

Cultural Repatriation: negotiation, conflict management, and reconciliatory diplomacy in Indonesia–Netherlands relations

Repatriación cultural: negociación, gestión de conflictos y diplomacia reconciliadora en las relaciones entre Indonesia y los Países Bajos

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CULTURAL REPATRIATION: NEGOTIATION, CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, AND RECONCILIATORY DIPLOMACY IN INDONESIA-NETHERLANDS RELATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The repatriation of colonial cultural objects from the Netherlands to Indonesia has become an important site of postcolonial diplomacy, historical recognition, and bilateral cooperation. This study analyzes how negotiation and conflict-management mechanisms are represented in media discourse and how those representations correspond with official Indonesian and Dutch policy discourse. Using a descriptive qualitative case-study design, the study analyzes 20 unique media texts published between 2019 and 2024 across Deutsche Welle Indonesia, NL Times, and The Jakarta Post, supplemented by official governmental and diplomatic documents for triangulation. Media texts are analyzed thematically through NVivo 15, while official documents are examined as evidence of state-level policy and diplomatic framing. The findings indicate that the contemporary process is characterized by provenance research, negotiated selection of objects, institutional cooperation, and formal restitution procedures. These patterns are consistent with Interest-Based Negotiation and with Dual Concern Model strategies of compromise and collaboration, although private bargaining preferences cannot be directly observed. The study further finds that repatriation creates opportunities for cultural diplomacy and reputational positioning, but media positivity alone cannot establish soft power or prove that repatriation transforms the entire bilateral relationship. Repatriation is therefore conceptualized as an ongoing process linking material restitution, cultural diplomacy, and postcolonial reconciliation rather than as a completed resolution.

KEYWORDS: cultural repatriation - international diplomacy - conflict management - soft power - Indonesia-Netherlands relations

REPATRIACIÓN CULTURAL: NEGOCIACIÓN, GESTIÓN DE CONFLICTOS Y DIPLOMACIA RECONCILIADORA EN LAS RELACIONES ENTRE INDONESIA Y LOS PAÍSES BAJOS

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RESUMEN

La repatriación de objetos culturales coloniales de los Países Bajos a Indonesia se ha convertido en un espacio relevante de diplomacia poscolonial, reconocimiento histórico y cooperación bilateral. Este estudio analiza cómo los mecanismos de negociación y gestión de conflictos aparecen en el discurso mediático y cómo estas representaciones se relacionan con el discurso oficial de política exterior de Indonesia y los Países Bajos. Mediante un diseño cualitativo descriptivo de estudio de caso, se analizan 20 textos mediáticos únicos publicados entre 2019 y 2024 en Deutsche Welle Indonesia, NL Times y The Jakarta Post, complementados con documentos gubernamentales y diplomáticos oficiales para la triangulación. Los textos mediáticos se analizaron temáticamente mediante NVivo 15, mientras que los documentos oficiales se utilizaron como evidencia del discurso estatal y diplomático. Los resultados muestran que el proceso contemporáneo se caracteriza por la investigación de procedencia, la selección negociada de objetos, la cooperación institucional y procedimientos formales de restitución. Estos patrones son compatibles con la negociación basada en intereses y con estrategias de compromiso y colaboración del Modelo de Doble Preocupación, aunque las preferencias privadas de negociación no pueden observarse directamente. Asimismo, la repatriación genera oportunidades para la diplomacia cultural y el posicionamiento reputacional, pero la positividad mediática por sí sola no demuestra poder blando ni una transformación completa de las relaciones bilaterales. Por ello, la repatriación se conceptualiza como un proceso en curso que conecta restitución material, diplomacia cultural y reconciliación poscolonial.

PALABRAS CLAVE: repatriación cultural - diplomacia internacional - gestión de conflictos - poder blando - relaciones entre Indonesia y los Países Bajos

Cultural Repatriation: negotiation, conflict management, and reconciliatory diplomacy in Indonesia–Netherlands relations

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Indonesia

Introduction

The repatriation of colonial cultural objects has become an increasingly important issue in international relations because it connects material restitution with historical memory, postcolonial justice, cultural diplomacy, and bilateral reconciliation. For Indonesia, the relationship with the Netherlands is especially significant because colonial rule produced extensive transfers of cultural objects to Dutch museums and collections. Repatriation therefore concerns not only the physical movement of objects but also the diplomatic negotiation of how colonial histories are interpreted and addressed. UNESCO notes that more than 80 % of African cultural heritage is stored outside the continent, and Asian countries, including Indonesia, experience similar conditions.⁴ Recent returns demonstrate that the issue has moved from isolated museum transfers toward a more institutionalized bilateral process. In July 2023, the Dutch government

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4 UNESCO, *The 1970 Convention: Fighting Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2021), <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375748>



announced the return of 478 cultural objects to Indonesia and Sri Lanka, including the Lombok treasure, four Singasari statues, a Klungkung keris, and the Pita Maha collection. In September 2024, the Netherlands announced a second return to Indonesia involving 288 objects, including 284 objects from the Puputan Badung collection and four Hindu-Buddhist sculptures. These developments indicate a continuing process rather than a single act of restitution.⁵

However, repatriation is not only a technical issue, but also a complex arena of political, legal, and moral negotiations.

Repatriation should not be treated as synonymous with legal ownership, moral restitution, cultural diplomacy, or historical reconciliation. Legal repatriation concerns the formal return or transfer of cultural property; moral restitution addresses historical wrongs and claims of justice; cultural diplomacy concerns the use of cultural relations to manage interstate perceptions and cooperation; and historical reconciliation concerns the longer-term transformation of relationships shaped by colonial violence and memory. The same return may involve all four dimensions without proving that one automatically causes another.

The literature has established that Indonesia–Netherlands cultural-property relations are embedded in a longer history of colonialism, decolonization, diplomacy, and asymmetrical power. Scott's analysis shows that the return of cultural property has long been connected to the wider bilateral relationship, while Kuitenbrouwer demonstrates how cultural diplomacy can operate within postcolonial foreign-policy disputes. Lijphart's *The Trauma of Decolonization: The Dutch and West New Guinea* is also relevant because it foregrounds the political consequences of Dutch decolonization and helps situate contemporary reconciliation within a longer postcolonial trajectory.⁶

5 M. Tinubu, "Recovery and Return of Stolen Cultural Property," *International Enforcement Law Reporter* 40, no. 3 (2024), <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/ielr40&i=145>

6 Arend Lijphart, *The Trauma of Decolonization: The Dutch and West New Guinea* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966).

In academic literature, there is debate regarding the definition and indicators of “cultural loot”. Some scholars emphasize the aspect of “illicitly acquired objects”,⁷ while others highlight the symbolic dimension as a representation of colonial domination.⁸ These differing perspectives influence the analytical framework for repatriation: whether artifacts are viewed solely as legal objects or as symbols of collective memory that demand recognition. In the case of Indonesia and the Netherlands, these two views converge and complement each other, because the seized objects have material value and are also laden with meaning for national identity. Liemanto, Fadli, and Kusumadara show that, although Indonesia and the Netherlands have cooperated on digitization projects and several returns, repatriation remains difficult where good faith between the parties is lacking; successful repatriation therefore depends not only on legal arrangements but also on diplomatic trust built gradually.⁹ Thus, this definition issue is relevant to understanding the complexity of negotiations and cultural diplomacy in this study.

Historically, colonial looting and cultural collection have occurred since the 19th century through ethnographic activities, religious missions, and Dutch military expeditions in the archipelago. This collection became even more massive after the First and Second Dutch Military Aggressions (1947–1949), when many valuable artifacts were taken to the Netherlands as symbols of power.¹⁰ During the Japanese occupation, many collections changed hands, complicating the trail of legal ownership. This historical context shows that

7 L V Prott and P J O’Keefe, *Law and the Illicit Trade in Cultural Objects* (Cambridge University Press, 2020).

8 Lydia Kieven and Christoph Antweiler, “Controversial Intangible Heritage in Indonesia,” in *Handbook on Intangible Cultural Practices as Global Strategies for the Future*, ed. Christoph Wulf (Cham: Springer, 2025), <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/96987/1/9783031721236.pdf>

9 Airin Liemanto *et al.*, “(Re)Collecting Colonial Ancient Manuscripts to Construct the National Identity of Indonesia,” *Agathos: An International Review of the Humanities and Social Sciences* 15, n.º 2 (2024), <https://www.agathos-international-review.com/issues/2024/29/Liemanto.pdf>

10 R. Wirayudha, “Perkembangan Repatriasi Benda-Benda Bersejarah Asal Indonesia Dari Belanda Periode 1949–2024 Dan Implikasinya Bagi Pendidikan Sejarah” (magister thesis, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, 2025), <http://repository.unj.ac.id/id/eprint/57154>

repatriation is not merely a legal matter, but also an effort to reorganize the nation's collective memory. As Maharani explained, the political dynamics of memory in Indonesia-Netherlands relations create a strong emotional layer in every negotiation process.¹¹ The historical aspect is an essential foundation for reading the contemporary context of cultural diplomacy.

In the realm of international law, there are several critical normative foundations. The 1954 Hague Convention protects cultural heritage during armed conflict, while the 1970 UNESCO Convention emphasizes the prevention of illegal trade in cultural objects. However, these instruments have limitations, particularly in dealing with colonial cases that occurred before the conventions came into force.¹² The bilateral approach is the main instrument, as reflected in the Indonesia-Netherlands agreement that enables the return of artifacts. Karabinos asserts that the NEFIS archives provide new insights into the mechanisms of Dutch repatriation policy, which was influenced by domestic political calculations and international pressure.¹³ The global legal basis can only be effective if adaptive bilateral diplomatic mechanisms complement it.

The study of the return of cultural loot from the Netherlands to Indonesia cannot be separated from the discourse of cultural diplomacy and postcolonial relations. Scott highlights how colonial heritage has become an arena for the negotiation of identity and power in the context of cultural diplomacy, where repatriation is not only a matter of objects but also a symbol of political legitimacy and historical reconciliation. Another article by Scott shows how the “special” Indonesia-Netherlands relationship after 1949 was fraught with diplomatic tug-of-war over repatriation, demonstrating that this

11 Bando Raden Ajeng Kusuma Maharani, “Politics of Memory and Cultural Diplomacy: Navigating Reconciliation in Postcolonial Relations between Indonesia and the Netherlands” (Skripsi, Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2025), <https://etd.repository.ugm.ac.id/penelitian/detail/253700>

12 UNESCO, *The 1970 Convention: Fighting Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property*.

13 Michael Karabinos, “Dutch Repatriation Policy Through the Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service (NEFIS) Archive,” in *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Cultural Heritage and Conflict*, ed. Ihab Saloul and Britt Baillie (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2025), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61493-5_136-1

issue has always been linked to the complex dynamics of bilateral relations.¹⁴ Kuitenbrouwer adds the critical perspective that Dutch post-war cultural diplomacy, particularly concerning West Papua, reflects the use of cultural heritage as an instrument of foreign policy.¹⁵ These three studies emphasize the importance of viewing repatriation not merely as a legal matter, but also as a strategy of cultural diplomacy and identity politics in international relations.

In a more contemporary context, Stutje examines the “Diamonds of Banjarmasin” case, which symbolizes the colonial relationship between the Netherlands and Indonesia, emphasizing that every colonial artifact carries a complex historical burden.¹⁶ This study is relevant because it shows how a single cultural object can become a focal point in diplomacy between countries and public debates about historical justice. Meanwhile, Durinx, Catteeuw, and Francken’s research on the Hans Christoffel collection at the MAS Museum highlights curatorial aspects and public perceptions of colonial collections.¹⁷ This work emphasizes how European museums have become arenas for re-representing colonial history, which has implications for the legitimacy of repatriation demands. Furthermore, despite some successes, the repatriation process has also faced failures. Several cases show tensions arising from differing legal and ethical frameworks, ranging from international museum codes of ethics to the domestic heritage laws of each country.¹⁸ Thus, this literature shows that colonial artifacts are not neutral but are laden with political, social, and cultural meanings that influence the negotiation process between countries.

14 Cynthia Scott, “Renewing the ‘Special Relationship’ and Rethinking the Return of Cultural Property: The Netherlands and Indonesia, 1949–79,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 52, no. 3 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009416658698>

15 Vincent Kuitenbrouwer, “Beyond the ‘Trauma of Decolonisation’: Dutch Cultural Diplomacy during the West New Guinea Question (1950–62),” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 44, no. 2 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2016.1175736>

16 Klaas Stutje, “The Diamond from Banjarmasin: A Story in Facets,” *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin* 70, no. 4 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.52476/trb.13473>

17 W. Durinx, P. Catteeuw, and R. Francken, “The Hans Christoffel Collection of the MAS Museum (Antwerp),” *Volkskunde* 120, no. 3 (2019), <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=s2.0-85082312138&partnerID=40&md5=858e995be5d92363fb654f27e62355c5>

18 Liemanto *et al.*, “(Re)Collecting Colonial Ancient Manuscripts to Construct the National

Although there is a wealth of literature on cultural diplomacy, there is still a gap in studies that directly link conflict management theory with cultural diplomacy in the context of repatriation. Most studies focus on historical, curatorial, or bilateral diplomacy aspects. In contrast, studies on how negotiation models (such as the Dual Concern Model or Interest-Based Negotiation) are applied to repatriating cultural objects are still limited. This study attempts to fill this gap by integrating contemporary conflict management perspectives with the dynamics of cultural diplomacy to analyze the negotiation mechanisms in the case of the return of Dutch museum collections to Indonesia. This is expected to contribute theoretically by enriching the study of international relations and practically by providing recommendations for Indonesia's future cultural diplomacy policies.

Theoretical Framework

This study uses three conceptual frameworks to analyze the mechanisms of diplomatic negotiation and conflict management implementation in the case of the repatriation of Dutch museum collections to Indonesia and assess their impact on bilateral relations between the two countries. First, the Dual Concern Model (DCM) developed by Pruitt and Rubin is one of conflict resolution studies' most influential analytical frameworks. This model emphasizes that actors' negotiation behavior is influenced by two main motivational dimensions: concern for self and others. These two dimensions result in five main conflict management styles: avoidance, competition, compromise, collaboration, and accommodation.¹⁹ In its development, DCM has been applied to interpersonal and cross-border diplomatic conflicts. Meta-analytic evidence shows that

Identity of Indonesia”.

19 Dean G. Pruitt y Jeffrey Z. Rubin, *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement* (Nueva York: Random House, 1986); M. Afzalur Rahim, “A Measure of Styles of Handling Interpersonal Conflict”, *Academy of Management Journal* 26, no. 2 (1983), <https://doi.org/10.2307/255985>

a combination of high concern for self and high concern for others tends to produce integrative, win-win solutions, which are relevant in the context of cultural repatriation.²⁰ Thus, DCM provides a framework for reading the dynamics of Indonesian and Dutch interests in negotiations for the return of cultural loot.

Experimental research on negotiation further clarifies how concern for the other party shapes outcomes. Galinsky *et al.* show that taking the counterpart's perspective helps negotiators reach agreements that satisfy both parties' underlying interests, while empathy toward the counterpart is associated with greater satisfaction with the negotiation process.²¹ These findings suggest that negotiations that consider the opposing party's interests provide a stronger basis for durable agreements. This aligns with the Indonesian-Dutch context, where repatriation is the transfer of objects and political and symbolic reconciliation. Assessing the frequency of win-win outcomes and the level of post-negotiation satisfaction can serve as operational indicators for evaluating the strategies' effectiveness.

However, DCM also faces criticism. Scholars of international negotiation have shown that structural factors, particularly power asymmetries between states, shape negotiation processes and outcomes in ways that models centered on individual motivation do not fully capture.²² In the case of Indonesia and the Netherlands, historical power asymmetries still overshadow relations, so that negotiation style preferences do not arise solely from interest orientation, but also from complex political calculations. Therefore, in applying DCM in this context, researchers also use the Interest-Based Negotiation Theory developed

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- 20 Carsten K. W. De Dreu, Laurie R. Weingart, and Seungwoo Kwon, "Influence of Social Motives on Integrative Negotiation: A Meta-analytic Review and Test of Two Theories," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 78, no. 5 (2000), <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.78.5.889>
- 21 Adam D. Galinsky *et al.*, "Why It Pays to Get Inside the Head of Your Opponent: The Differential Effects of Perspective Taking and Empathy in Negotiations," *Psychological Science* 19, no. 4 (2008), <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02096.x>
- 22 I. William Zartman and Jeffrey Z. Rubin, eds., *Power and Negotiation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

by Fisher and Ury through the Harvard Negotiation Project, which emphasizes that successful negotiation depends on the ability of the parties to separate people from problems, focus on interests rather than positions, develop mutually beneficial options, and use objective criteria.²³

This approach is relevant in cultural repatriation, where formal positions are often rigid, such as claims of absolute ownership. Still, fundamental interests, such as historical justice, moral legitimacy, and long-term cooperation, are more flexible to negotiate, as Liemanto *et al.*, suggest in recommending that Indonesia and the Netherlands complement repatriation with shared initiatives such as collaborative digitization, access to collections, and education and research partnerships.²⁴

In practice, interest-based negotiation indicators can be measured by the number of alternative options developed during negotiations, the extent to which objective criteria are used, and changes in each party's BATNA value. Experimental research by Pruitt and Lewis shows that negotiators who engage in problem solving and exchange information about their underlying priorities develop more integrative, mutually beneficial solutions than those who hold rigidly to their initial positions.²⁵ This can be seen in the case of the Netherlands, which offered long-term loans, exhibition exchanges, and joint research programs as compromise options that expanded the scope for bilateral cooperation. However, this approach also has limitations. Sebenius emphasizes that negotiators' interests are layered, because each side must also satisfy internal constituencies "behind the table" whose demands are not fully visible to the counterpart.²⁶ Countries can hide strategic interests behind moral

23 R. Fisher, W. Ury, and B. Patton, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving In*, 3rd ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 2011).

24 Liemanto *et al.*, "(Re)Collecting Colonial Ancient Manuscripts to Construct the National Identity of Indonesia".

25 Dean G. Pruitt and Steven A. Lewis, "Development of Integrative Solutions in Bilateral Negotiation," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 31, no. 4 (1975), <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.31.4.621>

26 James K. Sebenius, "Level Two Negotiations: Helping the Other Side Meet Its 'Behind-the-

discourse, making the use of objective criteria susceptible to manipulation. In the case of Indonesia and the Netherlands, for example, the Netherlands' domestic political interests related to its postcolonial image could be an invisible factor influencing the course of negotiations.

Finally, this study also uses the concept of soft power through cultural diplomacy. This concept, introduced by Joseph Nye, focuses on a country's ability to influence others through cultural appeal, values, and legitimacy, rather than coercion.²⁷ In cultural diplomacy, soft power is vital in creating a positive image and building long-term trust. Constructivist analyses of Indonesian foreign policy further show that national identity and self-perceived international roles shape how Indonesia defines its interests and responsibilities abroad.²⁸ For Indonesia, the repatriation of cultural objects from the Netherlands is not merely the return of artifacts, but also a symbol of sovereignty and recognition of colonial history.

The soft power indicators in this study include cross-border cultural activities, national image in international media, and the participation of non-state actors in cultural diplomacy. Cull identifies cultural diplomacy and exchange diplomacy as core components of public diplomacy and shows that cultural institutions, local communities, and other non-governmental actors have often extended diplomatic engagement beyond formal state channels.²⁹ This can be seen in the case of Indonesia–Netherlands repatriation involving cooperation between museums, curators, and research institutions. However, critics argue that soft power is conceptually imprecise and difficult

Table' Challenges," *Negotiation Journal* 29, no. 1 (2013), <https://doi.org/10.1111/nej.12002>

27 Joseph S. Nye, "Soft Power: the Evolution of a Concept", *Journal of Political Power* 14, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2021.1879572>

28 Mohamad Rosyidin, "Identitas dalam Kebijakan Luar Negeri: Peran Indonesia Pasca Kudeta Militer di Myanmar Tahun 2021," *Jurnal Hubungan Luar Negeri* 6, no. 1 (2021), https://kemlu.go.id/files/repositori/56596/172775798166fb7e9db439f_Jurnal_Hublu_Vol_6_No_1_Januari___Juni_2021__1_.pdf

