

**Who Controls the Past, Controls the Present?
Eurocentrism and the Cycle of Knowledge in the British
Historical Worldview**

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PhD

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I, Kulvinder Kamau Nagre, confirm that the work presented in my thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

ABSTRACT

This project has sought to investigate the continued perpetuation of Eurocentric archaeologies within popular discourse in the UK, and the extent to which these are fed-back into the academic research infrastructure. Whilst Eurocentrism (here defined as the dominant ideological crutch of European coloniality, rooted in totalistic worldviews, oppositional and denigratory perspectives on Others, and relying on teleological grand narrative histories) has been robustly challenged within archaeology (and the academy more broadly), the same cannot be said for the historical narratives disseminated throughout those *outside* of the academic community. This project has thus sought to provide a ‘cradle to grave’ appraisal of knowledge on the past throughout British society, focussing on its (i) production, in universities; dissemination, in schools and the media; and (iii) consumption, by non-academic members of the public. It has utilised a range of methods and approaches, including quantitative surveying and ethnographic interviews with a range of participants, critical discourse analysis of teaching resources and media outputs, and analyses of research funding structures. Results demonstrate a disjuncture between recent scholarly work and popular understandings of the past. Quantitative and qualitative issues were uncovered with the content delivered to both school pupils, and the general public, via popular media. The extent of mis- and under-representation of groups from the Global South is wholly out-of-step with the current British research landscape, which is shown to be highly diverse, although there are some parallels with recent Research Excellence Framework returns, which are significantly narrower in scope. Questionnaire data suggests that a significant minority of adults, and large number of current Year 9 pupils, subscribe to historically Eurocentric discourses, potentially as a reflection of the sources of information presented to them. Results thus call into question the (mis)uses of ‘the past’ in public discourse, and the responsibility of colleagues to challenge them.

IMPACT STATEMENT

The highly public-facing focus of the present research means that data has potential impacts in a number of sectors: (i) within academia; (ii) for the English educational system; (iii) for British media presentations; and (iv) within the public-academic interface.

For colleagues, the novel theoretical and methodological synthesis drawn upon throughout this study could prove highly transferrable to researchers working in other geographical and disciplinary contexts seeking to analyse and discuss the continued effects of coloniality and Eurocentrism on the production, dissemination, and consumption of knowledge. The dissemination of findings and methodologies from this research in both interdisciplinary and international journals is thus a priority, in order to facilitate any academic impacts of the present research. For the UK in particular, the critical appraisal presented below concerning the disjuncture between research submitted to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) assessments, and the highly diverse research landscape, could encourage further discussion on the ways in which ‘impact’ is indexed and measured amongst institutional-level actors within the research sector, particularly considering the extent to which data also demonstrates and existing demand for more diverse past narratives amongst the British public.

This study also raises some serious issues with the content and design of current history textbooks in schools, alongside the negative effects of these textbooks, and the national curriculum programme in general, on students’ historical cognition and worldviews. Findings could therefore be of interest to a number of interest groups attempting to lobby for curriculum reform. Dissemination of this empirical data within educational and activist circles could thus serve to contribute to continued efforts to build up a more accurate, up-to-date, and representative national curriculum in the UK.

It is also hoped that the dissemination of findings concerning the content and presentation of historical screen media content may help shine a light on the highly problematic patterns of representation which underpin many of these discussions. Furthermore, data concerning participants’ desires to have access to more diverse historical content could feature in continued discussions around the diversity of British media presentations.

Finally, data gathered from the general British public allows for insight into the highly diverse ways in which individuals access and consume knowledge on the past. Results may thus be used to inform outreach strategies and themes, particularly concerning diverse histories of the Global South, which a significant number of participants noted an interest in. Further research into these themes could help to elucidate the sources of the apparent disjuncture between scholarly and popular conceptions of historical narratives, thus further improving both academic outreach, and the means through which interested individuals can access information on the past.

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INTRODUCTION

THE PAST IN THE PRESENT

Does the past matter? How much? To whom? And, perhaps most importantly, why? In the Eighteenth Century, ideas around shared histories were used to draw together disparate communities around a singular, national identity. In the Nineteenth, notions of past glories enabled and justified expansive global imperialism, and the subjugation of the ‘inferior’ global majority at the hands of the ‘superior’ minority. By the turn of the Twentieth Century, these uses of the past had become entrenched within both scholarly orthodoxy, and public discourse, underpinning violent nationalisms, segregationist politics, supranational racism, and last-ditch attempts to maintain European power across crumbling empires. In the wake of resurgent (neo)nationalism, the rise of ‘alt-right’ politics, and the late 2010s ‘culture wars’, we must ask: how have these dynamics survived into the Twenty-First Century?

In particular, this research seeks to assess the dynamics through which knowledge on the past circulates throughout contemporary British society, and how this knowledge may become affected by, or subsumed into, broader Eurocentric narratives as it does so. I ultimately hope to address the question: ‘what is the nature of the relationship between archaeological research and Eurocentric discourses?’, through an assessment of the whole ‘life cycle’ of archaeological knowledge in the contemporary UK: from its production in academic institutions; to its dissemination through both ‘formal’ channels, such as schools, and ‘informal’ channels, including the media; to its consumption by members of the public beyond the ‘ivory tower’ of academia.

A comprehensive review into the relationships between archaeological praxis and knowledge of the ancient past in the UK is long overdue. Heritage issues have been high on the agenda over the last decade or so, as a facet to the British ‘culture wars’ which, at their heart, have been fought over the ways in which we define ourselves as a nation, the elements of our past which we choose to memorialise. Public discourse has been characterised by skirmishes on artefact repatriation (*The Guardian*, 2022b) pitched battles over controversial public monuments (*The Daily Mail*, 2023), and a longer, entrenched conflict surrounding the ‘decolonisation’ of school curricula and public institutions (*The BBC*, 2020). What we are missing, however, is an empirically-grounded discussion on the role of historical archaeological scholarship within these discourses, the extent to which *contemporary* scholarship may be placed to counter the misapplication of outdated knowledge, and indeed the extent to which these discourses may affect the production of *new* knowledge.

Drawing on mixed methodologies, including quantitative surveying, qualitative interviews, and a comprehensive analysis of media outputs and school resources, this research demonstrates a fundamental disconnect between archaeological scholarship and those disseminating and consuming knowledge on the past outside of ‘the academy’.

Background to Research

These issues have not been ignored by archaeological and heritage scholars. The relationship between the practice of archaeology, and the social contexts in which researchers are embedded was a central concern for archaeologists in the ‘post-processual school’ of the 1980s and 1990s (Hodder, 1985; Shanks and Tilley, 1987; Wilk, 1985). These scholars drew heavily on the post-structural perspectives of Pierre Bourdieu (1977), Anthony Giddens (1979), and Michel Foucault (1966), who sought to assert the fundamentally discursive, subjective nature of ‘knowledge’ in society. Bourdieu in particular emphasised how established narratives and ‘common knowledge’ served more as a reflection of social norms and unequal distributions of power in society, rather than the ‘universal truth’ which had been emphasised by earlier, positivist scholars. Applying these theses to the production of specifically *archaeological* knowledge, post-processualist scholars argued that our methodologies, praxis, and interpretations are inextricably linked to the social context in which they occur, wholly entangled with contemporary discourse beyond academia. These scholars further sought to discuss the role of discursive power in producing and maintaining certain perspectives on the past, and thus the structural violence enabled through these mechanisms on ‘alternative’ interpretations. Scholarship and the ‘production’ of archaeological knowledge is thus positioned as ultimately contingent on norms and discourse beyond the ‘ivory tower’, and not, as had been supposed previously, as fundamentally isolated, seeking only to achieve ‘true enlightenment’ through diligent, scholarly investigation.

Post-structuralism has also had a profound influence on post-colonial perspectives, initially in the social sciences and later with explicit reference to archaeological interpretation. The concept of *Eurocentrism* was initially posited by Samir Amin in his titular 1988 work. Amin argued that the discursive landscape of the post-colonial, globalised world was in effect structured during the Imperial period to assert the fundamental superiority of actors in the Euro-American sphere, enabling and justifying the continued exploitation of the Global South. He was followed in 1978 by Edward Said, whose seminal *Orientalism* served as a blueprint for the analysis of mechanisms through which colonial and neo-colonial powers draw on discursive inequality in order to maintain superior/inferior binaries. Valentin-Yves Mudimbe expanded Said’s critique, nominally concerned with conceptions of the Near East, in 1988, to discuss problematic conceptions of African society in the Western tradition. Drawing on these theses, along with the work of post-processualist scholars, post-colonial archaeological critiques gained significant traction towards the end of the Twentieth Century. A seminal contribution from Bruce Trigger (1984) was followed by more in-depth discussions from Kohl and Fawcett (eds., 1996), Diaz-Andreu and Champion (eds., 1997), and Lynn Meskell (ed., 1997). These authors sought to situate the history of archaeological praxis within broader discourses of power, exploitation, and coloniality. A particular concern was the function of imperial power in denigrating the cultural sophistication of historical actors in the Global South, understood to have served to maintain notions of Western historical primacy.

These perspectives were developed in tandem with the significant re-appraisal of archaeological knowledge in formerly colonised regions. In particular, established narratives on African history have been challenged. Early work from Susan and Roderick McIntosh (1979) and Mark Horton (1987) served to establish the cultural sophistication of historical African societies, and their indigenous character, dispelling then-ubiquitous interpretations which positioned any evidence of ‘development’ as a consequence of either conquest or diffusion from more ‘civilised’ groups. Further work enabled more robust critiques on the misconceptions of Africanist archaeologies (Reid, 2005), how they are evidenced (LaViolette and Fleisher, 2005), and the politicality of their historical misrepresentation (Shepherd, 2002). More recently, evidence from Africa and the Global South have been drawn upon in wider studies seeking to challenge established archaeological approaches to ‘civilisation’ (Jennings, 2017) and inequality (Graeber and Wengrow, 2021). The last fifty years have thus seen transformations in both our approaches to Global South archaeology and, when considered alongside post-colonial critiques, how we identify and explain its historical biases and deficits. No longer considered as peripheral societies, recent scholarship has demonstrated the fundamental validity of archaeological research beyond the European sphere, with the data drawn from these societies being used to critique and reshape the fundamentals of archaeological interpretation.

