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Unfolding Decoloniality



Interpreting decoloniality through a Bourdieuan perspective while tracing the relationship between art and ethnographic museums

Alia Farid, *At the Time of the Ebb* (still), 2019, video loop, 21 minutes.
Retrieved from: <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/reviews/sharjah-biennial-review-12605/>

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Preface

Arriving at the end of this journey, I feel blessed to have gained so many new insights on what decoloniality means and entails, especially in a present where decolonial actions are needed more than ever before.

Throughout the writing of this dissertation, I received a great deal of support and assistance. Writing a thesis during a pandemic was proved to be quite a challenge. Without the encouragement and patient guidance of my supervisor dr. Dorus Hoebink, this thesis would not have been made possible. His willingness to share and his constructive criticism have been proven invaluable during this process.

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Abstract

Social demand for more diverse, inclusive and just cultural institutions is constantly increasing calling museums to intensify their decolonial practices and challenge their colonial legacy. Despite the many decolonial actions museums are already implementing, the meaning of decoloniality and what entails in a museum context is still to be defined. Through 14 in-depth interviews, this qualitative study set out to explore the way the concept of decoloniality is interpreted by stakeholders of art and ethnographic museums in the Netherlands as well as how it influences the relationship between the two. This research approached decoloniality through the prism of the coloniality/modernity research group while it substantiated the value of Bourdieu's field theory as an analytical tool in decolonial scholarly debates. The study showed that decoloniality is perceived as a novelty and as an external issue for the art field while at the same time, ethnographic museums perceive it as an internal necessity and a logical continuation of their practice. Moreover, the position of museum stakeholders in their field was proved to be determinantal in the way decoloniality was perceived. Established museum stakeholders had a broader understanding of the term and a more conventional approach when implementing it while less established stakeholders were perceiving it only through the practice of their corresponded field and they were demanding more radical approach. Lastly, decoloniality proved to provide a new stream in the existing collaboration between art and ethnographic museums. The study indicated that museum stakeholders perceives the use of their discourse in a different environment rather cautiously but they are still positive to collaborate between them to the extent their autonomy is not harmed.

Keywords: decoloniality, perception, field theory, art & ethnographic museums, collaboration

Introduction

Western museums are among the many western institutions with legacies rooted deep in colonialism which are now highly criticized by decolonial movements. Museums play an essential role in the establishment and circulation of colonial ideas and systems of knowledge, both within the former colonies and within the European metropolises (Harrison, 2010; van Huis, 2019). Dutch museums are not an exception to that. Calls for more diverse, inclusive and just cultural institutional practices in the Netherlands are constantly increasing. The recent eruption of global protests against institutional racism urges Dutch museums to accelerate and intensify their decolonial practices and challenge their colonial legacy.

As a response to the increased public demand for change, many museums around the world - Netherlands included - started adopting a more decolonial agenda. Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum for instance, appointed two new curators to specifically help with the museum's decolonial practice¹. At the same time, Rotterdam's prestigious art center, so far known as *Witte de With Centre for Contemporary art*, will be officially renamed as *Kunstinstituut Melly* at the beginning of 2021², as a way to dissociate itself from the colonial burden of its previous name. Decolonial projects in Dutch art museums might have been recently accelerated but decolonial projects are not all new for Dutch museums. Dutch ethnographic museums have been dealing with this burden for some time already since they have been challenging and questioning the provenance of their collections, their history and the way they represent other cultures.

Nevertheless, despite the rise of decolonial practices in many museums, there is still a lack of understanding on what decoloniality in museology means and entails (Jilani, 2018). Decoloniality as a concept has different implications in different contexts (Maldonado-Torres, 2011). So far, decoloniality has been mainly studied under the prism of humanities offering a specific literature to the topic. That remains mainly interest in the theoretical and cultural aspect of decoloniality, excluding any socio-economic relevance (Bhambra, 2014). This thesis sets out to offer a new reading of decoloniality through a sociological perspective aiming to observe the concept from a different perspective and further understand the ways social forces influence its perception, specifically within museology.

The thesis approaches decoloniality through the lenses of the South-American scholarly group coloniality/modernity/decoloniality (C/M/D) and it utilizes Pierre's Bourdieu field theory

¹ <https://www.stedelijk.nl/en/news/stedelijk-museum-amsterdam-proudly-announces-appointment-yvette-mutumba-and-adam-szymczyk-curators-large>

² https://www.fkawdw.nl/en/about_us/news/on_27_january_2021_you_can_call_us_kunstinstituut_melly

as its main interpretative framework. Field theory is used to understand how the interpretation of the concept varies according to the type of museum -or sub-field- that it is applied to, and to the position the stakeholder interpreting it holds within his/hers corresponding field.

The research focus on two specific types of museums dedicated to two distinct, but interrelated discourses: art and ethnographic museums. The two types of museums have been influencing each other since the 1980s (Clifford, 1981; Shatanawi; 2009; Geismar, 2015, Van Huis, 2019). Scholars argued that contemporary art and ethnographic artifacts are to a certain extent part of a parallel epistemology (Sansi – Roca, 2015; Geismar, 2015). Both art and ethnographic discourses are sharing a ‘common theoretical and political concern: the politics of representation’ (Foster, 1996; Coles, 2000; Sansi – Roca, 2015). The relationship of the two has attracted the attention of many scholars from both fields, trying to understand how those fields can collaborate (Foster, 1996; Coles, 2000; Westermann, 2005; Ingold, 2013; Sansi – Roca, 2015; Geismar, 2015). Despite the academic interest on this relationship, it has not been studied extensively yet under the prism of decoloniality (Shatanawi, 2009; van Huis, 2019). Through qualitative interviews with stakeholders from both museums, this thesis aims not only to understand how decoloniality is interpreted, but also how the relationship between the two museums is influenced by the decolonial debate.

1.2 Academic and Societal relevance

In this research, academic and societal relevance are overlapping to a great extent. Below, I first present the academic importance of this research and later its potential societal significance.

Decoloniality is gradually becoming popular in various fields of social life in different ways. We can see decoloniality in education, in science, in language and gender, among others. The thesis concerns decoloniality in the domain of museology, a domain which researchers have been studying for some time already (Mignolo, 2010; Lugones, 2010; van Huis, 2019). Nevertheless, most of the research on the field tries to understand how decoloniality is applied and how it affects collections, visitors and local communities (Tolia – Kelly, 2016; Turunen, 2019; van Huis, 2019). There is a gap in decolonial literature regarding how individuals in the museum sector perceive and interpret decoloniality. Examining how museum stakeholders interpret the term in each field will help to better understand decoloniality, the way it is perceived by museums’ stakeholders, and how decolonial projects are affected by the relationship between the agents and structures of their corresponding fields.

Decoloniality has been mainly studied under the prism of humanities. The lack of sociological research in decoloniality limits our understanding of the term and the way decoloniality affects and is affected by social structures and agency. The Bordieuan sociological approach the thesis encompasses contributes to a new understanding of decoloniality which opens new reciprocal paths or research for further investigation regarding decoloniality as well as the structures dictating each separate field and its institutions.

Furthermore, studying decoloniality as a concept influenced by the structures of the fields it is applied to does not only further inform decolonial scholarship but it also contributes to the sociological literature regarding the use of field theory as an applied methodology.

As already stated, the relationship between art and ethnographic discourse advances under the prism of decoloniality. Art is exhibited in ethnographic display while ethnographically inspired art works and methodologies are adopted in art museums. This relationship has not been studied extensively yet. What art can offer to the ethnographic field and the other way around or how this relationship is perceived by the museum stakeholders still needs to be critically unpacked (Sansi- Roca, 2015; Geismar, 2015). Comparing two different museum types, how they understand and interpret decoloniality and how their relationship is formed under this prism, provides not only a better understanding of decoloniality, but also of the structures of each field and their importance in museum practices generally.

On a more practical note, a clear overview of the relationship between different museum fields under the prism of decoloniality will be helpful to the field of museology. In fact, European museums are continuously evolving to adapt to a society that changes rapidly (Shatanawi, 2009; van Huis, 2019). Ethnographic museums are closing down, merging with art museums or being transformed into cultural history museums (Shatanawi, 2009; Jilani, 2018). This research will offer museum professionals a more profound understanding on how different types of museums relate with each other and under which premises these relationships are built when fields are informed by external forces such as decoloniality. Understanding the relationship of the two museums will help professionals to further develop it in a more stable and productive ground and take more informed decisions related to possible collaborations or mergers between museums.

Lastly, any research that adds to the debate of decoloniality in a Dutch context is highly relevant since the Netherlands is a multicultural society with a long and troubled colonial history (Wekker, 2016; van Huis, 2019). The way the colonial past is presented or silenced by museums has consequences on the inclusion or exclusion of postcolonial migrants in Dutch society (Shatanawi, 2009; Wekker, 2016; van Huis, 2019). Museums are essential places where new

meanings for existing heritage are created. They have a transformative potential and therefore decolonizing museums will lead to a possible actual change in society. This research aims to provide museum professional with a better understanding of decolonial practices and thereover promote a more equal, honest and just society.

1.3 Research Question

This thesis was built around the concept of decoloniality and the way it is perceived and interpreted by two types of museums in the Netherlands: art and ethnographic museums. Decoloniality was approached sociologically and Bourdieu's field theory was used as its main interpretative tool. The thesis aims to explore decoloniality not autonomously but in relation to the field, museum and the agents it is applied to. Furthermore, decoloniality is perceived as an external force to both art and ethnographic museums and as such, the way it affects the relationship of the two museums is explored.

With all that being said, the research question of this master thesis has been formulated as follows:

- How is the concept of decoloniality interpreted in ethnographic and art museums in the Netherlands according to the museums' stakeholders and how does it influence the relationship between these two types of museum?

In addition to the main research question, two sub-questions were formed to facilitate and better structure the research process. The two sub questions helped me formulate the answer to the main question and organise the analysis process accordingly to end up in a concrete result. The two sub questions are therefore the following:

- How do museum stakeholders from each museum (art and ethnographic) interpret decoloniality?
- How do the structures within each museum (art and ethnographic) influence interpretations of decoloniality?

1.4 Thesis outline.

Following the introduction, the next chapter presents the theoretical framework of this research in which I position the current study in the existing body of literature and I present its main theoretical tools. I discuss how decoloniality has been so far conceptualised within academia according to the South American scholar group C/M/D and the concept of 'coloniality', 'colonial matrix of power', 'coloniality/modernity', and finally 'decoloniality' are

introduced. I proceed by tracing the relationship of European museums with ‘coloniality’ and then discussing the presence of decoloniality in Dutch ethnographic and art museums. The chapter continues with the relationship between art and ethnographic museums as presented by Hal Foster (1996), Heidi Geismar (2015) and Roger Sansi-Roca (2015). The theoretical framework is concluded by introducing Bourdieu’s field theory and arguing how key concepts of this theory are used to make sense of the collected data and answer my research question.

In the following chapter about methodology, I justify all my methodological choices including sampling, operationalisation, data collection and analysis. Moreover, I detail the consequences the Covid -19 pandemic had on the development of my research design. The chapter concludes with a section in which I reflect on my position as a researcher and to the extent it may have influenced the process of this research.

Furthermore, I present the results of the thematic analysis divided in three main sections with 9 themes in total. Each theme is discussed in a dialogical way between the two types of museums investigated in this project.

Lastly, the thesis concludes with a general discussion and conclusion chapter. Here, I contextualise the results within the existing literature and I clarify how the themes presented in the previews chapter are used to provide an answer to the research question. I answer my two sub-questions and I formulate a clear answer to my main research question. I lastly reflect on the limitations I encountered in this process and a delineate possible areas for future research.

2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework is divided in three main sections, each dedicated to an important concept informing the research. In the first section, I explore the interconnections between the concepts of coloniality, modernity and decoloniality, and I give an overview of the academic debates surrounding these concepts. In the second section, I focus primarily on the field of museology and more specifically, on how the concept of (de)-coloniality is presented in ethnographic and art museums. Furthermore, I continue with a discussion on the most recent literature regarding the current developments of decoloniality in the two types of museums. Finally, I discuss Bourdieu's field theory and how it applies in art and ethnographic museums. This theory helps to gain a better understanding of how ethnographic and art museums work, and of how the concept of decoloniality informs and affects the practices of the museums, acting as an crucial external force.

2.1 Coloniality – Unfolding decoloniality.

The concept of decolonisation first appeared in the 19th century as part of new critical ideas that emerged in the European colonies. These ideas responded to the creation of imperial nation-states by Western Europe, they challenged the idea of colonialism in general and they were later associated with the struggle of the physical decolonisation around the world . (Mignolo, 2010, Bhabra, 2014). During the second half of the twentieth century, decolonisation found its way into western academic discourse, creating a diverse landscape of thoughts and theories on which today the academic field of postcolonial studies is based.

One of the most influential branches of the postcolonial studies is the research group Coloniality/ Modernity/ Decoloniality (C/ M/D). This research group represents a school of thought developed at the beginning of our century by the Peruvian scholar Aníbal Quijano, and was further developed by the Argentinian philosopher and semiotician Walter Mignolo (Mignolo, 2010). This group of scholars introduced four main concepts related to decoloniality, which I further use to conceptualise decoloniality in relation with the ethnographic and art museums. Those are: 'coloniality', 'colonial matrix of power', 'coloniality/modernity', and finally 'decoloniality'.

The first concept, *coloniality*, was introduced by Anibal Quijano to highlight the fact that the end of the physical presence of European colonial rule in the second half of the twentieth century did not necessarily mark the end of coloniality (Gosden, 2004; Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2007). Coloniality, according to Quijano, significantly differs from colonisation. 'Coloniality' is used by Quijano to describe the underlying logic of Western imperialism. It is embedded into

social constructions, beliefs, ideas, and practices imposed on the colonised people. That systematic repression of indigenous beliefs has acted as an efficient way for social and cultural control (Quijano, 2010). The legacy of colonialism outlived its physical end and still influences contemporary societies in the form of social discrimination, for which particular cultures are valued while all other cultures and perceptions are marginalized (Quijano, 2010).

Quijano introduced the concept of *colonial matrix of power* as an extension of coloniality to describe the control of the world by the former colonial powers. This happens in four different, interrelated domains: first, control of economy, second, control of authority, third, gender and sexuality and, finally, control of subjectivity and of knowledge. Each of these domains and its effects on contemporary societies are analysed and further studied by different scholars - members of the C/M/D group. The main idea behind the concept of the 'colonial matrix of power' is that colonialism still influences our societies on different levels (Quijano, 2007). In the following paragraphs, I discuss the influence of the colonial matrix of power in the domains of subjectivity and knowledge, since these are the ones more connected with museology.

The control of knowledge can be seen as the consequence of the establishment of the European paradigm of thinking, based on rationality, as a universal and superior form of knowledge (Quijano, 2007). Other epistemologies or ways of thinking, outside the western realm, such as various indigenous forms of knowledge, were silenced or were labelled as primitive, barbarian or inferior (Mignolo, 2007).

On one side, European colonialism has had a decisive role on the constitution of the European paradigm of thinking, living and acting and its proclaimed universality also within continental Europe (Mignolo, 2007). On the other side, non-western cultures that did not agree with the European paradigm were presented as irrational and thus inferior, primitive and undeveloped. The 'colonial matrix of power' is indeed characterised by a radical absence of the 'other' (non-western individuals/cultures) in the western narratives. The European relationship with the 'other', was based on those premises, and it was constituted in a hierarchical way which, to a certain extent, is still present today (Quijano, 2007). Within this context, European museums are to a great extent carriers and promoters of those ideas, and only recently they have started to challenge them (Shatanawi, 2009; Wekker, 2016; Tolia-Kelly, 2016; van Huis, 2019).

In addition, one of the most important theoretical insights of the C/M/D research group was the association of coloniality with western modernity. Modernity and coloniality according to Quijano (2007) are considered to be two sides of the same coin. Modernity is intended by the scholars of the group in the way sociologist Anthony Giddens conceptualise it. As a specific set of attitudes towards the world, the emergence of complex economic institutions, the market

economy and, lastly, the emergence of political institutions such as the nation-state and mass democracy (Giddens & Pierson, 1998). The south American scholars underline the fact that modernity is primarily a European creation which nevertheless has been imposed to all the world, through European colonial domination. Gurminder Bhambra, paraphrasing Quijano explicitly argues that:

‘[...] modernity that Europe takes as the context for its own being is, in fact, so deeply imbricated in the structures of European colonial domination over the rest of the world that is impossible to separate the two: hence, modernity/coloniality’ (Bhambra, 2014, p.118).

