



INSTITUTIONEN FÖR KULTURVÅRD

Förhandlingar om kulturföremål
Parters intressen och argument i processer om återförande av
kulturföremål

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Negotiations regarding cultural objects

Interests and arguments of parties in processes involving the restitution of cultural property

Disputes over demands for a return of cultural objects, in many cases museum objects, are well known. But such conflicts can also be seen as negotiations, which can be analyzed as well. This thesis adds a negotiation perspective and by a close scrutiny points out certain factors and arguments which can facilitate a process, cause a blocking, or rescind a blocking. By referring to such a process as a form of negotiation, this might bring about possibilities for the parties involved, which they otherwise would not be considering. It may occur that behind a party's arguments some interests could have been hidden consciously, or been surpassed by something else, which can cause a blocking.

The aim of this thesis is to highlight the actors' different perspectives in negotiations concerning return of cultural objects, how they argue in a negotiation position and how the process can affect the management of cultural objects.

The negotiation perspective can generate knowledge for increased understanding of motives behind the parties' positions. The specific traits of negotiation processes and what arguments and interests that may be important during the passage of events are examined in two case studies.

One case is about the process of the return of medieval ecclesiastical objects from a museum context to two rural churches on Gotland, Sweden. The other study examines the process of negotiating the return of a totem pole from the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm to the people of Haisla First Nation, Canada.

The material that has been analyzed in this thesis shows in which phase in the process and why the parties changed their opinion, thus making a constructive solution possible.

The thesis identifies aspects that the parties considered important in the negotiation process, and the outcome indicates how essential factors are valued in cases where the return of cultural objects are negotiated.

Values and arguments, present in the case studies, are identified and categorized, which then are compiled into tables in order to make them comparable. These tables show in what period turning points took place in the process, and which aspects made parties change their respective standpoint, as the situation shifted from disagreement to consensus. For instance, groups of arguments that associates to the categories are: place, cultural identity, conservation and economy, are strong indicators of what some people find important. This thesis shows why and how the parties were convinced of the benefits of a solution grounded in consensus. By using a negotiation perspective the analysis identifies incentives that created a progressive process. The findings are useful for better understanding of future processes of returning cultural objects and benefit the development of the management of cultural heritage.

Keywords: cultural heritage, cultural objects, negotiation, arguments, value creation, processes