The new millennium has also seen a resurgence in the study and practice of public archaeology, as scholars have sought to unpick the complexity of the public-academic interface in discourses on ‘the past’. Discussions on historical media have incorporated elements of the above-described critical approach to archaeological research, highlighting the over-representation of Classical themes (Hobden, 2013), and the denigration of societies in the Global South (Hall, 2004; Hiscock, 2012). Recent discussions have also centred on the use of outdated, chauvinistic archaeologies as a facet to political discourse, as a response to the Brexit Referendum (Gardner and Harrison, 2017; Barclay and Brophy, 2020) and the broader trend in resurgent nationalisms (Niklasson and Hølleland, 2018; Bonacchi, 2022). Discussions around manifestations of archaeological knowledge in school curricula have noted a similar focus on well-established themes surrounding the Classical period (Corbishley, 2011), whilst highlighting the (missed) potential for Global South archaeologies in schools, which could serve to destabilise problematic, Eurocentric conceptions of these regions (Garrison, 1990; Henson, 2017). These conversations have dovetailed, if not directly coalesced with, discussions in education concerning the ‘decolonisation’ of British school curricula, with authors highlighting how the present curriculum in particular emphasises nationalistic, Eurocentric perspectives, at the same time ignoring or denigrating the histories of the Global South (Harris and Burn, 2016: 520; Mansfield, 2019; Lidher, Alexander, and McIntosh, 2020).

Remaining Questions: Britain and the Past

There is thus a sizeable corpus of research into the many facets to this discourse. There are a number of remaining questions across these research areas, however, that require further investigation.

For one, although post-processualist scholars discussed the potential for structural interference in the production of archaeological knowledge, there has been little empirically grounded discussion on how this is manifested. Much has been written on the changing dynamics of academic research in the neoliberal economy (Belfiore, 2015; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 2016). However, far more pertinent are questions surrounding the role of archaeology and heritage funding specifically within the *politicised* academic sphere, as funding is funnelled towards higher ‘impact’ research, which is more reflective of the ‘public interest’, and provides better ‘value for money’ for the taxpayer. It is important to consider the neutrality of these metrics, and the means through which they may be subject to (mis)interpretation. This is particularly important given the fractured political landscape (‘culture war’) in the contemporary UK. As public bodies such as the BBC are being told to ‘regain’ their ‘neutrality’ under threat of privatisation, are we to believe that academia is and will continue to be isolated from these discourses? Whilst the Haldane Principle (see Haldane *et al.*, 1918) does ostensibly ensure academic independence and self-regulation from parliamentary politics, the extent to which this is indeed the case is in need of review, especially in a discipline as politically loaded, and chronically underfunded, as archaeology.

Of similar concern are the ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ means through which knowledge on the past is disseminated. Whilst scholars have discussed the content of on-screen media presentations on the past, the rapidly changing modes of media consumption across the present century necessitate renewed attention, particularly when considered alongside the ‘culture wars’ and resurgent (neo)nationalism: are these narratives reflected in media content? Or do on-screen presentations of the past actually serve to destabilise regressive chauvinisms? Similarly, the content of school curricula has also found itself embroiled in the present ‘culture war’, particularly with regards to the teaching of history. Whilst what we teach young people about the past has always been something of a ‘political football’ (see Cole, 2004) the highly charged nature of the current disputes around Britain’s ‘national identity’ (and dog-whistle nature of its politics) have seen the enactment of highly regressive policies around history curricula, harking back to the ‘great tradition’ in history education concerned chiefly with the Kings and Queens of England. The extent to which these discourses are manifested in educational resources, particularly ubiquitous textbooks, has received limited consideration from educational and archaeological scholars. Also in need of investigation is the role that these resources, school curricula, and the wider dissemination of knowledge affects students’ perspectives on the past.

Crucially, however, is the wider perspective on the ultimate role that academic, official, and unofficial means for disseminating knowledge on the past play in contemporary British society. Although not wholly absent from recent discussions on presentations on the past (Kajda *et al.*, 2018; Richardson, 2020; Bonacchi, 2022), there has been little critical consideration on the relative discursive weight exercised through different means of accessing knowledge on the past, the agents, aims, and agendas underpinning these sources, and the effects of these discourses on consumers of

this knowledge. Thanks to the contributions of the above scholars, our disciplinary *complicity* in fostering, indeed *authorising* these narratives during the colonial period is widely understood within the academy. Whilst these same contributions may also be taken as evidence of our attempts to challenge and excise these ideas *internally*, there has been little discussion on our responsibility to export these discourses *outside* of the ‘ivory tower’, and how any attempts in this arena have been met by those not chiefly engaged in research. What we are lacking, therefore, is a comprehensive, empirically-grounded assessment of the role of archaeology in contemporary British society. Of particular concern is the relationship between archaeological research, and hegemonic narratives of coloniality, Eurocentrism, and scientific racism.

The Present Research: Aims, Objectives, and Questions

The central contention that this research seeks to address is:

‘What is the nature of the relationship between Eurocentric discourses and archaeological research?’

This will be discussed through a comprehensive review of the various stages of archaeological knowledge (i) *production*; (ii) *dissemination*; and (iii) *consumption* in contemporary British society.

These stages will be analysed in conjunction with the Eurocentric discourses outlined and situated in Chapter One. For the purposes of this project, particular attention will be paid to ideas around *totality*; *opposition*; and *teleology*, a rubric for Eurocentric discourses gleaned through a synthesis of the post-colonial approaches of Said, Mudimbe, and Amin. For analysis on the interactions of knowledge across and between these stages, I draw upon elements of Pierre Bourdieu’s practice theory, in particular his concepts of *doxa* and the discursive field.

The secondary research questions that this research aims to address are:

- ***How isolated is the creation of archaeological knowledge from broader social discourses?***

The complicity of archaeological research in the European Imperial project of the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries is amply attested-to in the literature. Trigger (1984), Diaz-Andreu (2007), and Malley (2012a) have highlighted the role of directive funding in effectively setting the academic agenda, as Western governments and persons of vested means and interests bestowed patronage on archaeologists throughout the colonies, who in turn produced research highly conducive to the imperial worldview. What has become of these mechanisms in the present century? Certainly, in the ensuing years, the Haldane Principle has become embedded in the British academic landscape, and as such the overt exchange of cash for conclusions has been replaced by a theoretically transparent, if broadly independent, peer-review process. The question is therefore less ‘who is giving whom

money to produce work?’ and more ‘what, besides genuine qualitative review, could be influencing the decisions made by independent funding committees, and individual researchers?’. Of particular concern is the drive to prioritise research which provides ‘value for money’, will be ‘impactful’, or is in the ‘public interest’.

- ***How up-to-date is the archaeological knowledge disseminated by non-academic agents?***

Outside of the academic sphere, archaeological and ancient-historical knowledge is disseminated both ‘formally’, in schools, and ‘informally’, throughout the media. But how accurate, and up-to-date, are the narratives that these agents are disseminating? There has been much discussion in recent years of the damaging effects of the recent drive for curricula based on ‘Our Island Story’, on students’ appreciation of the diversity of the historical record, and their ability to develop criticality in a global context (e.g., Harris and Burn, 2016; Lidher *et al.*, 2020; Mansfield, 2019; Vincent, 2019). Besides primary school discussions on Ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, and/or Persia, formal inclusion of archaeology in curricula is non-existent. Gathering empirical data on students’ comprehension of archaeology and ancient history in this vacuum, along with a review of the resources available to them, would allow timely interpretations on the real effects of this exclusion.

It is likely that school pupils, along with other non-specialists in archaeology in wider society, have gleaned some knowledge on archaeology and ancient history through ‘informal’ dissemination in popular media. The general consensus amongst scholars is that the focus of many media outputs on archaeology and ancient history is narrow – tending to focus largely on the ‘Great Civilisations’ of antiquity, or prehistoric Northern Europe – reinforcing patrimonial concepts of the development of ‘Western’ civilisation through the empires of the Ancient Mediterranean. Furthermore, presentations of ‘Other’ histories are often imbued with highly problematic tropes, and outdated interpretations. There therefore may exist a fundamental disconnect between the ways in which archaeology has been *practiced* over the last 40 years, with a greater focus on indigenous archaeologies and reflexive challenges to colonial science, and the ways in which these narratives are *represented* to non-specialists. So, whilst this is by no means a neglected area of study, it would be highly beneficial to re-tread these analyses with an empirical basis, utilising primary data gathered throughout the course of this project pertaining to the most widely consumed and trusted sources of ‘informal’ knowledge dissemination.

- ***How has academic outreach, alongside schooling and media representations, affected the consumption of research amongst non-specialists?***

The ways in which archaeological research is actually consumed by non-specialists members of the public is of central concern to this project. Whilst there has, in recent years, been a sustained drive for effective public outreach, especially as an increasingly conditional factor for funding applications, it has been argued that those who engage with outreach efforts are demographically

narrow (Simpson and Williams, 2008). This, combined with the thematically-limited opportunities for outreach within the UK (Thomas, 2017), means that knowledge is often disseminated by non-specialist interlocutors – the issues amongst which are outlined and hypothesised above. However, there is a paucity in studies auditing the effects of this on people’s perceptions of archaeological and ancient-historical narratives – what could be termed ‘general’ or ‘common’ knowledge about the human past. Of particular concern are the widespread, Eurocentric narratives of Western exceptionalism, cultural patrimony over the Great Civilisations of Antiquity, and the lack of ‘development’ in the Global South prior to colonialism. These concepts were core to the emergence of archaeology in the Nineteenth Century and, whilst much work has been done in recent years to challenge these outdated conceptions, it is not clear if these critiques have been received by non-specialists in society, or whether the presence of these narratives as stalwarts in media presentations of archaeology have fared better on the field of discourse. Addressing this question is fundamental to understanding how effective our current outreach efforts are and, if they are found to not be so, where we should seek to build private sector partnerships in order to work on disseminating ‘better’, more up-to-date knowledge.

A Note on Museums

The work of museums, as largely public institutions with a mandate to collect, produce, and disseminate knowledge on the past to the British public, could be considered as a further area of interest to the present research. However, whilst such analysis would not be out of place, it was decided that, owing to the already broad set of research questions and datasets under consideration, the limited time and resources available to complete this research, and the already well-populated literature on museum receptions and impacts, to instead focus on the three areas outlined above. Popular understandings of archaeological knowledge, alongside the dissemination of this knowledge in schools and media, represent significant gaps in existing knowledge, which deserve focussed attention.

Research Contributions

The present research makes a number of key conclusions and contributions to continued discussions on the role of archaeological research in British society.

Data gathered in response to questions concerning the production of academic knowledge have given insight into the British research landscape and funding practices, the relationship between research production and the ‘impact agenda’, and the perspectives of academic researchers on these processes. The analysis below suggests that British archaeological and heritage research since 2010 has been highly diverse, with a significant number of publications concerning a range of societies throughout both the West and the Global South, in a range of different temporal contexts. Conclusions concerning British funding processes, and in particular those of UK Research & Innovation (UKRI), have been harder to draw, owing to difficulties faced when gathering data from

UKRI. Nonetheless, data that was gathered suggests that there are processes utilised internally in order to direct the broad direction of research sponsored by the British taxpayer. A comparative analysis of impact case studies for the 2014 and 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF) assessment suggests a disconnect between the research that is actually produced in British universities, and that which is considered sufficiently ‘impactful’ to submit for assessment, with the latter in both cases being far more focussed on British and European contexts. Qualitative interviews with academic researchers demonstrate the highly complex nature of the relationship between research production and structural discourse, which on one level is superficially ignored, even as elements of these discourses continue to subversively impact research directions.

Particularly illuminating are discussions around the dissemination of knowledge on the past which, in both ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ contexts suggest a disconnect with contemporary knowledge *production* within the universities sector. Quantitative analysis of post-millennium historical screen media outputs demonstrates a heavy skew towards Europe-centric content, with an especially significant paucity in discussions on the pre-Colonial Global South. Qualitative analysis on a sample of recent media outputs revealed a reliance on problematic, outdated tropes when discussing the historical populations of the Global South. This analysis also demonstrates the frequent use of patrimonial narratives in discussions concerning Classical Antiquity, echoing the wider narrative of teleology within the Eurocentric tradition. Both quantitative and qualitative issues were also noted in the analysis of current English history textbooks. These typically had a paucity in discussions on the pre-Colonial Global South, instead focussing on later periods in history (where these regions are discussed at all). Discussions on the recent past are furthermore imbued with problematic tropes and Eurocentric narratives of superiority and opposition. The effects of these discourses on current students are shown to be notable, with a far higher subscription to Eurocentric theories amongst student participants compared with their adult counterparts.

Research into conceptions of past narratives amongst the adult British public has been similarly enlightening. Questionnaire data again speaks to a potential disconnect between the production of academic knowledge, and the consumption of wider historical narratives. A significant number of participants expressed or subscribed to various Eurocentric positions concerning the global past throughout the questionnaire. This is potentially a reflection of consumption habits, questions on which went on to inform the above-discussed qualitative review of media outputs. Participants also reported significantly low levels of knowledge in the history of the Global South in general, and the history of Africa in particular. Analysis of various sub-populations within the questionnaire sample suggests that students of the national curriculum from the mid-1990s to the present day may subscribe to Eurocentric narratives more than their older peers, raising questions around the function and content of national curricula since their inception, and echoing the scepticism of educationalists towards the national curriculum. Qualitative interviews with participants raised similar concerns towards the ways in which knowledge on the past is disseminated in the UK, and

the extent to which this is reflective of structural concerns more than contemporary scholarship. Interviews also detailed the complex, multifaceted relationships participants develop to the past, and differing conceptions of Britain's historical identity.

Overall findings suggest that 'common knowledge' on the past is, despite the work of researchers, reflective of older, often imperialist perspectives on world history. This speaks to the discursive power held by these earlier scholars, and the extent to which they have become embedded within the British cycle of knowledge, supplanting or overruling more recent contributions.

Limitations

That said, a number of difficulties faced during the data-gathering process should be taken into account when considering extent to which findings may be considered wholly generalisable.

As mentioned above, there were significant difficulties faced when attempting to request data from UKRI under the FOI Act. Numerous requests were denied under Section 40 of the act (owing to what UKRI saw as personal data pertaining to individuals submitting applications), and one under Section 15 (owing to the amount of time it would take to process the request). Whilst appeals did lead to some data being disclosed, which is discussed in Chapter Three, it is of insufficient specificity to allow for the conclusions that had been hoped for. The interview sample for academics' interviews was also of a modest number, at 11 individuals, owing in part to difficulties faced when recruiting colleagues to take part in the research. Whilst this does not by any means invalidate the findings presented, especially as there was a high level of homogeneity across many responses, it should nonetheless be considered when extrapolating data from the present study.

Significant difficulties were also faced when attempting to recruit schools to take part in the study, resulting in a smaller sample size than had been hoped for. Whilst 55 questionnaires were returned, and there is a general degree of demographical heterogeneity within the questionnaire sample, these were only drawn from two schools. This was despite significant efforts to recruit schools – over 10 attempts were made in conjunction with teachers in my personal network, and over 100 schools were emailed recruitment invitations. The negative responses that were received do provide insights into what could be termed the 'audit mentality' within the comprehensive school sector, with one head denying my request as "the questions are a bit too difficult and our students would struggle to access them", and another teacher saying of their deputy head: "he and the Head of Humanities do not feel comfortable with the questionnaire going ahead. He said it was mostly to do with a couple of the questions, which could cause a possible reaction from parents, which they have had to deal with in the past".

Limitations to the final dataset (questionnaires and interviews with members of the public) largely centre on the high levels of interest and engagement that participants reported with the past in general, and often with archaeological research. Although the sample sizes are sufficient in both cases (509 and 40), only 16 questionnaire participants declared that they were 'not that interested' or 'not

at all interested' in the ancient past on a four-point Likert scale. Similarly, over the course of the interviews, it became clear that a large number of these participants were very engaged with historical pursuits, including mudlarking, metal detecting, historical re-enactment, and volunteering for Historic England and other similar organisations. However, the obvious skew in both samples does make the overall findings, particularly subscription to historiographical Eurocentric discourses, and low levels of knowledge on the histories of the Global South, even more stark.

Definitions

Above, and below, I use several terms which have been contested at various points. This is often done with specific reference to what I term to be 'outdated' archaeological interpretation. Nevertheless, terms which are often used include:

Eurocentrism – Whilst I define Eurocentrism with reference to specific literature in Chapter One, I briefly define it here as: the ideological system which positions Europe as inherently, irrefutably superior throughout the sweep of human history.

The West – Is defined as: the contemporary geopolitical and cultural group formed by former and contemporary imperial powers throughout Western Europe and North America.

The Global South – I define as: the geopolitical group formed by formerly colonised nations across the world, including indigenous populations in countries which are now defined as part of 'the West' (i.e. the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand).

The Classical Tradition – I use this term to refer to the societies of the Central and Eastern Mediterranean taken as foundational to contemporary European culture. This is generally with exclusive reference to Roman and Hellenic societies, although I occasionally include the Pharaonic Egyptian tradition, at which points I refer to *the Egypto-Classical Tradition*.

Structure

I open the below discussion with Chapter One, in which I trace the genealogy of the Eurocentrism within the Western intellectual tradition, focussing on four key points in its development: (i) the Classical Period; (ii) the Early Modern Period; (iii) the Imperial Period; and (iv) the late Twentieth Century to the present day, including challenges to the concept. This chapter provides greater context to the concept of Eurocentrism, allowing for its identification throughout contemporary discourse. I also outline my core interpretive approach with relation to post-colonial theories.

In Chapter Two, I review previous work conducted across my key areas of interest, including: (i) the creation of academic knowledge; (ii) the past in schools; and (iii) the past in media. I also outline my overarching analytical approach with reference to the work of Pierre Bourdieu.

I outline my methodologies for data collection, sampling, and analysis in Chapter Three.

In Chapters Four, Five, Six, and Seven, I present the key findings from data collection, concerning academic knowledge creation, dissemination of knowledge in schools, and the media, and consumption of knowledge amongst the general public, respectively. In Chapter Five, I utilise data and analysis presented in a recent publication (Nagre, 2023).

In Chapter Eight, I discuss these results in tandem, and with explicit reference to the post-structuralist theories I outline at the end of Chapter Two. I finally offer conclusions, and potential directions for future research around this topic.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND: EUROCENTRISM AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

As a political doctrine, Eurocentrism has served over the last few centuries to legitimate, authorise, and perpetuate notions of Euro-American cultural, ethical, and intellectual superiority. Catalysed during the European Imperial project, narratives of supremacy and alterity were initially formalised through a (mis)application of Classical thought during the Renaissance, combined with the deeper pedigree of antisemitic thought already rooted within the Western tradition. Below, I provide a brief genealogy of the key facets of Eurocentric discourse, at four key points in its development: (i) Classical Antiquity; (ii) the Early Modern Period; (iii) the Imperial Period; and (iv) into the Present century. A consistent feature of Eurocentric discourses throughout these stages has been the mobilisation of ‘the past’ within them, Ancient Athenian autochthony, to the Classical prerogative drawn into Enlightenment discourses, and the artifice of superior Imperial origin myths, narratives which continue to the present day. The entry of archaeology and anthropology into the debate from the Nineteenth Century has occasionally served to undermine Eurocentric discourse, but more often has actively reified them, providing an ‘empirical’ crutch to pre-existing dogma. I preface this discussion with an outline of the working definition and model for ‘Eurocentrism’, drawn on throughout this research.

Defining ‘Eurocentrism’

Samir Amin, acknowledged to have coined the term in its present meaning, argues that Eurocentrism represents an ideological means through which to suppress, and exploit, actors on the ‘global periphery’ (generally, peoples living outside of the Euro-American ‘core’) (Amin, 1988). Thus, Eurocentrism serves to *totalise* global experience within a singular, explicitly European, framework, underpinned by self-serving ‘empirical’ observations, and positioning ‘us’ as the ‘standard’ by which all other ontological systems are measured (see Pokhrel, 2011). Edward Said also highlights the fundamentally *oppositional* nature of Eurocentrism (e.g. 1978). The powerful subject, to Said, is a diametric construction in contrast to the weak object – ‘we’ are better than ‘the Other’, according to a set of self-defined and ultimately self-serving metrics. Taken in conjunction with the totality of the Eurocentric worldview, this prejudice is also placed with a ‘rational’, ‘objective’ framework, neutralising imbalances of discursive power through scientific affectation. A final defining feature of Eurocentrism, noted by Amin (1988), Said (1978), V.Y. Mudimbe (1988), and Bruno Latour (1993) is the *teleological* worldview associated with the doctrine. Eurocentrism is underpinned by the assumption that any and all human achievement in the past can be broadly attributed to Europeans, or more often amalgamated into our own elite developmental trajectory. Accordingly, the definition of Eurocentrism which I follow in this discussion is: “a *totalising, self-serving worldview, which exists to denigrate the other whilst appropriating their cultural achievements*”.

Narratives of Alterity in Classical Antiquity

There has been much recent discussion on the contention of ‘racism’ and ‘ethnocentrism’ in Classical Antiquity, broadly echoing the theoretical shifts across the social sciences over the past 50 years. The kernels of what Isaac (2006) has termed ‘proto-racism’ in Classical antiquity are crucial to understanding contemporary Eurocentrism, since it is these that were taken, (mis)interpreted, and (mis)applied by scholars in the millennia since in order to inspire, and to *justify* Eurocentric doctrine. The ability of more recent authors to place their ideas within a Classical tradition, to glean authority and precedent from Classical authors, has significantly contributed to the tenacity of the Eurocentric worldview. Below, I briefly review works discussing elements of Graeco-Roman proto-Eurocentrism according to the model laid out above.

Totalising Worldviews

Hellenes were the first in the classical canon to employ totalistic, rationalised explanations and justifications for their own supremacy, and their rivals’ inferiority. Several authors have highlighted that Classical Greek epistemologies were underpinned by a staunch commitment to environmental and biological determinism, and to the notion of socio-cultural ‘purity’ (Hall, 1997; Isaac, 2005). A persons’ temperament, appearance, and capabilities were thought to be a direct result of factors like climate, altitude, and the fertility of their native soils, which in turn went on to dictate systems of government and cultural norms (Isaac, 2006: 36). Paradoxically, these traits were also thought to be heritable – the ‘native’ lands of a persons’ great-great-grandfather, and their unique environmental hallmarks, thought to dictate the behaviours of a person born and raised hundreds of miles away (*ibid.*). This schema was intrinsically self-serving. Whilst contemporary Persians were thought to be ‘soft’, on account of their easy-going climate, and Scythians were ‘spirited’ but essentially stupid thanks to their harsher conditions, Greeks were the best of both worlds – spirited, shrewd, and intelligent (Hall, 1997; Kennedy, 2015: 10). Kennedy discusses how these beliefs were later distilled into clear origin myths under the Athenian hegemony, hierarchising the populations of the known world according to the ‘purity’ of their ancestral origin, with Athenians as the ‘purest’, and therefore ‘best’ (Kennedy, 2015: 13). This schema also privileged indigeneity, which is reflected in the Athenian policy of autochthony, barring citizenship from those of any heritage not ‘purely’ Athenian (Lape, 2010: 3).

This framework was readily adopted by later Roman populations. Isaac notes that the notion of racial purity implicit in autochthony was revised by Latin thinkers such as Strabo, with the goalposts moved to privilege the Roman, rather than Greek, lineage (Isaac, 2006: 36). ‘Pure’ Roman pedigree was accordingly favoured during early phases of Roman expansion. Mixed marriage was discouraged as tantamount to ‘degeneration’ – a point of crucial and continued importance to these debates (Isaac, 2006: 40). Balsdon has highlighted how notions of environmental determinism were also broadly accepted by Roman thinkers, favouring Latin as opposed to Hellenic contexts but with the same underlying logic (Balsdon, 1979). This belief was employed as a catch-all justification for

imperial expansion, as Romans were said to be ‘civilising’ local populations, and that their subversion to a ‘naturally’ stronger power was inevitable and unavoidable – a striking parallel with later imperialist discourses in Europe (*ibid.*; Isaac, 2006: 41).

The supremacist worldviews espoused by the Hellenic and later Roman powers were neither unique, nor entirely unprecedented. In a thorough comparative study, Poo (2005) has highlighted that previous Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Chinese hegemonies had also employed similar rhetoric and policy in order to assert, even flaunt their regional supremacy, and the social and cultural shortcomings of their neighbours. However, what sets the Graeco-Roman tradition apart is what Eliav-Feldman, Isaac, and Ziegler term the “rationalisation and systematisation of the irrational” (2009: 4) – the practice of *authorising* prejudice within an ‘empirical’ framework. This is also key to the totality of the Graeco-Roman worldview. Having established the ‘rules’ of environmental determinism and trait-heredity, along with the hierarchisation of world populations, and the ultimately ‘natural’ supremacy of the subject, contemporary theorists were in effect authoring a blueprint with which the entire known and *unknown* worlds could be interpreted - a periodic table of social purity, cultural success, and political power.

Denigrating the Other

The Graeco-Roman totalistic worldview was also fundamentally *oppositional*. This was also not a new development - Huang highlights that us/them dichotomies have been central to the construction and maintenance of group identities throughout human history (Huang 2010: 556). However, as Kennedy discusses, when considered alongside the environmental and biological determinism espoused by Classical thinkers, the power dynamics behind such cultural delineation become far more complex, pejorative, and enduring (Kennedy, 2015). The hallmark oppositional doctrine of the era is the oft-discussed dichotomy between ‘civilised’ and ‘barbarous’ societies. Prevalent in both Hellenic and Roman discourse, this construct saw ‘typical’ Roman and/or Greek cultural traits and institutions posited as the benchmark for ‘higher’ existence. These traits were contrasted with those of the Other - Hellenic virility against Persian impotence (Wenghofer, 2014); Roman valour against Parthian cowardice (Balsdon, 1979: 61); Greek sartorialism *versus* Ethiopian ‘nakedness’ (Snowden, 1970: 109); Latin urbanism in opposition to Berber nomadity (Shaw, 1972); or, the more familiar Graeco-Roman ‘freedom’ against Eastern ‘despotism’ (Isaac, 2009: 52), another key enduring discourse returned to throughout this discussion. Conversations on Africans are less plentiful. However, scholars have argued that the Southern Continent was seen to have operated on a parallel plane to Eurasia, with both ‘civilised’ and ‘barbarous’ peoples (Derricourt, 2015; Omobowale 2015).

The Otherness of populations surrounding the Hellano-Latin subject came to be reinforced with a series of pejorative tropes and stereotypes, many of which will be familiar to the contemporary observer. As noted above, a significant example is that of ‘oriental despotism’, the notion that ‘Eastern’ governments were prone to autocracy, and that their subjects were inherently servile and

submissive (rationalised through geographical determinism – soft lands breed soft people) (Kennedy, 2015: 9). This trope was deployed frequently by Graeco-Roman actors seeking to criticise Eastern leaders (Roshan-Zamir, 2019) justify occupations of Persia (Heijnen, 2018: 81) or simply to assert their own civility and governmental transparency (Huang, 2010: 558). The notion of ‘oriental decadence’ is closely linked with that of oriental despotism, and was employed to emphasise Greek/Roman sobriety and rationality against Eastern hedonism (Strootman and Versluys, 2017: 13). The Classical powers were also arguably the first to deploy the ‘noble savage’ trope towards Africans. Isaac has highlighted that, according to Herodotus, Sub-Saharan Africans were ‘innocent’, what he terms the “faraway good barbarian”, who has neither need nor want to interfere with the more ‘advanced’ civilisations to the North, a trope echoed later by Pliny and Tacitus (Isaac, 2006: 36). Others discuss the creation of ‘Africa’ in the Graeco-Roman imagination as a mythologised, mystical space, populated with human-animal hybrids and other mythical beings (Mudimbe, 1988: 17; Mazrui, 2005; Derricourt, 2015: 21; Goldman, 2015: 66). The continent is thus conceptualised as somewhere wholly outside of the subjective frame of reference, a blank canvas for subjective fantasy and a means to assert Graeco-Roman civility – another theme echoed by authors discussed throughout this chapter.

The function of the reinforced Otherness of Afro-Asiatic populations can be seen in parallel with imperial discourses of previous millennium, and can thus be discussed using critical post-colonial theories. Not only is the Other represented as fundamentally different, but, once this belief is diffused through the prism of subjective superiority, this difference is portrayed as empirical justification for aggression, subjugation, and domination. The dichotomy of civilised/barbarous is especially pertinent. The leading authorities on colonial dynamics in the Near East (Said, 1977) and Africa (Mudimbe, 1988) have both drawn parallels between European representations of these respective regions in the Classical and Colonial periods. Said highlights that the deployment of the ‘oriental despotism’ trope has been used to justify the annexation of the Near East since Antiquity, as the aggressor is armed with the ‘empirical’ knowledge that the people of Mesopotamia/Persia/Egypt only thrive under foreign subjugation, but also paradoxically that their current leaders are morally corrupt when compared with the subject. The causal and symptomatic ‘evidence’ for moral corruption is seen through the lens of ‘oriental decadence’, seen to have eroded institutions of state and the motivations for individual action – thus serving as both a diametric counterpoint to subjective civility and sobriety, and as a precautionary tale of the dangers of abandoning these apparent values. Mudimbe has similarly indicated that Classical conceptions of Africa as a place essentially without ‘culture’ and order mirror Colonial epistemologies, which served to justify the imposition of ‘order’ and ‘culture’ by force. Both authors highlight in particular the early ‘geographies’ of Herodotus, Pliny, and Tacitus as key documents for emphasising the Otherness of rival populations, and thus the superiority of the self.

Appropriating History

A number of scholars have argued, *contra* the above, that evidence for ‘cultural borrowings’ throughout the Ancient Mediterranean demonstrates the open-mindedness of Classical powers when compared with their recent European counterparts (e.g. Gruen, 2005; 2011; Goldman, 2015; Garland, 2015). However, it is possible to place many of these interpretations within broader dynamics of imperial teleology. For Hellenes, the obvious narrative for appropriation was that of the far older centres of Persia and Egypt. Whilst the rhetoric of opposition served to initially denigrate the Oriental Other, by the 5th Century BCE, ‘Persian’ affectations stood-in as status-markers in Hellenic society (Strootman and Versluys, 2005; Shapiro, 2009). Strootman and Versluys argue that the antiquity of Persia as a regional hegemon was co-opted to underscore the power of Greece, enshrining their imperialism within a broader narrative of exceptionalism. Similarly, Miller has highlighted the tendency amongst Hellenic groups to claim descent from Near Eastern quasi-mythological ancestors, “[enhancing] the antiquity of their own claims to civilisation” (Miller, 2005: 68). Similar appropriations occurred with Egyptian history. Assmann suggests that to Greeks, “Egypt was the epitome of everything primordial and original in terms of culture” (Assmann, 2005: 40). This led to detailed investigations into the ethnography and history of the region, despite the prevalent representation of Egyptians themselves as ‘deceitful’ and ‘servile’ (*ibid.*: 41).

Later Roman conquerors were also intrigued by Egyptian antiquity, especially following the annexation of the region. Swetnam-Burland (2015) discusses the appropriation of Egyptian aesthetic styles, along with the acquisition of actual artefacts (such as Obelisks) within the broader context of imperial identification and appropriation. She argues that symbolic control of, and identification with, the ancient power served to assert the Roman Imperial tradition within the broader sweep of regional history and power, reified through the appropriation and display of artefacts and ‘Egyptian-esque’ artworks (see also, Barrett, 2019). However, perhaps the best-known example of imperial teleology during the period comes with the Roman appropriation of Hellenic culture following the annexation of the latter. Roman actors followed a programme of conscious ‘Hellenisation’ in order to co-opt the antiquity and legacy of The Other, whilst also denigrating contemporary Hellenes as too decadent, complacent, ‘Eastern’ (Heijnen, 2018: 81). Barchiesi points to the Roman origin myth espoused in Virgil’s *Aeneid*, effectively positioning Rome as a successor to the Greek Heroic Era (Barchiesi, 2018; see also, Wyler, 2005). According to Barchiesi and Heijnen, the concepts of *social degeneration* and *transfers of power* were crucial to this process. Former regional powers (Greece, Persia, Egypt) were seen to have succumbed to the perils of their climes, descending into hedonistic decadence, and allowing their once-great societies to crumble, and the torch of civilisation to pass through a series of worthy successors, culminating in the Roman regional hegemony. This inherently teleological view of history served to embed the subject in broader discourses of power, authorising the subject as part of a broader narrative of domination, and also legitimating the subjugation of former powers on account of an imagined cultural relationship.

Classical Parallels to Modern Eurocentrism

Parallels between Classical and contemporary Eurocentrism are significant. Both the Graeco-Roman and recent European empires relied on self-serving, totalistic worldviews in order to establish, and justify their respective hegemonies. The former utilised quasi-scientific geographical and biological determinism to assert their inherent cultural and spiritual supremacy whilst the latter, as discussed below, relies on pseudoscientific reasoning and ‘empirical’ observation to justify world conquest. Both also constructed rigid hierarchies of peoples governed by extrinsic, heritable characteristics, placing themselves at the zenith. Both groups also forged their supreme identities out of opposition, utilising binaries and diametric reasoning to simultaneously authorise the supremacy of the self, and denigrate the Other. These judgements were, in both incidences, underpinned by a series of stereotypes and tropes, many of which are common across the millennia that separate the respective hegemonies. Finally, Graeco-Roman and recent European imperialists sought to appropriate the historical achievements of neighbours, rivals, and subjugated peoples. In so-doing, hegemonies were able to effectively justify their oppression, and forge imaginary cultural links between themselves and the groups that they were subjugating. When taken in conjunction with the narratives of totality and opposition, appropriation completes a triad of self-perpetuating power – to rationalise superiority; represent the inferior; and to take ownership on any apparent ‘middle ground’ between the two. However, the question remains as to how these dynamics were inherited by European actors over a thousand years after the fall of the Roman Empire. As I discuss in the next section, this process owes far more to the self-conscious classicisation of these later Europeans than the discursive strength of Eurocentric theory.

The Roots of Racism in Early Modern Europe

Prior to the formalisation of Eurocentric thought during the imperial period (discussed below), the nascent concept of biological racism developed as a significant precursor during the Early Modern Period. Early genealogies of the concept (e.g. Mathews, 1924; Benedict, 1942; Mosse, 1979) assert that racism emerged as *a by-product of the slave trade, against the backdrop of diminishing Church authority and the rise of Enlightenment philosophies*. This interpretation is also the most frequently propagated in non-academic media, including in the BBC’s ground-breaking 2007 miniseries ‘*Racism: a History*’, and on the Historic England Website (N.D.). The model is not without merit. However, revisionist authors have also sought to position the orthodox interpretation as fundamentally simplistic, glossing over centuries of ‘proto-racist’ and discriminatory practices, as well as the role of Classical revisionism.

“a by-product of the slave trade...”

The slave trade, racism, and most other developments of the Early Modern Period took place within the broader context of exploration, mercantilism, and ultimately *globalisation*. Increasing interconnectivity had huge implications for the development of racial theories. In the 50 years

following the ‘discovery’ of the Americas, a litany of prejudicial comparisons between European and Amerindian cultural ‘sophistication’ were drawn (Scammell, 1991: 504; Pagden, 2009). Iberian incursions along the African coastline in the Sixteenth Century drew similar conclusions, as ‘natives’ were compared to the barbarians of antiquity (Derricourt, 2015: 16). These broad-brush cultural comparisons were refined, and disseminated, through the growing popularity of travel literature. Often referencing the above-mentioned works of Pliny, Tacitus, and Herodotus, Early Modern authors benefitted from far wider circulation than their Classical counterparts, disseminating revisited tropes of Otherness and inferiority far further (see Roddan, 2016). Informed by emergent Eurocentrism many travelogues took an etic, ‘objective’ stance on the Others authors encountered, neutralising prejudice and problematic comparisons under the growing movement in empiricism, whilst also exaggerating and semi-fictionalising adventures and cultural encounters under unacknowledged artistic licence (Smith, 2015: 10; Parris, 2015: 26). This growing corpus formed the basis for many Europeans’ knowledge of global Others, and was hugely influential on the works of armchair theorists and ivory-tower philosophers across the continent, including many of the key architects of Enlightenment racism (Parris, 2015).

That is not to say that slavery was not important to Early Modern racism. In his seminal genealogy of racism, Frederickson pays significant lip service to the orthodox model, arguing that chattel slavery was one of the two main contributing factors to the doctrine – the other being the European antisemitic tradition (Frederickson, 2002). The effects of slavery on self- and Other-perceptions are exemplified in the changing face of ‘The African’ in Europe. Within the first 50 years of institutionalised slavery, representations of Africans had transformed from that of the benign novelty, into the deceitful, sexually depraved, submissive coward that continued to underpin legislative racism well into the Twentieth Century (Scammell, 1991: 506). Erickson has tracked this shift across the visual arts, noting that, where prior to the Sixteenth Century Africans were oddities employed to denote cosmopolitanism, post-slavery portraits were underpinned with notions of servility (Erickson, 1993). Similarly, popular discourse was mobilised to undermine Africans’ capacity for rational thought, creativity, or any other trait contemporary European theorists thought commendable in their own culture (Olende, 2018: 162). This is best represented in Edward Long’s *History of Jamaica* (1774), in which the former colonial governor spends much of his 600-page opus in vitriolic debasement of any and all aspects of the ‘African’ character that he had ‘observed’.

Another hallmark of the Early Modern Period in Europe was the gradual emergence of what Hobsbawm has termed ‘proto-nationalism’ (Hobsbawm, 1990). He and Anthony Marx (2005) demonstrate that meta-identities forged during this period were often highly exclusive, and as such dichotomous (*‘we are Hanoverian, they are not!’*), and pejorative (*‘we Hanoverians are better than those Jews’*) by perceived necessity (*‘we don’t want them to benefit from our system’*). Frederickson (2002) and Appiah (2003) agree that the post-*Reconquista* policies of ethnic cleansing enacted in Fifteenth Century Iberia were foundational to both nationalism, and Early Modern Racism. Whilst

religious Others, notably the European Jewry, had been the target of debasement and violence for centuries in Europe, the Spanish policy of *limpieza de sangre* in 1496 was the first time that this persecution was rooted not in belief, but biology – Spain’s Jews and Muslims were inherently impure, hereditarily inferior and undesirable by virtue of ‘blood’ (Nirenberg, 2009). Smith (2005) and Xiang (2015) argue that across Europe the subalternity of the religious Other was seen as crucial for national self-identity, a convenient scapegoat for immorality and degradation, allowing proto-national intellectuals to claim a moral imperative for expulsion and genocide, whilst drawing clear battle lines between the superior subject and inferior object. It is interesting that the core vocabulary of Enlightenment racism, imbued with notions of exclusivity, purity, and superiority, is comprehensively mirrored in this earlier discourse, a point which has only recently been raised in the literature.

“...against the backdrop of diminishing Church authority...”

Whilst the orthodox model maintains that Church authority served as a bulwark against the eventual emergence of racist theories, it is significant, and often overlooked, that much of the key infrastructure for racist thought was erected in conjunction with the European Church. The slave trade was initially justified through representations of Africans as heathens (Frederickson, 2002). The first waves of European colonialism throughout the Sixteenth Century were given Papal assent, and therefore divine imperative, with Iberian rulers pledging to spread the gospel, whilst extracting resources, capital, and human bodies from their new territories (Scammell, 1991: 505). In real terms, this was achieved through the actions of Christian missionaries, dispatched from Europe to territories throughout the Global South. Mudimbe (1988) has argued that, alongside serving as a vanguard for later imperial subjugation, missionaries in Africa worked to undermine the ontologies and epistemologies of the ‘natives’, supplanting local knowledge for the ‘correct’ (Western) belief systems. These sentiments are echoed by Wheeler (2008) and Flaherty (1992) discussing missionary receptions of indigenous religion in both North and South America, respectively.

It is also significant that the structural violence of missionaries follows a centuries-long tradition of Church persecution and ethnocentrism, with tensions between the Abrahamic religions serving as a defining characteristic of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Said (1978) argues that ‘old world’ geopolitics from the Eighth Century CE until the Colonial Era was characterised by a perceived binary opposition between Christendom and the Muslim World, driven on the part of the former by fear and paranoia of the latter. Appiah (2003) adds that, prior to Enlightenment secularisation the chief political identity markers in the ‘old world’ were religion, and thus that religious persecution was a direct precursor to biological racism. As I note above, hostility towards the great ‘internal Other’ – Europe’s Jews – was also a consistent feature of Medieval and Renaissance discourse (see Buell 2009; also Buell and Johnson-Hodge, 2004). Said (1978) and Whelan (2001) argue that, much like later, ‘proper’ Enlightenment racism, religious alterity was observed in Europe as a means for self-identity, and a claim to superiority on the part of Christian majorities.

However, certain elements of Church doctrine did prevent these practices of alterity from morphing into full-blown, modern, biological racism. Ogunnaike (2016) has discussed the implications of the concept of universalism at length. Prior to the Early Modern Period and Enlightenment, questions on the nature of the human spirit, and of the capacity for human morality and intellect, had been addressed through a biblical reimagining of Classical philosophy. The defining feature of moral and spiritual aptitude seen to be intellect, which was in turn attributed to a beings' relationship with the divine - the means through which to achieve moral and spiritual purity were not corporeal, but ethereal. This interpretation was both influenced by, and later constitutive to, the dynamic conception of universalism in Christian doctrine. As Buell and Johnson-Hodge (2004) highlight, Christians initially sought to define themselves according to their inclusivity – anyone, from any family, and any background, can be 'saved'. According to this interpretation, Christianity has since its inception been fundamentally anti-racialist, and anti-racist. Ogunnaike highlights how universalism and the platonic mind-body dualism were distilled into the Great Chain of Being by Medieval theologians which, whilst hierarchising the beings of the world according to their proximity to the divine, did not discriminate between different biological units of humanity.

“...and the rise of Enlightenment philosophies.”

Feeding directly off the decline in universalist theory was a reversion to, and reimagination of, Classical aestheticism and materialism. Ogunnaike (2016) highlights that this process begun with the Renaissance, when centuries of biblically mediated reinterpretation of platonic philosophy was abandoned, and original classical texts revisited. These new interpretations privileged ingenuity, creativity, and order, rather than piety, morality, and asceticism. Crucially, however, these theories held character traits to be wholly *corporeal*, rather than ethereal. This is reflected in Voltaire's *Essay on Universal History* (1759) and Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1783), for example, with both authors explicitly linking African's physique, hair texture, and cranial structure to their supposed limited scope for intellect and creativity, whilst Kant (1764) proxies morality in skin colour (Parris, 2015). Ogunnaike (2016) and Smith (2015: 18) have argued that the re-appropriation of these concepts formed part of the broader project of secularisation, in which 'Western Man' supplanted God atop the Great Chain of Being. The position of any 'race' on this hierarchy was therefore dictated by their similarity to Europeans, according to largely imaginary metrics of European design.

These concepts were furthered, and refined, through discussions on the *origins* of the different 'races' of earth. There is a broad split amongst Enlightenment scholars between polygenetic (e.g. Montesquieu 1748; Buffon 1749) and monogenetic (typified by Hume, 1985[1777]) theorists. The former camp maintained that the 'races' of earth were biologically distinct, descended from pre-Adamite man in a synthesis of contemporary 'empirical' biology with theological tradition (see Hume, 1985). This interpretation has obvious interpretations for the development of racialism. However, monogenetic theories have been far more influential for contemporary racist discourses.

Theorists in this tradition argued that, whilst humans did share a common ancestor in Adam, non-European races had suffered from cultural degeneration or stagnation, where Europeans had continued to ‘advance’ through an imaginary ladder of cultural development – a perspective informed by revised Classical literature. This is reflected in Dow’s *History of Hindostan* (1772), where both colonialism and racism are justified through the prism of cultural degeneration, compounding physical, intellectual, and moral variation with the emergent Eurocentric ethnic hierarchy of Dow’s contemporaries

Questions around human difference also form a cornerstone of Enlightenment racism. Prior to the empirical biology of Darwin and his colleagues in the Nineteenth Century, physical and intellectual variation was explained through reference to the Classics, and in particular through the deployment of the Hellenic concepts of environmental determinism and cultural degeneration. Biller (2009) has tracked the genealogy of these concepts throughout the Medieval period and into the Enlightenment, convincingly arguing for a clear line of succession from antiquity to the works of Buffon and Montesquieu. According to this interpretation, the physique, intellect, and ‘character’ of different ‘races’ was ascribed by their environment – the harshness of Europe requiring White populations to develop grit, tenacity, and intelligence, whilst the ease of the African, Asian, and American climates induced laziness and cultural stagnation. Parris (2015) highlights how this concept was used both to rationalise the Enlightenment ethnic hierarchy, and to justify colonialism, and slavery. Thomas Jefferson (1783) and Long (1774) both make reference to the ‘natural’, ‘environmental’ inferiority of Black slaves, and attempt to reconcile the chattel trade with Aristotle’s notion of ‘natural slavery’ on these grounds. These concepts were also compounded with notions of ‘purity’ initially pioneered by Classical Athenians, rallying against any attempt at intermarriage and/or integration, and shoring up conceptions of the European ethnic hierarchy (see Ogunnaiké, 2016).

The final key component of Enlightenment racism is the discourse on *civilisations*. Having established the biological superiority of European populations, theorists turned their attention to the question of social structures, and cultural ‘development’, as part of the broader proto-modern efforts in absolutist theory and taxonomic classification. Much of this discourse was, unsurprisingly, highly racially charged. Africans were thought unable to develop anything resembling ‘civilisation’ – feeding into the broader ‘natural slavery’ discussion noted above (Olende, 2018: 162; Scammell, 1991: 506). The concept of development was rationalised through stadial theory, proponents of which emphasise a universal trajectory of increasing cultural sophistication, thus ahistoricising African and Amerindian populations, seen to have ‘stagnated’ in a nascent stage of development (Wells, 2015: 308). Asian populations posed a more significant challenge to the notion of ‘Western’ cultural superiority, as they had since antiquity been visibly analogous to Europeans, developing hierarchised, urban societies with long-distance trade and broad cultural hegemonies. This issue was circumnavigated through the revisited concept of oriental despotism, refined and widely

disseminated by Montesquieu in his *Spirit of the Laws* (1748). Synthesising Classical geographies with contemporary travelogues, Montesquieu asserted that the climates of Western and Southern Asia were not conducive to ‘free’ society, and were far more suited to authoritarian, despotic rule (Whelan, 2001) The implications of this theory are twofold: on the one hand, Europeans can maintain their pre-eminence thanks to their immutable ‘spirit’ and ‘freedom’; and on the other, colonial incursions throughout Asia were justified as the ‘natural’ order of things – as expressed by Dow (1772) of India.

Racism: Diverse Causes and Effects

The need to approach the concept of ‘racism’ from a holistic perspective is clear. Whilst the slave trade and Enlightenment philosophy were hugely important catalysts for scientific racism, other contemporary developments and theoretical traditions were also in play. Globalisation provided the broader backdrop against which these discourses could take place, bringing Western observers into far closer proximity with global Others, with greater frequency, than ever before, and the litany of travelogues produced by these authors formed part of the corpus of racist theory. The burgeoning nationalist movement in Europe would also prove definitive, in particular with developing and mobilising us/them dichotomies and supremacist rhetoric as a facet of collective ‘national’ identities. Whilst the downfall of Christian universalism worked in conjunction with ‘empirical’ Eurocentrism and ‘scientific’ ethnic hierarchies, it must be noted that centuries of antisemitism and Islamophobia preceded scientific racism with the blessing of the Church, who also actively encouraged and facilitated colonialism, another key facet of racist discourse. Furthermore, whilst Enlightenment philosophy was undoubtedly a key forum for racist theory, much imperative, prerogative, and evidence was drawn from Classical, Medieval, and Biblical sources. Racism was therefore not a simple ‘flash in the pan’ of history, but a natural succession to centuries of ethnocentric, supremacist, and partisan traditions in European thought and practice.

Imperial Worldviews and the Eurocentric Doctrine

The nascent racism and Eurocentrism underpinning colonial incursions in the ‘New World’ was catalysed through the dawn of what Díaz-Andreu (2018:3) terms ‘New Imperialism’ (i.e. capitalist expansion over the ‘Old World’, as opposed to the ‘Early’, exploratory, *de facto* missionary imperialism of the past three centuries in the ‘New World’). The opening volley to this geopolitical chapter was fired by Napoleon and his *Armée d’Orient* during the 1793 annexation of Egypt. Not only did this kick-start a series of events which both devastated and fundamentally reshaped the Old World, but the convoy of proto-archaeologists, ethnographers, and art historians which accompanied Napoleon would go on to instigate and influence a tidal wave of academic and theoretical developments (see Said, 1978: 43). The materials gathered during Napoleon’s excursion established both a foundational corpus, and a keen interest in the culture and history of the Oriental Other. As agents of empire, newly ordained social and historical scientists would spend much of the next two centuries churning out theses and treatises underscoring the morality, and inevitability, of

empire, the superiority of Westerners, and the inadequacies of The Other. This was echoed in the work of armchair theorists across the Imperial capitals of Europe, where Darwin's theory of evolution, infused with Enlightenment discourses of alterity and nationalistic chauvinism, quickly led to Eugenics and the formalisation of scientific racism. The imperial period thus represented both a continuation of, and departure from, the Enlightenment discourses which immediately preceded it.

Discourses of Superiority

Imperial worldviews during the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries were ultimately all underpinned by the assumption that 'Westerners' were *intellectually* superior. This was partially an inheritance of Enlightenment humanism. However, as imperialism expanded, Western actors were globalised even further than during the Early Modern Period, with Other-encounters already underwritten by chauvinism and unequal relations of power. Thus, these same actors felt that, armed with positivist, 'objective', 'empirical' post-Enlightenment research methods, they were uniquely placed to investigate, study, and *represent* the Other (see Lydon and Rizvi, 2010). This process was initiated with the report commissioned by Napoleon following his brief annexation of Egypt – the *Description de l'Égypte* – which saw the ethnography and antiquity of Egypt painstakingly taxonomised for European consumption. Soon, archaeological, anthropological, and geographical reports were being commissioned on traditions and cultures across Africa and the Near East. Shephard highlights the deep complicity of social and historical scientists in fabricating the continent of Africa in the Western imagination, a process which enabled and justified later formal imperialism and economic exploitation (Shepherd, 2002). Similarly, Bahrani discusses how Western archaeologists sought to impose loaded typologies on the Near East, literally 'conjuring' Mesopotamia as a halcyon cultural tradition, whilst denigrating later and contemporary Near Eastern populations (Bahrani, 1998). After Said (1978), many authors have highlighted that the claims to authority to represent the world, and the Other, ultimately stem from a process of self-seeking and identity construction on the part of the hegemon (e.g. Connah, 2013; Gonzalez-Ruibal, 2010).

Representations of the Other were at the core of the discourse on biological superiority. Whilst ideas around the heritability of European superiority were popular with Enlightenment thinkers, the publication of *On the Origins of the Species* (1859) brought a new level of 'authenticity' and 'empiricism' to these discussions. Whilst Darwin's own racist credentials have, and should, be highlighted (see Rose, 2009), the chief issue is the entanglements of Eurocentric, racialist discourse with the scientific credentials of evolutionism. Galton's theory of eugenics exemplifies this confluence perfectly. In *Hereditary Genius* (1869), Galton postulated that intellectual capacity was both heritable, and racialised, that Europeans were therefore biologically intellectually superior, and that all innovative, 'great men' across time and space had therefore originated from European racial 'stock'. This theory was greatly influenced by the work of Darwin, but also tapped into other post-

Enlightenment strands of European supremacism – for example, the barely pre-Darwinian works of Gobineau, who in 1855 suggested a tripartite, hierarchical taxonomy of races in which European populations held a biological ‘monopoly’ on intelligence, creativity, and beauty. These discourses were also key to the works of Ernst Haeckel, who argued for a hierarchy of races according to their relation to apes, with Aryans the most biologically distinct (e.g. 1868).

The empirical backing of Darwinian evolution, and the spread of colonial archaeology and anthropology, brought renewed attention to the discourse on *cultural* superiority. Atia (2010) has highlighted the supremacism underscoring the ethnography and culture-histories throughout the Near East during the period, as such revered early excavators as Gertrude Bell (1911) sought to demonstrate the ‘cultural bankruptcy’ and ‘sterility’ of Arab populations. In Africa, colonial scientists diffused their ethnographies through the prism of either Rousseau’s ‘nascent society’, or Hobbes’ ‘state of nature’ – Africans were incapable of ‘civilising’, condemning them to a life of either noble savagery or chaotic barbarism (Mudimbe, 1988: 72). In the imperial ‘centres’ of Europe and America, this ‘data’ was incorporated into the eugenics fold, meaning that by 1860, the concept of ‘civilisation’ had effectively become racialised (Jackson and Weidman, 2006: 70). Gobineau had suggested in 1855 that only Aryans were capable of building civilisations, an idea that was echoed by Chamberlain in 1899. Lubbock (1868) made a materialist contribution to this discourse, highlighting the apparent lack of metallurgy or pottery throughout African, American, and Oceanian archaeological records as ‘proof’ that these peoples were inherently ‘uncivilised’. Later, in 1936, V.G. Childe followed a similar cart-before-horse line of reasoning, modelling ‘urbanism’ and ‘civilisation’ on the Western tradition, and thus excluding all other traditions that did not conform to this exclusive model.

Teleological History

Gonzalez-Ruíbal (2010) has argued that the ‘discourse on civilisations’ – one of the fundamental underpinnings of Nineteenth Century archaeology – was focussed largely on demonstrating a clear line of succession from the Ancient Mediterranean to the modern, imperial nation-states of North-Western Europe. This perspective is encapsulated by Legge, who argued in 1844 for the ‘undeniable’ truth of the narrative, based on clear similarities in the culture and ‘spirit’ of the hegemons. These conclusions were also complimentary to contemporaneous race science. Gobineau (1855), for example, was keen to emphasise the ‘Aryan’ roots of Hellano-Latin civilisation, and to demonstrate how its ‘essence’ shifted northwards after the fall of the Mediterranean empires. Díaz-Andreu (2007) has rightly emphasised that this discourse cannot be understood outside of the broader context of emergent Western nationalism. A key element to the ‘national question’ was one of history – on a practical level to bond together the ‘imagined’ community, but, increasingly throughout the 1800s, an element of prestigious chauvinism also came into play, with nation-states striving to demonstrate their superiority over their neighbours and rivals. Accordingly, closer relations with this most

glorious of pasts served to legitimate the self-ascribed superiority of individual and collective Western powers (see also: Kohl and Fawcett, 1996).

Prior to the annexation of the region throughout the Nineteenth Century, most knowledge of the Near East, and Near Eastern history, was filtered through the prism of Classical interpretation, which tended to emphasise the despotism, decadence, and inferiority of Orientals. However, the discovery of the pre-Classical civilisations of the Tigris and Euphrates uprooted the traditionalist interpretation, demonstrating that those in the East had in fact practiced literacy, agriculture, and urbanism prior to Hellene and Latin populations. Porter (2010: 52) points out that the ‘similarities’ in our cultural practice were in turn taken to position the wonders of the pre-Islamic Near East as ‘our’ cultural heritage. A similar process occurred across the Suez in Egypt, as Napoleon’s excursion sparked the first wave of Egyptomania, and the Nile was flooded with archaeologists and explorers (see Hasan, 1998; Reid, 2003). The process of bringing the Ancient Near East into the Western cultural tradition had, as Atia (2010) and Bahrani (1998) point out, a two-fold benefit. On the one hand, the discovery and subsequent appropriation of the ‘primary civilisations’ of Egypt and Mesopotamia served to underscore the emergent narrative of Western cultural and biological superiority throughout human history (see also: Meskell, 1998). On the other hand, the notion of ‘our’ cultural patrimony in the region served to justify and facilitate colonialism (cf. Malley, 2008).

Narratives of universal Western patrimony ultimately relied on an inherent equation of ‘West’ with ‘civilisation’. With the expansion of Imperialism and colonial archaeology and anthropology, this model came to be used to interpret, and appropriate, the histories of ‘stateless’ societies throughout the Global South. Even as archaeologists uncovered evidence for historical cultural ‘sophistication’, their colleagues in anthropology made it clear that the present ‘natives’ did not possess the proficiency to develop ‘complex society’, and thus these ancient mounds, cities, and castles were attributed to ‘lost’ races – often Semitic or Aryan - who had been displaced by present culture. This was famously the initial interpretation of the ruins of Great Zimbabwe (see Shepherd, 2002:195), and the pattern was repeated across the African continent (Mudimbe, 1988: 13; see also: Connah, 2013; LaViolette and Fleisher, 2005). Similarly, as Trigger (1984: 361) highlights, sites like Cahokia in the USA were seen as evidence for a ‘lost’ race of sophisticated mound builders, whose potential Aryan heritage was mooted. Narratives of diffusion served as a powerful justification for European colonialism. Throughout Africa, extant remains of contested heritage were used to justify the domination of minority governments – indeed, until the end of Apartheid the Afrikaner governments of South Africa and Rhodesia relied on the Phoenician-origin thesis on Great Zimbabwe, and sanctioned Africanist archaeological dissenters (Connah, 2013: 26). Similarly, throughout the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries, the lack of acknowledgement surrounding the Amerindian origins of the Mississippi Mounds was used to deny land-rights to local Amerindian populations (Díaz-Andreu, 2007: 291).

Narratives of Alterity

The lack of ‘development’ throughout the Global South was often interpreted as the effect of cultural stagnation. Once again, archaeology and anthropology worked in tandem on this project, with the *archaeology* of prehistoric Eurasia analysed in parallel to the *ethnography* of ‘stateless’ Global South communities (Trigger, 1984: 362; Lydon and Rizvi, 2010; Connah: 2013). These populations were thus presented as ‘timeless’, living relics of a bygone era in European history. Contemporaries attempting to explain this apparent developmental schism fell back on pseudoscientific dogma and mis-applied Darwinism. Lubbock (1868) argued that biological deficits saw Africans and Amerindians develop culturally at a far slower rate than Europeans. Haeckel (1868) also postulated that these populations would never develop owing to their position as ‘lower’ races. These perspectives were especially influential in the development of L.H. Morgan’s 3-age system, expressed in *Ancient Society* (1877). Under this schema, the concept of ‘cultural development’ is necessarily unilinear, passing through a series of successive stages (modelled on the development of the European tradition) culminating in the Nineteenth Century Western Imperial powers. ‘Lower’ races were seen to have stagnated around the ‘barbarism’ stage millennia ago, unable to progress further without diffusive or colonial intrusions from more ‘advanced’ cultures – an idea also expressed by Engels (1884). These also served to justify imperial incursions – seen as a ‘civilising’ mission.

Discussions around the apparent degeneration of previously ‘civilised’ societies in the Near East similarly relied on a fusion of Classical and post-Enlightenment thought, in interpretations of *moral degradation*; and *ethnic dilution*. The former narrative was often employed in conjunction with discourses on Oriental Despotism and Decadence – once-great societies fallen victim to their own hedonism and/or autocracies, which effectively underpinned Nineteenth Century Egyptology and Assyriology (Bahrani, 1998). Building upon this discourse, Hogarth proposed his model of ‘Oriental Fatalism’ in 1904, arguing that the early ‘Great Civilisations’ had used all of their energy ‘developing’ so early, and were thus left with a void which allowed moral and social decay to fester (see Atia, 2010: 234). In parallel to this discourse, others argued that a failure to preserve ‘good’ ‘ethnic stock’ was behind the degeneration and demise of the ‘Great Civilisations’. Galton was keen to use the example of Ancient Greece as ballast for his emphasis on eugenics and ‘selective breeding’ – arguing that the ‘loose morals’ of women in classical Greece saw their ‘interbreeding’ with ‘lesser’ migrant races, and the eventual displacement of ‘native’ Aryans. Similarly, Reid (2003) and Said (1978: 60) both point out how centuries of Christendom *versus* Islam were distilled into interpretations that placed the ‘soldiers of the prophet’ as having destabilised the already-ailing Great Civilisations of the Eastern Mediterranean; a characteristically Nineteenth Century blend of Xenophobia, Islamophobia, and eugenics, which would prove popular throughout much of the Twentieth Century.

For the armchair theorists of Imperial Europe and America, notions of cultural stagnation and degeneration were met with panic, and a defence was mounted to defend newly nationalised empires

from the fate of their (self-identified) cultural ancestors. Theorists including Grant (1916) and Sollas (1911), took the Darwinian concept of species-extinction as a prophecy of impending race war (see Marks, 2012: 97), leading to a programme of mass sterilisation for African Americans across the American South, which had around 60,000 victims by 1939 (Jackson and Weidman, 2006: 74). Across the Atlantic, Galton was anxious to ensure that Britain's own Aryan stock was not 'diluted' through 'interbreeding' with recent colonial migrants, effectively authorising the already *de facto* system of sexual segregation. This was echoed in France, where Lapouge (1899) decried the French Catholic Church for its opposition to his proposals of 'selective breeding' to 'eliminate racial inferiors' (in Jackson and Weidman, 2006: 71). In Germany too, leading eugenicists such as Delitzsch (1902) seized upon the apparent downfall of 'Aryan' Assyria at the hands of the 'Semitic' Babylonians as proof to shore-up Germany's antisemitic politics, and to boycott further immigration from Southern Europe or Germany's ailing colonies.

Challenges to Eurocentrism into the Present Century

Intimately linked to the spread of European colonial hegemonies, the establishment of nation-states, and the emergence of scientific racism, Eurocentric narratives have underpinned the creation of knowledge, the direction of policy, and the representation of the world for centuries. This has not, however, gone unopposed. True, the sheer discursive, economic, and political capital held by Europeans has for much of this period eclipsed that of opponents to Eurocentrism, and as such historic narratives of dissent are not typically broadcast as widely as the structures that they oppose. But that should not detract from their importance and significance. Below, I outline three key critiques to Eurocentric historiographies – (i) *counter-nationalism*; (ii) *anti-colonialism*; and (iii) *postcolonialism*.

Counter-Nationalist Challenges

Within diasporic contexts, counter-nationalist challenges to Eurocentrism have been both *civic*, and *romantic*, whilst the end of formal colonialism also bought about a wave of *post-colonial* counter-nationalism. According to Hobsbawm (1990: 18), *civic* nationalism is fundamentally administrative, an extension of franchise and universal rights as a means to legitimise political centralisation. Challenges to the Eurocentric doctrine on civic-national grounds have therefore taken place when franchise and rights are unevenly distributed, monopolised by dominant (White) groups. In the US, this discourse first emerged in relation to slavery, on both biblical and liberal grounds. White, typically Northern Christian voices argued that the central fiction of the slave trade (that Africans were inherently inferior) ran counter to both Christian universalism, and to the liberal, legal basis of the US constitution (e.g. Stowe, 1851). These tempered perspectives ran in conjunction with the more radical calls for resistance typified by David Walker who, in his 1829 *Appeal*, launched a scathing and ground-breaking critique of Eurocentric theory, rejecting the historiographic and biblical authority of slavers. Crucially, Walker argued that a central element of Eurocentric infrastructure was a monopoly on the means to *author* and *interpret* the past, a point which was later

picked up by members of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, notably James Baldwin (1963) and Martin Luther King (1964). Whilst neither agreed with their separatist contemporaries (see below), they argued that an overhaul of the Eurocentric, supremacist overtones of US legal practices and public discourse was necessary for true integration and racial equality.

Romantic nationalism emerged through the deployment of racialist theory within nationalist frameworks, and is thus exclusive, and often chauvinistic (see Hobsbawm, 1990: 63). Whilst romantic *counter*-nationalism suffers from the same maladies as its predecessor, its critiques serve as important counterpoints to Eurocentric intellectual hegemony (see Achebe, 1975: 44) – in particular, to the notion that Europeans ‘gave’ civilisation to Africa. A key battleground is thus education, and the perceived violence of Western curricula for members of the African diaspora. Whilst the issue was first raised by Booker T. Washington (1895), it was Du Bois (1903) who most notably argued for a holistic education, stressing the need for ‘Classical’ syllabi in order to challenge the White monopoly over academic interpretation. His mantle was later picked up by Woodson (1933), who also challenged the role of state institutions and discursive violence in maintaining the alterity of African Americans. By the 1960s, this idea had developed into calls for separatism and self-governance, an agenda best represented in the 1965 works from Malcolm X and Elijah Mohammed. The school of Afrocentrist thought pioneered by these authors was emphatically monumentalist, iconophilic, and exclusive. Ancient Egypt was adopted as the totem of precolonial African excellence, and the imperial telos that placed Egypt within the Mediterranean-European, rather than the African cultural tradition was roundly rejected (see Olinja 1995: 97). This approach was given a significant bolster by Diop’s *The African Origins of Civilisation* (1984) and Bernal’s *Black Athena* (1987) – both critiques of Eurocentric archaeology, and radical reinterpretations of Africa’s role in ‘civilising’ the Ancient Mediterranean. These works, along with later Afrocentrist contributions produced in their wake (e.g. Asante, 1998) received largely undue vitriol from the intellectual and academic establishment, igniting calls to ‘defend’ history from their critique (see Kershaw, 1992). Even authors within the liberationist tradition have been critical of Afrocentrism, with Appiah (1990) terming the idea ‘Eurocentrism upside-down’ (see also, Balakrishnan, 2020; Gilroy, 1995).

Following the gradual end of the European imperial project, most newly independent states embarked on some kind of nationalisation project. Hobsbawm (1990: 12) argues that this often saw both the administrative civic, and chauvinistic romantic facets of nationalism appearing in tandem. A key function of ‘European’ romantic nationalism was the invocation of shared, glorious histories, post-colonial parallels of which were useful in challenging the vilification of global Others under imperialism. In Southern Africa, for example, the Great Zimbabwe civilisation was taken as evidence for historical, indigenous sophistication (Connah, 2013: 23). Elsewhere on the continent, the Igbo-Ukwu and Swahili Coast cultures, along with the Great Empires of West Africa, became foci points for new national identities (Shepherd, 2002). A similar model was followed throughout the Near

East and North Africa, with Meskell (1998) highlighting the highly politicised discourses of pre-Islamic heritage throughout the Arab nations. The neo-Ba'athist regimes in Syria and Iraq sought to monopolise the prestige bought about through their association with the 'Cradle of Civilisation', representing an important challenge to the agreed-upon, teleological narrative of Eurocentric history. This model for nation-building was built around the distinctly modernist-romantic principles of secularism, antiquity, and iconophilia, and thus the Islamic history of the region was significantly downplayed. Lydon and Rizvi (2010) argue that, in the Near East as elsewhere in the postcolonial world, this has much to do with the ideological, intellectual, and vocational infrastructure of archaeology and heritage praxis, an important post-colonial tool which is nonetheless governed and authored largely by actors in the Euro-American sphere.

Anti-Colonial Resistance

Anti-colonial resistance is inherently positioned against Eurocentric historiographies. Prior to the end of formal settler-colonies during the 1960s, resistance took place in both the university departments, streets, and beer-halls of Imperial Europe, and the Colonies themselves. The Marxist critique was initially foremost in the former arena, with Lenin's *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917) serving as a foundational text in the tradition. Lenin argued that the concept of imperialism was a logical extension of the capitalist mode of production, which necessitated global conquest in order to meet the unquenchable thirst of capitalist expansion. Lenin was building on earlier works from Hobson, who had first attacked the central fiction of the inevitability and morality of empire in 1902. However, Hobson's analysis conversely echoed many of the central facets to Eurocentrism – arguing that the colonisation of Africa *was* morally sanctioned, since Africans were like “children... with no capacity for self-governance” (in Etherington, 1984: 74). His work was furthermore highly anti-Semitic, blaming colonialism on an international group of Jewish bankers. An exception for the early Marxist camp is Rosa Luxemburg, who firmly positioned herself against imperialism, capitalism, and racialism with her seminal *The Accumulation of Capital* (1913). Later, arguably more notable entries in this tradition come from Frantz Fanon, whose *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) have had huge influence on anti- and postcolonial theories. Whilst Fanon did prescribe to the Marxist, materialist *roots* of colonialism, his work was far more concerned with the psychological, sociological, and discursive *effects* of the agenda, and in particular with the role of racialism as both a fiction, and a powerful ideological tool through which to maintain colonialism through the dehumanisation of colonial subjects.

Throughout the Global South, anticolonial resistance was less a theoretical exercise, and more actual struggle for liberation. So, whilst cues were taken from various theoretical traditions, the organisation and ideological coherency of movements varied hugely, from diffuse, decentralised insurgency, to highly organised, theoretically coherent revolution. Groups on the former axis (for example, members of the Volta-Bani uprising (Saul and Royer, 2001) or Mau Mau insurgents (Lonsdale, 1990)) were broadly successful in achieving their primary aim of independence.

However, as Mazrui (1987) notes, the decentralised model tended away from theoretical coherency, and as such groups were often only united on a single issue (independence) – leaving little by way of consensus on which to build the post-colonial state. Mazrui notes how the post-colonial Kenyan government effectively inverted elements of Eurocentric discourse in support of a regime that privileged Kenya's Kikuyu ethnic majority. More theoretically-considered and coherent resistance movements include that of the Indian National Congress in the 1940s, exemplified in the works of Jawaharlal Nehru, and South Africa's anti-apartheid movement. Nehru's *Glimpses of World History* (1934) and *The Discovery of India* (1945) make a clear case for independence through a sustained attack on the idea of European exceptionalism in nurturing 'civilisation' – synonymously challenging the Eurocentric concept, and discursively reifying it through the privileging of antiquity and monumentalism, albeit in an Asian cultural context. Much anti-apartheid literature was the product of a more explicitly discursive intellectual *milieu*. Steve Biko, for example, was profoundly influenced by Fanon, and argued that apartheid and segregation were as much discursive exercises as they were political, highlighting the construction of 'blackness' in South Africa as the negative counterpoint to 'whiteness' (e.g. 1978). Apartheid, and the implicit belief in Black/White inequalities, are thus presented as chiefly ideological means to preserve the political and economic status quo. More recent resistance has occurred to the White, settler majority of North America (see Coulthard, 2010). Amerindian scholars, such as Vine Deloria Jr. (1969) and Paula Gunn Allen (1986) have sought to challenge ideas around the inevitability of inequality, patriarchy, and the concepts of 'civilisation' and cultural 'development'. These authors highlight and problematise the implied totality of Western ontologies, using autoethnographic data and oral histories to posit the ultimate structural violence of Eurocentric interpretive frameworks.

Whilst the dismantling of European minority governments represented to many the ideal outcome to the anti-colonial struggle, theorists were quick to point out the caveats to nominal 'independence'. The concept of neocolonialism was initially proposed by Jean-Paul Sartre in 1964, who argued that whilst colonialism was primarily an economic exercise, it was its *political* facets which were chiefly targeted by anti-colonialists, thus enabling post-colonial, *neocolonial* economic exploitation. This theme was elaborated by Kwame Nkrumah, in his seminal *Neocolonialism* (1965). Nkrumah argued that, by the end of Empire, minority governments had become unpopular, expensive, and essentially redundant. Economic exploitation, the initial point of colonial occupation, can and would continue through the reliance of former colonies on the international capitalist economy. Other contributions include Walter Rodney's opus *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972), which saw the author argue that the perpetuation of the idea of underdevelopment was being used to both enable and justify neocolonial exploitation. His approach borrowed heavily from dependency theory (e.g. Baran, 1957) whose proponents have been highly critical of US neocolonialism in the New World, employed through strategic underdevelopment and resulting economic dependency. In 1968, Julius Nyerere weighed into the discourse, proposing a critical, historiographical angle to the discussion. Nyerere argued that the rugged individualism privileged in Western capitalism was

fundamentally incompatible with ‘traditional’ African ontologies, and thus that totalistic capitalism amounted to Eurocentric cultural violence. Instead, Nyerere endorsed a return to ‘traditional’ African socialism, which he termed Ujamaa. His critique is powerful in its challenge to the fiction of African primitiveness, instead arguing that ‘development’ according to Western metrics only amounted to the isolation of self from the community (see Mohiddin, 1968). This approach is mirrored in the works of Ali Shariati (e.g. 1980) in Iran, who argued that the fiction of Western liberal democracy and civility was at-odds with ‘traditional’ Shi’ite class equity and social justice. Both Nyerere and Shariati are notable in their critique of the discursive and ideological facets of neocolonialism, rather than the strict materialism of their Marxist contemporaries.

Post-Colonial Critique

The postcolonial critique emerged from the confluence of theories around neocolonialism and anti-imperialist Marxism, alongside the post-modernist discourse emerging from literary theory and sociology. The key distinction of post-colonialism is the emphasis placed on *discourse*, rather than Marxist materialism, and it can thus be seen as the intellectual offspring of Fanon, Nyerere, and Shariati. