p>I know that others feel that they that they should never have been separated--...but others feel they should never have been excavated. But now that's done. And given the commodification that you talked about, I don't know if reburying them is really a realistic...it's something you should really look at. I mean, if they were to be repatriated and reburied, would they stay reburied? I don't think that--I mean, that's really interesting because, in talking about private, undisclosed locations, but I don't think anybody went around putting a flag in saying this is a Mimbres site, please loot it.</p> <p>**Unless the laws change drastically, I don't see repatriation. Because I don't think it's responsible to just repatriate something that hasn't been asked for and that--so, I think legally, unless the laws change, that it won't be repatriated...But it's very hard to deal with this period--the artifacts of this antiquity because right now calls for the establishment of direct descendancy, and that's just really at this point not possible with this kind of material. So, if you're going to repatriate something you want to repatriate it for the right reasons and to the right people...</p> |
| XI | <p>...and for me, that placement in burial is a bottom line, a line in the sand, definite factor. To me, if it comes out of a burial, it's grave robbery and it needs to go back to the burial if you could, to the ground if you can. But not to just somebody else's museum. I don't see, personally, the sense of just transferring to another although it might even be a Native-owned museum. No! Put it back in the ground! Just leave it.</p> |

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The results presented from this research likely come as no surprise to those involved in conversations and work that are applicable to NAGPRA. Overall, the findings from the analysis of these data are supported by themes and factors discussed throughout the literature on Mimbres pottery, particularly those within museums. In its nearly thirty-year trajectory, NAGPRA has elicited strong emotions, opinions, and divides in matters concerning the proper placement of Native American cultural heritage. Apparent from this research is that materials of greater antiquity, such as Mimbres Classic pottery, are all the more contentious due to the differences in how various groups conceive of and arrive at reconstructions, connections to, and ownership over the past. Relationships between all of the categories and corresponding codes discovered through analysis of participant responses further reveal a complex mosaic of factors that the keepers of collections and those seeking the return of these materials must navigate.

A few participants noted some aspects of NAGPRA that lend to the complicated and contentious nature of negotiating the many perspectives, opinions, and attitudes involved in collection practices, display of funerary materials, and repatriation. First, one participant commented that while NAGPRA was intended to be reparative it was written as property law due to the power and pervasiveness behind notions of ownership embedded within our society. These notions of ownership originate from Roman law and understandings of private property that form the foundations of our legal system. The concept of cultural affiliation in NAGPRA, however, attempts to transcend notions of

private property and allow for understandings of *cultural* and group property. While cultural affiliation revolutionizes the concept and application of property within NAGPRA, the concept of private property so thoroughly permeates the Western understanding of property law that it becomes difficult to disengage from notions of “...absolute, legally protected dominion of individuals over things” (Kuprecht 2012, 35). As a result, establishing proof of “ownership” and the right to claim archaeological cultural items, while not legally stipulated in NAGPRA, is often still involved in determining cultural affiliation (Breske 2018, Kuprecht 2012, Schillaci and Bustard 2010).

The burden of establishing and providing proof typically falls to Indigenous communities; the responsibility of determining the validity of claims filed and proof of cultural affiliation or descendance is entrusted to the museums, institutions, or agencies holding the collection(s) in question. Forces that disenfranchised and marginalized Indigenous peoples to begin with, however, make it difficult to untangle the past and provide evidentiary proof of these connections. Secondly, as evident from both participant responses and the archival background to this research, the standards and means through which cultural affiliation is determined is not consistently applied or well understood between the institutions making these determinations. Moreover, there is no legal stipulation that determinations of cultural affiliation are consistent between museums and institutions. For instance, the Mimbres archaeological culture has been simultaneously determined to be culturally unidentifiable by the Forest Service and

culturally affiliated with numerous contemporary Southwestern tribes by the National Park Service (Anyon and Thornton 2002).