29 Nicholas J. Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1 (2008), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207311952>

to operationalize as an analytical category.³⁰ In practice, cultural appeal can be manipulated as an instrument of propaganda. Therefore, this study uses soft power theory combined with DCM and Interest-Based Negotiation to construct a comprehensive conceptual framework. DCM explains actor motivations, Interest-Based Negotiation explains negotiation mechanisms, while soft power explains the broader context of cultural diplomacy. These three theories complement each other in explaining the dynamics of conflict and diplomacy in repatriating cultural loot between Indonesia and the Netherlands.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the mechanisms of diplomatic negotiation and conflict management in the repatriation of Dutch-held Indonesian cultural objects, and to assess how the process is represented in media discourse and official bilateral policy discourse. The article contributes to International Relations by connecting negotiation and conflict-management concepts with a postcolonial foreign-policy case, rather than treating media coverage itself as evidence of foreign-policy behavior. It also clarifies how cultural diplomacy operates as an institutional and reputational dimension of bilateral engagement without assuming that every positive cultural narrative constitutes soft power. Practically, the study identifies implications for provenance research, cultural-property governance, and Indonesia–Netherlands diplomatic cooperation.

Operationally, DCM is examined through evidence of competition, accommodation, avoidance, compromise, or collaboration in official statements and reported negotiation outcomes. IBN is examined through evidence of interests, joint problem definition, provenance research, objective criteria, alternative arrangements, and mutually acceptable outcomes. Soft power is examined through explicit diplomatic use of cultural cooperation, reputational claims, international engagement, and institutional partnerships. These

30 Todd Hall, "An Unclear Attraction: A Critical Examination of Soft Power as an Analytical Category," *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3, no. 2 (2010), <https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/poq005>

indicators allow the analysis to distinguish what the sources demonstrate from what is inferred theoretically. The study therefore avoids treating the occurrence of repatriation itself as proof of successful conflict resolution or soft power.

Research method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative case-study design. The unit of analysis is the discourse and documentary record surrounding the repatriation of Indonesian cultural objects from the Netherlands during 2019–2024. The case was selected because the period captures the institutionalization of Dutch restitution policy, the 2023 return of 478 objects, the 2024 return of 288 objects, and the accompanying diplomatic discourse. The study does not claim to reconstruct confidential bargaining or private negotiating preferences; instead, it examines observable public discourse, official policy statements, institutional actions, and reported outcomes. This approach aligns with the research by Afisa *et al.*, which confirms that media-based qualitative analysis with NVivo effectively reveals discourse patterns in political and cultural issues.³¹

The media corpus was purposively constructed from 20 unique media texts published between 2019 and 2024. The corpus includes Deutsche Welle Indonesia, NL Times, and The Jakarta Post. Search terms were developed around the substantive case and included combinations of “cultural repatriation,” “cultural restitution,” “Indonesia Netherlands repatriation,” “Indonesian artifacts,” “Indonesian cultural objects,” “colonial collections,” “looted artifacts,” “return of Indonesian artifacts,” and “Indonesia asks Netherlands to return.” Inclusion criteria required a text to address the return, request, negotiation, provenance, public reception, or diplomatic implications of Indonesian cultural objects connected to the Netherlands. Texts unrelated to cultural repatriation,

31 Afisa Afisa *et al.*, “Analysis of the ITE Law on Digital Rights and Democratic Values in Indonesia”, *Journal of Society and Media* 8, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.26740/jsm.v8n2.p424-444>

duplicate versions of the same report, and articles outside the 2019–2024 period were excluded from the analytical corpus. The supplied list was therefore cleaned rather than treating duplicate or substantively unrelated items as independent observations.

The 20-item media list is documented in Table 1 so that the corpus is fully auditable. The table records outlet, date, language, title, and URL. The study does not claim that 20 articles constitute a representative sample of all media coverage; rather, they constitute a purposive discourse corpus designed to compare Indonesian, Dutch, and international media narratives. Media evidence is treated as evidence of public/editorial framing, not as direct evidence of government preferences.

Table 1. Media corpus supplied for NVivo 15 analysis

No.	Outlet	Date	Language	Title	URL
1	DW Indonesia	2022-06-24	Indonesian	Wawancara Wakil Delegasi Tetap RI di UNESCO Paris	https://www.dw.com/id/wawancara-wakil-delegasi-tetap-ri-di-unesco-paris/a-62349192
2	DW Indonesia	2020-01-04	Indonesian	Sebanyak 1.500 Koleksi Bersejarah Indonesia 'Pulang' dari Belanda	https://www.dw.com/id/sebanyak-1500-koleksi-bersejarah-indonesia-pulang-dari-belanda/a-51877046
3	DW Indonesia	2024-02-02	Indonesian	Akankah Eropa Mengembalikan Artefak Asia yang 'Dijarah'?	https://www.dw.com/id/akankah-eropa-mengembalikan-artefak-asia-yang-dijarah/a-68149514
4	DW Indonesia	2023-07-07	Indonesian	Belanda Kembalikan Artefak Curian ke Indonesia dan Sri Lanka	https://www.dw.com/id/belanda-kembalikan-artefak-curian-ke-indonesia-dan-sri-lanka/a-66146264

No.	Outlet	Date	Language	Title	URL
5	DW Indonesia	2023-07-14	Indonesian	Mampukah Indonesia Menjaga Koleksi Repatriasi dari Belanda	https://www.dw.com/id/mampukah-indonesia-menjaga-koleksi-repatriasi-dari-belanda/a-66226196
6	DW Indonesia	2021-10-30	Indonesian	Repatriasi Benda-benda Budaya Indonesia	https://www.dw.com/id/repatriasi-benda-benda-budaya-indonesia/a-59620434
7	DW Indonesia/ DetikNews	2020-01-04	Indonesian	Sebanyak 1.500 Koleksi Bersejarah Indonesia 'Pulang' dari Belanda	https://news.detik.com/dw/d-4846412/sebanyak-1-500-koleksi-bersejarah
8	NL Times	2022-10-18	English	Indonesia asks Netherlands to return art, natural history collections	https://nltimes.nl/2022/10/18/indonesia-asks-netherlands-return-art-natural-history-collections
9	NL Times	2024-09-20	English	Netherlands to return 288 museum pieces to Indonesia	https://nltimes.nl/2024/09/20/netherlands-return-288-museum-pieces-indonesia
10	NL Times	2023-07-06	English	Netherlands to return 478 looted art pieces to Sri Lanka, Indonesia	https://nltimes.nl/2023/07/06/netherlands-return-478-looted-art-pieces-sri-lanka-indonesia
11	NL Times	2024-11-13	English	Rijksmuseum starts next phase of public restoration of Rembrandt's Night Watch	https://nltimes.nl/2024/11/13/rijksmuseum-starts-next-phase-public-restoration-rembrandts-night-watch
12	The Jakarta Post	2018-11-22	English	Art repatriation: Colonial ghosts haunt Europe's museums	https://www.thejakartapost.com/life/2018/11/22/art-repatriation-colonial-ghosts-haunt-europes-museums.html
13	The Jakarta Post	2015-10-20	English	Dutch museum to return 14,000 artifacts to RI	https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/10/20/dutch-museum-return-14000-artifacts-ri.html

No.	Outlet	Date	Language	Title	URL
14	The Jakarta Post	2024-12-23	English	Indonesians embrace return of plundered treasure from the Dutch	https://www.thejakartapost.com/indonesia/2024/12/23/indonesians-embrace-return-of-plundered-treasure-from-the-dutch.html
15	The Jakarta Post	2023-07-14	English	Lombok treasure among items to be returned by Dutch	https://www.thejakartapost.com/paper/2023/07/14/lombok-treasure-among-items-to-be-returned-by-dutch.html
16	The Jakarta Post	2020-01-07	English	Netherlands returns 1,500 historical artifacts to Indonesia	https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/01/07/netherlands-returns-1500-historical-artifacts-to-indonesia.html
17	The Jakarta Post	2020-02-28	English	Preparing for return of foreign fighters to Indonesia	https://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2020/02/28/preparing-for-return-of-foreign-fighters-to-indonesia.html
18	The Jakarta Post	2020-03-14	English	Prince Diponegoro's kris cuts core Indonesian identity	https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/03/14/prince-diponegoro-s-kris-cuts-core-indonesian-identity.html
19	The Jakarta Post	2021-02-23	English	The sad state of Indonesian museums	https://www.thejakartapost.com/paper/2021/02/23/the-sad-state-of-indonesian-museums.html
20	The Jakarta Post	2023-12-06	English	'Repatriasi': Reclaiming Indonesia's heritage from the shadows of colonialism	https://www.thejakartapost.com/culture/2023/12/06/repatriasi-reclaiming-indonesias-heritage-from-the-shadows-of-colonialism.html

Official-source triangulation focuses on Dutch government statements on the 2023 and 2024 returns, Indonesian diplomatic reporting on repatriation, and official foreign-policy materials concerning bilateral cooperation. The Dutch government's 2023 statement records the return of 478 objects following recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the Return of Cultural Objects from Colonial Context, while its 2024 statement records a further return of

288 objects following provenance research and consultation with Indonesian experts.³² Indonesian diplomatic reporting similarly presents repatriation as part of cultural cooperation and the strengthening of Indonesia–Netherlands relations.³³ These sources are used to verify state-level claims that cannot be established from media narratives alone.

Data collection techniques included documenting media articles, thematic coding with NVivo 15, and triangulating academic literature and official reports to ensure data validity. The validity of the research was tested through source and method triangulation, comparing media analysis results from three different contexts (international, Indonesian national, and Dutch national). Data analysis was conducted thematically, following open, axial, and selective coding stages, resulting in main categories related to cultural diplomacy, conflict, and negotiation mechanisms. NVivo 15 was used to measure the frequency of theme occurrence, relationships between concepts, and sentiments in media texts.³⁴ This approach also allows for exploring soft power representations in cultural diplomacy, as demonstrated in the study by Sukarno and Mutiarin, which examined media narratives in public policy.³⁵ Using this method, the analysis reveals reporting patterns and explains the complexity of bilateral negotiations that shape Indonesia–Netherlands diplomatic relations.

32 Government of the Netherlands, “For Second Time Cultural Artefacts to Be Returned to Indonesia”, September 20, 2024, <https://www.government.nl/latest/news/2024/09/20/for-second-time-cultural-artefacts-to-be-returned-to-indonesia>; Government of the Netherlands, “Colonial Collections to Be Returned to Indonesia and Sri Lanka,” July 6, 2023, <https://www.government.nl/latest/news/2023/07/06/colonial-collections-to-be-returned-to-indonesia-and-sri-lanka>

33 Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in The Hague, “Repatriasi Benda Bersejarah Dari Wereldmuseum Rotterdam Ke Indonesia: Simbol Mempererat Hubungan Indonesia–Belanda,” n.d., <https://kemlu.go.id/id/denhaag/berita/repatriasi-benda-bersejarah-dari-wereldmuseum-rotterdam-ke-indonesia-simbol-mempererat-hubungan-indonesia-belanda?type=publication>; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, “Laporan Kinerja Direktorat Jenderal Amerika Dan Eropa 2023” (2023).

34 Kristi Jackson and Pat Bazeley, *Qualitative Data Analysis with NVivo*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2019).

35 Mohamad Sukarno, Dyah Mutiarin and Fauziah Saragih, “Narratives and Green Policy Implementation: A Case Study of the Sea Defence Project in Indonesia”, *INJECT: Interdisciplinary Journal of Communication* 10, no. 1 (2025), <https://ejournal.uinsalatiga.ac.id/index.php/inject/>

Mechanisms of Diplomatic Negotiation and Conflict Management Implementation in Museum Collection Repatriation

In efforts to repatriate museum collections, diplomatic negotiations between Indonesia and the Netherlands are often based on the Interest-Based Negotiation (IBN) approach. Instead of focusing on hard positions or absolute ownership, negotiators from both countries emphasize the historical and moral significance attached to cultural objects. This has led to collaborative solutions, such as the return of part of the collection and joint exhibitions, reflecting a shared interest in preserving cultural heritage.³⁶

Figure 1. Overall Word Cloud



Source: Proceed by Authors using NVIVO, 2025

Figure 1 Overall Word Cloud reflects the intensity of public narratives that emerged in the selected media corpus, with dominant keywords such

[article/view/4463](#)

36 Lauhil Fatimah and Edi Dwi Riyanto, "Repatriasi Arca-Arca Peninggalan Candi Singhasari Sebagai Upaya Pelestarian Cagar Budaya Pada Era Poskolonial", *Journal of Contemporary Indonesian Art* 10, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.24821/jocia.v10i2.12632>

as “Indonesia,” “museum,” “return,” and “heritage.” These terms indicate the subjects most frequently represented in the media texts, but they do not by themselves demonstrate that negotiators prioritized substantive interests. The relevance to Interest-Based Negotiation is therefore interpretive and must be read together with official evidence concerning provenance research, requests from Indonesia, expert cooperation, and negotiated restitution.

The Dual Concern Model helps organize the observable interaction between concerns for self and concerns for the other party. In the documentary record, the Netherlands sought to implement restitution within its emerging colonial-collections policy framework, while Indonesia consistently requested the return of objects regarded as culturally and historically significant.³⁷ The evidence is more consistent with accommodation and collaboration than with unilateral competition, but the article does not infer private motivations that are not publicly documented.³⁸

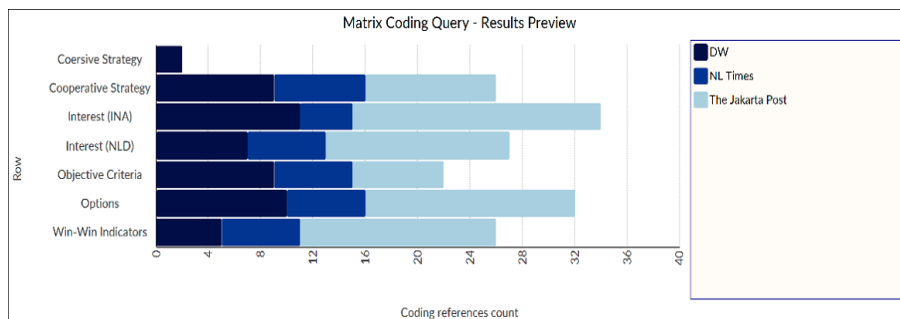
In practice, repatriation negotiations are not without the potential for identity conflicts. Indonesia seeks to reaffirm its national identity through the return of historical collections. The Interest-Based Negotiation model allows for open dialogue about the symbolic value of the returned objects, strengthening the emotional attachment of both parties to their shared heritage and reducing tensions based on past domination.³⁹

37 Muhammad Zulfan Abdillah and Nuraeni Nuraeni, “Heritage Diplomacy Indonesia-Belanda Dalam Repatriasi Warisan Budaya Menurut Perspektif Poskolonialisme”, *Padjadjaran Journal of International Relations* 7, no. 2 (2025), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/394792969_Heritage_Diplomacy_Indonesia-Belanda_dalam_Repatriasi_Warisan_Budaya_menurut_Perspektif_Poskolonialisme

38 Ahmad Rofiq, Johan Arifin and Purwanto, “Harmoni Dalam Perbedaan (Strategi Diaspora Muslim Indonesia Menghadapi Tantangan Anti-Islam Di Belanda)”, *Insight Mediatama* (2024).

39 Fatihah and Riyanto, “Repatriasi Arca-Arca Peninggalan Candi Singhasari Sebagai Upaya Pelestarian Cagar Budaya Pada Era Poskolonial”.

Figure 2. Matrix Coding Query - Negotiation Theories



Source: Proceed by Authors using NVIVO, 2025

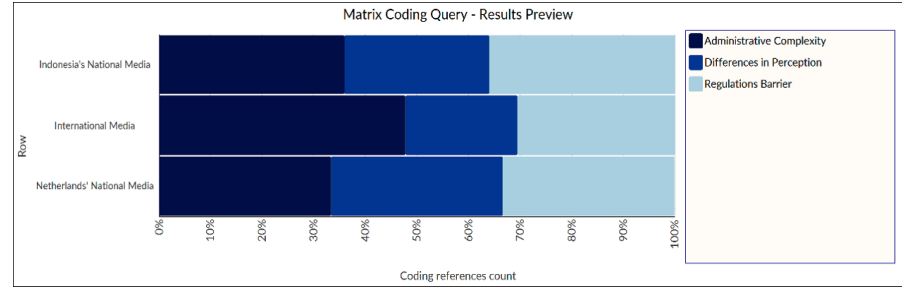
Figure 2 is interpreted as a map of media discourse, not a direct measure of government negotiation strategy. The coding indicates that cooperation, negotiation, and solution-oriented language recur in the selected media corpus. This pattern is consistent with Interest-Based Negotiation, but it does not by itself demonstrate that negotiators adopted IBN. The interpretation becomes stronger when read alongside official Dutch and Indonesian documents describing provenance research, requests for return, committee recommendations, and cooperation between experts. The evidence therefore supports an IBN-compatible interpretation of the institutional process, while private bargaining dynamics remain only partially observable.

The diplomatic mechanisms implemented by Indonesia and the Netherlands also illustrate coexistence elements that align with the Dual Concern Model. When economic and political interests are at stake, cultural diplomacy becomes a middle ground that can ease sensitivities. This is evident in the Netherlands' willingness to hold joint exhibitions and curatorial collaborations, which reflect compromise without losing the interests of each country.⁴⁰ Indonesia's soft power approach is also realized through cultural

⁴⁰ Wieske Sapardan, "Pemulangan Benda Cagar Budaya Dan Identitas Nasional Pada Era Pascakolonial Di Indonesia", *Journal of Buddhist and Hindu Art, Architecture and Archaeology of Ancient to Premodern Southeast Asia* 2, no. Article 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.25501/SOAS.00039539>

institutions such as the Indonesian Cultural House in the Netherlands. Through art performances and exhibitions of repatriated collections, Indonesia shapes European public opinion on the importance of returning cultural objects. This is not only formal diplomacy, but also a strategy to build empathy and international public support for the issue of repatriation.⁴¹

Figure 3. Matrix Coding Query - Conflict and Barriers



Source: Proceed by Authors using NVIVO, 2025

Figure 3 Matrix Coding Query - Conflict and Barriers image shows three main categories of obstacles raised by the media: administrative complexity, differences in perception, and regulatory barriers. These findings reinforce the application of the Dual Concern Model, which combines attention to self-interest and relationships with other parties. While Indonesia emphasizes administrative urgency, the Netherlands focuses on perception and legality. This variation reflects tension but also opens up room for compromise. This model explains why repatriation negotiation strategies require balancing normative demands and long-term relations. Repatriation negotiations also imply the importance of a transparent and empathetic communication structure per the principles of Interest-Based Negotiation. In some cases, the negotiating team involves

41 Purwo Agung Nugroho, "Diplomasi Kebudayaan Indonesia Melalui Rumah Budaya Indonesia Di Belanda Periode 2016-2017", (bachelor's thesis, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2020), <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/bitstream/123456789/55266/1/PURWO%20AGUNG%20NUGROHO.FISIP.pdf>

historians, anthropologists, and diplomats to ensure that the cultural narrative presented is inclusive and does not offend sensitive colonial memories. This creates a more open and solution-oriented atmosphere for dialogue.⁴²

Based on the Dual Concern Model, negotiations often involve “win-win” scenarios such as cultural object loan programs for a specific period before permanent repatriation. This strategy reflects the desire to maintain cooperation while fulfilling the aspirations of each party. Both sides recognize each other's balanced diplomatic positions and take into account political and cultural sensitivities.⁴³ The postcolonial context greatly determines the dynamics of cultural diplomacy in repatriation. The Netherlands' soft power approach through narratives of acknowledging past mistakes and cultural collaboration is a strategy to restore fair international relations. Indonesia takes advantage of this opportunity to assert its position as an active cultural actor on the global stage, not merely a victim of history.⁴⁴ The overall dynamics of diplomatic negotiations between Indonesia and the Netherlands in the repatriation of museum collections can be seen as a model of interaction that combines Interest-Based Negotiation, the Dual Concern Model, and soft power. These three theories complement each other in creating a conflict resolution mechanism based on trust, empathy, and cooperation. This forms a new paradigm in cultural diplomacy that is more ethical and participatory.⁴⁵

Indonesian Foreign Policy and the Repatriation Process. The repatriation agenda is consistent with a broader foreign-policy orientation in which Indonesia combines national interests, sovereignty, and international cooperation under

42 Michellin Ferensia Tahiru, Jemmy Sondakh, and Cevonie M. Ngantung, “Perlindungan Cagar Budaya Menurut Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 1 Tahun 2022”, *Lex Privatum* 12, no. 1 (2023), <https://ejournal.unsrat.ac.id/v3/index.php/lexprivatum/article/view/49307>

43 Jauhar Muhammad Kamil *et al.*, “Analysis Tourism Area Life Cycle of the Museum National to Improve Cultural Tourism in Indonesia”, *Journal of Tourism Destination and Attraction* 13, no. 1 (2025), <https://journal.univpancasila.ac.id/index.php/jtda/article/view/8771>

44 Sapardan, “Pemulangan Benda Cagar Budaya Dan Identitas Nasional Pada Era Pascakolonial Di Indonesia”.

45 Abdillah and Nuraeni, “Heritage Diplomacy Indonesia-Belanda Dalam Repatriasi Warisan Budaya Menurut Perspektif Poskolonialisme”.

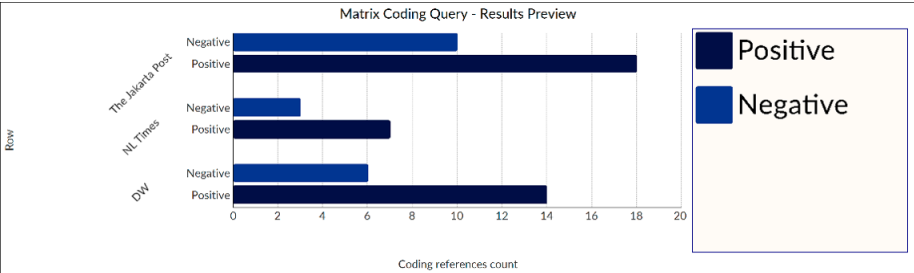
the principle of *bebas aktif*. Cultural diplomacy can function as an instrument through which Indonesia articulates historical recognition, protects cultural interests, and sustains bilateral cooperation. Rosyidin's identity-oriented analysis of Indonesian foreign policy is useful for understanding why questions of identity and national meaning can shape external policy choices. The case illustrates how material cultural claims can intersect with foreign-policy identity without assuming that identity alone determines policy.

The Impact of the Repatriation Process on Indonesia–Netherlands Bilateral Relations

The process of repatriating cultural artifacts has created an additional institutional channel for Indonesia–Netherlands engagement. Official Dutch and Indonesian sources indicate cooperation among governments, expert committees, museums, and researchers. This provides evidence of sustained cultural cooperation, although the available data do not establish that repatriation alone caused a broader transformation of the bilateral relationship.

This effort shows that the issue of cultural heritage is no longer merely a matter of ownership, but part of a diplomatic reconciliation that is rich in political and symbolic meaning.⁴⁶

Figure 4. Matrix Coding Query - Sentiment per Media



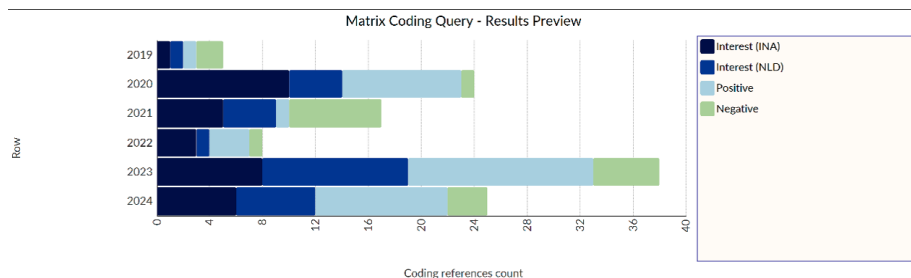
Source: Proceed by Authors using NVIVO, 2025

⁴⁶ Jos van Beurden, *The Empty Showcase Syndrome*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2024), <https://library.oapen.org/viewer/web/viewer.html?file=bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/92921/9789048564088AUP.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Figure 4 Matrix Coding Query - Sentiment per Media shows that the narratives formed by the media in Indonesia, the Netherlands, and internationally are primarily positive. This indicates a tendency for each actor to balance concerns about relations and national interests, as described in the Dual Concern Model theory. The Indonesian media encourages harmonious relations through positive reporting, while the Dutch media maintains a critical stance that reflects caution regarding repatriation's political and legal implications.

Furthermore, this process has transformed attitudes among the political elite and the public, both in Indonesia and the Netherlands. In Indonesia, the return of colonial artifacts has strengthened a sense of ownership of national history and increased the state's legitimacy in preserving cultural identity. Meanwhile, in the Netherlands, this process has been welcomed with a more open public discourse on colonial heritage and the ethical responsibilities of the state. This change, reflected in the Dutch advisory committee's recommendation to recognize colonial-era injustice and to return involuntarily lost objects unconditionally, marks a shift from a defensive to a reflective approach in viewing the colonial past, indirectly encouraging the growth of a spirit of equal partnership in cultural diplomacy.⁴⁷

Figure 5. Matrix Coding Query - Sentiment per Year

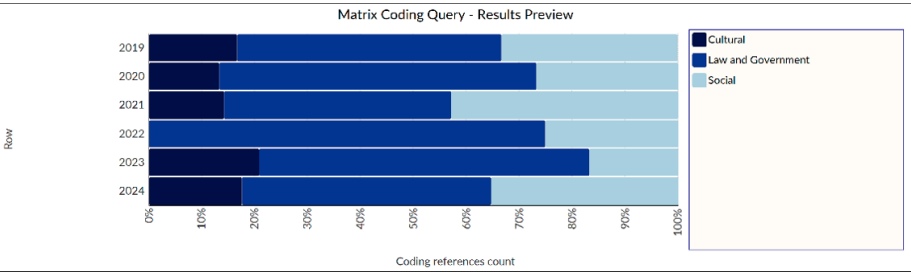


Source: Proceed by Authors using NVIVO, 2025

⁴⁷ Advisory Committee on the National Policy Framework for Colonial Collections, *Colonial Collection and a Recognition of Injustice* (The Hague: Council for Culture, 2021), <https://www.raadvoorcultuur.nl/documenten/2022/02/10/colonial-collection-and-a-recognition-of-injustice>

Figure 5 Matrix Coding Query - Sentiment per year shows an increase in positive sentiment since 2020, reflecting that the negotiation process is not stagnant but developing based on mutual interests. This reinforces the concept of Interest-Based Negotiation, in which both countries realize that achieving a solution requires understanding each party's needs, not just legal or political positions. In line with this, Indonesia strategically uses repatriation to enhance its international image through a soft power approach. By showcasing returned artifacts at various international events and using cultural narratives as a tool of diplomacy, Indonesia has successfully positioned itself as a country that actively fights for historical justice and the protection of cultural heritage. Through this strategy, Indonesia has expanded its influence on the global stage as a recipient of restitution and as a leader in international cultural discourse.⁴⁸

Figure 6. Matrix Coding Query - Theme per Year



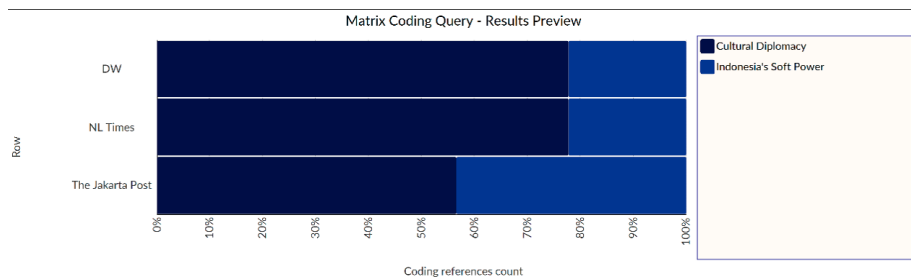
Source: Proceed by Authors using NVIVO, 2025

Figure 6 shows that cultural diplomacy and reputational themes recur across the selected corpus. Because the data are media texts, the figure is interpreted as evidence of representation rather than proof of an Indonesian foreign-policy strategy. Official sources provide stronger evidence that the repatriation process was accompanied by institutional cooperation,

48 Jos van Beurden, "Colonial Collections, Restitution and Issues of Inequality," *ICOFOM Study Series* 52, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.4000/11zlr>

provenance research, and museum-to-museum engagement. The most defensible finding is therefore that cultural cooperation became an important institutional component of restitution and that media discourse frequently represented it as part of a broader rapprochement. These inter-institutional relationships expand the bilateral relationship from a purely formal one to a more participatory and knowledge-based one, making repatriation a gateway to more productive civil society relations.⁴⁹

Figure 7. Matrix Coding Query - Cultural Diplomacy Frame



Source: Proceed by Authors using NVIVO, 2025

Figure 7 Matrix Coding Query - Cultural Diplomacy Frame shows that institutional cooperation no longer focuses solely on cultural preservation, but has expanded to include social and legal aspects. This indicates that repatriation has developed into a multilevel agenda, which also requires awareness of other parties' concerns, as described in the Dual Concern Model theory. Repatriation has also encouraged policy reform in the Netherlands regarding managing colonial collections. The Dutch government has begun developing guidelines that enable museums to proactively return cultural objects acquired during the colonial period, including forming a special commission to assess restitution requests. These reforms show that the

⁴⁹ Jona Mooren, Klaas Stutje, and Frank van Vree, *Clues: Research into Provenance History and Significance of Cultural Objects and Collections Acquired in Colonial Situations*, (Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), 2022), https://pure.knaw.nl/ws/portalfiles/portal/496442096/RAP_PPPOCE_FinalReport_ENG_v10_202203.pdf

diplomatic impact of repatriation extends to legal and institutional aspects, demonstrating that cultural diplomacy can drive structural change in former colonial powers.⁵⁰

Figure 8. Word Cloud INA media



Source: Proceed by Authors using NVIVO, 2025

Figure 8. The INA media word cloud indicates that local discourse emphasizes technical aspects such as curation and conservation. This position reflects a strong internal interest in cultural heritage management, but still leaves room for interest-based negotiations with Indonesia, which focuses on historical and symbolic value. This tension can be bridged through the principle of Interest-Based Negotiation. However, the dynamics of bilateral relations also face some tensions due to differences in perception regarding the management of returned artifacts. Some parties in the Netherlands still question Indonesia's readiness in terms of conservation, while Indonesia feels that the restitution process is slow and too selective. This tension reflects the continuing asymmetry in perceptions and expectations, which could

50 Evelien Campfens, "Whose Cultural Objects? Introducing Heritage Title for Cross-Border Cultural Property Claims", *Netherlands International Law Review* 67, no. 2 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40802-020-00174-3>

trigger new mistrust if not appropriately managed. Therefore, transparent communication and the principle of equality must be maintained so that repatriation remains a bridge, not a divide, in the diplomacy between the two countries.⁵¹

Figure 9. Word Cloud NLD media



Source: Proceed by Authors using NVIVO, 2025

Figure 9. The NLD media word cloud emphasizes national identity, repatriation, and symbolic independence. This explains that the perception gap arises because Indonesia interprets repatriation emotionally and symbolically, while the Netherlands interprets it more rationally and procedurally. This reinforces the need for interest-based and empathetic communication to avoid escalating the perception conflict. As a result of this bilateral success, there is an opportunity to form a multilateral forum or regional coalition focused on the collective restitution of cultural objects. Indonesia has the strategic potential to lead such an initiative, especially in the ASEAN region, by using the experience of repatriation from the Netherlands as a model of good

51 Naazima Kamardeen and Jos van Beurden, "Law, Provenance Research, and Restitution of Colonial Cultural Property: Reflections on (In)Equality and a Sri Lankan Object in the Netherlands", *Santander Art and Culture Law Review* 8, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.4467/2450050XSNR.22.028.17041>

The case demonstrates clear evidence of the first and substantial evidence of the second and third, while the fourth should be treated as an ongoing process rather than a completed outcome.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that the repatriation of Indonesian cultural objects from the Netherlands functions simultaneously as material restitution, a site of postcolonial memory, and an institutional channel for bilateral cooperation. The evidence from media texts and official documents supports the interpretation that contemporary restitution relies on provenance research, formal requests, expert cooperation, and negotiated selection of objects. These practices are compatible with Interest-Based Negotiation because they move beyond a purely positional dispute toward evidence, interests, and administratively workable outcomes. They are also compatible with Dual Concern Model strategies of accommodation and collaboration, although confidential preferences and bargaining calculations remain outside the observable evidence.

The Interest-Based Negotiation approach helps explain why the contemporary process emphasizes provenance research, requests from the country of origin, expert cooperation, and mutually acceptable arrangements rather than a single binary ownership claim. Official Dutch documents provide stronger evidence for this interpretation than media reports alone because they explicitly connect restitution decisions with committee recommendations, provenance research, and cooperation with Indonesian experts. At the same time, the process should not be described as a complete resolution of historical inequality. Legal repatriation concerns the transfer of objects; moral restitution concerns recognition and redress for historical wrongs; cultural diplomacy

concerns the use of cultural relations to manage and develop interstate ties; and historical reconciliation concerns the longer-term transformation of relationships and memories. These dimensions overlap but cannot be treated as equivalent.

The results of the word-cloud visualization in NVivo show a contrast in framing between Indonesian media, which frequently emphasizes cultural nationalism, historical memory, and the significance of returned objects, and Dutch/international reporting, which more often emphasizes procedures, provenance, museum management, and restitution policy. This contrast demonstrates variation in media framing. It should not be converted into a claim that Indonesia is inherently more “moral” or that the Netherlands is inherently more “rational,” because such a binary would exceed the evidence. The more defensible conclusion is that different media environments foreground different dimensions of the same diplomatic process.

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