

**The General Opinion across three Different Generations in the Netherlands on the display  
of Looted Colonial Artefacts, with a Special Focus on the artefacts Originating from  
Indonesia.**

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### **Abstract**

This research emerged out of the growing movement of Western European countries returning artefacts to the countries they originate from. The artefacts in question are looted colonial artefacts taken from former colonies during the colonial period. During Autumn 2022 Indonesia requested the Netherlands to return several artefacts, a case that is currently still being discussed. This research looks at the opinion within the Netherlands across three different generations on this matter, as the Netherlands and Indonesia have an intertwined history. Indonesia is a former colony of the Netherlands, during the decolonisation process several war crimes were committed and this time period is now referred to as the Indonesian War of Independence. During the years after this war the Netherlands showed little interest in what took place, and a process of ‘un-remembering’ took place in the country. Recently more and more individuals have started to advocate for this piece of history being adequately mentioned and included in the present educational systems, leading to the focus on artefacts originating from Indonesia. Results of the research show how in general most participants are in favour of a procedure that takes care of this return. However multiple individuals mentioned how every artefacts should be individually researched and is a case by case situation, the process of returning items should not be generalised and be applied to all artefacts in question. It can also be seen how the general opinion of the older generation in question differs from the middle generation. This aligns with the current literature available that states how younger generations are gaining more and more interest in the past and what happened during the Indonesian War of Independence.

*Keywords:* Netherlands, Indonesia, looted art, generational division

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### **The General Opinion in the Netherlands on the display of the artefacts Originating from Indonesia.**

This research paper emerges from the discussion around a topic that museums in western Europe are dealing with right now. The situation is that many of these museums display stolen art, also called looted art (Wilder, 2023). The artworks were often taken during colonial times, however in some cases it can also be tied back to other forms of invasions. The topic came to light in 2017 and has been debated over the past five years (Wilder, 2023). Conversations about colonialism and museums have been gaining more attention, and several former colonised countries actually requested return of certain artefacts (Smith et al., 2021; Nederlandse Omroep Stichting - NOS, 2022d; Codrea-Rado, 2021).

A museum in France is one of those examples, as Benin requested the return of several artefacts, under which the Benin Bronzes, and started the formal return of 26 artefacts in October 2021 (Nayeri & Onishi, 2021). According to the French president, Emmanuel Macron, he could “*not accept that a large part of the cultural heritage of several African countries should be in France*”, as he stated in one of his speeches when visiting Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso back in 2017 (Nayeri & Onishi, 2021). This speech and the statement caused a shift in the way individuals now look at the art, and also started the process of these looted artefacts slowly returning to their home country (Wilder, 2023). Some countries are more inclined to work along with the process of returning art than others. It can be noticed how reluctant Great Britain is when it comes to this topic, as they mention that it would be a great loss if items do get turned to their country of origin (Marshall, 2021d).

Another European country that was asked to return artefacts is the Netherlands. In July 2022 Indonesia requested the Netherlands to return several artefacts and scientific collections to

their country of origin (Van Nuland, 2022). Currently a team of researchers is looking into the matter and trying to find out which artefacts should and should not return (Van Nuland, 2022). The artefacts were taken during the time that the Netherlands colonised Indonesia, which lasted from the early 17th century until 1949 (Scholtz, 2019). In 1945 the Indonesian independence movement arose and the Netherlands officially recognized Indonesian independence in 1949 (Oostindie et al., 2018). This four year period went down in history as the Indonesian Independence war, and many horrible events took place during these years that cost around 14 000 lives. In the end the Netherlands surrendered after pressure from other countries, the United States of America (USA) in particular (Oostindie et al., 2022).

The war in Indonesia was a bruise to the ego of the Netherlands, the country barely mentioned the conflict in the years that followed. They did not want to look back on the fact that they left the war beaten and humiliated (Scholtz, 2019). Nowadays, individuals in the Netherlands tend to refer to the war as a piece of ‘forgotten history’, showing how the topic is often not mentioned and not adequately addressed in class or in other educational settings (Thijse, 2020; van der Vaart, 2009). Researchers and spokesmen often refrained from looking into the topic, motivated by the fact that the wound was and is still fresh, and many do not want to face the humiliation the Dutch Empire faced after their surrender (Visser, 2022). Recently, it has become more clear that the knowledge on this topic within Dutch society is lacking (NOS, 2021b; van der Vaart, 2009).

This raises the question of how individuals belonging to different age groups think about the display of the art that originates from Indonesia, and especially whether the Dutch government and museums should follow the same procedures as applied in, for example, France regarding the return of the art. It is also interesting to look into how different generations in the

country look at the matter, since this is likely to differ due to the different personal ties they can have regarding the topic. The research question that was developed for this research is as follows; *What is the opinion of individuals belonging to different generations in the Netherlands on the display of the looted colonial artefacts, in particular originating from Indonesia?* During the research the following objectives were kept in mind, (1) examine the opinion individuals hold regarding the origin of the artefacts displayed in the museum, (2) explore the attitude towards the procedures done in France, with a special focus on whether the same should be applied to these museum artefacts in the Netherlands, and (3) assess whether a difference in opinions between generations can be established. The outcome of this research displays how different generations feel about whether looted art originating from Indonesia should be returned to the country of origin. It was expected that the generations will hold different opinions on the matter as some of the individuals belonging to the older generation have more personal ties to the matter compared to individuals belonging to the younger generation, and this then influences their view on the matter.

This research report presents a theoretical background that discusses the intertwined relationship between Indonesia and the Netherlands, and the events that took place in their shared history. In addition, it looks at the current situation within the Netherlands where there is a lack of knowledge within the Dutch population regarding this topic. Lastly, it discusses the recent emergence of attention regarding the display of the looted colonial artefacts in European museums, and the actions that have been taken so far regarding a return of these items. This is followed by a brief methods section that discusses the data gathering process. Afterwards the results are presented and discussed, which shows that the majority of the participants group were in favour of artefacts being returned and these procedures being in place in the Netherlands and

France. However it was often mentioned how every case should be investigated individually as the right answer is case specific. The research also contains a few limitations, as the participant group that exists out of the older participants is significantly smaller in comparison to the two other generations. Afterwards the whole research is summarised in the conclusion.



## **Theoretical framework**

### 1. The intertwined history of the Netherlands and Indonesia

To give a complete understanding of the topic of this thesis, it will first give a narrative review of the conflict that took place between the Netherlands and Indonesia, as this has an influence on the current relationship between the two countries. The Indonesian War of Independence - in some occasions this conflict is also called the Indonesian National Revolution - occurred during the decolonisation of the former Dutch colony, Indonesia. The conflict started in 1945, the year in which Indonesia declared their own independence, and took place until 1949, the year in which the Dutch government acknowledged Indonesia's independence (Frisart, 2022). Decolonisation of this region did not take place smoothly and grew into a 4 year long armed conflict. The war took place as the Dutch Empire desperately tried to hold on to their colony after the Second World War ended (Oostindie et al., 2022). The two actors taking part in this conflict were the Dutch Empire and the Republic of Indonesia, however Japan also played an important role when it came to this conflict.

Indonesia was a Dutch colony from the 1600's on until the abolishment of the 'Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie' (VOC) in 1796, however, after this the Dutch government still stayed in control of the country. During the 19th and early 20th century, the Dutch government applied a more formal colonial administration in the colony, called the Dutch East Indies. The Dutch aimed at modernising the country and therefore imposed their culture, language and religion on the country (Scholtz, 2019). They also tried to turn Indonesia into an overseas nation state. These actions caused resistance from local populations (Oostindie et al., 2022). The Netherlands ruled the Netherlands East Indies until at least 1949, according to some sources (Scholtz, 2018). Other sources state that the country was part of the Dutch kingdom until 1941, that is when the

Japanese took over. They ruled the country until the end of the Second World War in 1945, the year in which Japan surrendered (Indonesian Resources From the Dutch Period, n.d.). The time period in which the Japanese were in power fundamentally changed the hierarchy in place in Indonesia. Dutch individuals were often brought to internment camps and soldiers went to prison or had to work as forced labourers (NOS, 2017a). In addition, several Indonesian native individuals were positioned in senior administrative positions, this distribution of somewhat higher power did not take place before under the Dutch colonisers and gave the more educated Indonesian individuals a taste of what it is like to gain more control (Scholtz, 2018).

After the Second World War the Dutch Empire wanted to claim back their power, however, they did not have the adequate resources to actually achieve this goal. As a consequence of this short time without an actual force in power, a group of Indonesian nationalists proclaimed the independence of Indonesia (Scholtz, 2018). The group was under the leadership of Sukarno and Mohammed Hatta and even established their own military force called Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI) (Scholtz, 2018). The situation of the nationalist gaining power in relation to the Dutch Empire caused extreme outbursts of violence between the Dutch and Indonesian soldiers (Scholtz, 2018). The nationalists slaughtered around 25 000 to 30 000 Dutch individuals that were held captive in Japanese internment camps, they also murdered pro-Dutch Indonesians and other individuals that were part of ethnic minorities. The Dutch, in their turn, displayed excessive violence against the local community and murdered up to 10 000 individuals (Scholtz, 2018).

When the first Dutch troops arrived in Indonesia to reclaim the land, they were forced to start with negotiations. This was due to the fact that most of the land was still in hands of the Republicans, the Indonesian nationalists, and partly because the USA was not in favour of the

continuation of Dutch colonialism (Oostindie et al., 2018). The Dutch offered for Indonesia to be a self-ruling federation, but it would have to remain under Dutch sovereignty. In the end an agreement was reached, however, both camps were not really in favour of this accord and both parties kept organising their army troops (Oostindie et al., 2018). In 1947 the Dutch planned a large-scale operation, referred to as a 'police action'. In reality, they created a strategic warfare campaign that was created to occupy the key Republican-held territories in order to force the Republicans to compromise more at the negotiation table (van der Vaart, 2009).