When archaeological materials are deemed culturally unidentifiable, participants viewed these determinations in two divergent ways: culturally unidentifiable determinations as justification to not repatriate cultural property, and the opposing position that view such determinations as merely tactics utilized to counter Indigenous claims or demands for materials to be returned. Whether viewed as justifications or tactics, a number of these arguments are visible within discussions concerning Mimbres painted pottery. The antiquity of these materials, the difficulty or impossibility of determining lineal descent, notions of national and universal human heritage, and the vast array of perspectives present within these discussions all serve to complicate issues of cultural affiliation for Mimbres materials. Regardless of the intent behind wielding such arguments in favor of or in opposition to repatriation, contemplation of underlying meanings and anticipation of the impact such arguments will have on collections is imperative to ensure proper care and placement of the enclosed materials. Without consideration for latent meaning and potential impact, arguments used in repatriation efforts or conversations run the risk of “slippery-slope fallacies”; such arguments are reminiscent of those positioned against NAGPRA’s initial passing and the added 10.11 section, alleging that such regulations will result in emptied collections and a complete loss of information vital to our understanding of the past. As the last few decades of NAGPRA-oriented work prove, such arguments ultimately hold little weight (Zimmerman 1992).

While representing a small sample size relative to the number of institutions holding collections of Mimbres painted pottery and professionals involved in their care, curation, or repatriation, the participant responses gained through the present research are representative of the expected range of perspectives inherent in such work. Furthermore, the data illustrate the various attitudes towards Mimbres collections and approaches adopted by professionals working with and within museums whose collections contain funerary materials. For some, the intellectual value of Mimbres pottery is highlighted while for others the ethical and moral obligations integral to NAGPRA outweigh what can be gained by study and display of funerary materials.

From the onset of their unearthing, Mimbres pottery has intersected the line between art, artifact, and an understanding of these vessels as living beings. The conflict between modern designations and interpretation of past meanings of Mimbres pottery remains unsettled among those invested in the disposition of these collections. In particular, the conceptualization of Mimbres pottery as art is often assigned from a Western perspective of what makes something art, starkly contrasting with spiritual understandings of these vessels. By and large, Western sensibilities perceive art as both rare and beautiful, raising art-objects beyond the status of “things” deemed merely utilitarian or common. This understanding of where the line exists between art and utility, however, is not accepted cross-culturally. While deemed a prestigious label by some, the designation of art to culturally significant or sensitive materials can obfuscate their deeper meanings, rendering them mere artworks to audiences (Weil 2002). As several participants indicated, many museums are moving away from “object-centered” displays towards exhibits and programs

designed to enhance learning and demonstrate cultural continuity. For instance, a few institutions involved in this study mentioned artist in residence programs that focus on bringing in Indigenous artists who draw on the museum's collections to inspire and inform their work. Rather than presenting archaeological materials as art, these programs juxtapose the artistry of historical and archaeological materials with contemporary art.

The spiritual understandings of Mimbres pottery, namely those that view these vessels as animate beings, paint a very different picture of their placement and treatment in museum collections. The designations we assign museum materials are symbiotic with how these materials are treated within museum collections in terms of display and the care provided. Evident in participant responses in the Treatment and Considerations category, Mimbres pottery understood as art are displayed as art objects, emphasizing aesthetic qualities over other contexts. When considered living beings that were interred in what was visibly intended to be their final resting place, however, the display of Mimbres bowls arguably becomes as problematic as the display of human remains or living, animate beings (Owings 2012). While the meaning and purpose of the Mimbres pottery as it was originally intended cannot be ascertained from their creators, it is obvious from the findings presented here that modern designations have considerable impact on the treatment of these collections in the care of museums.

A connection to a sense of humanity, or in some cases the absence of this connection, was raised by a few participants in regard to the treatment of Mimbres pottery and other comparable materials, as well as attitudes expressed towards the appropriate disposition of these materials. Throughout these remarks, it is evident that Mimbres pottery

is considered both a source of human connection through their display and visual enjoyment, and a source of contention between the potential benefit to audiences and the consequences such display has in terms of disembodiment from their makers and the respect those connections warrant. Ultimately, these opinions establish the importance of a human connection to the past peoples and contexts from which Mimbres pottery originates. Simply put, there are people behind the Mimbres painted pottery. Articulating this human connection is essential in understanding and appreciating the meaning embedded in and beyond the beautifully painted motifs decorating their interior surfaces.

