

Science and culture - an uneasy partnership

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Countries like Egypt and Italy have demanded artefacts and cultural material that belonged to them returned. Cultural property is now taking an imperial meaning with countries looking to nationalize all artifacts within the country and those outside the country (Rothstein, 2008). Most recently, the discovery of Kennewick man has intensified the fight between scientists and culture. Discovered in North Carolina, the Kennewick man dated back to more than 9000 years.

This had many scientists excited as it gave new insight into American history. With the Kennewick man, there was a possibility there were earlier settlers in America before the Clovis-first model. However, the Native Americans demanded to have the remains of Kennewick man returned to them for a proper burial. According to several scientists, the Kennewick man had no features that suggested he might be an Indian American. By the government and the community demanding that he be returned, they denied Americans and indeed the entire human race of new knowledge. The Kennewick man provided a unique learning opportunity on American history. Science aims to protect cultural property by ensuring that knowledge on the past generation is uncovered and disseminated to the rest of the people. Science is not an attempt by the west to loot and rob a country or community of their heritage; neither should it have to pay for evils done in the past. Science only seeks to protect cultural property.