After two weeks of maintaining these 'police actions' the Dutch government was forced to stop by international pressure, mainly coming from the United Nations and the USA in particular. The operation led to new negotiations and later on to a new agreement that froze the front lines into borders between the land that was controlled by the Dutch and Republican troops (van der Vaart, 2009). The new agreement was, however, treated the same way as the former one, as neither parties really committed to it. Not long after the agreement went into force, groups of the Republicans infiltrated over the border lines and started an attack that was characterised by guerilla campaigns. The Dutch did not have enough troops to control their own territory effectively, and more and more Indonesians slipped back into the land that was won by the Dutch (van der Vaart, 2009).

In 1948 the Dutch army started their second 'police action' (Frisart, 2022). Even Though the action showed operational success, it showed how isolated the Netherlands was when it came to the idea of gaining control in Indonesia again (Oostindie et al., 2022). The UN ordered the Netherlands to call off the operation and the USA discreetly announced that they would reconsider the help they were offering the country through the Marshall Plan Aid (Oostindie et al., 2022). In May, 1949, the Dutch signed an agreement, under great pressure, that would

transfer the sovereignty of the country under enormous international pressure, and in December 1949 the war was officially over (Frisart, 2022).

### 1.1 The process of ‘un-remembering’

The war in Indonesia was a bruise to the ego of the Netherlands, and it can be seen how conflict was rarely discussed in the years that followed. This is due to the fact that the Dutch did not want to look back on the fact that they left the war humiliated (Scholtz, 2018). In the present time, individuals tend to refer to the war as a piece of ‘forgotten history’, showing how the topic is, and was, often not mentioned and not addressed adequately. This happened in all kinds of situations, for example in the classroom and other educational settings (Thijse, 2020). The education system put the main focus on Nazi-Germany’s occupation of the country and the loss of the colony, instead of the loss of the war and the humiliation that came with it (Tasevski, 2020; NOS, 2021a). In situations where the war is included in the Dutch cultural canon, it refers more to the general decolonisation process instead of acknowledging the wrongdoings and war crimes committed by the country (van der Vaart, 2009). It is also seen how historians do not want to talk about the topic, and especially avoid having to describe all the wrong doings and war crimes the Dutch army committed during the war (NOS, 2021b; NOS, 2022b).

In addition, the media also played an important role in the encouragement to forget about the war. This particularly happened just after the conflict took place. According to Paul Doolan, an Irish historian, many different media outlets worked together with the former operating authorities in order to draw a prettier picture of the conflict to the Dutch population (Frisart, 2022; Thijse, 2020). Some of the veterans that returned from Indonesia tried to tell their story, however the Dutch population did not listen as they already had enough on their minds with the

Second World War just coming to an end. Many were processing their own collective memory of this German occupation (Frisart, 2022).

All these separate actions contributed to the ‘un-remembering’ of the war (Frisart, 2022). Only in recent years more and more research has been done on the war. Doolan mentioned that in order to start this adequate research, a generation of military staff and politicians had to disappear (NOS, 2022b; Frisart, 2022). In his book, *‘Collective Memory and the Dutch East Indies. Unremembering Decolonisation’*, Doolan cites Rudy Kousbroek, a publicist born on Sumatra who stated that the Dutch historians only started mentioning a topic after it was no longer a controversial topic within the historical and political fields (Frisart, 2022). It is even mentioned how judges at some point started discussing the topic earlier than historians, since the Dutch state was sued and forced to pay compensation for mass killings by Dutch troops in Rawagede (West Java) and South Celebes (Thijse, 2020). The word ‘un-remembering’ is used on purpose, since it adequately describes the process that took place after the war. The word is defined as; *“the deliberate suppression of the memory of something that an individual or society no longer wants to be reminded of.”* (Frisart, 2022).

## 1.2 Recent events in connection to the history

Only recently, on the 17th of February 2022, the Dutch government apologised for their action in the past. An inquiry researched and displayed the systematic use of violence such as extrajudicial executions and torture, actions that politicians in The Hague tacitly approved of (NOS, 2022a). This report showed how the official position of the Dutch government, that the excessive violent incidents were exceptions and extraordinary instances, is not right and suitable anymore (NOS, 2022c). The research shows how the prime minister in place during the years of the war, Willem Drees, knew about the use of the extensive violence. He, however, chose to not

react and also effectively did not take responsibility for the situation. The population in the country barely noticed this occasion taking place because the government was rarely scrutinised in society during those years (NOS, 2022a). The current prime minister Mark Rutte apologised in 2022 “*to the people of Indonesia for the systematic and widespread extreme violence by the Dutch side in those years, and the consistent looking away by the previous cabinets*” (Boffey, 2022). Rutte mentioned in particular that the blame should be put on the system in place at the time, and not the individual soldiers, as they were often also kept in the dark about the actual situation taking place (Boffey, 2022; Scholtz, 2018). The Dutch king, Willem-Alexander, already apologised earlier in 2020 (Boffey, 2022).

These apologies given by representatives of the Dutch society are slightly in contrast with the general opinion of this society. Research showed that the main opinion within Dutch society downplays the actual severity of the actions. Many individuals seem to think that everyone else, as in other countries, were doing it as well, “*it's not that serious, there's nothing to apologize for*”, in addition individuals were not adequately informed about the topic since the process of un-remembering took place in the years that followed the war (Henley et al., 2020; Frisart, 2022). The Dutch population rather sees themselves as victims of the Second World War than perpetrators of the historical violence that took place in Indonesia, in addition the lack of knowledge in the Dutch population makes them not able to critically reflect on this matter (Tasevski, 2020; Thijse, 2020). Hans van Griensven, chairman of the Veterans' Platform, stated that the violence applied back then fitted in the timeframe of the area. In those years after the war more violence was used in general, nowadays this type of violence is looked down upon and extreme, however then it did not stand out with all the violence of the second world war taking place (NOS, 2022c).

### 1.3 Renewed interest in the history

During recent years it can be seen that within the Netherlands more and more individuals start asking about this part of Dutch history. Such individuals are for example individuals with Indian roots or grandchildren of individuals that were put in camps during the war by the Japanese authorities, but also individuals that were born in Indonesia and moved to the Netherlands (NOS, 2017b). These individuals pointed out how important it is to think and process about what happened in Dutch East Indies, as one currently receives limited information about the matter. Individuals that experienced both the Japanese domination in the area and/or the Indonesian War of Independence often find it difficult to talk about the matter to their children (NOS, 2017b). However it can be seen that once grandchildren start asking around they will share their experiences. For these grandchildren it is important to know where their roots are and what their family has been through (NOS, 2017b). Several instances have been trying to bring the topic more into the spotlight in order to educate individuals. Jim Taihuttu for example made a movie about this part of the history, his sister also created a curriculum that will teach highschool students more about the history (NOS, 2021b).

## 2. Artefacts

As a result of the colonial period, the Netherlands, and other former colonisers, gathered quite some artefacts from their colonies. These items can for example be photos, bracelets and numerous other personal belongings, which could be taken during raids of the military during the war. (Times, 2022). However, it can also be items found by Dutch archaeologists during their work in the countries (NOS, 2022d; NOS, 2019). The items were often brought home to the Netherlands where they are stored in the National Archives (Times, 2022). It can also be the case

that artefacts from other countries ended up in the Netherlands, and other European countries, as they were sold and traded within Europe by the former colonisers. This is for example the case with some artefacts belonging to the Benin Bronzes collection that are stored in Leiden, the Netherlands (NOS, 2019). The statues were taken from the palace of the former king who held power over a large region in West Africa. The kingdom was razed by the British as a punishment, and the bronzes were taken and later on ended up in different museums in different countries (NOS, 2019).

## 2.1 The start of the movement

Recently, more and more former colonisers are asked to return the artefacts that were taken during the colonial years to the country of origin. Former imperialists, such as France, are already busy with this process (Nayeri & Onishi, 2021; Wilder, 2023). The topic was raised back in 2017, as the French president Macron declared in one of his speeches that “*it should not be the case that individuals growing up in Africa have to come here [to France] to see their history*” (Codrea-Rado, 2021). France is the first former European colonial power to start taking action when it comes to this matter. During October 2021 the country started the formal transfer of 26 artefacts that made their way home to Benin city, Nigeria, after they were displayed one last time in Musée du Quai Branly in Paris (Nayeri & Onishi, 2021; Surtees, 2022). Once this process started to be implemented local art historians explain how this action “*is a form of regained dignity and the culmination of a long fight started by African countries shortly before independence*” (Surtees, 2022). The collection is of importance to the country because it contains aspects of the forgotten pre-colonial african queens that have been absent during many researches in this area, despite the fact that they actually carry political importance (Surtees, 2022).



In order to be prepared for the arrival of several artefacts, plans were made to open a museum, Edo Museum of West African Art, in Benin city that can store and guard artefacts such as the Benin Bronzes (Marshall, 2021b). The report written by Felwine Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy caused quite some commotion across other European countries that have a heavy history with colonialism and looted art. The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, and Great Britain are such countries (Nayeri & Onishi, 2021). However, in 2021, governmental bodies of Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium announced to start identifying objects in museums that were looted during the colonial period and plan on starting the process of returning these items (Wilder, 2023).