Walter Mignolo further reflects on the relation of modernity with coloniality by arguing that the ‘colonial matrix of power’ is the ‘inextricable combination of the rhetoric of modernity (progress, development, growth) and the logic of ‘coloniality’ (poverty, misery, inequality)’ (Mignolo, 2007, as cited in Bhambra, 2014, p.119). Quijano further argues on this relationship by stating that modernity originated at the end of the 15th century after a violent encounter between Europe and America (2000). He opposed to the idea that modernity is primarily an outcome of 18th century European enlightenment, rationalism and scientific progress but he rather aligns it with the logic of colonialism. Therefore, an actual abolition of the influence of the ‘colonial matrix of power’, which is the aim of many decolonial projects, will not be possible unless ideas related to western modernity are abolished as well.

The last concept I discuss is the concept of *decoloniality*, which is highly related with the two preceding concepts and, more specifically, on how to abolish them and reduce their implications to our society. According to Mignolo (2007), to practice decoloniality is to delink: delink modernity and its carriers from the universalist claims of the Eurocentric way of thinking. Decoloniality aims not for a hegemonic universalism but rather for a pluriversality, intercultural dialogue and respect. Decoloniality is the re-conceptualisation of modernity as something inherently related to colonialism, reconsider how colonial history affected the privileged position of Europe in the world and also how the colonial order still influences contemporary society (Mignolo, 1995; Quijano, 2007; Escobar, 2007; Wekker, 2016; van Huis, 2019). Mignolo et al. also see decoloniality as a method to unlearn and relearn how to look at the world around us, how to live and how to think, as well as reversing historical perspectives. Decoloniality is also a set of intellectual tools through which one is trying to make sense of the world, not only in the academic centres but also in the academic margins (Mignolo, 1995). In other words, decoloniality is to give voice to those people that were denied enunciation by coloniality.

2.2 The formation of the Modern European museum and coloniality

In this section, I attempt to create a bridge between the theories of the C/M/D group and the modern European museum. I explain the influence of the 'colonial matrix of power' on the formation of the European museum, and I discuss the way it influences the practice of Dutch ethnographic and art museums. I conclude this section with a brief discussion of the current decolonial practices within Dutch museums.

2.2.1 European museum and modernity

The formation of the European museum is highly associated with modernity (Harrison, 2012). In fact, museums as we know them today were developed in the 19th century from the transformation of earlier collecting institutions. Newly transformed institutions began to bring private collections into public displays, forming a new way 'for inscribing and broadcasting the messages of power (but of a different type) throughout society' (Bennett, 1988, p.74). According to Tony Bennett (1995), it was through museums that modernity managed to promote its notions on time, progress and rationality. These notions, were supported by disciplines relevant to the museums such as archaeology, anthropology and art history. Museums usually presented history in a linear way, presenting the Western, modern culture as epitome of the human civilization. Furthermore, 20th century European museums were – and to some extent still are – promoting a particular type of knowledge system based on specific principles of classification, ordering and cataloguing. Those principles which, according to Harrison are an integral part of Western modernity (2012). For instance, European Ethnographic museums used to frame non-western cultures as being inferior to the western cultural in a civilizing hierarchy. Non-western cultures were shown until recently as 'being 'other' to the European sensibilities and modernity itself (Tolia – Kelly, 2016, p.898)?

Museums are proved to be highly related to the values of western modernity and therefore to coloniality as well (Harrison & Hughes, 2010). European museums were collecting, classifying, and presenting to the European public, cultural materials from different cultures, mainly from European colonies. For many years, western museums have been constructed as the places where ideas and feelings about the 'non-western other' were materialized concerning power patterns (Stocking, 1985). Museums were places where the relationship between power and knowledge was on permanent display (Bennett, 1995). Furthermore, the newly formed nation-states in continental Europe saw in the museum a vital tool to promote the ideals of western modernity through an educational mission, by cultivating public's national citizenship

and demonstrate the might and greatness of the nation which coincided with the success of the nation's colonies (Bennett, 1995).

Museums also had an essential role in forming a common European identity. Concerning the formation of the European identity, Quijano argues that it emerged through a constant process of differentiation from other cultures (2007). The radical absence, the objectification and the subordination of the 'other' to the European used to be a common practice in European museums. Tony Bennett's work on the *exhibitionary complex* argues that modern European museum became an embodiment of possession, knowledge and power promoting hierarchies and structuring meanings for the benefit of the nation-state (Bennett, 1995). Concerning all these, decolonization is highly important in order to deal with the colonial burden of the museums and reimagine them as decolonial institutions. In the following paragraphs, I elaborate more on how all these statements were manifested specifically in ethnographic and art museums in the Netherlands.

2.2.2 Coloniality and Decoloniality in Dutch ethnographic museums

Among the different typologies of museums, ethnographic museums are those more tightly related to the history of colonialism, and Dutch ethnographic museums are not excluded from that. In fact, ethnographic museums in the Netherlands were either founded to promote scientific research on the field of ethnology/anthropology (Volkenkunde museum - Leiden), or to promote political and economic collaborations between the Netherlands and their colonies (Tropen Museum - Amsterdam) (Kreps, 2019). Anthropologist, Christina Kreps, specifically mentions that Dutch ethnographic collections came to be as 'a result of scientific research, military expeditions, commercial trade and economic exploits as well as missionary work' done in the colonies (Kreps, 2019, p.120).

The colonial matrix of power, as described in the previews section, was the matrix through which ethnographic museums organized and promoted mainstream knowledge systems. Non-western cultures and material objects were studied under pre-established canons. Non-western people were classified in fixed categories through racialized criteria, following an Darwinian sequence. Binary oppositions were created to describe the relationship between Europe and the colonies: West/East, Modern/Primitive or Art/craft. Those oppositions left no space for mutual cultural interchange (MacLeod, 1998; Kreps, 2019).

With the starting of the collapse of Dutch colonial empire by the end of World War II, and with the formation of the first postcolonial nations, Dutch ethnographic museums began a process of decolonization. They primarily focused on reflecting on their past, rethinking their

mission and re-shaping their relationship with the former Dutch colonies (Kreps, 2019). With the beginning of the new century, this process has been intensified with ethnographic museums making significant progress (Van Huis, 2019). Decolonial practices in ethnographic museums include actions as giving voice to the represented people. Furthermore, museums are actively trying to deal with the burden of their colonial past as it is evident through repatriating human remains, looted objects and challenge the promotion of ethnonationalist narratives (van Huis, 2019). Entering the 21st century and the rise of voices for a more decolonial museum sector, ethnographic museums become more critical towards their practice. Art was seen as a mean through which to achieve a more decolonial practice (Shatanawi, 2009, Geismar, 2015). Slowly but steadily, Dutch ethnographic museums would start to buy art works from various non-western artists for their collection to finally arrive to the inclusion of non-western contemporary art as part of their periodical exhibitions and permanent displays (Shatanawi, 2009; Geismar, 2015).

2.2.3 Coloniality and Decoloniality in Art museums

Next to ethnographic museums, art museums are also highly related to coloniality, albeit in a less direct way than ethnographic museums. Besides, art museums are dedicated in presenting modern and contemporary art from Europe. However, while they appear not to be connected with coloniality, their epistemic base is highly influenced by it. Art museums are related to the academic discipline of art history and aesthetics, both of which have highly Eurocentric histories and were to a great extent influenced by the values and ideas of Western Modernism. Art history originated in the 19th century and it is biased towards the artistic production of Europe (Bouwhuis, 2019). For example, renaissance, romanticism and impressionism are European art movements which happen to be at the core of art history claiming universality. At the same time, art history is characterized by a radical absence of any form of non- European art (Bouwhuis, 2019).

This phenomenon is present also in contemporary art collections and institutions. Already by the end of the 1990s, postcolonial influence have had an impact regarding the introduction of non-western artists in big western art institutions, collections and events but still, according to various artists and scholars not to the right extent (Araeen, 2004; Bonilla, 2017).

Additionally, western art museums claim universality of the aesthetic values they evaluate and categorize art, forgetting that those values are a product of modern European thought. The way art is perceived as an aesthetic experience originates from the end of 18th century Europe. The system of principles regarding the appreciation of beauty and art in general were formulated

back by philosophers such as Alexander Baumgarten and Immanuel Kant and are to a certain extent still perceived as universal by many western art institutions (Quijano, 1997). Walter Mignolo and Rolando Vázquez sees the Kantian aesthetics as a ‘normative standard that attempts to superimpose its own sense of beauty over the world’ (Mignolo & Vázquez, 2013 as cited in Schütz, 2018).

When compared to ethnographic museums; Dutch art museums only recently started dealing with decoloniality (Shatanawi, 2009; Bonilla, 2017). Only recently, Dutch art museums have taken some serious steps related to decoloniality. The main decolonial action by art museums concern revision in acquisition policies, attempts to adopt less Eurocentric points of view regarding presentation and inclusion of artists and curators from different ethnic groups in the museum’s practice (Bonilla, 2017).

The Stedelijk museum of Amsterdam for instance, in 2014, organized the exhibition, *How far, how near – The world in the Stedelijk* in an attempt to let the museum dig into its collection and understand its relationship with art created outside Europe and Northern America³. Since then, the museum has established long term partnerships with art institutions outside Europe, started changing its acquisition policy to include non-western areas and it started diversifying its personnel (Bonilla, 2017). In Eindhoven, Van Abbe museum presented in 2017 an interesting new display for its permanent collection, entitled *The making of modern art*⁴. In this display the museum reflects and challenge the formation of the modern European canon in art raising questions about European universalist claims on art and aesthetics.

Lastly, it is important to mention the introduction of ethnographically inspired artworks in the display of art museums in an attempt to criticize and challenge their colonial legacy. Art projects whereas the artist take the role of the ethnographer have recently become more popular among art museums in the Netherlands (see Witte de With center, Tent art space, Van Abbe museum, Stedelijk museum Amsterdam). An example of that is the acquisition and installation of Michael Rakowitz art work, *The Invisible Enemy Should Not Exist*, by Van Abbe museum in Eindhoven. According to the museum curator, Christiane Berndes, the work of Rakowitz addresses issues of ‘migration of goods in colonial and postcolonial times, creating and destroying identity through power, law and value systems (Berndes, 2015, p. 40).’ Rakowitz work is just an example of the many ethnographically inspired artworks that can be viewed in art museums under the prism of decoloniality.

³ <https://www.stedelijk.nl/en/exhibitions/how-far-how-near>

⁴ <https://vanabbemuseum.nl/en/programme/programme/the-making-of-modern-art/>

2.2.4 The relationship between art and ethnography

Art and ethnographic museum have been deliberately chosen for this research due to their long lasting relationship between art and ethnography, which goes back to the beginning of the 20th century. To begin with, both art and ethnographic discourse aim to represent social worlds and they are both interested by the politics of representation (Foster, 1996; Coles, 2000; Geismar, 2015; Sansi – Roca, 2015). According to the anthropologist Roger Sansi- Roca, ‘both [...] would ask questions about everyday life, questions about things one normally takes for granted: the value of commodities, the relation of people and things, work and play, people and the city’ (Sansi-Roca, 2015, p.20). In addition, the relationship between the two fields was encouraged when both art and ethnography were highly doubting the established quo within their field, seeking for a radical change or a break from the ‘academy’. It was then when ethnographers started looking at art while artists were seeking inspiration in the field, out of their studios.

Social anthropologist Haidy Geismar argues that art and ethnographic artifacts are parallel epistemologies. She identifies four streams that the two discourses intersect (2015). The first one has to do with the relationship of modernism with primitivism: the modernist’s discovery of what was then portrayed as primitive art (art from the colonies) and the influence of it in the art of the time. The second stream sees artists working with historic and ethnographic collections with the aim of criticizing institutional practices. Thirdly, art has been used in ethnographic museums as an alternative methodology for producing knowledge in museums. Finally, art and ethnographic museums collaborate under the prism of actor-network theory (Latour and Weibel, 2005) which ‘incorporates art into a broader view of the ways in which objects and people constitute cultural knowledge together in museums’ (Geismar, 2015, p.185).

Art theorist Hal Foster was among the first scholars to deal with the relationship between art and ethnography. In his famous paper ‘The artist as an ethnographer’, he describes the relationship between artists and ethnographer as a relationship based on envy. Artists envy the ethnographers for the critical perspective and direct access to cultural alterity while artists are envied for their freedom and openness (Foster, 1996). Artists dealing with those issues, being interested to work out of their studio, either with or for communities, are representative of what is known today as the ‘ethnographic turn’ in contemporary art. As a consequence of the said turn, art and ethnographic discourses seem to get more and more intertwined over the time.

Decoloniality appears to add a new analytical layer into this relationship. which raises new questions regarding the dynamics of this collaboration and its possible future.

2.3 Bourdieu's Field Theory. The ethnographic and art museum.

In order to further elaborate and understand the relationship between ethnographic and art museums as it is informed by decoloniality, I decided to adopt several concepts from Bourdieu's field theory. Bourdieu's field theory is used as the main interpretative framework for my research and concepts such as 'field', 'field structure and effects', 'autonomy', 'doxa' and 'homology', are used as analytical tools.

Social space and fields

Bourdieu uses the concept of *fields* to describe the social space where all human actions take place. For Bourdieu, social space is a relational space which is constituted by different fields and subfields from within different agents operate simultaneously. A specific field is seen as an arena in which different agents produce goods, circulate knowledge, and act in general. Each field has preset boundaries and all actions happening in the field are filtered through a 'logic of practice' which determines agent behavior, understandings and relation with one another (Bourdieu, 1977). Agents from each field act through competitive positions, trying to accumulate more capital and power and to gain more prestigious positions. Each agent gains a position in the field based on the specific rules that govern the field, agents' habitus and agent's capital (Bourdieu, 1977).

Autonomy and Doxa

Bourdieu's social space is dominated mainly by three main fields: the social, economic and political. Various fields of society though have managed over the time to gain a form of relative autonomy from the main fields described above. When a field becomes more autonomous, it sets its own rules and its own type of (symbolic) capital on which the elite of the field bases its power. Intellectual capital and cultural capital, for instance, would be much more appreciated in respectively the academic and cultural fields, than as an economic capital.

The more autonomous a field becomes, the more independent it gets. An autonomous field is able to create its own conventions and logic, as well as its own selection mechanisms for its future members (Bourdieu, 1993). The rules, the underlying beliefs and assumptions formed in the autonomous fields which are controlling the activity of the field and its members, is what Bourdieu refers to as *doxa* (Bourdieu, 1993). Autonomous fields require new agents to have a basic knowledge of how the field works and what the doxa of the field is to legitimate their presence there.

Ethnographic and art subfields are part of the broader field of Culture. Ethnographic and Art museums are institutions which we can argue they are part of the fields of Ethnography and of Art respectively, both of which are subfields to the Cultural field. Moreover, both types of museums are tightly related to the subfields of the academic disciplines of anthropology and art history.

Influence of the field of power

So far, I described how each field has its own rules and conventions that renders it, to a certain extent, autonomous. Depending though, on how autonomous each field is, it can be influenced by other, bigger fields that surround it. The American anthropologist, Sally Moore, describes the semi-autonomous characteristic of the social field as following:

‘The semi-autonomous social field has rule-making capacities, and the means to induce or coerce compliance; but it is simultaneously set in a larger social matrix which can, and does, affect and invade it, sometimes at the invitation of persons inside it, sometimes at its own instance’ (Moore, 1973, p.720).

Following this line of thinking, ethnographic and art museums might indeed be autonomous to the extent they have their own doxa, but they might as well be influenced by other fields that surround them. As already mentioned, ethnographic and art museums are institutions of two subfields that are part of the broader cultural field. Bourdieu explicitly argues that each subfield of the cultural field is dominated by the broader economic and political fields (Bourdieu, 1998b). Therefore, we can argue that this also applies to art and ethnographic museums.

The decolonial debate might not be a specific field per se but it is part of other, broader fields such as the political field and the field of academia. The influence of the decolonial debate has now expanded in many fields of society including the cultural field and therefore also the institutions of art and ethnographic museums (Shatanawi, 2009; Tolia – Kelly, 2016; Van Huis, 2019).

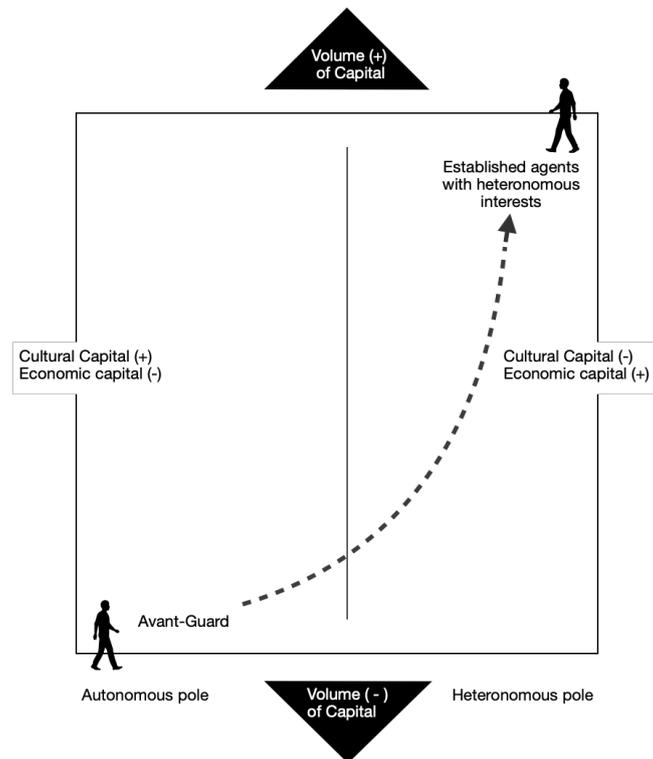


Figure 1. Graphic representation of a field influenced by the field of power

Field structure and struggles

Each social field can be seen to host a competitive game or, as Bourdieu states, it can be seen as a *field of struggles* between the different agents trying to maximize their influence and position in the field (Bourdieu, 1993). Agents are positioned in the field according to the volume of symbolic capital they possess and its value based on the established 'Doxa' of the field. On one hand, well-established agents have an interest in maintaining the existing structure and 'Doxa' of the field to keep their privileged position. They allow modifications in the order of the field only to the extent that enables them to keep their domination. On the other hand, non-established agents, agents possessing less-valued capital (usually new arrivals and young agents), try to influence or subvert the symbolic order of the field, in an attempt to get a chance to obtain a higher position. It is important to underline that the position each agent holds within his field defines not only the way the agent acts, but also the way it perceives the world around it (Bourdieu, 1993).

Each field of the social space follows two opposing principles of hierarchizations: A heteronomous and autonomous one. The heteronomous principle is influenced by the field of power. Compared to other fields, the competition in the field of power is quite abstract and is positioned in-between economic (dominant) and cultural (dominated) capital. Economic capital is the dominant capital for the dominant class of the field, while the cultural capital is the

dominant capital for the dominated class (see figure1). Any field affected by the field of power generates in its structure the two opposing poles existing in the field of power. One influenced by the cultural capital and one by the economic. In the field of education for instance, in the autonomous domain, some agents are conceiving education as being merely interested with cultural matters while at the heteronomous pole education is concerned for economic prosperity and competitiveness (Hilgers & Mangez, 2015).

We can argue that the same principles apply to the field of art. In the autonomous pole art is perceived as more self-reflective, art for art's sake, or in other words non-responsible for extra – aesthetic concerns (Doorman, 2015). On the other hand, the heteronomous pole, conceives art as part of the society, influenced by the economic and political realms of the social space.

Lastly, while the autonomous and heteronomous distinction in the field can be seen horizontally, the second hierarchization principle concerns the volume of capital each agent has. The more capital an agent possess the higher his position in the hierarchy of the field will be.

Change in the field

The structure of each field, including its doxa, is not steady in time, but open to changes. In each field, there are people with progressive ideas that challenge the established doxa, but also people who fight to maintain the current status quo. The first attitude is positioned within the avant-garde side of the field, and usually, occupies a subordinate position in comparison to other members. Agents of the field fighting for the status quo to remain as such are called *incumbents*, and they are usually positioned in a consecrated place within the field. Other agents of the field highly appreciate them, and they possess a high amount of symbolic capital. They allow modifications to the established order of the field only to the extent that enable them to keep their privileged position. A radical change of the structure of the field might put their current position in danger. Changes within the field usually occur from the *avant-garde* positions (lower level in the autonomous pole).

With new, innovative ideas, actions or products, avant-garde agents seek recognition by their established peers in an attempt to distinguish themselves from the more established agents. As the avant-garde agents gain more symbolic recognition (in the autonomous pole) and their ideas become accepted in the field they rise in the hierarchy. They are first becoming what Bourdieu calls 'consecrated avant-garde', to later move even further towards the heteronomous pole of the field gaining more capital and finally becoming established agents.

Looking at the hierarchy within art and ethnographic museums, I can assume that similar actions take place. Directors of the museums or curators with much experience will be in a privileged position within the field compare to new junior curators, exhibition makers or interns. Following the same logic, it is assumed that well-established individuals from both ethnographic and art museums will be open to decolonial changes to the extent that it does not affect their current position in the field. On the other hand, non-established agents will support decolonial changes more vigorously aiming to subvert the power structures of the field to gain a better position within it.

Homology

Homology is mostly referred to as the structural positions of the agents within different fields through which they are related. Bourdieu (1977) argues that between social agents occupying homologous positions in different fields there might be a mutual understanding and a share of affinity. Agents are connected because they share ‘the invariant, or indeed universal, content of the relationship between the dominant and the dominated’ (Bourdieu, 1977). It is also through the homology of their structures that different ideas get spread through the fields. Ideas adopted by junior curators in ethnographic museums might be easily adopted by junior curators of art museums since they share an affinity.

For example, agents in dominant positions in the ethnographic museum, such as museum directors or chief curators, could be sharing the same structural ideas with their counterparts in art museums. Thus, both museums’ directors will act similarly, within their fields, since both their interests, for instance, will be to consolidate the established order within their field and therefore keep their dominant position. Following the same logic, people in less established positions, such as junior curators, newly hired exhibition-makers and interns will be sharing the same needs despite being members of different fields.

3. Methodology

To best answer my research question, I decided to follow a qualitative research design. Initially, I collected the necessary data through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, which were then further analyzed following a thematic analysis process. In this chapter, I firstly discuss the unusual conditions under which this research has been conducted, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, as it influenced to a great extent my methodological framework. Furthermore, I lay out and justify all my methodological decision, including sampling, operationalization, data collection and analysis process.

3.1 Doing research during the outbreak of a pandemic.

When I began preparing my research thesis, I never thought I would have to conduct my research during a global pandemic outbreak. Writing a research paper in such an uncertain and unpredictable times was not an easy task both on a personal and organizational level.

Art and ethnographic museums were all closed due to the pandemic and the interviews I had initially planned were all cancelled. My initial plan was falling apart. After the first shock, I had to be more practical if I wanted to finish my thesis. I slightly changed my initial research design to fit the new reality excluding any planned observations in museums. I decided to focus primarily on collecting data through interviews. Thankfully, I managed to rearrange the cancelled interviews and arrange more through Skype and Zoom, which despite not being the ideal way of conducting qualitative interviews was the only possible way to do so.

The difficulties were a lot and the personal effort was quite demanding. Nevertheless, with a positive attitude and some extra time the research was finally conducted and eventually finalized.

3.2 Research Question

As already mentioned, this thesis seeks to explore two main things. First, how the concept of decoloniality is interpreted by museum professionals in the Netherlands and second, the relationship between ethnographic and art museums under the prism of decoloniality. The research question of this thesis has been formulated as follows:

- How is the concept of decoloniality interpreted in ethnographic and art museums in the Netherlands according to the museums' stakeholders and how does it influence the relationship between these two types of museum?

In addition to the main research question, two sub-questions were formulated to narrow down the research spectrum. The first sub-question is the following:

- How do museum stakeholders from each museum (art and ethnographic) interpret respectively decoloniality?

Decoloniality as a concept is quite vague and broad. It has been analyzed theoretically by different theoretical schools but what it means in the museological field has not been studied extensively yet. Do all museums interpret and understand decoloniality in the same way? Does decoloniality have the same meaning for art and ethnographic museums?

The second sub-question focuses on individual perception and specifically on how the position of each museum agent in its field affects the way it interprets and understands decoloniality.

- How does the structure within each museum field (art and ethnographic) influence interpretations of decoloniality?

The second sub-question was formulated in such a way as to focus on the internal sub-field structure of each museum. Both sub-questions will guide me through formulating an answer to my main research question.

3.3 Qualitative interviews.

Even though it is quite common throughout academic research to use multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) when employing field theory as an analytical tool, I decided to adopt semi-structured, in-depth, qualitative interviews as my methodology. Field theory has recently been approached with different qualitative methodologies such as ethnographic observations and interviews. Researchers such as Friedman & Kuipers (2013) and Nettleton (2013) have used such methods successfully proven that qualitative interviews can be deployed to understand the dynamics of various fields as well.

Considering the complexity of MCA, it was not possible within the following organizational and time framework to undertake such an extensive analysis. Instead, qualitative interviews, known as being a good mean through which to approach field theory (Friedman & Kuipers, 2013; Nettleton, 2013) have been employed. Specifically, my choice fell on in-depth and semi-structured interviews.

A qualitative approach is suggested as a very prominent research approach when it comes to explore people's perceptions, understandings and experiences on a specific phenomenon (Frances et al, 2009). A methodology, providing me the flexibility to guide the

conversation and relying, when necessary, on follow-up questions, was necessary given the variety of the sample I coped with. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews provided not only flexibility but at the same time ensured all my topics of interest would be covered. According to McNamara, in-depth, semi-structured interviews ‘are more focused than the conversational approach, but still allows a degree of freedom and adaptability in getting information from the interviewee (2009, Types of Interviews section, para. 1).

3.4 Operationalization & Interview guide

I proceeded with a semi-structured interview design guided by themes derived from my research questions that acted as a framework to keep the interviews on track. Semi-structured interview design is very flexible and it allowed me to explore unanticipated responses and let the interviewees guide the process. I understand the personal viewpoints of the interviewees without them being influenced by a set of close-ended questions (Frances et al, 2009). In that way, I ensured to collect richer and more nuanced data which later helped me to answer my question.

My interview guide was divided into three categories, each of which related to themes derived from my research question and my theoretical framework: decoloniality, decoloniality in practice and lastly the relationship between the two museums. Each category had two or three main questions, and some follow up questions. Due to the flexibility of the selected research design, I could easily ask for more clarifications if necessary and decide which topics to explore further.

The first theme was connected with decoloniality, which I operationalize as any reference by the interviewees that dealt critically with issues around coloniality (Quijano, 2007). In other words, decoloniality will be observable as any activity held by museums that opposes or challenges the Eurocentric model of thinking and perceiving the world. Moreover, actions dealing with the non-western cultures and the systematic repression of their beliefs, ideas and practices will be seen as decolonial actions. The main questions were evolving around interviewees’ interpretation of the concept of decoloniality, aimed at providing me an internal point of view. This approach allowed me to see what each interviewee considered essential and what not.

The second theme was about decoloniality in practice in the field of museology. Precisely, what does decoloniality mean for them in practice. Similarly, I started with an open question (When you are putting together an exhibition, how does decoloniality affect the conception and realization of the exhibition?) and continue with some follow-up questions related to topics that appeared in other similar research papers of the field such as language, text,

selection of objects and contextualization (How do you select the exhibits you will show and how do you tell a story through them?, how important is written text concerning decoloniality and how much attention do you pay when writing labels and introductory text?) (Van Huis, 2019; Turunen, 2019).

The last theme was tailored specifically for each type of museum in order to examine the relationship between the two types of museums. Regarding the concepts of 'art' and 'ethnography', specifically interested in this theme, they were operationalized in an open and broad way. Both terms are quite complicated to define, specifically when under the prism of decolonization. Therefore, each concept was operationalized for this research in the way it was described and perceived by the interviewees themselves. The questions of the last theme were developed to shed light on the relationships between the two museums, as informed by decoloniality, and how each other's discourse (art in ethnographic displays and ethnographic projects in art museums) was seen and used by the opposite field (As an art curator, what elements of the anthropological discourse can you find useful for your practice, also related to decolonization?/ Why did you introduce contemporary art into an ethnographic exhibition?).

Each interview guide can be seen in its exact form in Appendix A.

3.5 Sampling & Data collection

The Netherlands was chosen as the area of focus of this study because of its controversial colonial past and its many museums, both ethnographic and art. Furthermore, Dutch ethnographic and art museums consider decoloniality highly in their agendas, and thus it makes them a compelling case to study. In addition to that, I am currently residing in the country, and thus it facilitates the process to a great extent.

Ethnographic and art museums have been selected deliberately as the central research units of this study for the following reasons. Both museums emerged during the colonial era, and their colonial past still influences them to a certain extent (Shatanawi, 2009, Van Huis, 2019). The ethnographic museum has been dealing with decoloniality for already some decades now while art museums have started doing so only recently. The last decade, decoloniality started to influence the relationship of those two institutions (Shatanawi, 2009, Geismar, 2015). Contemporary artists are presented more intensely in ethnographic displays while at the same time ethnographic research appears in art museums (Shatanawi, 2009, Geismar, 2015).

To better understand this relationship, I decided to study the main agents of these fields, responsible to a great extent of the way a museum manifests itself in the society. Professionals, daily engaged in the language of the field, with a direct experience of how it is to be an internal

agent, formed the sample of the following research. An equivalent degree and demonstrable experience in the field were used as selection criteria. People working in positions responsible for organizing permanent and temporary exhibitions as well as dealing with the collections of the institutions were considered as possible interviewees. Therefore, I conducted interviews with curators (9), directors/chief curators (3), exhibition makers (3) and researchers (1) from various Dutch ethnographic and art museums.

To obtain a range of perspectives, 14 interviews were conducted, lasting approximately one hour each. In total, I interviewed 16 museum stakeholders (one of the interviews was a group interview with three stakeholders from ethnographic museums). Due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, I was limited in conducting the interviews online to respect the social distancing measures. From the total of 16 interviewees, five were stakeholders of art museums and eleven of ethnographic museums. That was one of the limitations posed to me by the Covid-19. While I had already arranged most of the interviews with ethnographic stakeholders before the outbreak of the pandemic this did not happen with art curators. Arranging interviews with art curators during a pandemic was proved to be challenging which resulted in only 5 interviews. Nevertheless, the lack of art museum interviewees compared to their ethnographic museums counterparts was taken under consideration during the analysis in order to achieve more plausible results.

Regarding art museums, four stakeholders were curators and one a museum director. The interviewees were working in 3 different Dutch art museums: Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam), Van Abbe Museum (Eindhoven) and Witte de With center for contemporary art (Rotterdam). Regarding the field of ethnography on the other hand, I interviewed seven curators, three exhibition makers and one researcher/curator. Interviewees from the ethnographic field were working in different ethnographic museums of the Netherlands, all of which recently merged under the umbrella of the 'Dutch National Museum of World Cultures (NMVW)'. An extensive list of the interviewees can be found in Appendix B.

The real names of the interviewees were replaced with pseudonyms to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the respondents. Even though the majority of the respondents had no problem in publishing their name, their anonymity was kept to ensure more honest responses and avoid possible, unwanted associations of their names with the outcome of this thesis. Contrary, the names of the museums are kept as such since there are no issues of privacy and they will help the reader to better understand research.

The interviewees were purposively selected to best answer the research question of my thesis. I deliberately chose to approach stakeholders of specific museums dealing with

decoloniality and that they included art or ethnographically inspired projects respectively. To do so I had to research various museum's exhibition archives, which I did primarily through their websites. The main criterion of selection for the ethnographic museums was the extent those museums were referring to decoloniality in their website and whether they were organizing exhibitions including works of art.

Regarding art museums, it was a bit more difficult to identify the museums interested in decoloniality. All selected museums, even though they might not speak specifically on their websites, they had organized several events regarding decoloniality in the recent past, so I assumed they would have been interested in the topic. Furthermore, in order to determine their relation with the ethnographic field, I had to go through their exhibitions and see the works of the artists they were showing. In all three museums, I identified several artists working with ethnographic methodologies and therefore, I included those museums to the research.

3.6 Between theoretical and inductive thematic analysis

The collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was seen as the most appropriate method because of the possibilities a researcher has on discovering new themes and concepts in the interviews (inductive thematic analysis). At the same time, the researcher is also able to seek for specific concepts that derived from existing theory, in this case Bourdieu's field theory (theoretical thematic analysis). Even though I had already decided to approach the analysis looking through the prism of Bourdieu's field theory, data were approached following an inductive procedure, in order to leave space for new findings and insights and not limiting the scope of the research.

Pierre Bourdieu's field theory has been used prominently in the humanities and specifically in the arts field as a research method. Field theory, in contrast with other theoretical approaches, connects structure with agency, and helps shed light to the forces that determine individuals' interpretation of the concept of 'decoloniality' in the context of Dutch museums.

Before starting the actual analysis, I allowed myself to familiarize with the collected material. The transcription process proved to be a great opportunity to go through all collected data before further proceeding with the analysis. I used *atlas.ti* software for more organized and efficient analysis.

Thematic analysis is often criticized for non-being very systematic and its results to lack reliability (Mostafa & Kourosch, 2016). To avoid that and increase the efficacy of my analysis, I tried to be as methodical as possible. I analyzed the data based on a six-phase model of thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). I first familiarized myself with the dataset and I

then proceeded with an initial coding (240 codes) of the dataset. I later narrowed down the initial codes to 119, which I finally organized in nine themes. All themes were reviewed thoroughly and finally were named accordingly. Codes were constantly compared between them and between the data as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) to ensure higher validity to the process.

The coding process began with the identification of concepts presented in the thesis's theoretical framework such as 'doxa', 'field struggles', 'hierarchy' as well as concepts such as 'modernity', 'representation', 'coloniality' etc. Interviewees were divided according to the museum they belong to and the position they possessed within it. I coded each interview thoroughly and I tried to identify codes with which decoloniality was associated by each group such as 'globalization', 'marginal communities', 'democratization', 'eurocentrism', 'delink', 'modernity' etc.

3.7 The role of the researcher

Qualitative research is based to a certain extent into the interpretative capabilities of the researcher to make sense of the collected data. The biography of the researcher though influences the way he interacts with the interviewees and the way he interprets data (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The interpretative model I follow in this research is often criticized to be biased since the research design is not as objective as in other research methods. Therefore, to increase the validity of my research, it is important to reflect on myself and specifically in how I might have influenced the collection and interpretation of the data.

I was specifically interested in studying decolonization especially because of my background. I was born and raised in the island-nation of Cyprus. Cyprus was a British colony for nearly 80 years and even though colonialism did not affect the island to the extent it did in other parts of the world, its stigma is still visible. Decolonial projects are therefore highly important to me since they have an impact on the society I grew up. Being a post-colonial citizen myself, I might involuntarily adopt a more critical gaze towards the decolonial actions of Dutch museums even if this was not in my intentions. Nevertheless, having been aware of my background made me more careful in not letting it interfere with the analysis of the collected data.

Secondly, it is important to state that my previous studies have been directly related to the art field, since I studied Fine arts. I have worked as an independent artist and as an assistant in different art institutions. I, therefore, have a special affinity and a more thorough understanding of the art world and discourse compared to the ethnographic one. Since part of the research is a

comparative approach between art and ethnographic museums, it was important to keep that always in mind to have a balanced and objective approach.

There is no doubt that my biography has to a certain extent influenced this research. The social researcher is part of the society he/she tries to research and interpret, and it is quite inevitable not to have a certain influence on what he/she is studying (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). However, this is not necessarily a limitation. Pre-existing knowledge and interests of the researcher can lead to interesting insights and a different approach to the data. By acknowledging how my position as a researcher might affect the research together with a strong theoretical foundation, methodology and a systematic analysis will nevertheless ensure convincing and plausible results.

4. Results

The analysis chapter presents the findings of the thematic analysis. The chapter is divided in three sections reflecting first, on how decoloniality is generally interpreted by the stakeholders of both museums, second, on the different perceptions of decoloniality according to the field and the position of the agent perceiving it and third, on the dialogues and dissonances between art and ethnographic museums.

From the 14 interviews I collected, nine themes are identified and are presented subsequently. They all contribute to properly answer each of the sub-questions and finally the main research question. Each theme is accompanied by excerpts from the conducted interviews to further support the validity of the analysis.

4.1 Interpreting Decoloniality

The first section of the analysis aims to answer how the concept of decoloniality is interpreted by museum stakeholders in a general manner. It explores remarks about decoloniality that appeared to be perceived similarly by stakeholders from both art and ethnographic museums.

4.1.1 A concept in progress

Decoloniality was proven to be a much more complicated concept to define than I was initially expected. Many of the interviewees were quite unable to address what decoloniality is precisely. Instead, many of them mention that decoloniality is something they are still trying to understand. Decoloniality was described as a concept that keeps on changing and evolving as society does.

On my question regarding the meaning of decoloniality, ethnographic museum stakeholder Walid, despite having a lot of experience in the field and specifically with decolonial projects, he responded simply and according to him honestly: 'I don't have a clue what decoloniality is. I don't know.' His answer emphasizes the difficulty to define a broad concept such as decoloniality, despite working with some time already as Walid. Decoloniality is a concept that changes constantly according to the context and time it is applied. What decoloniality might mean now will change tomorrow and what was considered to be a right way to decolonize today, tomorrow might not be as good. This is what ethnographic curator Marije supports:

Marije: [...] every generation thinks that the way they decolonize is a good way and its really effective. What you see is that it is really slow and that these new generations that happen to be there every 20 years have to re-invent new ways [to decolonize].

Marije supports that ‘decoloniality’ is something that changes constantly. It depends on the people who apply it, it depends on the social context and time. Nevertheless, in contrast with other curators, Marije was also quite critical concerning the pace in which changes occur on decolonial practices. Further in our interview, she did not forget to mention that for an actual change to happen, we should be learning faster and be more radical than just waiting for another generation to come up with more effective decolonial practices.

Walid and Marije were not the only curators to mention the changing character of decoloniality. Art curator, Roos was also sharing similar ideas regarding decoloniality. When I asked Roos what decoloniality is; she answered me by describing a project the museums she is working for is organizing called ‘Collective learning’.

Roos: I think we've really been thinking about that [refers to decoloniality] in terms of like collectivity. So like, specifically ‘collective learning’. I think the ‘learning’ word is important there. Because it suggests a process rather than specifically a position.

Collective learning is a project aiming in engaging the audience more with the institution’s practices but according to Roos is also a way to create new structures in the institution which will endure and have an actual change towards a more decolonial institution. What I want to highlight in the aforementioned quote is that Roos describe decoloniality as a process. An idea about decoloniality that eight out of the 14 interviewees, from both art and ethnographic museums, share as well.

Having a concept that its definition keeps on changing means that people and museum stakeholders should keep working with it and keep learning what it is and how it should be applied. Ethnographic exhibition maker, Esmay described decoloniality as a ‘learning curve’. As a ‘process’. Something that museum professionals still need to embrace and learn. More you apply decolonial thinking in your work more you learn what might mean and how to apply it better.

4.1.2 Not only institutional but also a personal burden

In nearly every interview, I noticed an interesting oxymoron. Interviewees were describing what decolonization means and how they practice it in their museums. Nonetheless, many of the interviewees made clear that an actual, honest decolonization in European museums is nearly impossible. According to several museum stakeholders, the existence of European museums are

so deeply rooted in coloniality that disassociate it from them is not an easy task. Many of the interviewees argued that even though museums are trying to decolonise they should keep in mind how hard this process is. Museums should also have in mind the possibility that entirely abolishing the colonial burden of the institution might be quite impossible.

Emma: I think that aam... always refer to the museum as a fully colonial thing, is an institution that it wouldn't have existed without uumm colonialism. So it is part of its DNA and I don't think we can really escape.

This is how Emma, ethnographic curator, describes the relationship of the ethnographic museum she works for with coloniality. Emma believes the colonial legacy of the museum will always follow the museum no matter how hard museums are trying to decolonise.

The relationship of Dutch museums with coloniality, both ethnographic and art museums, was described by the majority of the interviewees in a way that demonstrates a belief that an actual disjunction between European museum practices and coloniality would be rather very difficult if not impossible. Museum stakeholders mention the close association of museums with coloniality not to show that decoloniality is impossible and it should stop but rather to demonstrate the difficulty this task encloses. It requires a lot of hard work to achieve a true decolonial practice or as Walid said 'we have to fight for it. It's not going to happen just like that.'

Walid further added that decoloniality has to be difficult! Decoloniality means to go against hundreds of years of colonial thinking. It is therefore not an easy neither a fast process. Walid was one of the few interviewees who was quite critical against the ease with which some Dutch institutions approach decoloniality. He argues that decoloniality in European museums is a lengthy and painful process. As he told me, and I quote: 'Colonization last for 500 years. Decolonization will not happen tomorrow'. According always to Walid, decolonization is a process requiring time to occur properly but this does not mean to just wait but rather keep on working hard for as long as it takes.

Walid: One of the difficulties with the Decolonial movement right now in museums is the impatience with which we approach it. (...). We imagine that decolonization is going to happen in two minutes. I call it decolonization with 10 bullet points after bullet point one you find the solution, two whatever. We are not attained into the fact that the colonial project is so ingrained in this very landscape, in all of what we do, that we think that there's going to be some solution of his job so easy.

Walid might have been one of the most critical stakeholders to discuss the effortlessness and superficiality some Dutch organizations addresses issues of decoloniality but he was not the only

one. Leading ethnographic curator Hannah, as well as art curator Roos, were sharing similar ideas to Walid. Below, there is an excerpt from my discussion with Roos, regarding the necessity of time in doing decolonization properly. Talking about the subject, Roos introduced two words to describe the superficial decoloniality and the more proper one: reactive and responsive respectively.

Roos. [talking about decolonial actions of her museum] you can't be reactive but you've got to be responsive and in a way, those two words are very similar, you know, they both enact kind of... how do you say? Yeah.... a response to an action, but I think the reaction it's more in terms of speed like reaction tends to be more impulsive and quick and then as a result, it can lead to quite symbolic or surface level engagement whereas responsive I think is really then more, you know how to respond in a way that is very considered. You know, and that kind of stands on a...and it really kind of takes the time to go into the complexity.

A quick response, a fast patch, might lead to a symbolic engagement! What Roos supports here is in accordance with Walid. It is the need for hard work to actually achieve something since coloniality is a heavy burden. Walid took his argument even further. He was the only stakeholder to speak explicitly for individual responsibility of the museum stakeholders.

Walid stated how decoloniality is not just any project but ' a commitment to difficult work, a commitment to an uncomfortable work'. Decolonization requires not only a lot of time but a lot of effort as well, including a personal effort by museum stakeholders as well.

Walid: The problem is that it requires of us, and this is what makes it fundamentally difficult. It requires of such a deep criticism of ourselves; me as a man. The questions of whiteness whole race articulate with it. It requires of such self-reflexivity and criticality that that very often is not easy to implement in the institutional framework it even requires of some of us to say at some point, I've done enough now! I need to leave this work, this job, this world of museums because somebody else needs to take my place[...]. I also dominate a position and I need to leave so that a woman can take over, or leave so that another person could take over because my position is too dominant. So it requires so much of us that makes it harder to implement.

Walid argues about the importance of the self-reflexivity and criticality as a necessary pre-requisite for institutional decolonization to happen. He supports his argument that decoloniality is a painful task that requires sacrifices on a personal level. Walid, despite being an established agent in his field is highly critical against the system. He criticizes museum agents arguing about decoloniality while themselves are not ready to take painful decisions towards that direction – such as giving up their position for younger and more diverse personnel.

4.2 Different perceptions of decoloniality.

The second section aims to answer the two sub-questions of the research as previously stated. I seek to expand how perceptions of decoloniality changes according to the type of museum an agent is working for, and according to the position it occupies within it. The first theme represents the different perceptions of decoloniality articulated by the two types of museums. The second theme concerns the different perceptions of decoloniality according to agents' position within their museum.

4.2.1 The field and its influence on how decoloniality is perceived

Ethnographic museums

Dutch ethnographic museums are directly associated with coloniality, since they were initially born as colonial museums. Their decolonial endeavor starts way back, already in the second half of the twentieth century, when Dutch colonies began to turn into independent nations (Kreps, 2019). Despite the early decolonial actions of ethnographic museums, it is only at the beginning of the new century that they have actively started to adopt decolonial policies (Shatanawi, 2009).

The decolonial discourse in ethnographic museums appears to be inherent to the practices of the museum discipline itself. Based on the collected data, ethnographic museums' stakeholders associate decoloniality with the notions of representation, authority, the origins of their collection and generally with the colonial legacy of their institution. Leading ethnographic curator Hannah, connected decoloniality primarily to the ways the museum presents its collection to the public by showing the public the existence of different 'relative cultural perspectives'. Not only Hannah, but the majority of the selected ethnographic museum's stakeholders connected decoloniality to museum practices and specifically to the representation of other cultures either through their collection or through temporary exhibitions.

Ethnographic museums' stakeholders considered the ethnographic museums to be highly colonial. For the majority of the ethnographic stakeholders, decoloniality was associated with the modalities through which museums were trying to get rid of their colonial burden and to find ways to show their collection in a more 'just' way.

Felicia: [...] our collections are almost all, around 90%, collected in colonial time so they are colonial collections. In that sense, we are very much a colonial museum, for the Indonesian part of course, and we are very busy at the moment trying to sort of decolonize the museum, meaning not that we are neglecting the past but that we inform the visitor why and what the colonial background is for our collection.

Felicia, as well as the totality of the respondents of the ethnographic field, is well aware that the existence of her institution is rooted in colonialism. In fact, ethnography as an academic field was founded and thrived during colonialism and therefore its practices are still easily connected with coloniality. All the interviewees indeed mentioned the colonial past of their museum as the most important motivation for the institution's decolonial process.

Art museums

Art museums in the Netherlands, in contrast to the ethnographic museums, have only recently started to show interest in decoloniality (Bouwhuis, 2019). The connection of art museums with coloniality is not a direct one but rather an indirect which has been neglected for years. Even though all respondents from the art field were aware of the concept of decoloniality, none of them explicitly connected their field with coloniality in the same way ethnographic stakeholders did.

As I will further discuss, agents from both fields (mainly established) connected decoloniality with decolonial theories out of the realm of museology and specifically with the theories of the C/M/D group. Nevertheless, only respondents from art museums explicitly referred to the association of coloniality with modernity. Three from the five art museum interviewees (Amber, Brit and Cas) mentioned the necessity to deal with the perception and presentation of modernity as part of a decolonial process. The fact that only respondents from art museums were talking about modernity and coloniality might be because modernism is per se an important moment in western art history and highly related to the art most of the Dutch art museums possess. Acknowledging the association of modernity and modern art with coloniality is an important step in acknowledging the connection of art museums with coloniality; which does not appear as apparent as in ethnographic museums.

Additionally, according to art museums respondents, the decolonial discourse in art museums does not refer to the colonial past of the museum or to specific museological practices. Dutch art museums started acknowledging their coloniality only recently, and therefore decoloniality in art museums is not directly exhibited as connected with colonialism. Moreover, the art field appears to have incorporated the decolonial debate within its own big debates: the recently developed social turn and the broader debate of autonomy vs heteronomy.

The debate of autonomy vs heteronomy is an ongoing debate with a long tradition in the field of art. On one side of the debate there is the autonomous pole, according to which art is seen as a 'pure' form without any social function, while on the other side, the heteronomous pole argues about the social and political values of art (Doorman, 2015). The *social turn* in

contemporary art is part of this debate and more specifically, part of the heteronomous pole. Claire Bishop uses this term to describe the turn in some artists' practices, moving towards a more socially engaged work, and often addressing questions of political relevance such as democratization, globalization, and social inequalities (2006).

In all interviews with art museum stakeholders, concepts such as 'globalization', 'local communities', 'accessibility', and 'democratization' often appeared as related to the concept of decoloniality. Agents of the art field mostly talk about the aforementioned concepts and societal issues in general (e.g. racism, poverty, exclusion, ghettoization etc.) when referring to decoloniality and their institution. Art curator Roos for instance, connected decoloniality with learning programs for young and diverse communities of the city. Sem, another art curator, connected decoloniality with creating more accessible institutions for all strata of society. According to Marije, Dutch art museums started showing an interest in decoloniality at the same time when contemporary art was shifting towards a more socially involved practice. The association of decoloniality with the social turn in art by art museums stakeholders shows how the decolonial debate became part of the art field, as another, external social issue art should deal with and not as an issue inherent to the practice of art museum itself.

The connection of the concept of decoloniality with local communities, marginalized groups of people and society in general was present almost exclusively in interviews with art museums curators, while it was barely mentioned by any of the ethnographic museum stakeholders. Art curator Sem, when asked about decoloniality, discussed extensively the importance of connecting art with society, which supports the aforementioned statement. From the same interview, the following excerpt ensues:

Sem: I became more and more interested in, you could say, the decolonial discourse because it was in that [referring to societal issues]. Like what is the place of Art in society? That was quite problematic for me. The relationship of the arts and the way it's used by the same lower social classes to put it like that and it is limited. But at the same time you also see that all kinds of new communities that are in 'name of museums' city', in the Dutch society also have difficulty finding their way through it and it was out of that reflection.

Sem connects decoloniality to the more general debate about the position of art within society. He also mentions social inequalities and the difficulties that many people have regarding access to art museums. For the art field, decoloniality is to a certain extent related to the actions bringing awareness about those issues. This approach seems to be connected with the C/M/D theories as already discussed in 2.1. The association of decoloniality in art museums with social issues conforms to a reaction to what Quijano describes as the effects of 'colonial matrix of

power' in contemporary society (2010). Quijano sees the influence of coloniality as one of the reasons why social discrimination, systematic racism and unequal treatment of marginalized people and cultures exist. Art museums, according to the interviewees, associate decoloniality mostly with actions aiming towards the aforementioned societal issues in contrary with ethnographic museums which firstly connect decoloniality with their colonial past, collection and practices.

Furthermore, decoloniality potentially provides for a bridge between art and society by evoking one of the pivotal debates within the art field: the autonomy versus heteronomy or otherwise, art for art's sake versus a more direct relation of art with society. Sem was not the only art curator implying such connections. For example, Roos, a junior art curator, also mentioned the connections of decoloniality to the autonomous vs heteronomous debate:

Roos: [...] In that so it's not just art for art's sake, especially in terms of the artists we're working with. They [refers to artists] are not producing something for say kind of like political or social impact necessarily, but for sure each of them grapples with questions that bring a kind of new awareness to the fall. So often many of them their works begin from identifying some kind of blind spots in general understanding so they are transformative in that sense, but also not transformative in the sense that they are, yeah that we're kind of artists politics. [...] They [the artists] are definitely contributing to different discourses that we're surrounded...

To sum up, the different associations that each museum creates with decoloniality manifest different perceptions of the same concept. Ethnographic museums perceive decoloniality as inherited in museological practice while art museums perceive decoloniality mostly as a reaction to an external stimulus. While art curators were connecting decoloniality with the bigger societal issues of their communities, ethnographic museums were associating decoloniality with the practice of their museum itself. Lastly, it is interesting to mention that while the connections art museums were making with decoloniality were easily identifiable in the interviews, the same does not occur in the ethnographic field. The influence of decoloniality in the current debates of the ethnographic field were only vaguely mentioned in the interviews and some of the interviewees were unable to connect it with current debates of their field. Decoloniality was important to them only to the extent it was related to the museological practices of ethnography and not to the broader issues of the ethnographic field.

4.2.2 Field structures defining perceptions

This theme tries to explore the relationship between the different positions held in each field by museum agents and their perception of decoloniality. I specifically searched for patterns

indicating the importance of each agents' position in how she/he perceives decoloniality based on Bourdieu's field theory. Bourdieu argues that the actions of an agent in the social space are determined by the position each agent holds in the field (Bourdieu, 1998). Each field he argues, contains agents who dominate and agents who are dominated, or differently, established and non-established agents respectively (Bourdieu, 1998).

The respondents of my research were both established and non-established agents from both fields. The position of each interviewee in his/hers field was proven to be a catalyst in the way the concept of decoloniality was perceived. The interviews support to a great extent that the position of an agent influences the way they think and act. Museum stakeholders in key positions (directors, chief curators) had a different, more informed and cautious approach to decoloniality compared to newcomers or other agents with less prestigious positions. During the analysis I divided my respondents into established and non- established agents as Bourdieu's field theory suggests.

Established Agents (n=3)		Non- established Agents (n=13)	
Radical (n=1)	Non- Radical (n=2)	Radical (n=5)	Non- Radical (n=8)
Positive towards decoloniality.	Positive towards decoloniality.	Positive towards decoloniality.	Positive towards decoloniality.
Promoting decoloniality requiring radical changes but nevertheless in a systematic way.	Promoting decoloniality but in a slower/ controlled way	Promoting decoloniality requiring radical changes.	Agree with their superior thus, promoting decoloniality in a slower/ controlled way.
Decoloniality is a very complicated issue which requires a lot of time to be done properly.	Decoloniality is a very complicated issue which requires a lot of time to be done properly.	Decoloniality is <u>not</u> complicated, museums need to finally act. Change the structure the museums and redefine them.	Decoloniality is a very complicated issue which requires a lot of time to be done properly.
Critical against the system.	Did not comment on the system.	Critical against their superior.	Support their superior.

Familiar with academic definitions of decoloniality. Very broad knowledge on what decoloniality is.	Familiar with academic definitions of decoloniality. Very broad knowledge on what decoloniality is.	Associate decoloniality with museum practices. Not familiar with decolonial theories to the extent established agents do.	Associate decoloniality with museum practices. Not familiar with decolonial theories to the extent established agents do.
Connections with other fields regarding decoloniality, especially with the academia.	Connections with other fields regarding decoloniality, especially with the academia.		
They can affect the field	They can affect the field	The have little power on the filed	The have little power on the filed

Table.1: Position of agents in the fields and their perception of decoloniality

After a first analysis, I further divided each group in two subgroups, the museum stakeholders with radical ideas and those with less radical ideas concerning decoloniality as it can be seen in Table.1. I will present the main characteristics of each group below and how their position in their field influences how they interpret decoloniality.

The established agents

The first group, the established agents of the fields, are agents holding leading positions in their museums with the power to impact their field. Directors and chief curators are considered established agents. According to the interviewees, it appeared that established agents holding positions of great authority in their field perceive and interpret decoloniality as closer to its academic definition as defined by the South-American colonial scholars of C/M/D group (see chapter 2.1). In other words, it is the idea that coloniality is connected with cultural, economic and political ideas, associated to western modernity, and further with knowledge production. Agents with less significant positions, associate decoloniality primarily to the practices of their specific field and not with the current academic debates.

Established agents are all aware of the decolonial debate, not only within their specific field or museology but in its broader setting. During the interviews, Cas, Hannah, and Walid, all of them stakeholders in leading positions in their field, they begin describing decoloniality to me in a broader sense. Only after they moved into discussing what decoloniality means in their specific field. In some of the interviews, names of decolonial scholars, such as Walter D. Mignolo, Anibal Quijano and Rolando Vázquez, as well as concepts used by them (colonial matrix of power, coloniality, modernity, de-linking) appeared repeatedly. The familiarity of the established

agents with decolonial concepts and scholars demonstrates a deeper understanding of the decolonial debate and its nuances, not only within the museological practice but within society in general. The following excerpt from an interview with Cas, established agent in the art field, shows how agents in leading positions define decoloniality:

D.: What does decoloniality mean to you?

Cas: Yeah, I mean it is a broad term. I think the... my master in this is Walter Mignolo more or less and that aspect of this sort of the Decolonial discourse, which puts the emphasis on the coloniality actually and decoloniality being as he will call it, understanding the colonial Matrix of power, which is not something that stopped in 1960 or whatever form of decolonization, probably in 1980s.

Cas directly associates the concept with its academic definition, citing Walter Mignolo and some of his concepts such as the 'colonial matrix of power'. Even though Cas occupies an important position in the art field, he prefers to first describe decoloniality broadly and then start talking about what decoloniality means in the context of his art museum.

Museum curators occupying leading positions in an institution are usually deeply conscious of all recent developments that surround their practice as well as regarding decoloniality. Agents with leading positions in their field appeared to have strong ties with international knowledge networks outside the museum. Indeed, after research on those agents' biographies, it resulted that all of them were active outside of the museum field. Chief curator Hannah, for instance, has worked in different positions in various museums, as well as a consultant in governmental positions, re-patriation of objects and human remains projects before arriving in the Netherlands. She has published various books and she has given lectures in various museums regarding her research interests while at the same time collaborating with academic journals.

Furthermore, the fact that established agents (from both fields) were supporting decolonial projects within their organizations is a sign of a possible institutional shift towards a more decolonial practice. Agents keen on decoloniality, holding key positions in their field, have the power to share their ideas on decoloniality with the rest of their field and gradually translate them as part of the field's Doxa. In other words, if established agents support decoloniality, they have the power to gradually include to be part of the field's own 'logic of practice'.

Nevertheless, established agents, despite being favorable towards decoloniality, they were against radical actions. According to Bourdieu, well-established agents of a field have interest in maintaining the existing order of the field as such or to modify it at the condition they maintain their domination (1977). Established agents would primarily argue about the necessity of

decolonization and the need of being done right even though this might require a lot of time. This approach partially explains the critical stance against established agents by the younger and more radical agents who advocate for faster and more effective changes.

Walid, an established agent of the ethnographic field, contrary to Cas and Hannah, he was more radical and critical towards the current decolonial approach of Dutch institutions. Walid shares the same characteristics as the other established agents apart from being highly critical. Walid is one of the few non-white, European museum stakeholders I interviewed and the only one in a leading position. Having being born outside Europe, he carries a different habitus, cultural background and experiences which thereafter influence his perception and actions (Bourdieu, 1977). Being a black professional in a white dominated field must have a direct impact on how you perceive decoloniality which can explain why Walid was more radical compared to his white counterparts.

Non established agents

In contrast with the established agents, lower position stakeholders from both museums were associating decoloniality with the practices of the museums and only to a lesser extent with academic theories on decoloniality. The lower positioned agents were not as well informed as their higher counterparts, but they were more enthusiastic, and they were demanding a rapid change towards a more decolonial museum.

As in the established agents' group, the non-established agents were further divided into two categories: the radical agents and the non-radical. The majority of the radical agents (four out of five) were part of the ethnographic field, while non-radical agents were primarily curators of the art field. The reason for this difference did not become clear during the research.

The main difference between radical and non-radical, non-established agents was how radical their expressed ideas about decoloniality were as well as their attitude towards their superior. Radical, non-established agents expressed frustration on how their superior and the whole organization handle decolonization, and advocated for more radical actions. The fragment below expresses the urge of a radical/non-established agent for an actual change and not only symbolic acts.

D. What do you think is the most important aim of decolonization for ethnographic Museums?

Melisa: Oh, for me change everything! (laughs). [...] we have to find a new meaning for having these collections. These are very valuable, but let's change everything. Let's find a new

way to make these museums, relevant again in contemporary society for everyone. But that's just a utopian dream.

The radical approach to decoloniality and the enthusiasm expressed by Melisa might be related to the fact that she is relatively new to the field and young. Field theory suggests that new entrants to the fields might be destabilizing forces trying to re-orient the field to accept changes that might benefit them at the expenses of the more established agents (Bourdieu, 1977). Newcomers did not seem to be scared of radical measures, while the higher position curators seemed to resist to this option. An example of that is the following fragment from my interview with the established agent, Hannah:

Hannah: So, your intention [when it comes to decoloniality] is always to aim high and at least deliver some of it. Especially regarding the decolonizing process. What you have to be very clear about is the actual circumstances in which you secured for example an external voice. Was that external voice? Let's say an influential partner to the interpretation or is that external voice basically a quote on the wall, and those are two very different things. So, they're not the same. They don't have the same power in an institutional context.

In the above excerpt someone can read how careful Hannah is when she is referring to decolonial practices in the museum. While non established agents like Melisa or Marije would request radical changes, Hannah would state that you need to be well aware of your actions concerning decoloniality. The phrase 'aim high and at least deliver some of it' signifies that Hannah believes that decoloniality is a difficult process which requires time and effort while at the same time is highly possible to fail. An attitude towards decoloniality radical (both established and non-established) agents did not seem to share.

In contrast with the radical, non-established agents, non-radical, non-established stakeholders were supporting the decolonial attempts of the established curators and superior to a great extent. Art curator Roos is a great example of that. During our interview, she expressed support to the decolonial policy followed by the more established agents of her organization. At that regard, she was confident on the possibilities of decolonial practices of her museum in general.

Non-radical, non-established agents from the art field might be highly influenced by the ideas of their superior to the extent they identify with them and do not criticize their actions. They might be perceiving the ideas on decoloniality, expressed by the established agents of their field, as the ideas through which their superior gained their prestigious positions. Therefore, if they share those ideas they might believe that they will gain more prestige, capital and acceptance among their peers and hence, maximize their position too.

Moreover, non-radical, non-established curators were not only supporting their superior, but some of them, like Sem, were actually introduced to the decolonial discourse by them.

Sem: I've been with the museum for ten years already. I've had a background in art history and art philosophy and I kind of landed on the topic of decoloniality if you will, in a way through, two elements: one is that I think most frankly through colleagues in the museum like Cas and Niels[...]Yeah. These are all people that I was working with and who were also interested in the topic and wanted to work on the topic. And I from my own, say art historical training I wasn't really working on that. [...] I was introduced to that (decoloniality) because of them.

The dynamics between established and non-established stakeholders in each museum seems to be quite different. Non-established, radical curators are characterizing by a great will to change the status quo and they were criticizing the practices of the established curators as not radical enough to create an actual change. Non-established, non-radical curators believe and support the work of the established agents of the fields. This confirms the theory section (2.3) which according to Bourdieu, the more legitimate the agents of a field are the more their colleagues will consume and support their ideas (1977).

4.3 Dialogues and dissonances

In the last and largest part of the analysis I discuss 6 themes which will shed light on the relationship between the two fields (ethnographic and art museums) and how decoloniality affects it. In this section, I begin by describing the dynamics behind the existing collaboration between the two fields and how this collaboration becomes possible. Later, I describe how each field incorporates the other's discourse (i.e. how art is exhibited in ethnographic display and how art museums present ethnographically inspired works) in its practice and why. The last two themes ultimately discuss how each field perceives and criticize this collaboration.

4.3.1 Unbalanced interest

It became quite common the last few years to encounter contemporary art in ethnographic museums and vice versa. For instance, Leiden's Volkenkunde (ethnographic) museum has recently organized an exhibition about Oceania named *A sea of islands, highlights from Oceania*⁵. Walking into the exhibition, the visitor encounters not only ritual objects and ancient Oceanian art, but also a video installation by New Zealand - Maori artist Lisa Reihana. Figure 1 shows a still from Reihana's video-installation *In the pursuit of Venus*. A panoramic video installation dealing with cultural identity issues, colonialism and encounters between different

⁵ <https://www.volkenkunde.nl/en/a-sea-of-islands>

cultures. At the same time, visiting Rotterdam's contemporary art center Witte de Witt, one can experience a video installation of Kuwaiti- Puerto-Rican artist Alia Farid, entitled *At the time of the Ebb* in which the artist takes the role of an ethnographer to talk about the after-effects of Haiti's historic revolution⁶.



Figure 1. Lisa Reihana, *In the pursuit of Venus* (video-installation). Retrieved from: <https://www.volkenkunde.nl/nl/eenzevaneilanden/ontmoetingen>

Based on the aforementioned examples we can argue that ethnographic and art museums in the Netherlands are introducing each other's discourse into their practice. Moreover, as it appeared in the interviews, the use of each other's discourse is implemented as another way to reinforce their decolonial practices. Nevertheless, ethnographic museums are showing a higher interest in including art in their practice rather than art museums regarding the ethnographic discourse.

Dutch ethnographic museums have been dealing with decoloniality for some decades already. They have been experimenting with the use of modern and contemporary art for the last 20 years and therefore, it was not surprising that all interviewees were familiar with the introduction of contemporary art in museum's collection and exhibitions. On the contrary, the ethnographically-inspired projects in art museums have started gaining popularity in the field only relatively recently and as a consequence, art museum stakeholders were not equally familiar with them.

The use of art in the practice of ethnographic museums became a common practice in ethnographic museology the last 20 years (Geismar, 2015). The call for decolonization in Dutch museums created an 'existential crisis' in the ethnographic museums due to their association with

⁶ https://www.fkawdw.nl/nl/our_program/exhibitions/alia_farid_a_solo_exhibition

coloniality. People have been criticizing ethnographic museums for their relationship with coloniality to the extent that many were demanding the closure of these museums as a decolonial act (Jilani, 2018). This is an idea that appeared also in the interviews. In fact, three of the interviewees (non-established, radical) proved to be open to the idea of shutting ethnographic museums down or merge them with art museums as an act against coloniality. Decolonization is a prerequisite for ethnographic institutions to continue exist. According to respondents from both art and ethnographic museums, the use of the contemporary art is an important tool for ethnographic museums to show that they are changing and claim a new position in contemporary museum landscape.

Moreover, ethnographic stakeholders would be more interested in the presence of art in their museums than art stakeholders would be interested in the ethnographic discourse. While the reasons of the introduction of the contemporary art in the ethnographic field were expressed relatively clear by the ethnographic interviewees, the same did not occur in the art museums. Art curators were aware of the introduction of ethnographic methodologies into their practice but what was the use of them in the museum was not clear. Each art curator would give me a different reason, which proves that immaturity of this relationship. Ethnographic discourse was introduced in the art museums in various forms, such as the works of artists or as a methodology to deal with social engagement or deal with museum's collection and exhibition.

4.3.2 Bridging the distance

Ethnographic and art subfields have been collaborating already in different levels. Decoloniality adds a new level to the existing framework of collaboration between the two subfields. Each field has its own rules and conventions (doxa) which gives them a certain autonomy (Bourdieu, 1993). This means that in order for the two fields to collaborate, they need to find a way to communicate despite their differences. Within this context, some agents in each field already act as mediators to help the use of the other's discourse in their practice. Nonetheless, each field approaches those interactions differently.

Ethnographic museums

To further elaborate on this it is important to firstly illustrate the relation of the museums' stakeholders with the other field. Between the nine ethnographic museum stakeholders I interviewed, three of them had an educational background in the art field. Two had previously studied Fine arts (Melisa, Rafael) and one of them art history (Wessel). As a consequence, those stakeholders were proved to be familiar with the artistic discourse and the

doxa of the art field. Their background in the art field appeared to influence their perception of decoloniality and their ideas regarding its implementation. In contrast with ethnographic stakeholders without art knowledge, they would perceive and understand contemporary art similarly to art museum stakeholders.

Ethnographic museum stakeholders see art as another narrative tool. They perceive each artwork as a cultural object that can narrate a specific story and it would be introduced in an exhibition only contextualized to help a specific narrative. It can be argued, that ethnographic curators see art as a tool with close end, specific and easily identified meaning while ethnographic stakeholders with art background would not. Rafael, a former ethnographic exhibition maker and curator (with an art background), presented the use of art by ethnographic curators as follows:

Rafael: As an ethnographic museum, obviously, you have to kind of stick to a certain story line or you kind of tend to have a little bit of this anthropological approach that something has to have a story or a backstory or you know, but I think in the contemporary art world there is more freedom and that freedom should be accessible to anyone.

Rafael recognizes that ethnographic and art curators approach art differently. Art in ethnographic museums is presented from an anthropological point of view and the ‘abstractness’ of art is not taken into consideration (Geismar, 2016). Furthermore, ethnographic stakeholders with an art education would see decoloniality in similar way as the art stakeholders and they were supporters of the interventive power of art and its contribution to the decolonial debate. Again, the influence of the field’s doxa in how a concept (art) is perceived is evident. Nevertheless, ethnographic stakeholders with an artistic background appear to work as mediators between the two fields, slowly bringing the fields closer.

The fact that such mediators exist in the ethnographic field manifests how important the field sees the use of art towards a more decolonial practice. The Dutch World Culture museums, in contrast to the Dutch art museums, have introduced into their team an art curator to specifically deal with the contemporary art collection and provide guidance to the museums’ team regarding contemporary art. Wessel, art curator in an ethnographic museum, mentions explicitly the distance between the two museum discourses highlighting that the gap must be bridged. However, despite the gap, Wessel did not forget to say that this does not prevent a meaningful collaboration between him and the ethnographic curators with both ends absorbing knowledge from each other.

D: I was quite curious about your colleagues, the anthropologists/ethnographic curators.
How familiar are they with contemporary art?

Wessel: (breathing deeply) Not at all. They know a little bit about it but... when I talk about art from my perspective, I'm always amazed about the distance that apparently is between us. For them, the artist is an expression of the cultural point of view and the idea that sometimes you don't even have to understand the work. But let just let it do its work, it's for them rather different, difficult to understand.

Wessel explains that indeed the art and ethnographic discourse are very different from each other and quite hard to understand if not studied properly. From his transversal experience, he gained a deeper understanding regarding the interactions between the two discourses.

Art museums

The art field, despite being more open to collaborations with other fields (as part of its doxa), usually lacks of a specific figure responsible for exploring potential/direct connections to the ethnographic field. However, art museum stakeholders were very interested in the discourse of anthropology and ethnography and they have stated in the interviews that art museums have a lot to learn from their ethnographic counterparts. Compared to the stakeholders of the ethnographic field, art stakeholders were more willing and interested to delve into the domain of anthropology to get to know the field better and to incorporate some of its elements to their practice as it can be seen in the following fragment:

D. How familiar are you with the anthropological field? What is going on in the specific field at the moment?

Cas: [...] So yeah, I read I read anthropology, and we talk about anthropology, quite a lot actually within the museum[...]. Some of the most interesting museological experimentation is being done in ethnographic museums at the moment. [...] So we have a lot to learn from that, and I think in terms of the methodologies of anthropology, I think there's a lot more than that I know. That we can learn and I don't know enough sometimes feel that I really need to do an anthropology course. It's something that I need to be closer to.

The reason for which the art field is keener on approaching the other field did not became clear in the interviews. The willingness of art museums' stakeholders to learn from the other field however, can be understood as a response to the increased demand of decoloniality regarding museum collections. The anthropological/ethnographic discourse appears to be a good source of knowledge about decoloniality since it has been dealing with it already for several years.

The fact that the art field does not yet have personnel specifically trained in the ethnographic discourse might be related to the novelty of decoloniality within the field. It is also likely that art field does not really see itself as being colonial to the extent the ethnographic field does. The ethnographic field needs to incorporate art in its attempt to present a different

museum to the public while for art museums, the presentation of ethnographically inspired art projects might be just one of the many 'turns' contemporary art has seen the last few years. Moreover, art museums approach decoloniality differently. The ethnographic discourse seems to be just one of the many ways they incorporate to address decoloniality. Despite that, the collaboration between the two fields, according to Brit (art curator) has recently increased. To what extent an agent with familiarity in the ethnographic field might be useful to permanently work within the art field is yet to be discovered. According to some art curators, the relation between art and ethnographic museums is still new, and one which themselves need to first understand and learn to evolve.

4.3.3 Incorporating the other's discourse

Despite the long tradition of giving and taking between the two fields, decoloniality brought the two fields even closer. Ethnographic museums are appointing art curators within their working teams, and art museum stakeholders are willing to include the ethnographic discourse in their practice. Both ethnographic and art museums are interested in incorporating each other's discourse. In the following paragraphs I will analyze how each museum incorporates the discourse of the other to inform their decolonial projects.

Ethnographic museums

Dutch ethnographic museums started including contemporary art in their displays already from the 1980s, and they even started collecting contemporary art systematically at the beginning of 2000 – Tropen Museum, Amsterdam (van Dartel, 2009; Shatanawi, 2009). Here I will describe precisely how art discourse is used in Dutch ethnographic museums as described to me by the stakeholders of the museums. As I mentioned previously, the position of an agent in the field affects its perception on decoloniality, but it also affects the way it approaches the discourse of the other field.

According to the interviewees, contemporary art was firstly introduced in the ethnographic display because of the 'intervening character it has' (Hannah). This statement by Hannah appears to be in accordance with Geismar's theory regarding the second stream where art and ethnography intersect, which is the use of each other's discourse for criticizing institutional practices – see chapter 2.2.4 (Geismar, 2015). Art can be used as a critical commentary voice on different aspects of the museum practice, including its colonial history and its relationship with it in the present. It can be a critical voice from the outside world when the

museum itself cannot be self-reflective. As Esmay, an ethnographic exhibition-maker told me: '[...] we always need to reflect on our behavior and what better way to do that through art'.

However, the incorporation of the critical voice of contemporary artists in ethnographic display is mostly supported by exhibition makers from the ethnographic field. Other stakeholders in authority positions tend to be more reluctant in using contemporary art as an interventive and critical medium. According to Hannah:

[...] there's a danger of making contemporary art do the work. In a sense, if you want to decolonize your collection, you can't just suddenly give a pot of money to someone and say make me something that means I don't have to think about it.'

First, Hannah, as it appeared in the excerpt, is highly critical against such a stance towards decoloniality and the use of art as an interventive 'tool' despite her recognizing the interventive character of art. The interviewee considers art as a tool to reflect on the institution's coloniality to be an irresponsible way to do so, both towards the institution, its visitors and the artists themselves. Using artists to comment on the institution's heritage is considered to be an act of avoidance by the organizations to confront their own colonial burden and successfully deal with it.

Second, contemporary art allows to deal with another important issue of the ethnographic museum, related to a certain extent with decoloniality: its relevance for the world of today. Ethnographic collections consist of objects dating centuries back (Kreps, 2019). Until recently, ethnographic museums were presenting non-western cultures as a-historic cultures, frozen in time (Shatanawi, 2009; Van Huis, 2019). Through the incorporation of non-western contemporary art, ethnographic museums try to avoid the reproduction of misleading colonial taxonomies where non-western cultures were represented as primitive or undeveloped based on a linear historical narrative (Santos, 2007). Discussing the use of art discourse in ethnographic display, exhibition maker Esmay mentioned the following:

Esmay: (Contemporary art is used) to make a particular contemporary bridge to the collection we have, and to make people ask questions to themselves, make people aware. [...] I think it is a very good thing because you want to, especially as an anthropological museum, you want tell something about what is going on at the world at a certain time and an artwork can do that very well.

Thirdly, by including works of non-western artists, Wendy, an ethnographic museum stakeholder, argued that 'contemporary art can be useful for making people present [...] in the telling of their own stories'. In other words, non-western contemporary art becomes a way to

include more diverse voices on the represented people into the museum and challenge the authority position of western curators on reporting about 'other' cultures.



Figure 2. Stacii Samidin, Aceh (2019), Dossier Indie Collection, Retrieved from: <https://www.wereldmuseum.nl/nl/zien-en-doen-in-het-wereldmuseum/tentoonstellingen/merdeka/aceh>

Dutch museums have been presenting other cultures for decades, but they were always presenting not the actual reality of those cultures but rather how the Dutch gaze perceived them (Shatanawi, 2009). Contemporary art made by indigenous artists, seems to be a solution to this problem since it gives the represented people the possibility to represent themselves (always to a certain extent) through their current artistic production. An interesting example can be seen in a recent exhibition in Rotterdam's ethnographic museum. The curators of the exhibition *Dossier Indie* – about the history of colonized Indonesia-, commissioned the Rotterdam based, Dutch-Indonesian photographer, Stacii Samidin, a series of photographs reflecting the presence of colonial traces in present day Indonesia⁷. The work of Samidin consisted of photos of everyday Indonesian people accompanied by texts narrating the stories of these people and their relationship to colonialism. Figure 2 above is an example of Samidin's work. Through art, the

⁷ <https://www.wereldmuseum.nl/nl/zien-en-doen-in-het-wereldmuseum/tentoonstellingen/merdeka>

museum tried to give a voice to the people around which the exhibition was revolving, in an attempt to challenge the western gaze.

In addition, some interviewees mentioned the use of contemporary art as a way of making the ethnographic display more exciting and attractive to visitors: large art installations, videos and experimental visual projects are said to all new layers to the museum, which possibly might attract new and especially young visitors. That opinion was challenged though by other ethnographic curators who believed that contemporary art does not attract visitors unless the exhibited artists are global players in the field (Marije). The use of art as a way to attract visitors was also highly criticized by art curators, but I will discuss that in the following pages.

Ethnographic discourse is used in art museums in the following ways:	Art discourse is used in ethnographic museums in the following way:
Work with society and communities	As an intervening, critical instrument
Work with archives, bring light to hidden museum stories and practices	Highlight the contemporary relevance of ethnographic collections.
Re-visit art museums' collection as ethnographic objects	Portray non-western cultures as present day cultures
Contextualize artworks as in ethnographic museums.	Give voice to the represented people
Attract a different target of visitors	Attract a different target of visitors
	Attracts visitor's attention

Table 2. Showing the main strategies with which each discourse is used in the other museum

Art museums

On the other side, art museums related decoloniality with social problems such as social discrimination, exclusion of marginalized communities and social cohesion. It is due to those interests that ethnographic and anthropological discourse increase their presence within the art field.

Before museums started incorporating ethnographic practices at an institutional level, artists were the first to collaborate with anthropologists combining artistic and ethnographic methodologies in representing others (Sansi - Roca, 2016). Dutch museums have started recently to be more interested in artists dealing with ethnographic methodologies and the representation of other cultures. A quick search on the exhibitions organized by Dutch art museums the last two years can support this statement. Rotterdam's Witte de Witt center for contemporary art have recently shown works of artists incorporating ethnographic methodologies in their practice such as Alia Farid, Rosella Biscotti and Firelei Baez. The same phenomenon can be seen in Van

Abbe museum in Eindhoven which showed works of Mounira Al Solh and the Otolith Group to mention few.

A photo from Mounira's Al Solh installation in Van Abbe museum entitled: *I strongly believe in our right to be frivolous* can be seen in Figure 3. This work is an example of works created using ethnographic methodologies. Mounira acted as an ethnographer in the field collecting histories and personal experiences from people experiencing humanitarian and political crisis in Syria and in Middle East. All these stories were later presented as an art installation, in the form of field notes including drawings of the people and handwritten notes regarding their experience ('Mounira Al Solh: I strongly believe in our right to be frivolous', 2018).



Figure 3. Mounira al Solh – 'I strongly believe in our right to be frivolous', (2011-present), Retrieved from: <https://www.avrotros.nl/nutten/gemist/detail/item/positions-5-telling-untold-stories-in-het-van-abbe-museum-07-02-2020/>

Art institutions started showing an interest in ethnographic methodologies when they started being interested in working with the social. Since the social turn in contemporary art, art museums became more interesting in understanding the society and the communities they are working for (Bishop, 2012; Sansi – Roca, 2015). Artists are many times invited by museums to work with local communities and either create works inspired by the communities, either create works for the communities or with the communities. Ethnographic discourse has always been dealing with fieldwork and studying communities, and it is now seen as a useful instrument for artists and museums to achieve those goals. In the excerpt below, art curator Cas talks about decoloniality in the art museums, and he describes the importance of the communities in the decolonial project:

Cas: So in that case, it would be turning to the communities that use the Museum, you know, the people who come in through the doors, the communities [...] that we work with. As a

Museum we are really trying to work with them to figure out what would make sense so not presume this idea of offering insight but more of offering a platform in which something can be developed together.

Following the same line of argumentation, museums invite artists who work with archives to show their work or revisit museums' archives through anthropological research. Through archival research, often based on ethnographic methodologies as Roos mentions, artists can revisit the museum's history, reveal colonial structures within the institution and challenge art museums' colonial past. The art curator Roos describes below the importance of archival research in artistic practice and decoloniality:

Roos: [...] I would say that for sure and especially in this time something we're really interested in is archives like looking to the archives such as our own institutional Archive. So how do we engage in that Archive of exhibition history? I mean how does that inform our current collective learning process, but how it also responds as well to what I was saying about disentangling contemporary and new, you know? Like also kind of really more engaging with the past whether that be artworks or artistic practices from the past and how that shaped our present and future or institutional history. How that gives us a more rooted sense of you know, where we are now. So, I think there is for sure enduring a connection to the ethnographic Museum.

Ethnographic discourse appears to influence also the way art museums are dealing with their collections and how they present them. Talking about the ethnographic discourse, art curator Cas mentioned that art museums have a lot to learn from them regarding the way they approach their collection. While ethnographic museums have been very systematic towards their collection, their origin, how objects ended up in the Museum and the context from where they came from, art museums have therefore not. Art museums should adopt methodologies used by the ethnographic museums to look back to their collection to understand it better and to reveal any relation it might have with coloniality (for example how artworks ended up in the Museum, who donated them, etc.).

Furthermore, both Cas and Sem, mention that an anthropological approach should be adopted in regards to the way objects are exhibited, and the way art is perceived in the museums. An anthropological approach will allow to see artworks as objects created in a specific time and space: it will challenge their universality and the modernistic framework through which they have been presented. Sem describes how to apply an anthropological gaze in the art world:

Sem: [...] in their whole philosophy of working is around trying to kind of understand art as an anthropological phenomenon, [...] as an anthropological entity or something like an objective fact. They see art as a social construction, maybe you could say that they try to

analyze what was the role of the social, but also of the construction of Modern Art [...]. And what kind of yeah, how could you interpret that development? And so yeah, the [name of a museum] to me became very eeeem, a way to kind of develop a more anthropological perspective on the Modern Art.

In continuation with the anthropological perspective in art, many art curators assert providing context to be an important element to introduce from the ethnographic field. Providing an object on display with a context is part of ethnographic museums practice. Objects from other cultures are related to different traditions and different viewpoints which a European visitor is not familiar with. For the visitor to understand and appreciate the object, the Museum has the responsibility to guide the visitor while providing all the necessary information.

However, in art museums, this is not the case. In fact, the most common practice in art museums is showing objects in a neutral, usually white, space with an attempt to avoid any distraction of the aesthetic experience of the visitors (O'Doherty, 1986). This presupposes that all visitors are familiar with the western perception of art which sees western art as universally acceptable.

In the following excerpt, Cas describes the importance of learning to use context in the art museums in the way ethnographic museums do:

Cas: At the same time, I think that the relationship with ethnographic museums is important. Basically, for what I've said around the way they learn to contextualize not only the object, [...] but their own institutional existence. So what I find most interesting about ethnographic museums, [...] look at how these objects were came to be here in this (art) museum. What was the history of the collectors that brought them here what were their engagements?

What Cas highlights here, is the necessity of art museums to learn how to reflect on the artworks they have in their collections, not merely from an aesthetic or artistic way but also on how and why those objects/artworks ended up in the collection of the museum as well as their role in the local community they are presented.

4.3.4 A tokenistic mentality?

Each field has been using the discourse of the other field for some time now and therefore a certain familiarity with the other's discourse would have been expected. The majority of the interviewees though, were familiar to the other's discourse only to the extent necessary to apply it in their practice. Ethnographic curators for instance, despite using contemporary art in their museum's display they were not familiar with the current debates of the art field. The same applies to the art field. Art curators would adopt an ethnographic approach, or they would

promote artists working with communities without being familiar with the ethnographic discourse. This approach was characterized by some of the interviewees, as I will further develop, as a tokenistic approach, or in other words as making merely just a token effort or gesture rather than an actual one.

Art in ethnographic display

Museum stakeholders were aware of the limits in their knowledge regarding the discourse of the other field. During our interviews, they did not imply that they were familiar with the other's discourse. They explicitly mentioned that despite using the other's discourse, their knowledge of it was rather superficial. The ethnographic exhibition maker Esmay replied as follows to my question related to her familiarity with the art world:

Esmay: My job requires me to be to know a lot of things but mostly superficial. I am not... you couldn't ask me to name the newest artists in the subject but I am, you know, I visit museums, art centers, galleries etc.

It is not common to require ethnographic or art curators to have a deep understanding of the discourse of the other field. Being familiar with the art discourse for instance, is not a prerequisite for a position in the ethnographic field. According to interviewees, when an ethnographic curator introduces contemporary artists or art residencies in its field, then she/he has to be aware of the potentialities and possible pitfalls of the introduced discourse. Since attaining a proper familiarity and expertise on a different field requires time and effort, many museum stakeholders make themselves familiar to the other's discourse only to the extent necessary to understand it and apply it. Art curator and director, Cas, mentioned the following regarding his relation to the ethnographic discourse.

Cas: It's good. I wasn't trained in it. So most of what I learned is rather haphazard and I would say instrumentalized (hahahahaha) in a sense. I try to learn in order to apply it there rather than learning the steering.

Cas uses deliberately the word instrumentalize to describe his relationship with the ethnographic discourse. The humorous tone he adopts when speaking about instrumentalizing the ethnographic discourse is characteristic of the puzzlement that the relationship between the two fields encloses.

Ethnographic stakeholder Wessel sheds more light in the relationship between the two fields. Wessel has an academic background in art history and he works in an ethnographic institution as a curator of the institution's art collections. His unique position in the field as a mediator make him familiar with both discourses. He argued that ethnographic curators perceive

and understand the use of art in their field in a different way than an ethnographic curator would have.

Wessel: [...] I started to realize that the concept of art from an anthropological point of view is rather a different one than from my point of view as art critic and historian who chooses on the on the basis of the quality of the works, the autonomous quality. So for me, it's always important that the work of art speaks, it has its language, and then I'm going to try to explain to the public the contextual information in which it has been created. But for anthropologists, it's the other way around. They are more interested in the contextual history, the narrative, and they are looking for objects that illustrate this narrative.[...] It's a different mindset.

Both fields perceive art differently, they present it differently, and they evaluate it differently. An important artwork of the art field might not be 'useful' in the ethnographic field and the other way around. Wessel illustrates the different ways he experiences and perceives art compare to his peers.

Learning a different discourse only to the extent necessary to apply it though might create criticism from stakeholders from the discourse used. The way art is used in ethnographic museums was not always perceived positively by the art field. Many of the art curators used the adjectives 'superficial' or 'tokenistic' to describe the use of art by ethnographic curators.

Brit: (referring to the use of art in ethnographic museums) I mean, it sometimes feels a bit like an excuse. [...] I mean somehow you need to have a contemporary perspective, of course on these things, but I mean when I think for example about the (name of an exhibition) exhibition, in the (name of a museum) last year, [...] I thought it was done really a bit superficially. I mean you had a contemporary artist at the beginning and one at the end and I think one in the middle. Then all the ethnographic objects were shown in the same traditional way very beautifully displayed. [...] What does it add in that case to put some contemporary artists in there? I mean, it doesn't say anything new about these objects.

Brit sees the way in which the art discourse was used by ethnographic institutions, as rather superficial. She states that art discourse in the case above was used poorly without meeting any specific purposes. This might be due to the lack of expertise by the ethnographic curators that introduced it in the exhibition at the first place. At the same time, Brit proposes a better use of the art discourse in that context based on her expertise on the field.

Art curator Roos also perceives the use of art in ethnographic display to be to a certain extent tokenistic. The use of the word tokenistic by Roos is quite interesting. *Tokenism*, according to Cambridge dictionary is translated as 'actions that are the result of pretending to give advantage to those groups in society who are often treated unfairly, in order to give the appearance of fairness' ('Tokenism', n.d.). The use of this word shows the general perception on

using art in the ethnographic field according to art curators. Roos though, argues that the use of art in ethnographic display can be problematic but it can also be quite productive. What will define that, is not the art per se but how the curator will present it. If the curator has not the right knowledge regarding contemporary art; then there is the risk of presenting it in a superficial way.

Roos: So it can either be, I think productive on that sense or quite problematic if handled the wrong way in terms of it becoming either tokenistic or too performative or if not in the right balance with other practices within ethnographic museum [...]. So yeah, it really depends on I think also how that's dealt with what kind of sensitivity by the curator

The use of the art in the ethnographic field was not only criticized by art museums' stakeholders but also by stakeholders from within the ethnographic field. As I mentioned earlier in this analysis, depending on the position of an agent within a field, his/her opinion and ideas regarding decoloniality and the relationship between art and ethnographic field differ. Younger stakeholders would see contemporary art as a useful tool to help the decolonial process of the museum while more established agents would be more reluctant to the extent art can have an actual contribution to this debate. Established ethnographic curator Hannah, was not against the use of art in ethnographic museums, but she was critical towards the way the art discourse is currently presented in ethnographic debate:

Hannah: So I say that as an example of when Contemporary Art in ethnographic museums can sometimes be used as an excuse as an attempt to feel up to date because Contemporary Art is quite popular. So that's useful and also that it bites the definition of contemporary. It feels like it's bringing home of this historical stuff into the present and I'm not sure that's the way that you should use it.

Ethnographically inspired art in art museums

Concerning the art field now, ethnographic curators were proved to be less critical towards the use of their discourse in art museums compare to art curators. The use of the ethnographic discourse in the art museums is something that is still very new despite the collaboration of the two fields in the past. In contrast with art curators, ethnographic curators were not very familiar with the use of their discourse in the art museums. Therefore, when asked to comment on it they were rather neutral, without any strong opinion neither negative or positive. Nevertheless, some of the interviewees were quite concern about contemporary artists working with ethnographic methodologies.

The ethnographic turn in contemporary art sees artists moving all around the world to do research in different cultures and issues and then report on them by different artistic mediums such as video, photography, archival presentations etc. Contemporary artists seem to take the position of the ethnographer by doing fieldwork, collecting material and then report on their research through art mediums. Dutch art museums have been showing such works in various exhibitions. Some of my interviewees were quite concerned on the authority an artist has to properly researching other cultures and reporting about them. Reporting on other cultures is a very important task which can have an impact on how people perceive cultures. According to some interviewees, some artists approach such works in a rather superficial way creating false perceptions or misinterpretations of reality. Same critique towards the artists working with ethnography was made also by art theorist Hal Foster in his 1996. Foster argued that artists claimed authority just because they adopt ethnographic methodologies without critically reflecting on their authority to report the 'other'. Below I cite how Foster criticizes artists inspired by ethnographic methodologies:

‘ Thus artists may end up projecting their own vision on the community “other,” building a representation that appears as authentic and politically engaged, without ever having had a critical understanding of who this “other” really is (Foster, 1996 as cited in Sansi -Roca, 2015, p.8).

It is interesting to see how the same critique is still applied today, 24 years after Foster published his paper.

Criticality against the use of the ethnographic discourse in art museums was not only coming from ethnographic museum stakeholders but also from art curators. Amber, a young art curator stated the following regarding artists reporting on other cultures:

Amber: He is (inaudible name). Oh, do you know him? No, it's a Brazilian artist. And he also did a project with a community and he kept on talking about 'they', 'They', 'they'... you know. You keep on otherizing them. Yeah, that's not okay! I think there are ways where you can, where you can do it in the right way, may be weird to say, but I think there are ways that have good opportunity to show what is going on in the world.

What Amber says here is that she was not quite happy with the way the artist presented the community his project was referring to. The artist was using language in such a way in his work that he kept on othering the people. Museums presenting such works without critically examining them might lead to the actual opposite result a decolonial practice would anticipate.

4.3.5 Maintaining the boundaries

Ethnographic museums in the Netherlands, but also all across Europe, are dealing with an existential crisis. Many European ethnographic museums have been already transformed into centers for multicultural debates, closed down or merged with art museums (Shatanawi, 2009). The art discourse is an important tool for ethnographic museums to move toward a more decolonial practice and it is perceived as such. Art museums on the other hand, are trying to reposition themselves in contemporary society and take an active role in current social problems they have been neglecting for a long time, including decoloniality. The ethnographic discourse is one way through which they can have actively deal with those issues. Despite the possible positive outcomes of the introduction of other discourses in their practice, both art and ethnographic curators proved to be reluctant in further developing the collaboration between the two fields.

Museum curators were very positive in using the discourse of the other field (art and ethnographic respectively) but they proved to be cautious on the way the other's discourse is been used, but mainly to the extent it has been used. Ethnographic curator Wendy, was considering each museum (art and ethnographic) to be a distinct museum and as such they should remain. According to her, each museum focuses on different things, asks different questions, and therefore provide different answers. With this statement Wendy makes explicit that she believes that both fields should exist separately since they contribute to society in different ways. Ethnographic curator Hannah had a similar opinion as well:

Hannah. [...]. I think anthropology has a different set of questions than contemporary fine art, and I think that's about processes. That's about value. That's about mechanisms in which society works.

Hannah underlines the many different characteristics of the two discourses, and she mentions specifically the differences in the value systems and the contribution of each field in society.

Similarly, young art curator Roos appears to have similar opinion regarding art museums.

Roos said that curating art exhibitions differs significantly from curating ethnographic exhibitions. The work of art curators, according to Roos, is characterized by intuition, something you do not encounter in the ethnographic museum, and it should be protected as an important element of the art discourse. Intuition is not something which is appreciated in the academic field, ethnography and ethnographic museums included, but it does in the art field as Roos explicitly said.

Roos: So, in many ways, I would also say that the work of the (art) curator is very intuitively driven and I think that's fantastic thing to be protected.

It is important to state here that fields have only a relative autonomy from social, political and economic constraints and not an absolute (Bourdieu, 1977). This means that the social and economic fields still influence the formation of the ethnographic and art museum. It is possible that if economic and political fields had no influence on ethnographic and art fields, the fields might not have been interested in each other's discourse at all.

Concerning the willingness of museum curators to incorporate each other's discourse to the extent that does not affect their existence as such can be explained by taking into consideration the influence of the economic field in the museums. According to Ruth Philips (2011), the distinction of the museums is constructed and this construction is related to coloniality. The distinction categorizes the artistic practice of the western world as art and the practices of the non-western world as something else, as artifact, that requires a different institution to host them. Moreover, according to Walid, ethnographic stakeholder, the distinction between art and ethnographic museums create different job opportunities and support a different field of economy, and thus it is essential to be maintained, primarily, for economic reasons. This might be one of the reasons curators from both field are reluctant towards a closer collaboration between the fields. Walid though, was the only stakeholder to claim the direct influence of the economic field to both museums. Below is a fragment of the interview with Walid expanding on the influence of the economic field in the distinction of the two types of museums.

Walid: So the distinction that we make is essential for another reason. It means that I can get that job, you know in an ethnographic museum, and an art curator will get another job in an art Museum. It means that artists can survive from going to the biennale because they are interested in contemporary art or the analysis of contemporary art or that maybe can be shown in the Stedelijk because that is what they can do. So it is a distribution of jobs, it is a distribution of storage regimes and storage conditions. It is a distribution actually of modes of engagement with different groups of people. But what if you were to think about what work is necessary to be done in the world today as Praxis, then I feel that that distinction is useless. It cannot help me in any way to better understand the world around me.

What Walid highlights here is that the main reason the -colonial influenced – distinction between art and ethnographic artifacts exists a residue of coloniality which decolonial projects should address. Nevertheless this does not seem to happen since this distinction is highly associated with socio-economic factors and an abolition of such a distinction will highly impact museums, museum employees and the art industry in general.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

In the last chapter, I discuss the empirical findings of the research, I explain how the nine central themes of the analysis are used to provide an answer firstly, to the sub-questions and consequently to the main research question of this study. I discuss the results in relation to the theoretical framework and I cite the theoretical and practical implications of the research. Lastly, I reflect on the encountered limitations of this study and identify possible areas for future research.

5.1 Discussion

This study set out to explore the way the broad concept of decoloniality is interpreted by stakeholders of art and ethnographic museums in the Netherlands. Furthermore, the research aimed to understand the relationship between art and ethnographic museums as it is informed by the concept of decoloniality. The research was approached through a qualitative methodology and data were collected through 14, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 16 museum curators and exhibition makers. The main theoretical tools used to make sense of the collected data were the decolonial theories of the Coloniality/ Modernity/ Decoloniality research group and Bourdieu's field theory.

The results of the thematic analysis have demonstrated that the two types of museums interpret decoloniality differently. According to Bourdieu's *field autonomy* concept, each specific field of the social space is formed in such a way as to have its own rules, conventions, language and logic which thereafter influence the way its members make sense of the world around them (Bourdieu, 1993). The empirical data of this research support this argument to a great extent. The fact that ethnographic and art museums associate decoloniality in different ways can be explained by considering the two museums as part of two distinct social subfields. Over time, each subfield forms its own rules, conventions and evaluation practices. This indicates that the concept of decoloniality by the agents of each field is filtered through different conventions and ideas, resulting in different perceptions of decoloniality.

The first sub-question was interested in how stakeholders from each museum perceive decoloniality. Based on the findings of this research, ethnographic museum stakeholders associated decoloniality mostly with practices concerning primary museology itself. They were associating decoloniality with issues regarding the museum's collection (its origin, as well as possible restitution of objects), the ways other cultures, histories and material objects, are represented as well as with issues of curatorial authority and communication. Decoloniality is perceived as an inherent, logical continuation of the museum's practice. It is seen as a necessary

procedure the museum should undergo to continue to exist and contribute to the struggles towards a more just and equal society.

Decoloniality, according to the art museums' stakeholders though, was seen to be rather less interested in the practices of the museum itself and more interested in practices related to the society around the museum. Decoloniality was seen as part of the heteronomous pole of the internal debate between autonomy and heteronomy, with art stakeholders associating the term primarily with issues such as globalization, social inequality, marginalized communities, the democratization of art and accessibility. Decoloniality in the art museums appears to be mainly perceived as something interesting to deal with and contribute to and only to a lesser extent as a necessity for the institution itself.

To continue, decolonial concepts such as coloniality, coloniality/modernity, colonial matrix of power and decoloniality, as defined by Anibal Quijano (2000) and Walter D. Mignolo (2007), proved to be insightful in understanding how decoloniality is defined in museology. Interviewees from both museums appear to perceive 'decoloniality' as actions or ways of thinking towards abolishing the implication of 'coloniality' still present in contemporary society. Most of the interviewees were perceiving decoloniality in the same way as described by the C/M/D research group thus, as various acts against the existence of the underlying colonial logic in social structures, beliefs and ideas in western society (Mignolo, 2007).

Each museum was associating the aforementioned decolonial concepts in the best way to fit its own doxa and needs. The structure and doxa of the art field would not recognize a direct connection of the field with coloniality and thus decoloniality was seen as an interesting social issue to deal with and not as an internal problem. Part of the art field's doxa, such as innovation and criticality, transformed the critical power the decolonial discourse as part of the art field itself, diminishing its actual contribution to just another 'interesting' discussion for the field. Nevertheless, the fact that art museums demonstrate a preeminent accountability for their local communities as well as an honest willingness to challenge their own collections, canons and origins signifies that they might be getting into a more meaningful path towards a more genuine decolonial practice.

Contrary, ethnographic respondents associated decoloniality more with their museums' history and practices and less with current societal issues and current debates of the ethnographic field. Their perception of decoloniality was more influenced by the concepts 'coloniality /modernity' and the effects of the 'colonial matrix of power' in representation, knowledge and epistemic practices. Decoloniality was perceived as an actual necessity. Ethnographic museums have to deal with their colonial past and create a new image for the

future ethnographic museum. Museological changes towards a more decolonial practice is just a small part of what it has to be done for a genuine decolonial approach. Decoloniality requires fundamental changes. Diversify museum personnel and board members, improve conditions of underpaid and many times migrant workers, as well as helping their majority white audience to understand how colonialism shaped their privileged position in contemporary society and what that means for the rest of the world.

Moving forward, the second sub-question was mainly interested in how structures within the museums influence the way decoloniality is interpreted. The analysis showed that the position of an agent in his/hers specific field determines to a great extent the way he/she interprets decoloniality. Agents in established positions of the museum and newcomers in the field were proved to perceive decoloniality differently. Museum agents holding established positions were keener to external forces influencing the field. In other words, they would perceive decoloniality not only through the prism of their field or museology but they would perceive it more broadly. They were familiar with the decolonial scholarly debates and with many decolonial practices outside the western museums. Established agents would rather approach decoloniality seriously, slowly and in a controlled way. According to Bourdieu's field theory, this can be explained by the competition presented in each field. Established agents struggle to maintain their privileged position and therefore their actions support new ideas – such as decolonization – only to the extent it does not affect their position (Bourdieu, 1993).

On the other hand, agents in less established positions were perceiving decoloniality only through the practice of their corresponded field. Decolonization did not seem to exist out of their field. Among the non-established agents, two groups were identified in relation to the way they wanted to approach decoloniality. The first group would rather support the decolonial agenda of their superiors without truly opposing it while the second group was highly criticizing it, demanding more radical actions if any change was to be achieved. Agents being explicitly critical against the current decolonial processes followed by museums were primarily young stakeholders who just enter the field or people whose position in the field might be benefitted if a more diverse, decolonial hiring policy was to be adopted.

Finally, the research substantiated the value of Pierre's Bourdieu field theory as an analytical tool in decolonial scholarly debates, a field of study where field theory was not commonly used as an interpretative framework. Perceiving ethnographic and art museums as institutions of their relative subfields helped understand the results of the empirical research. Bourdieuan concepts such as field autonomy, doxa, field struggles, hierarchy and homology helped to link structure and agency and understand how structural changes and competition

within the museums are influencing the agency of the individuals and thereafter their interpretation of decoloniality.

5.2 Conclusion

The discussion in the previous part have answered the two sub-questions of the study. It has been shown how stakeholders from different museums perceive decoloniality differently, influenced by the doxa of their own field. Moreover, the position agents hold in their field was also proven to be an important element that determines the way decoloniality is perceived and understood.

Finally, I return to the main research question of this dissertation which was the following: 'How is the concept of decoloniality interpreted in ethnographic and art museums in the Netherlands according to museums' stakeholders and how does it influence the relation between the two types of museum?'

The first part of the question can be answered as follows: the concept of decoloniality is a very broad and hard to conceptualize concept. It is interpreted and experienced differently according to who interprets it, in which context and through which prism. Art museums, ethnographic museums, established and non-established agents all interpret decoloniality in different ways. Decoloniality in museology can be seen as a concept with a rather relative meaning, an external force which is interpreted differently in each museum according to the field the museum belongs to, its conventions, rules and history. Decoloniality is perceived as a novelty and as an external issue for the art field while at the same time is perceived as being an internal necessity for ethnographic museums. Decoloniality is seen as a concept in constant change, quite painful to deal with. It appears that the definition given to the term by each field is internalized and slowly turns into being part of the field's 'doxa', which will further influence its perception among the members of the field.

Concerning the second part of the research question, the study has demonstrated that the relationship between art and ethnographic museums in the Netherlands are indeed influenced by decoloniality. Decoloniality comes to add an additional stream to the four existing streams where art and ethnographic discourses intersect, as described by Geismar (2015). The way each field is seeing the other's discourse is influenced by the specific doxa of the field. Despite the willingness of each institution to work with the discourse of the other museum, the collaboration between the institutions is quite complicated. Each field looks the use of its discourse in a different environment rather cautiously. Nevertheless, agents of the fields highly

support the necessity for both museums to collaborate to the extent their autonomy is not harmed.

Moreover, the majority of the respondents were quite concerned regarding the use of their discourse in a different setting by people outside their field. Using contemporary art or ethnographic methodologies in an oversimplified way to achieve outcomes not directly related to their corresponded field raises questions on the way the other's discourse is treated and how its quality and independence is ensured. Nevertheless, it is understood that gaining in-depth knowledge of another fields' highly developed discourses is not an easy task, especially when you want to implement them in a new environment. It is important therefore, that museums ensure a safe and constructive environment for stakeholders of both museums to engage in formal collaborations and exchange of ideas for more meaningful outcomes.

To continue with, for ethnographic museums agents, art was seen as a critical instrument, as a way to give voice to the represented cultures of the ethnographic museums aiming at the same time to a different audience group. In addition, according to the ethnographic museum respondents, art museums are generally perceived as institutions with a higher cultural status than theirs in western society. Introducing the art discourse in their practice as part of their decolonial agenda can be seen as an attempt to elevate the value of the museum claiming a new position in the western cultural scene.

From the art museum's perspective, the ethnographic discourse was seen as a way to introduce other cultures and forms of knowledge in the art display, engage communities and people with the museum and project a more democratic institution. The introduction of the ethnographic discourse in the art museums seems to be closely associated with the doxa of the art field, interested in innovation, criticality and novelty.

Moving towards the end, I am optimistic that the findings of this thesis could contribute to the decolonization process followed by Dutch ethnographic and art museums as well to the further development of their collaboration. Studying decoloniality through a sociological perspective sheds a light to the social forces affecting the perception and definition of decoloniality within museology, providing museum professionals with a new understanding on how to effectively deal with it. The thesis offers insights into the ways the structure and doxa of a field influence how an abstract and new concept like decoloniality is perceived by museum stakeholders. Understanding decoloniality as a concept being perceived differently in each type of museum and by each museum agent highlights the fact that decoloniality cannot be applied to any museum in the same way nor can it only rely on the perception of a museum's established personnel.

This thesis aims to be a useful tool for museum professionals to further develop a meaningful relationship between various institutions towards a more just and equal cultural sector. The research has shown that despite the interest of both museums in each other's discourse there is still a lack of trust between the institutions' agents. In order to avoid meaningless, superficial acts, a closer collaboration between agents of both fields is necessary. The development of decolonial policies by each museum might be a first positive step for a more just and genuine approach towards decoloniality. A policy which will be conceived by all museum's personnel, established and non-established, as well as by activists, organizations, visitors and professionals from different fields. In this way an inclusive and tailor-made practice will be created, with clear objectives and purpose which will take the dynamics and conventions of each field it is intended to be applied into consideration. Doing so, it will ensure a more solid collaboration between different institutions establishing a consequential exchange of ideas and knowledge as well as a more democratic and inclusive process towards a better decolonial practice.

5.2.1 Limitations and future research

The research process followed was interesting and highly instructive. Following the selected methodological design and a solid theoretical framework, I managed to conduct this research providing valid and reliable results. Nevertheless, some limitations about the process of this thesis need to be brought up.

First, some issues appeared regarding the sampling procedure. To make the research feasible under the present situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the sample was not very representative of the actual environment in Dutch ethnographic and art museums. Ethnographic museum stakeholder were far more than the art stakeholders interviewed for this study. Nevertheless, the fact that I have prior knowledge and experience in the art field, as a cultural practitioner myself, helped to deal with the sampling imbalance and to assure trustworthy results.

Understanding that the concept of decoloniality can successfully be studied through a sociological perspective opens up new areas for future investigation. This research tried to understand decoloniality sociologically within western museology. Future research could take the findings of this work even further by examining the perception and interpretation of decoloniality under the prism of sociology also in museums in postcolonial nations. Following the results of this thesis, the perception of decoloniality is highly affected by the conventions and rules of the various fields it is applied to. We can assume that decoloniality in a postcolonial

setting is perceived differently than in the west, but we still need to figure out how and how decolonial practices both in the west and the Global South are related.

Further research following a Bourdieuan approach can investigate the impact broader social forces (such as the broader fields of power and economy) have in the decolonial practices of museums, both in the western world as well as in postcolonial nations.

Lastly, this thesis delineated the relationship between art and ethnographic discourse as described by the museum stakeholders. Future research might consider to further explore this relationship as it is presented from the visitors' side. Exploring visitors experience of a museum's decolonial practices will help researchers understand the extent those practices have an impact on people. Such research will provide interesting insights to be compared with the results of the present study and will understand the relation of what museum stakeholders perceive and apply as decolonial practices and how this is translated by museum visitors.

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Appendix A

In this appendix you can find the interview guides used for the interviews with museum's stakeholders. The first interview guide was used for the interviews with art museums' stakeholders while the second for ethnographic museums' stakeholders. The interview guide was divided in three main sections with various questions in each one as already presented (Methodology 3.3). To increase validity and reliability and facilitate comparison between the two fields, the interview guide was mainly the same for both fields except some minor changes regarding how each field perceives the discourse of the other.

Art museums' stakeholders:

A.

- Decoloniality is a very broad term. I am quite interested to see how you personally understand it and interpret it.
- Why is decoloniality important for a contemporary art Institutions and what should their main objectives be?
- How do you deal with the issues of representing art/artists from other cultures (non-western) in your curatorial practice?
- How do you confront with the legacies of the colonial past when you are organising an exhibition? Can art reflect critically on coloniality of western museums?

B.

- When you are putting together an exhibition how does decoloniality affects the conception and realization of the exhibition?
- Do you display ethnographically inspired contemporary art (or research based works) differently that let's say, a more conventional artwork (modernistic sculpture)?
- Relatively recently, contemporary art institutions started collecting artworks from also from non-western artists (global art history). What is your opinion about that? (relate decoloniality)
- What is the most important tool of a curator to convey ideas and messages?

C.

- What are the current biggest debates within the field of contemporary art, regarding the purpose of art?/ Can art be political?

- Anthropology has an increased influence on contemporary art the last few decades. How familiar are you with the ethnographic/anthropological discourse and its current debates?
- Why did you introduce ethnographically inspired art into your museum/exhibition? In what way does anthropology/ethnography help you in the decolonisation process?
- What do you think an artist can offer to the field of anthropology and what can the anthropological field offer to the art world?
- How would you describe the relationship between contemporary art and anthropology/ethnography?
- Ethnographic museums have recently started exhibiting works of contemporary art in their exhibitions what do you think about that?
- How do you see the future of the Contemporary Art museum? Do you see a collaboration with an ethnographic museum being possible?

Ethnographic museums' stakeholders:

A.

- Decoloniality is a very broad term. I am quite interested to see how you personally understand it and interpret it.
- What are the main objectives of the decolonial project in an ethnographic museum according to you?
- How do you deal with the issue of representation of other cultures in your curatorial practice?
- How do you confront the colonial legacy of the Ethnographic museum when you are organising an exhibition?

B.

- When you are putting together an exhibition how does decoloniality affect the conception and realisation of the exhibition?
- How do you select the exhibits you will show and how do you tell a story through them?
- How do you communicate your message in an exhibition?
- What is the most important part of an exhibition concerning decoloniality?
- What is the most important tool of a curator to convey ideas and messages?

C.

- How familiar are you with the contemporary art discourse? / What do you think is the purpose of contemporary art in a society?
- Why did you introduce contemporary art into an ethnographic exhibition? / What do you think is the role of contemporary art in an ethnographic museum?
- What characteristics of contemporary art discourse do you think are useful to your field and how are they related to the decolonial practice?
- How is contemporary art affected/perceived when entering into an ethnographic display?
- Former ethnographic museums or museums of world cultures have started in recent decades collecting contemporary art from non - western countries. What do you think about this phenomenon?
- Are you familiar with the ethnographic turn in contemporary art? What do you think about it?
- How do you see the future of the ethnographic museum?

Appendix B

Below is a comprehensive table with information of all the participants to the research. All interviewees were given a pseudonym to protect their privacy as agreed in the consent form. The respondents are presented below based on the type of the museum they are working for following a hierarchical order based on their position and experience in their Institution.

	Code Name	Gender	Nationality	Field	Position	Museum	Interview duration
1.	Cas	M	British	Art	Director	Van Abbe - Eindhoven	01:06:16
2.	Sem	M	Dutch	Art	Curator	Van Abbe - Eindhoven	59:42:00
3.	Brit	F	Dutch	Art	Curator	Stedelijk - Amsterdam	1:02:46
4.	Roos	F	Dutch/ British	Art	Junior Curator	Witte di With center for Contemporary art - Rotterdam	01:03:00
5.	Amber	F	Dutch/Indonesian	Art	Junior curator	Stedelijk - Amsterdam	0:58:04
6.	Hannah	F	British	Ethnographic	Chief Curator	Dutch National Museum of World Cultures	0:59:54
7.	Wessel	M	Dutch	Ethnographic	Contemporary art Curator		55:15:00
8.	Wendy	F	unknown	Ethnographic	Curator		55:36:00
9.	Emma	F	Papua New Guinea	Ethnographic	Junior Curator		
10.	Kathy	F	Dutch	Ethnographic	Research Assistant		57:36:00
11.	Felicia	F	Dutch	Ethnographic	Curator		
12.	Marije	F	Dutch/Egyptian	Ethnographic	Former Curator		
13.	Esmay	F	Dutch	Ethnographic	Exhibition maker		56:46:00
14.	Melissa	F	Dutch	Ethnographic	Junior exhibition maker		01:05:17
15.	Rafael	M	Dutch	Ethnographic	Former Exhibition maker		55:07:00
16.	Walid	M	Jamaican	Ethnographic	Director	Research Center for Material culture	1:00:00

Appendix C

Main codes used during the analysis of the empirical data.

A. Interpreting Decoloniality	
Art	Ethnographic
Accessibility	Archives
Aesthetics	Collection (ethn.)
Archives	Colonial Legacy
Autonomy/ Heteronomy	Representation
Collections (art)	Restitution
Collectivity	Text
Diversity	
Eurocentric	
Globalization	
Inclusivity	
Local communities	
Pluriversality	
Social	
Universality	
Western canon	

Decoloniality – both museums
Decolonial academic theories
Expose colonial structures
Painful process
Painful process
Reproduce colonial patterns
Specificity
Specificity

B. Different perceptions	
Established	Non-established
Authority	Criticality
Complexity	Radicality
Decolonial academic theories	Top down influence
Influence by socio-economic fields	
Personal interest	
Responsibility	
Serious approach	

C. Dialogues and dissonances	
Art in ethnographic museum	Ethnographic. in art museum
Eye catcher	Context
Interventive model	Ethnographic artifacts
Intuition	Archives
Criticality	Social
Contemporary relevance/ Freedom of artists	Collection Attract visitors
Indigenous art	
Innovation	
Playful	

Collaboration between museums
Instrumentalization
Superficiality
Keep boundaries