

### **Abstract**

This thesis explores the interplay between cultural diplomacy and the politics of memory in addressing historical injustices and fostering reconciliation between Indonesia and the Netherlands in the postcolonial era. It examines how cultural heritage repatriation serves as both a tool of identity reclamation and a mechanism for diplomatic transformation, contributing to the broader process of postcolonial justice. By acknowledging Indonesia's historical grievances and returning cultural artifacts, the Netherlands signals a willingness to confront its colonial past and engage in a more equitable postcolonial dialogue. For Indonesia, the repatriation of these artifacts restores cultural continuity, revitalizes traditions, and reasserts sovereignty over its historical narrative, reinforcing its role as an active agent in shaping its past and future. Grounded in the theories of the politics of memory and cultural diplomacy, this thesis argues that reconciliation requires more than apologies; it demands tangible actions that engage with collective memory, reshape public perceptions, and challenge colonial legacies. By analyzing Indonesia's cultural initiatives, such as joint exhibitions, educational programs, and public commemorations, the thesis underscores how shared histories can be leveraged to promote mutual understanding, heal historical wounds, and create equitable bilateral relationships. It further examines how repatriation and cultural diplomacy challenge traditional Eurocentric narratives of heritage ownership, shifting the power dynamics of historical knowledge production and reinforcing the cultural agency of formerly colonized nations. This thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of politics of memory as a tool for postcolonial reconciliation with cultural diplomacy as the main goal, positioning the Indonesia-Netherlands case as a model for addressing colonial legacies through memory politics and cultural restitution. It demonstrates how integrating cultural heritage and memory into diplomatic practice can transform relationships shaped by exploitation into partnerships based on respect, empathy, and shared historical accountability.

**Keywords:** cultural diplomacy, politics of memory, Indonesia, Netherlands, artifact repatriation, reconciliation, postcolonial relations, heritage restitution.