## 2.1 Cases in other Western European countries

Belgium set up a draft bill together with the Congolese government that talks about the possible return of looted artefacts (Walker, 2022). These actions were taken after Thomas Dermine, State Secretary for Scientific Policy, Recovery Program and Strategic Investments, stated during a visit to the Democratic Republic of Congo in November 2021, that it was time to return the objects that were *“unlawfully removed from Congo”*. The returns of the items will be funded by the Belgian government (Walker, 2022). The main focus of the actions lay on the reconstitution, as it is planned to move away from compensating and aiming for *“returning the objects to their original state or original ownership”* (Walker, 2022). In addition, the Africa museum, located in Belgium, also started to talk about the return of looted artefacts to the Democratic Republic of Congo (Nayeri & Onishi, 2021). During 2021 Germany announced to start making substantial returns of several famous artefact starting from 2022 on. The country has multiple items of the Benin Bronzes collection on display, artefacts that were originally looted by the Britain army, and are now displayed throughout Europe (Marshall, 2021a).

The German minister of Culture, Monika Grütters, marked the action as a “*moral responsibility to bring Germany’s colonial past to light and come to terms with it*”. Handling the return of this collection is a touchstone according to Grütters (Marshall, 2021a). The collection has in fact been returned, and on the first of July 2022 Nigeria received the items in Abuja (Oltermann, 2022). This action however spraked commotion in Britain, the country that first took the item from the kingdom of Benin, now Nigeria, and so far stonewalled restitution debated for several years (Marshall, 2021a). The country has a rich history of taking artefacts from other countries and displaying them, mainly in the British museum. However, it can be noticed how it is rather silent when it comes to the matter of returning looted artefacts (Marshall, 2021d). Both the leading party and the opposition Labour party had issued a policy statement on the matter back in 2021 (Marshall, 2021d).

The British government stated that they believe that the matter of whether artefacts should or should not return to their country of origin is “*a matter for the British Museum’s trustees*”, which is a group of individuals appointed by the prime minister Boris Johnson. It should be noted however that this same prime minister repeatedly states that this history should be preserved in London as it is the Museum’s mission to tell world history, and it would be a “*grievous and irremediable loss*” if the items would leave the British Museum (Marshall, 2021d). Several former and current British lawmakers said that there were several reasons for the blind eye that was turned to the matter. It was mentioned how the government often would refer from so-called “woke” actions and rather clinged on to the “*real or imagined past*” (Marshall, 2021d). In March 2023 a university in Scotland returned a statue to Nigeria, this was the first time a British institution returned looted art to the country (NOS, 2021a).

## 2.4 The Netherlands

A panel located in the Netherlands, Council for Culture, recommended the Dutch government to unconditional return of objects stolen by the Dutch colonisers from their former colonised countries (NOS, 2020). This report was released after years of research in which individuals from several former colonised countries, such as Indonesia, Suriname and the Caribbean Islands, were interviewed. The report can however only act as a recommendation, as the Dutch government in the end needs to make the decision (NOS, 2020; Moses, 2020). Stijn Schoonderwoerd, director of the National Museum of World Cultures, located in the Netherlands, mentioned how it is important to engage in a dialogue with the former colonised countries once the report would be implemented. He mentioned how it would be “*almost neocolonial to presume to know what’s good for Indonesia or Suriname, or any other country*” (Moses, 2020). It is reported, however, that the Dutch population is also a tough one to convince. When the Hermitage Museum, located in Amsterdam, wanted to remove the Golden Age out of their collection, because it obscured the history of slavery and exploitation, the statement was met with great condemnation and even the Prime Minister, Mark Rutte, marked the action as “*nonsense*” (Moses, 2020).

There are however already conversations that focus on the return of art pieces to the country they originate from. In 2018 debates between Nigerian authorities and then European museums discussed the return of the Benin Bronzes (NOS, 2022e). In 2019, the National Museum of World Cultures posted a statement saying that they will actively start a research in which they will search for objects that are eligible for restitution within their own collection (NOS, 2019). The director, Schoonderwoerd, mentioned that it is difficult to say how many items will be returned, as most of their collection is related to the colonial past, however not all of it

contains solely looted art. However, it is mentioned how the Dutch government has the final say in the matter, and they can decide whether an item actually will be returned in the end (NOS, 2019).

The director of the Museum Volkenkunde mentioned how the items would be returned once Nigeria builds a museum that meets the international standards, it was also expected that the items would be loaned to the country, as *“the most important thing is that those pieces can be seen in the country again”* (NOS, 2022e). Malaysia received an official note that stated that dozens of skeletons that are stored in the Leiden Naturalis museum will be returned (NOS, 2022e). Malaysia filed a request for the restitution during the summer of 2021, as the skeletons that were discovered in Malaysia are part of the nation's cultural heritage, and in October 2022 the decision to return the items was made (NOS, 2022e).

### 3. Debates about the procedure

The return of the art is a powerful symbolic action that emerged out of the confluence of several separate events that took place in European countries: contemporary questioning of the social inequalities, racism and sexism, and the belated redemption of their colonial past (Nayeri & Onishi, 2021; Farago, 2019). Some individuals in the countries even state that their country is getting their dignity back, with the return of the looted artefacts (Nayeri & Onishi, 2021). A news item posted by the Dutch Broadcasting Foundation (Nederlandse Omroep Stichting - NOS) showed how individuals in Suriname and Indonesia reacted excitedly about the report posted by the Dutch Council for Culture. It was mentioned how it is important that the pieces that are important for one's culture and they read about are also actually accessible to the individuals (Kas & Jurna, 2020). However, Suriname did mention that they first want to create the perfect

condition for the item to be stored, in order to create this they wish to work together with the Netherlands to exchange knowledge on how to do so (Kas & Jurna, 2020). An archaeologist in Indonesia, Siswanto, is a bit more hesitant about the procedure. He mentions how the return of the items should be with a reason, and it should not become a case of quantity over quality. In addition he mentions how it should first be researched to where in the country the items should be returned, in order to avoid conflict on where to store the returned items (Kas & Jurna, 2020).

It can be seen that there are also obstacles that countries face when they ask back for their art. In some countries there are laws that state that the looted art is now rightfully theirs. France has for example one of these laws, the Napoleonic-art legislation that guarantees the ownership of these artefacts, even when taken during war or other conflicts (Surtees, 2022). The rapport, calling for the return of potentially thousands of works of art, written by Bénédicte Savoy of France and Felwine Sarr of Senegal, states that this law should change, as it is the only morally responsible action to be applied in this case (Farago, 2019). Critics state that the report was made by individuals that worked based on an ‘activist agenda’. They worry about which art would actually remain in Europe and feel like the rapport asks for all the art to be returned.

They state how the rapport and actions based upon it should *“not apply to works that came into Europe before 1899. That was when the Peace Conference in The Hague banned the practice of pillaging. If you go back further than 1899, you can get on with it, because looting was a common practice everywhere. Even in Africa.”* (Jager, 2018). It is mentioned how kingdoms in Africa also undertook punitive expeditions to the neighbouring regions, the same way this happened in Europe (Jager, 2018). Therefore, the report explicitly mentioned that before an item is returned, it should be considered whether the object was taken without consent in the

first place. Mr. Kasarhérou stated that this is the reason why the word ‘restitution’ should be used, as it *“applies to objects that were acquired in an illicit manner”* (Nayeri & Onishi, 2021).

There are also worries about whether the countries that receive the art back are able to conserve this in a suitable manner, critics state that the objects are safe in their current location (Wilder, 2023). The example of statues that belong to Nigeria but are conserved in Paris as the country *“has no suitable space”* is given when talking about this situation (Jager, 2018). Before the ‘Art of Benin Yesterday and Today’ collection returned to Benin there were debates about whether the country, and other African countries included as well, were able to look after the artefacts. Individuals pointed out the needed security in order to make sure that the artefacts were safely stored and there was no risk of them being stolen (Surtees, 2022; Codrea-Rado, 2021).

Although some individuals agreed on this matter and pointed out the same worries, others compared these statements with the past; *“it reminds me of when people questioned if black people had a soul”* (Surtees, 2022). In addition, experts say that these Western countries should also look at their own security as there are often double standards applied, *“Thieves also entered the Kunsthal [located in the Netherlands] because of a silly lock. When something like this happens in Nigeria, we say ‘see you there’, but sometimes we don’t have things in order ourselves”* (NOS, 2021c). Some say that *“Western countries should provide monetary reparations equaling the benefits derived from holding these objects for more than a hundred years”*, this money can then be used to reassure safe conditions for the artefacts (Rea, 2018). In addition, countries that expect art to be returned invest themselves as well in the safekeeping of the art. Benin invested more than 1.16 billion dollars on the nation’s cultural infrastructure, in Abomey two museums have been built as an effort to turn Benin into a more popular tourist destination (Nayeri & Onishi, 2021).

However, the return of the artefacts does have to be slowed down, as the museum should first be finished in order to reassure the safeguarding of the artefacts before they return. The aim is to open the Edo Museum of West African Art at the end of 2023 (Jager, 2019). In 2019 it was seen how Macron was starting to rush the process of returning the art as he wanted it all back in their country of origin by 2022. The officials of the museum in Benin City had to slow the process down and mentioned how diligence prevails (Jager, 2019). It is also seen how in some cases the former colonisers want to return as much as possible back to the country it came from. However, it should be kept in mind that quality is more important than quantity (Kas & Jurna, 2020). One case showed how the return of Indonesian artefacts from the Netherlands to Indonesia was handled with a lack of empathy. First Dutch museums were allowed to submit wishes, what remained was shipped to Jakarta, if Indonesia paid the shipping costs. This situation was met with resistance and Indonesia stated that in this case the Netherlands could keep the remaining artefacts (NOS, 2021c). The return of certain artefacts can also cause commotion in the country of origin, as different populations in the country claim the item to be theirs and want it preserved in different places. These kinds of situations should first be examined and handled before all the art is returned, as it will ensure a safe and peaceful process instead of the return causing turmoil and conflict (Kas & Jurna, 2020).

## Methodology

For this study, a quantitative research design was used. In order to receive the data for this research individuals belonging to three different generations were asked to fill in a short questionnaire (appendix C). The generations were chosen based on generations displayed by the centre for Generational Kinetics. The first generation exists out of individuals ranging from 18 to 28, originally this generation goes until the age of 13, however due to ethical procedures individuals younger than the age of 18 were excluded from this research. The second generation exists out of individuals ranging from 47 to 58, and the third generation ranging from 77 to 95 (The Center for Generational Kinetics, 2022). The gaps in between the generations are added on purpose as the change in between generations sometimes needs a bit of time before it becomes more obvious and present.

The questionnaire exists out of both open and closed questions and the main aim of this questionnaire is to discover the opinion within different generations on the matter of looted artefacts. In particular, it aims at assessing this opinion within the community of Dutch individuals. The closed questions tackled the objectives of the research and, anonymous, information about one's socio-economic background in order to see if there are any possible correlations that were left out in the hypothesis, these questions were all mandatory. There was also one optional open ended question where individuals could write down any thoughts or information they wanted to share regarding the topic.

The first question of the questionnaire states the following; "[\*A research\*](#) on the British museum and its visitors showed that multiple visitors of the museum felt uncomfortable watching the exhibition because "it felt like they were watching all the stolen goods that did not originate from Britain itself". Do you think that you would feel similar watching an exhibition that



*concerns items originating from Indonesia?”. The second question goes as follows; “Recently, the media published that museums in France returned artefacts to the country of origin. The news article can be found [here](#). Do you support this procedure?”. The third question “is connected to the topic of the previous question. During the announcement of the above-mentioned procedure, the French president Macron held a speech. In this speech he mentioned that “it should not be the case that individuals growing up in Africa have to come here [to France] to see their history”. Do you agree with this statement?”. And the fourth question states that “[I]n October 2022 it came to the attention that Naturalis museum and Volkenkunde museum, which are both displaying artefacts from Indonesia, were requested by the Indonesian government to return certain artefacts back to Indonesia. The full news article can be found [here](#). Do you think that the museum should give the artefacts back to Indonesia?”.*

The questionnaire is built up this way in order to gather all the information needed. By making the closed questions mandatory it is ensured that the needed data is gathered. These questions could be answered with either yes and no in order to do an adequate data analysis based on a quantitative approach. The result section displays the data with a descriptive analysis of the answer distribution. This analysis looked at possible patterns and trends that might exist between the responses. Since the closed questions can be limiting the data gathering process, the optional open ended question was added, as this gives the option of exploring a participants attitude or experience in relation with the topic. In order to analyse the responses to the open questions they were coded and grouped into different topics that were mentioned.

In order to recruit participants for this research a mix of different methods were implemented. First of all participants were recruited through social media, as a link to the questionnaire was shared on different platforms such as Instagram, Whatsapp and LinkedIn. In

addition flyers were hung up in a library in Leeuwarden, Tresoar, in order to reach more possible participants (appendix D). The snowball effect was also applied to the research. Participants that took part in the research were asked to spread the questionnaire to as many individuals as they know in order to reach more individuals that fit the criteria. Due to the nature of the study the outcome is not bound to a certain number of participants, as the aim is not to assess an association but to run a descriptive study. In total, a number of 124 participants filled out the voluntary based questionnaire.

Individuals participating in the research will be asked to note the generation they belong to, their gender and their educational background (appendix C). This was done in order to see if there are any possible correlations between these variables. The participation group was limited to only Dutch individuals. This is done as it aligns with the objectives of the research, which were as stated before, (1) examine the opinion individuals hold regarding the origin of the artefacts displayed in the museum, (2) explore the attitude towards the procedures done in France, with a special focus on whether the same should be applied to these museum artefacts in the Netherlands, and (3) assess whether a difference in opinions between generations can be established.

## **Results**

### 1. The demographic aspects

The total response rate of the questionnaire is 124 responses, of which 116 responses were in Dutch and 8 were in English. Out of the 116 Dutch responses a total of 115 individuals declared to be Dutch and gave consent to participate in the research, out of the 8 English responses 3 individuals declared to be Dutch and gave consent to participate in the research, which led to a group of 118 individuals. As the analysis is restricted to the different age groups, 18 to 28 year olds, 47 to 58 year olds, and 77 to 95 year olds, the answers that were given by individuals that declared to be outside of these age groups are eliminated from the sample size. Therefore the restricted sample size exists out of 97 participants, 18 to 28 year olds (N = 48), 47 to 58 year olds (N = 46), and 77 to 95 year olds (N = 3). Out of the restricted sample size (N = 97), 67% (N = 65) individuals are female, 32% (N = 31) individuals are male and 1% (N = 1) individual identifies themselves as other. In total for 69% (N =67) of the individuals a WO education is the highest educational level they attended/are currently attending, 25% (N = 24) followed or are currently following education at a HBO educational institute, 2% (N = 2) followed/are doing a PhD, 3% (N = 3) followed/are following a VWO education as their highest educational level, and lastly 1% (N = 1) of the individuals followed or are currently following a MAVO study as their highest educational level.

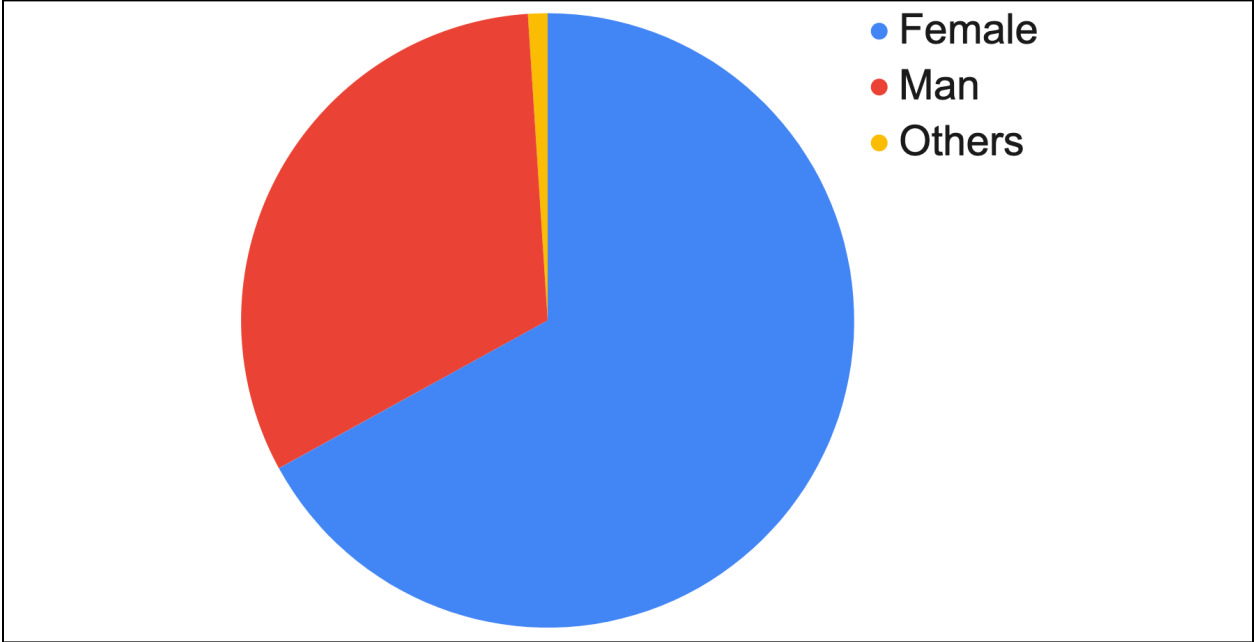


Figure 1, the distribution of the gender groups within the participant group

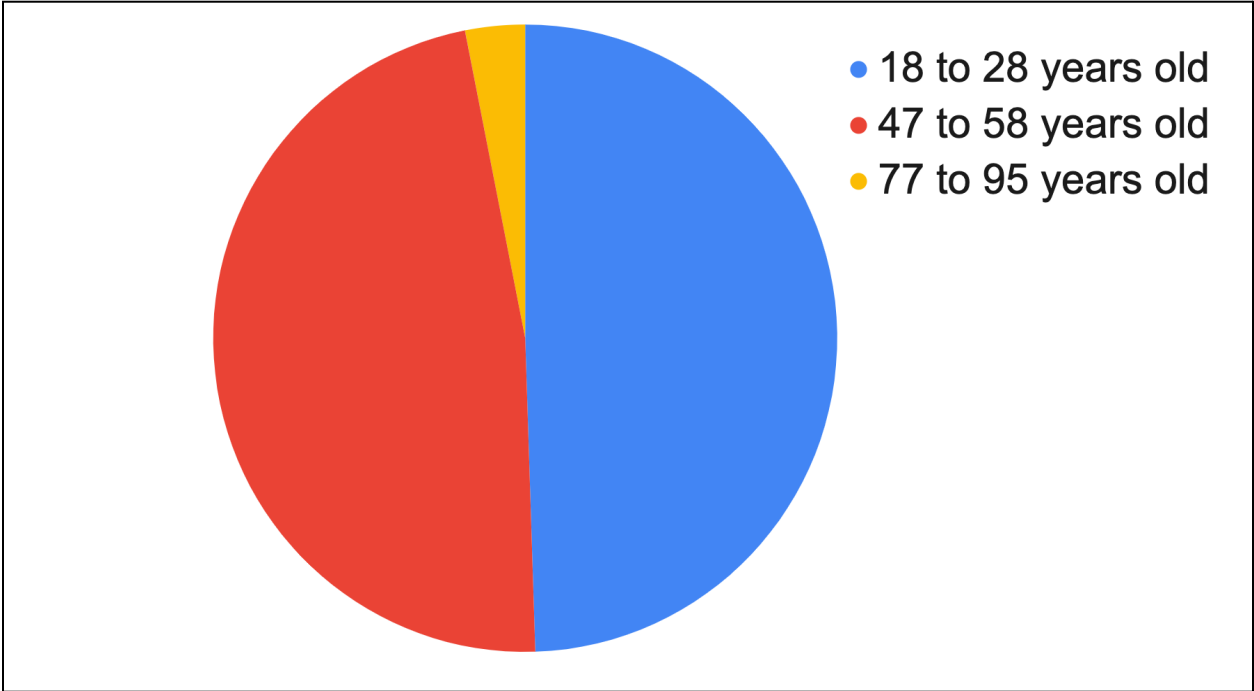
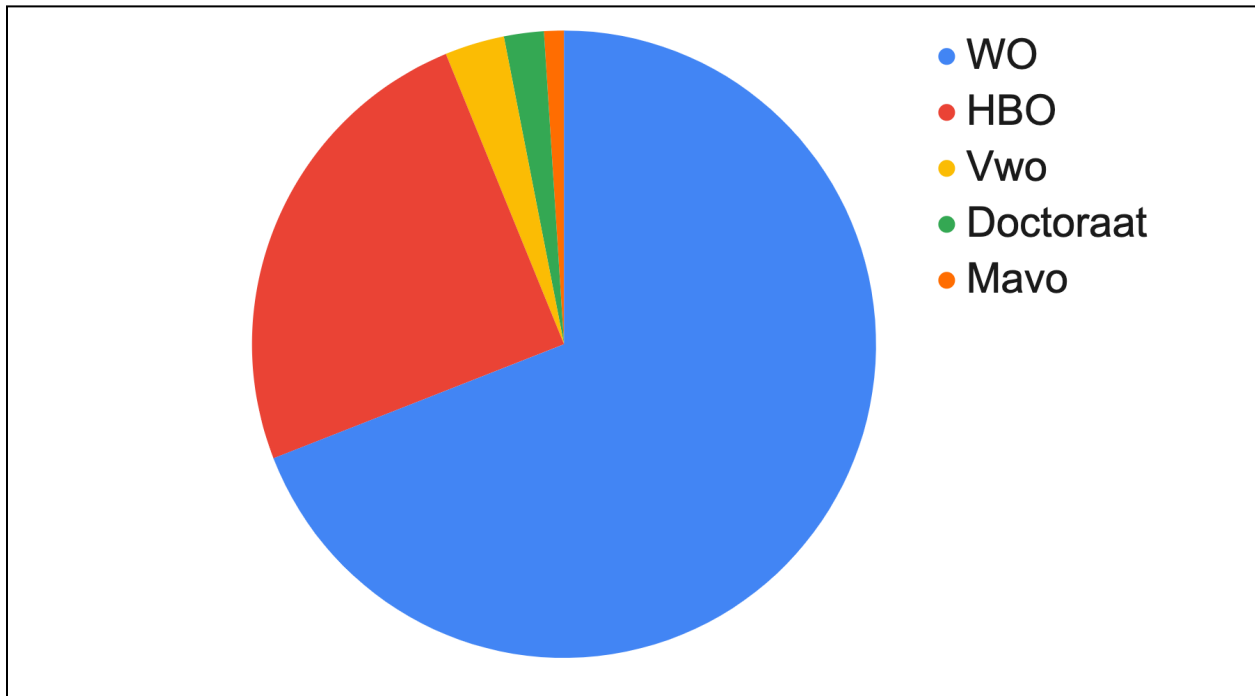


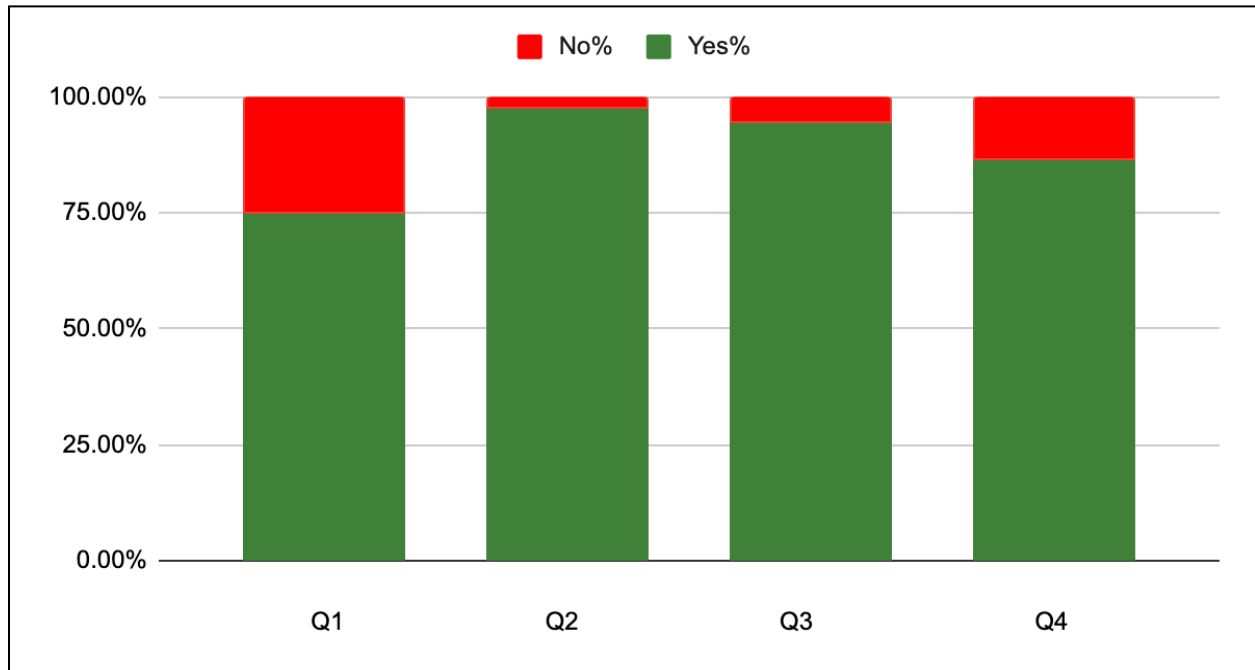
Figure 2, the distribution of the age groups within the participant group



*Figure 3, the distribution of the educational groups within the participant group*

## 2. General data

The data gathered by the first question showed that out of the total number of replies, 75,3% (N = 73) stated that they would feel emotions such as discomfort when visiting these kinds of exhibitions. The responses to the second question state that a total of 97.9% (N = 95) does support the procedure mentioned. For the third question the response rate shows that a total of 94.9% (N = 92) does support the mentioned procedure. The data gathered with the fourth question state that a total of 86,6% (N = 84) think that the museum should return the artefacts.



*Figure 4, the answer distribution to the four questionnaire questions*

The questionnaire also gathered data with an optional open ended question, in total this question gathered a total of 44 responses. All individuals that sent a reaction to the open ended question were Dutch respondents. When looking at the responses it can be seen that the main themes that are discussed talk about the fact that the art should be returned to the country of origin, that it is a difficult question and the answer is case specific, and that the country the art returns to should have the means to adequately protect and preserve it. A few participants also mention that when the art gets returned, it again should be put on display in order to make sure that individuals can still access it when they visit the places and they can still in a way “learn” from the items as they are on display for the public. In addition, it is mentioned that the case of fossils differs from a case where the artefacts are art pieces with cultural meaning. This is mentioned because the article that was added to the fourth question discussed a specific case in which fossils found by a Dutch archaeologist were requested to return to Indonesia.

### 3. The data connected to the aims of the research

Data analysed from the first and the fourth questionnaire question can be used to assess the first aim stated for this research, “*examine the opinion individuals hold regarding the origin of the artefacts displayed in the museum*”. The responses to the first question show how most respondents expected themselves to feel like they are watching stolen items that do not originate from the Netherlands when looking at an exhibition that concerns artefacts originating from Indonesia, as around 75% stated that they would expect this. The responses to the fourth question showed that around 87% of the respondents think that the Netherlands should return artefacts originating from Indonesia to this country of origin. This shows that the majority of the respondents hold opinions that artefacts should be displayed in the country they originate from when they have been taken from this country in an illicit manner, as they would not feel comfortable watching an exhibition that displays such items and hold the opinion that such items should be returned to the country they originate from.

In order to examine the second aim of the research “*explore the attitude towards the procedures done in France, with a special focus on whether the same should be applied to these museum artefacts in the Netherlands*” the findings gathered with the second and the third question in the questionnaire should be examined. These show that around 98% of the respondents support the fact that France is taking care of the return of multiple artefacts, and around 95%, stated that it should not be the case that individuals have to come to countries in Europe to look at important parts of the history of their country. These findings assessed in combination with the findings of the fourth research question, which state that around 87% of the respondents believe that the Netherlands should return the artefacts originating from Indonesia, conclude that individuals support the procedures done in France and that they believe that it

would be good if the Netherlands would apply the same or similar procedures to the art they preserve.

When examining the third aim, “*assesses whether a difference in opinions between generations can be established*”, the data gathered with all questionnaires are of importance. In this case an important aspect that should be considered is the geographical data that displayed the opinion within generations. The following graph’s display the distribution of opinion scattered over the different generations. It can be observed that in general all generations hold similar opinions on the matter, questionnaire question two and three all gathered similar data within the different generations as all participants hold the opinion that the procedure in France and the statement made by the French president Emmanuel Macron is supported. When looking at the first questionnaire question however it can be seen that the opinions within the different generations are not unanimous. It can be observed that the middle generation, 47 to 58 years old, would feel more awkward and uncomfortable looking at an exhibition that displays art that is not originally from the Netherlands, while the older generation, 77 to 95 year olds, point out that they are less likely to feel these kinds of emotions. The younger generation, 18 to 28 year olds, displayed an equilibrium in this case. It should be noted, however, that the older generation only represents 3 participants while the younger generation contains 48 participants. The fourth question shows how all the generations think that the procedure should be implemented, the middle generation, individuals ageing from 47 to 58, shows, however, slightly more individuals that do not agree compared to the other generations.



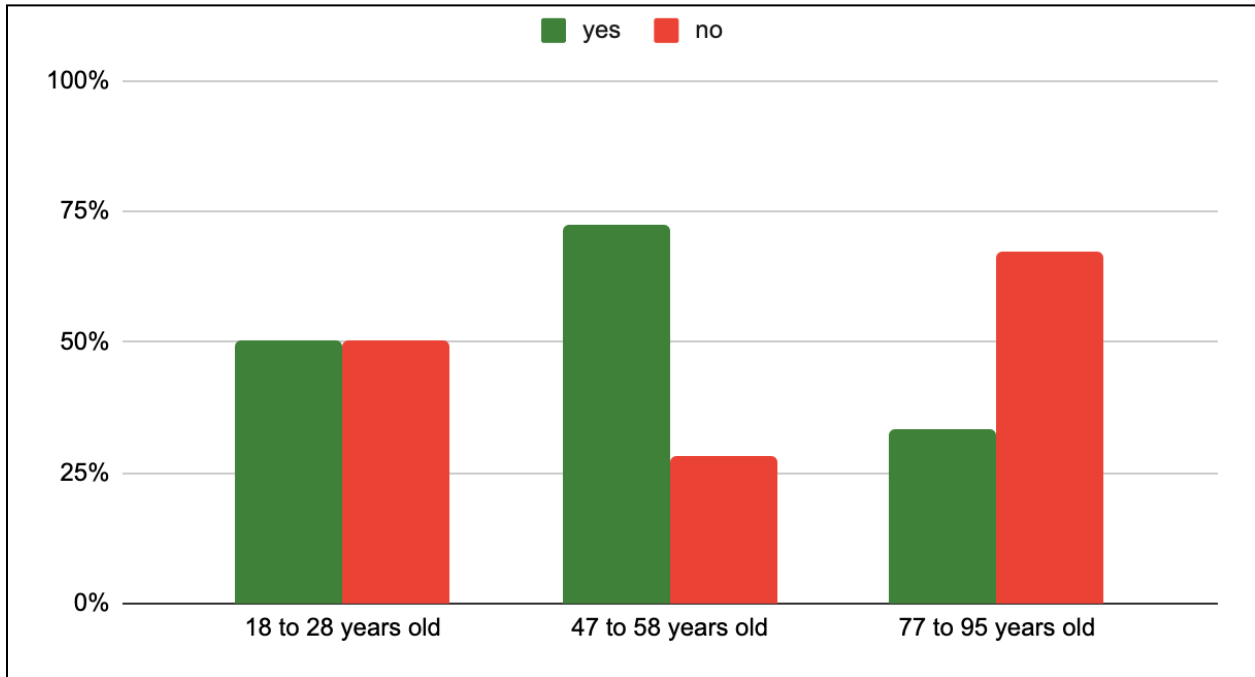


Figure 5, answer distribution to the first questionnaire question, divided by the age groups

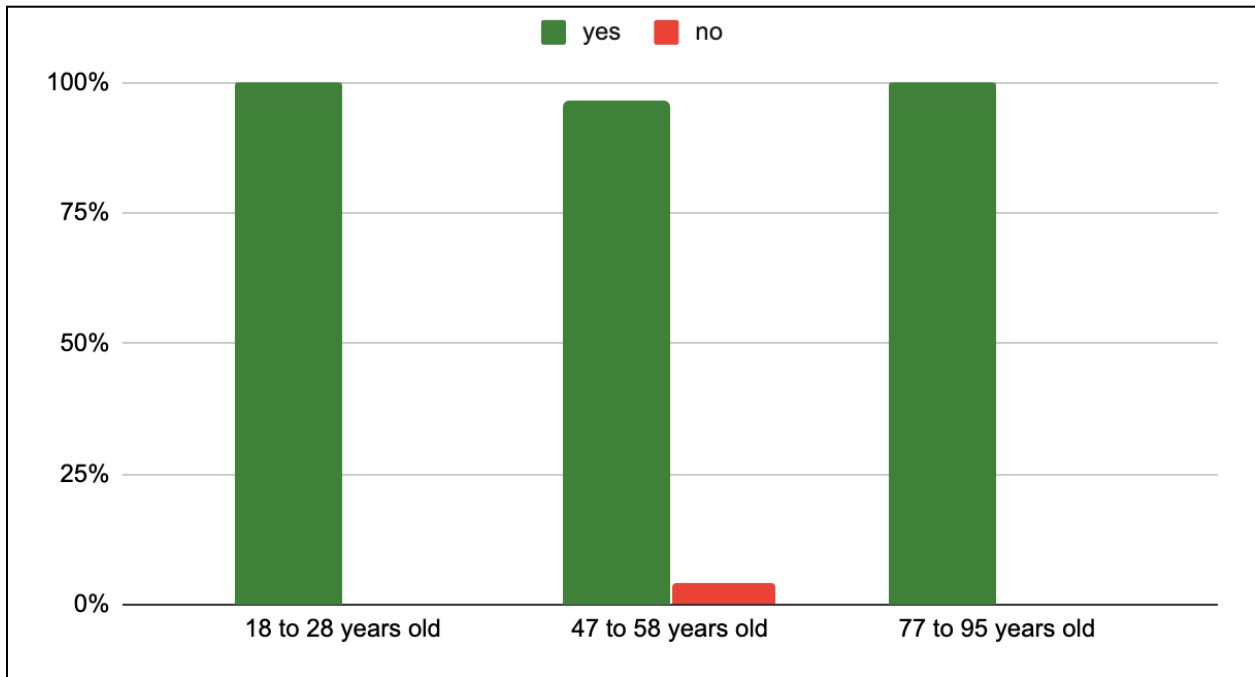


Figure 6, answer distribution to the second questionnaire question, divided by the age groups

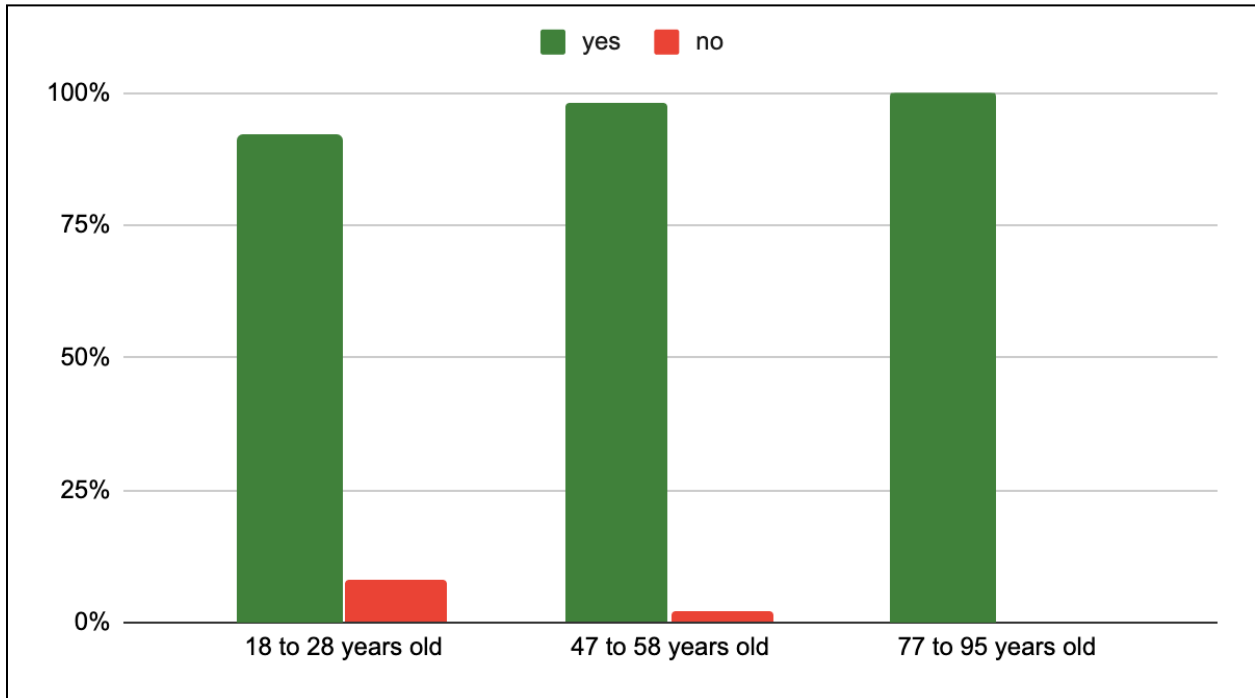


Figure 7, answer distribution to the third questionnaire question, divided by the age groups

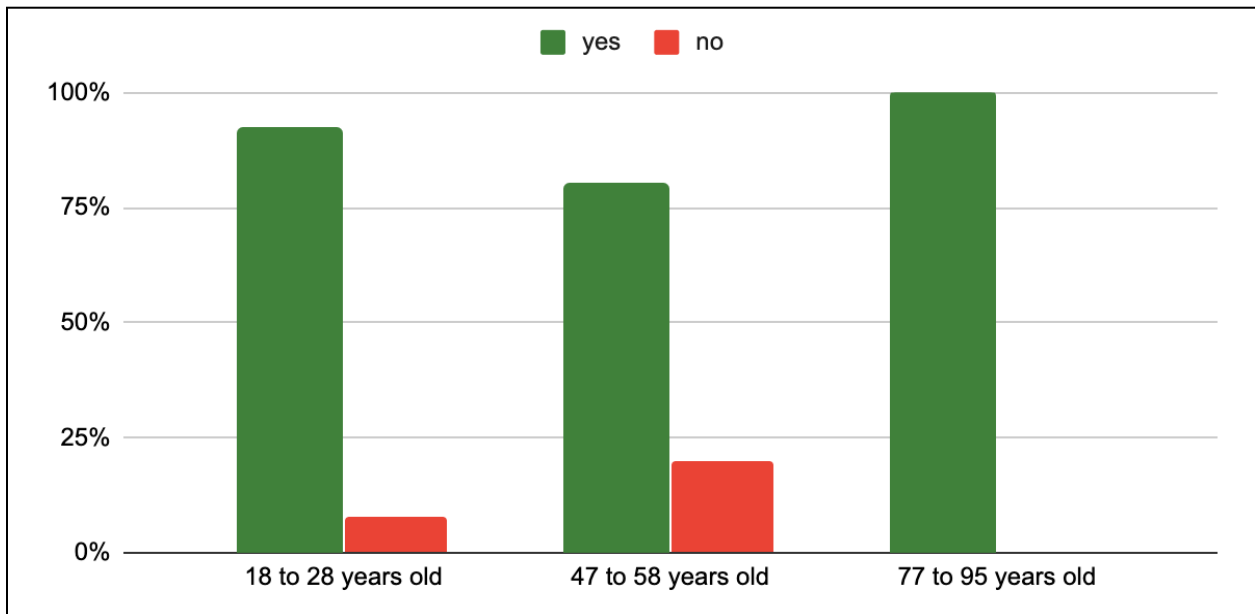


Figure 8, answer distribution to the fourth questionnaire question, divided by the age groups

## **Discussion**

The overall conclusion that can be drawn from the results is that in general all individuals are in favour of the procedures currently being applied in Western European countries when it comes to returning the artefacts. Most individuals also state that the same should be done in relation to the artefacts being displayed in the Netherlands that originate from Indonesia. These findings are not in line with literature found on the topic, as these literature findings stated that the Dutch population does not think of the war as something too serious or an occasion that should be apologised for (Henley et al., 2020). It, therefore, can be concluded that they would also not be bothered by the artefacts being displayed in the Netherlands. However, the findings in this case show the opposite, as they display how around 87% of the respondents would actually support the Volkenkunde museum in the action of returning the artefacts gathered from Indonesia. In addition, the fact that the overall opinion within the population shows that individuals support procedures of art being returned and believe that the Netherlands should apply a similar procedure contradicts with the literature that stated that in general the Dutch population is a hard one to convince (Moses, 2020).

When assessing the data gathered with the open ended question, the question where individuals could leave some thoughts behind, it can be found that the thought that the art should return is a recurring topic. Individuals also state that it is important that dialogue takes place before the art is returned, as it should be discussed whether the receiving country even wants the items and has the means to store the items. This aligns with the literature found that discusses the situation in which some countries slow down the process of artefacts returning to their ground, as they need more time to create safe places for it to be securely stored (Jager, 2019; Moses, 2020). The fact that numerous participants also mention that the safe keeping of the artefacts should be

reassured aligns with the found literature that states that often individuals are not entirely convinced whether the countries where the artefacts return are able to keep the items completely safe (Wilder, 2023). Kas and Jurna (2020) mentioned that it is important that art is accessible to the public, from the results it can be concluded that some of participants believe the same as they pointed this out at the open ended question. However, the main conclusion that can be drawn from the comments left in by the open ended question is that most individuals agree that the topic is a difficult one to assess and case specific, as it is multiple times mentioned that the situation is not “*black and white*”. One individual also points out that “*It is difficult to judge how the objects were obtained and how they ended up in the museums. If excavations were done in a neat manner at the time - with the approval of the incumbents, then that seems OK to me. Anything from colonial times seems to me to be of disputable provenance.*”

The distribution of the answers of the first question, whether individuals feel uncomfortable when looking at the art taken from their country of origin, shows how different generations have different feelings on the matter. A clear difference can be seen between the middle generation, 47 to 58 years old, and the older generation, 77 to 95 years old, as the middle generation would feel more awkward about visiting these kinds of exhibitions while the older generation stated to be less affected by these exhibitions. This difference aligns with the literature found, at this stated that generations that did not experience the war, are so to say a bit younger, start to pay more attention to the intertwined history of the Netherlands and Indonesia (NOS, 2017b). They are becoming more aware of the wrongdoings and actions that took place within the Dutch army, and want the Netherlands to take more responsibility. As they gather more knowledge on the topic they are also developing stronger emotions connected to the topic, as knowledge feeds these emotions (Tasevski, 2020; Thijse, 2020). These findings can be

explained by the concepts of an inter generational division. This suggests that different generations possess different characteristics, values, beliefs and experiences that can create a sense of separation between generations (Bengtson & Lovejoy, 1973). In this case the division is most likely explained by the different experiences the generation experienced as the older generation was already born either before or during the war. This way they may hold different values in connection to the war , as these were shaped by this experience and the beliefs that were present during that time. The middle generation was born after the war and were informed about the war as an historical event that took place, on which investigations were done which displayed the wrong doings. Their conception of the war, and values and beliefs in connection to it, are therefore shaped differently and are more likely to differ from the beliefs and values of the older generation.

### 1. Limitations

The first limitation worth mentioning is the fact that not all institutions that were reached out to were willing to help find participants. Several cultural institutions were contacted and asked whether they would be willing to hang up a poster to prompt individuals in participating in the research. However only one institution was actually willing to do so, as the others mentioned how they were not able to help in such cases. Consequently, most of the participants were gathered through social media instances such as LinkedIn, Whatsapp and Instagram. This then also leads to the limitation of not all participants taking the research seriously. It can, for example, be seen that at least one participant was less invested in the outcome of the research as they commented an completely unrelated comment at the open ended question that discussed world politics and a war taking place at the moment and not the actual topic of the questionnaire.

Another limitation is the fact that most of the participants in the research belong to the younger and middle generation (N =94) and only three participants belonged to the older generation. This leads to the outcome not being able to adequately represent the Dutch generation of 77 to year olds. The fact that less individuals of this age group participated in the research can be explained by the methods used to reach participants. Individuals belonging to older generations are less likely to use social media and therefore would have come less in contact with the recruiting strategies used to find participants.

In addition, the questionnaire also contains a limitation when it comes to gathering data for this research. The question that asked participants to fill in which generation they belong to only contains limited options. If one did not belong to one of these groups, they had to select different, however in retrospect it would have been more effective to also add the ages in between the mentioned age groups, instead of all other individuals belonging to the 'different' age groups, as it would have still been interesting to see what age group they belonged to and how this connected to the answers they responded.

Lastly another limitation that was located in the questionnaire in the fourth research question. This question discussed the specific case of two museums in the Netherlands and whether the artefacts displayed in this museum should be returned. With this question a picture and link to a specific news article were included in order to give more information on the case. However, this article discusses a case of the Dubios collection, which exists out of 40.000 fossils that were found in Indonesia by the Dutch archeologist Eugène Dubios. In the comments left behind at the open ended question, it can be seen how the fact that this article discusses fossils brings more confusion and also doubts about what kind of procedure should be applied. Most individuals mention how in general art should be returned however that they think that this is a

different case when it comes to fossils as they are seen as less “landlocked”; *“It feels a bit double. Excavated fossils in Indonesia, but by a Dutchman... If it had been 'indigenous' art it feels different. Then no discussion, back home”*. In order to make this question more accurate and in order to get more nuanced reactions, it would have been better to include a different kind of article with this question. For example, an article that discusses another case more related to artefacts created by the Indonesian population for example or items that carry more cultural significance instead of fossils found by a Dutch individual.

## 2. Recommendations

Possible future studies that could be conducted in connection to this topic could for example focus on what kind of procedures the Dutch population find applicable, which artefacts would be applicable to be returned to the country of origin and which cases should stay in the Netherlands, or a study that looks more at the ethical considerations that come into play with the topic, such as the ethical responsibilities of museums and rights of indigenous communities. In addition it was mentioned in the open ended questions that several respondents believe that it is a different situation when talking about fossils. Therefore, it would also be beneficial to see what drives these opinions and whether art historians, and other individuals that play a role in this restitution of the artefacts, hold a similar opinion on these cases or disagree.

## Conclusion

To conclude, it can be seen in the result that the majority of the participants support the procedures that focus on returning artefacts. Such procedures are more and more applied in countries in western Europe, as former colonies started to request the return of artefacts that were taken during the colonial times. The majority believes that the same procedure should be applied to artefacts that are currently in the Netherlands and originate from Indonesia. The findings show that around 74% of the respondents expect themselves to feel uncomfortable when viewing an exhibition that displays artefacts originating from Indonesia, and around 83% believe that the Netherlands should also return the artefacts they display. It is however often mentioned that there should not be one big decision that is applied to all artefacts, they should be treated as single cases. Additionally, around 95% of the participants support the return procedures that are taking place in France and agree with the statements made by the French president, Emmanuel Macron, that states that *“it should not be the case that individuals growing up in Afrika have to come here [to France] to see their history”*.

The responses to the open-ended question highlighted themes such as the importance of returning art to its country of origin, the need for dialogue when it comes to this matter, and the consideration of preservation and protection in connection with the accessibility of the artefacts to the public. The participants mention how the issue is a complex situation in which each case should be uniquely judged and attention should be paid to the manner in which the items were obtained. The demographic analysis showed how the opinions were generally consistent among all age groups. It should, however, be noted that the older generation was represented with only three responses. Despite some limitations, such as the recruitment methods and, as mentioned, the imbalance in participant representation across age groups, the findings contradict the



previous literature that the Dutch population is difficult to convince on such matters. The younger generation especially demonstrated a heightened awareness of the sensitivity that comes with the intertwined history of the Netherlands and Indonesia.

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**Appendices**Appendix A. Information form

Beste lezer,

Ik vraag u vriendelijk of u mee wil doen aan mijn onderzoek voor mijn bachelor thesis. In mijn onderzoek focus ik op kunststukken die van oorsprong uit Indonesië komen en de publieke opinie binnen de Nederlandse samenleving over deze kwestie. Het invullen van de vragenlijst zal niet langer dan 10 minuten in beslag nemen! De antwoorden zijn anoniem en zullen alleen door mij gelezen worden.

Bij voorbaat bedankt!

Met vriendelijke groet,

Lotte van Dijk

Indien er vragen zijn over het onderzoek of de informatieverzameling, aarzel niet om mij een mailtje te sturen! Mijn email is: [L.m.van.dijk.1@student.rug.nl](mailto:L.m.van.dijk.1@student.rug.nl).

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Ik ben Nederlands

a. Ja

*(de vragenlijst vervolgd bij de consent form)*

b. Nee

U heeft aangegeven dat u zich niet identificeert als een Nederlands persoon. Omdat de doelgroep van dit onderzoek Nederlandse personen zijn, verzoek ik u vriendelijk uw

deelname aan dit onderzoek in te trekken. Ik zou het echter zeer op prijs stellen als u deze vragenlijst zou kunnen sturen naar personen met een Nederlandse nationaliteit!

Dear reader,

Hereby I kindly ask you to participate in this research for my bachelor thesis. My research focuses on artefacts that originate from Indonesia and the public opinion within the Dutch population on this matter. Completing this survey will not take longer than 10 minutes! The data gathered by the questionnaire is anonymous and will only be read by me.

Thank you in advance!

Kind regards,

Lotte van Dijk

If there are any questions regarding the research or data protection, do not hesitate to reach out to me. My email is [l.m.van.dijk.1@student.rug.nl](mailto:l.m.van.dijk.1@student.rug.nl).

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I am Dutch

a. Yes

*(the questionnaire continuous at the consent form)*

b. No

You have indicated that you do not identify as a Dutch person. Because the target group of this research are Dutch individuals, I would kindly ask you to withdraw your participation from this study. However, I would greatly appreciate it if you would be able to send this questionnaire around to individuals with a Dutch nationality!



Appendix B. Consent form

\* Dit onderzoek omvat het invullen van een vragenlijst die informatie verzamelt over de publieke opinie over kunstvoorwerpen tentoongesteld in musea die uit Indonesië komen. Uw deelname aan dit onderzoek is vrijwillig.

De vragenlijst bestaat uit vier vragen en het invullen hier van zal ongeveer 10 minuten in beslag nemen. De gegevens die worden verzameld gebruik ik voor mijn afstudeer scriptie. Deze kan mogelijk later gepubliceerd worden.

De gegevens die de vragenlijst verzameld, zijn vertrouwelijk en anoniem en worden op een beveiligde manier opgeslagen volgens de richtlijnen van de Universiteit van Groningen. De resultaten van dit onderzoek kunnen worden gepubliceerd, maar er zal geen persoonlijk identificeerbare informatie worden opgenomen bij het antwoorden van de vragenlijst.

Als u vragen of zorgen heeft over dit onderzoek, neem dan gerust contact op met [l.m.van.dijk.1@student.rug.nl](mailto:l.m.van.dijk.1@student.rug.nl).

Door de onderstaande knop te selecteren bevestigt u dat u de informatie in dit toestemmingsformulier hebt gelezen en begrepen, en u begrijpt dat uw deelname aan dit onderzoek vrijwillig is.

Dank u voor uw tijd en overweging om deel te nemen aan dit onderzoek.

- a. Ik geef toestemming

\* This study involves the completion of a questionnaire that will gather information about the public opinion on artefacts that are on display in museums and originate from Indonesia. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

The questionnaire will consist of four questions and will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The data collected from this questionnaire will be used for my bachelor thesis, which has the potential of being published later on.

Your confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study. The data collected from the questionnaire will be stored securely in compliance with the University of Groningen guidelines. The result of the research has the potential to be published, however no personal identifying information will be gathered by answering the questionnaire.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact [l.m.van.dijk.1@student.rug.nl](mailto:l.m.van.dijk.1@student.rug.nl).

By clicking on the button below, you confirm that you have read and understood the information provided in this consent form. You understand that your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

Thank you for your time and consideration in participating in this study.

- a. I give consent

Appendix C. Questionnaire

\* Uit [een onderzoek](#) naar het Britse museum en haar bezoekers bleek dat meerdere bezoekers van het museum zich ongemakkelijk voelden bij het bekijken van de tentoonstelling omdat *"het voelde alsof ze naar alle gestolen goederen keken die niet uit Groot-Brittannië zelf afkomstig waren"*. Zou u zeggen dat u hetzelfde zou kunnen voelen bij het bezoeken van een tentoonstelling over voorwerpen die afkomstig zijn uit Indonesië?

- a. Ja
- b. Nee

\* Onlangs was in het nieuws dat musea in Frankrijk artefacten hebben teruggegeven aan het land van herkomst. Het nieuws artikel kunt u [hier](#) vinden. Steunt u deze procedure?

- a. Ja
- b. Nee

\* Deze vraag sluit aan bij het onderwerp van de vorige vraag. Tijdens de aankondiging van de voorheen besproken procedure hield de Franse minister Macron een toespraak. In zijn toespraak zei hij dat het niet *"zo mag zijn dat personen die in Afrika opgroeien hier [naar Frankrijk] moeten komen om hun geschiedenis te zien"*. Bent u het eens met deze uitspraak?

- a. Ja
- b. Nee

\* In oktober 2022 werd bekend dat het Naturalis museum en het Volkenkunde museum, die beide kunstvoorwerpen uit Indonesië tentoonstellen, door de Indonesische regering werden verzocht



bepaalde kunstvoorwerpen terug te geven aan Indonesië. Het volledige nieuwsbericht is [hier](#) te vinden. Bent u van mening dat het museum de kunststukken aan Indonesië moet teruggeven?

- a. Ja
- b. Nee

Zijn er persoonlijke opmerkingen over dit onderwerp die u wilt maken?

- a. Open vraag

\* Tot welke leeftijdsgroep behoort u?

- a. Van 77 tot 95 jaar oud
- b. Van 47 tot 58 jaar oud
- c. Van 18 tot 28 jaar oud
- d. Anders

\* Wat is uw geslacht?

- a. Man
- b. Vrouw
- c. Anders

\* Welke opleiding heeft u gevolgd/volgt u momenteel?

- a. Basis school
- b. Mavo
- c. Havo

- d. Vwo
- e. MBO
- f. HBO
- g. WO
- h. Doctoraat

De vragen met een \* zijn verplicht

---

Dank u wel voor uw deelname aan dit onderzoek! Ik zou het zeer op prijs stellen als u deze vragenlijst zou kunnen rondsturen naar andere personen met een Nederlandse nationaliteit!

Als u vragen of zorgen heeft over dit onderzoek, neem dan gerust contact op met [l.m.van.dijk.1@student.rug.nl](mailto:l.m.van.dijk.1@student.rug.nl).

\* [A research](#) on the British museum and its visitors showed that multiple visitors of the museum felt uncomfortable watching the exhibition because *“it felt like they were watching all the stolen goods that did not originate from Britain itself”*. Do you think that you would feel similar watching an exhibition that concerns items originating from Indonesia?

- a. Yes
- b. No

\* Recently, media published that museums in France returned artefacts to the country of origin. The news article can be found [here](#). Do you support this procedure?

- a. Yes
- b. No

\* This question is connected to the topic of the previous question. During the announcement of the above-mentioned procedure, the French president Macron held a speech. In this speech he mentioned that *“it should not be the case that individuals growing up in Afrika have to come here [to France] to see their history”*. Do you agree with this statement?

- a. Yes
- b. No

\* In October 2022 it came to the attention that Naturalis museum and Volkenkunde museum, which are both displaying artefacts from Indonesia, were requested by the Indonesian government to return certain artefacts back to Indonesia. The full news article can be found [here](#). Do you think that the museum should give the artefacts back to Indonesia?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Are there any personal remarks regarding this topic that you would like to address?

- a. Open question

\* What age group do you belong to?

- a. 77 to 95 years old
- b. 47 to 58 years old
- c. 18 to 28 years old
- d. Other

\* What is your gender?

- a. Man
- b. Woman
- c. Other

\* What education have you attended/are you currently attending so far?

- a. Elementary school
- b. Mavo
- c. Havo
- d. Vwo

- e. MBO
- f. HBO
- g. WO
- h. Phd

*The questions marked with a \* would be mandatory.*

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Thank you for your participation in this research! I would greatly appreciate it if you could forward this questionnaire to other individuals with a Dutch nationality!

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact

[l.m.van.dijk.1@student.rug.nl](mailto:l.m.van.dijk.1@student.rug.nl).

Appendix D. The flyer





Bookn

**Bachelor thesis**

# What shall we do with the art originating from Indonesia displayed in the Netherlands?

I would really appreciate it if you would participate in me research! It will take no longer than 10 minutes and is completely anonymous. Scan the QR code!