Furthermore, some participants commented that a sense or awareness of the humanity associated with Mimbres pottery is a necessary ingredient to successful conversations and consultations, specifically noting how this component pertains to the ethical treatment of Native American cultural heritage, particularly materials applicable to NAGPRA. One participant remarked this humanity is something often lost in museum and archeological work. Based on the results, ethical treatment of collection materials and compliance with both the letter and spirit of NAGPRA (i.e., placing its moral and ethical intentions ahead of other pursuits and interests) is contingent upon the willingness of institutions and agencies to be sensitive to Indigenous perspectives and positions regarding their cultural heritage. Many participants expressed this sentiment either directly or through an explanation of the cultural protocols and decolonizing practices implemented within their institutions. Furthermore, the general consensus among participants was the enrichment that consultation and collaboration have brought to museum work and archaeology; significantly, this benefit was emphasized when

consultation is conducted in accordance with the *spirit* of NAGPRA and not just “ticking-all-the-boxes” to remain compliant.

Perspectives greatly differed among participants with respect to the likely or appropriate placement of Mimbres pottery. In part, these differences were based upon priorities of the institutions and those expressed by Indigenous communities with which those institutions consult. Not presented here, or necessarily obtained in the collection of the present data, are the specific tribes consulted by each respective institution. Even when such information was provided by participants, it is not the intent of this study to provide those perspectives at present. As these were priorities stated by specific Southwestern Indigenous communities to the institutions or persons with whom they were consulting, it was decided that providing such details without gaining these perspectives directly, or permission to disclose those obtained secondhand, would be inappropriate. As the provision of such details could potentially compromise the confidentiality of the participants, relations between institutions, communities, or persons, or even impact any repatriation efforts currently underway, it was deemed appropriate to withhold this information.

While considered representative of the major issues and varying perspectives involved in the treatment and considerations of Mimbres collections, it is important to recognize the findings of this study depict a moment in time. As NAGPRA and paradigms within the related disciplines evolve over time, so too will the perspectives on topics investigated through this research. Potentially fruitful directions of research on this subject include gaining perspectives from descendant or culturally affiliated tribes in the

American Southwest. Just as museum and scholastic perspectives vary, the perspectives of Indigenous communities and tribal members are likely to present an equally diverse spectrum. Additionally, perspectives on these issues from museums within closer geographical and cultural proximity to Mimbres sites and their contemporary descendants (i.e., those located in the Southwest) would significantly contribute to the objectives of this study. Incorporation of these would certainly enhance the understanding of Mimbres pottery in museums and how the treatment, considerations, and conceptualization of these materials are negotiated between the peoples and interests involved.

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APPENDICES**Appendix A – Overarching Themes**

| THEMES |
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| Public Opinion and Communication |
| Perspectives on materials with funerary/burial contexts in museum museums |
| Perspectives about Native American materials in museum collections (General) |
| Costs and Consequences |
| Issues with NAGPRA |
| Issues with Discipline |

Appendix B – Aid/Hindrance Codebook

| CATEGORY | Aid/Hinderance |
|---|--|
| | Factors that either aid, hinder, and/or are otherwise necessary for processes, conversations, and/or carrying out efforts related to the implementation of policies, consultation and/or collaboration, repatriation, claims, curation and care, display, etc. |
| CODE | CODE DESCRIPTION |
| Accessibility | Participant Remarks on components that provide or deny access to resources and materials necessary for conversations and/or efforts related to consultation and/or collaboration repatriation, claims, curation and care, display, etc. to occur. |
| Cultural Affiliation | Participant remarks on factors of determining and/or identifying cultural affiliation that affects the (re)association of Native American collection materials to one or more contemporary Indigenous tribes/nations |
| Differential Treatment/ Discrimination | Participant remarks on the differential and/or discriminatory ways that Native American remains and/or material culture are treated differently from other peoples/ethnicities/cultures, etc. in processes, conversations, and/or efforts related to consultation and/or collaboration, repatriation, claims, curation and care, display, etc. |
| Distance/ Proximity | Participant remarks on factors of geographical and/or cultural distances that affect processes, conversations, and/or efforts related to consultation and/or collaboration, repatriation, claims, curation and care, display, etc. |
| Division of Materials | Participant remarks on the division of materials and/or the effects that such division has on documentation/records and/or processes, conversations, and/or efforts related to consultation and/or collaboration, repatriation, claims, curation and care, display, etc. |
| Documentation | Participant remarks on factors of documentation that affect processes related to repatriation such as consultation, collaboration, reassociation of materials, and gaining access to collections |
| Leadership/ Institutional Structure | Participant remarks on factors of leadership and/or institutional structures that contribute to implementing and carrying out processes, policies, protocols, and/or procedures relating to in processes, conversations, and/or efforts related to consultation and/or collaboration, repatriation, claims, curation and care, display, etc. |

| Aid/Hindrance Continued | |
|--|---|
| Policy | Participant remarks on past, current, or planned policy/policies, either formal or informal, that affects processes, conversations, and/or efforts related to consultation and/or collaboration, repatriation, claims, curation and care, display, etc. given to Native American collections and service to the institution's public, audiences, partners, and source communities |
| Power and control | Participant either remarks directly or references circumstances of power dynamics, control, and/or authority that influences issues regarding processes, conversations, and/or efforts related to consultation and/or collaboration, repatriation, claims, curation and care, display, and/or treatment and considerations given to Native American collections and/or parties involved, including Indigenous tribes/nations, staff, departments, etc. |
| Priorities | Participant references priorities in repatriation, curation and care, consultation and/or collaboration, including steps in the process and specific materials (i.e., human remains, material objects, etc.) |
| Resources | Participant remarks on the access to, lack of, and/or investment of resources including but not limited to monetary, staffing, time, delegation of responsibilities (including individual, institutional, and community responsibilities and/or onus probandi), and emotional and/or mental investment necessary and/or involved in consultation and/or collaboration, repatriation, claims, curation and care, display, and/or treatment and considerations. |
| Relations | Participant remarks on the effect that relationships between legal entities, museums, academic institutions, the public, and/or Indigenous communities and the effects that efforts to build, improve, repair, maintain, prevent, delay, and/or resist those relationships have on consultation and/or collaboration, repatriation, claims, curation and care, display, and/or treatment and considerations of Native American collections. |
| Spirit of the Law vs. Letter of the Law | Participant remarks on embracing either the letter of the law based on how it is currently written and interpreted, or the spirit of the law based on what it was intended to do, including the effects these have on consultation and/or collaboration, repatriation, claims, curation and care, display and/or treatment and considerations of Native American collections. |

Appendix C – Treatment and Considerations Codebook

| CATEGORY | Treatment and Considerations |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| | Factors that influence or direct the treatment and/or curation and care of Mimbres materials or comparable materials currently in collections within museums, academic institutions, federal agencies, and/or any other held in public trust |
| CODE | CODE DESCRIPTION |
| Curation & Care | Participant remarks on their personal/institution's perspective and/or policy on the curation and care of Native American materials, particularly those that are culturally sensitive and/or significant (e.g., funerary materials) as well as factors that influence, direct, and/or impact curation of these materials. Curation and care include but is not limited to storage, packaging, etc. |
| Display | Participant remarks on their personal/institution's perspective and/or policy on the display of Native American materials, particularly those that are culturally sensitive and/or significant (e.g., funerary materials) as well as factors that influence, direct, and/or impact display of these materials. Display includes any form of visible form, exhibition, or dissemination of these materials including but not limited to museum display, media publication, merchandise, presentations, etc. |
| Responsibility /Obligation | Participant remarks on personal, institutional, community, ethical and/or moral obligations, responsibilities, or accountability in regard to treatment and/or consideration given to Native American collection materials, source/affiliated communities, Indigenous perspectives and wishes, and the perspectives and wishes of the public, as well as the delegation of responsibilities towards those collections. |
| Shifts - Disciplinary | Participant remarks on shifts that have, currently are, or are expected to occur within the related disciplines (i.e., museology, museum studies, anthropology, archaeology, etc.) or those that affect disciplinary work (i.e., NAGPRA) that affect the perspectives on the treatment, placement, and considerations given to Native American cultural materials, particularly those that are culturally sensitive and/or significant (e.g., funerary materials). This includes acceptance, embrace, or resistance to these changes. |
| Shifts - Generational | Participant remarks on past or present shifts in how generations of various publics (i.e., general public, Indigenous communities, etc.) think about and relate to Native American cultural materials and what these communities and/or public wish to see and gain from Native American collections, particularly those that are culturally sensitive and/or significant, and/or expectations of museum experiences. This includes acceptance, embrace, or resistance to these changes. |

Appendix D – Conceptualization and Categorization Codebook

| CATEGORY | Conceptualization and Categorization |
|---|--|
| | Categories, perspectives, and or ways of thinking about Mimbres or comparable materials and the meaning, value, and/or significance that Indigenous communities/peoples, museums, scientists, and/or the public perceive in them or assign to them. |
| CODE | CODE DESCRIPTION |
| Art | Participant remarks on materials and/or perspectives of Native American materials as art objects/artworks that hold and/or reflect qualities, characteristics, meaning and value relating to their artistic and aesthetic appeal. |
| Artifact | Participant remarks on materials and/or perspective of Native American materials as artifacts that hold and/or reflect qualities, characteristics, meaning and/or value of historical and/or archaeological interest, referenced as historic and/or/versus prehistoric, and/or importance and may be interpreted through an anthropological and/or scientific lens |
| Education/ Knowledge/ Experience | Participant remarks on materials and/or perspective of Native American materials as part of a teaching collections, as teaching tools, and/or ways in which conversations, actions, or efforts can take place that impart new and/or lost knowledge, reintroduce and/or revitalize knowledge and/or traditions, provide an experience, and/or provide a sense of connection between peoples, places, communities, cultures, and /or materials of the past, present, and/or future. |
| Spiritual/Religious/ Sacred | Participant remarks on the spiritual, religious, and/or sacred qualities, characteristics, meaning and/or value of Native American material culture |
| Market/ Commodity | Participant remarks on materials and/or perspectives on the monetary, market, and/or commodity value of Native American materials/collections. |

Appendix E – Divergent Worldview Codebook

| CATEGORY | Divergent worldview |
|---|--|
| | Factors or references that indicates a divide in the ways that people within and between Indigenous communities, disciplines, and institution's view issues related to Mimbres or comparable materials |
| CODE | CODE DESCRIPTION |
| Impact and Value | Participant remarks on the impact and/or effects that curation and care, display, excavation, division of materials, disciplinary and/or generational shifts, repatriation, consultation and/or collaboration have had and/or will have on the related discipline, the public, the source/affiliated communities, and/or the collection materials. |
| Ownership, Property, and Patrimony | Participant remarks on concepts of ownership, property, and/or cultural patrimony in regard to their relationship to collection materials, and personal and/or institutional opinions and/or beliefs about who ultimately has the right/rights to keep, care for, or in any other way decide the fate of or make decisions regarding Native American materials/collections, particularly those that are culturally sensitive and/or significant (e.g., funerary materials) |
| Placement/ Action | Participant remarks on their personal and/or institutional perspective on the proper, appropriate, responsible, and/or likely placement and/or action taken regarding any conversations and/or efforts of repatriation and/or burial of Mimbres collections or comparable collections, particularly those that are culturally sensitive or significant (e.g., funerary materials) |

Appendix F – NAGPRA Definitions

| Term | Definition |
|--|--|
| Cultural Affiliation: | A relationship of shared group identity which can be reasonably traced historically or prehistorically between a present-day Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization and an identifiable earlier group. [25 USC 3001 (2)] Cultural affiliation is established when the preponderance of the evidence -- based on geographical, kinship, biological, archeological, linguistic, folklore, oral tradition, historical evidence, or other information or expert opinion -- reasonably leads to such a conclusion. [43 CFR 10.2 (e)] See also Preponderance of Evidence. |
| Culturally Unidentifiable: | Cultural items for which no culturally affiliated present-day Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization can be determined. [43 CFR 10.9 (d)(2)] See also Inventory of Culturally Unidentifiable Human Remains/Review Committee Inventory |
| Claimant: | A lineal descendant, Indian tribe, or Native Hawaiian organization who asserts a claim for cultural items pursuant to NAGPRA. |
| Lineal Descendant: | An individual tracing his or her ancestry directly and without interruption by means of the traditional kinship system of the appropriate Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization or by the common law system of descendency [sic] to a known Native American individual whose remains, funerary objects or sacred objects are being claimed under these regulations. [43 CFR 10.2 (b)(1)] |
| Repatriate: | In NAGPRA (25 USC 3005 (f), 25 USC 3009), the term repatriate means to transfer physical custody of and legal interest in Native American cultural items to lineal descendants, culturally affiliated Indian tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations. See also Disposition, Repatriation, Return, and Transfer. |
| Disposition: | Act of disposing. Transferring to the care or possession of another. The parting with, alienation of, or giving up property. [Black's Law Dictionary, 6th Edition]. As used at 25 USC 3002 and 43 CFR Subpart B, the term refers to the return of cultural items excavated or inadvertently discovered on Federal or tribal lands after November 16, 1990 , to lineal descendants, Indian Tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations. The term disposition is also used at 25 USC 3006 (c)(5) with respect to the Review Committee's charge to recommend specific actions for developing a process for the disposition of culturally unidentifiable human remains . See also Repatriation, Return, and Transfer. |
| What's the difference between "repatriation" and "disposition" as used in NAGPRA? | The term repatriation means the transfer of legal interest in Native American human remains and cultural items to lineal descendants, Indian tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations. The term disposition has been used for the Review Committee development of a process regarding culturally unidentifiable Native American human remains. The rule 43 CFR 10.11 became final March 2010. In effect, transfer of interest in Native American human remains and cultural items is repatriation, regardless of whether they are regarded as culturally affiliated or culturally unidentifiable. In NAGPRA, the term disposition refers to the return of cultural items excavated or inadvertently discovered on Federal or tribal lands after November 16, 1990, to lineal descendants, Indian Tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations |



March 24, 2018

Dear Rhonda Dass, Ph.D.:

Re: IRB Proposal entitled "[1140864-3] "Mimbres Painted Vessels: Western Museums and Representation of Non-Western Cultural Objects" Thesis Research for Master of Science in Applied Anthropology"

Review Level: Level [I]

Your IRB Proposal has been approved as of March 7, 2018. On behalf of the Minnesota State University, Mankato IRB, we wish you success with your study. Remember that you must seek approval for any changes in your study, its design, funding source, consent process, or any part of the study that may affect participants in the study (see <https://grad.mnsu.edu/irb/revision.html>). Should any of the participants in your study suffer a research-related injury or other harmful outcome, you are required to report them to the Associate Vice-President of Research and Dean of Graduate Studies immediately.

When you complete your data collection or should you discontinue your study, you must submit a Closure request (see <https://grad.mnsu.edu/irb/closure.html>). All documents related to this research must be stored for a minimum of three years following the date on your Closure request. Please include your IRBNet ID number with any correspondence with the IRB.

The Principal Investigator (PI) is responsible for maintaining signed consent forms in a secure location at MSU for 3 years following the submission of a Closure request. If the PI leaves MSU before the end of the 3-year timeline, he/she is responsible for following "Consent Form Maintenance" procedures posted online (see <https://grad.mnsu.edu/irb/storingconsentforms.pdf>).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Hadley".

Mary Hadley, Ph.D.
IRB Coordinator

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeffrey Buchanan".

Jeffrey Buchanan, PhD
IRB Co-Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julie A. Carlson".

Julie Carlson, Ed.D.
IRB Co-Chair

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Minnesota State University, Mankato IRB's records.



July 1, 2018

Dear Rhonda Dass, Ph.D.:

Your proposed changes to your Minnesota State University, Mankato Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved research ([1140864-5] "Mimbres Painted Vessels: Western Museums and Representation of Non-Western Cultural Objects" Thesis Research for Master of Science in Applied Anthropology) have been accepted as of July 1, 2018. Thank you for remembering to seek approval for changes in your study.

If you make additional changes in the research design, funding source, consent process, or any part of the study that may affect participants in the study, you will have to reapply for approval (see <https://grad.mnsu.edu/irb/revision.html>). Should any of the participants in your study suffer a research-related injury or other harmful outcome, you are required to report them to the Associate Vice-President of Research and Dean of Graduate Studies immediately.

The letter approving your changes is attached to your original proposal; therefore, the original approval date has not changed. When you complete your data collection or should you discontinue your study, you must submit a Closure request (see <https://grad.mnsu.edu/irb/closure.html>). If you will be collecting data for one calendar year or longer, please submit a Continuation (<https://grad.mnsu.edu/irb/continuations.html>). All documents related to this research must be stored for a minimum of three years following the date on your Closure request. Please include your IRBNet ID number with any correspondence with the IRB. Please include your IRBNet ID number with any correspondence with the IRB.

We wish you success in your research. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Mary Hadley at irb@mnsu.edu or 507-389-5102.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Hadley".

Mary Hadley, Ph.D.
IRB Coordinator

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeffrey Buchanan".

Jeffrey Buchanan, PhD
IRB Co-Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julie A. Carlson".

Julie Carlson, Ed.D.
IRB Co-Chair

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Minnesota State University, Mankato IRB's records.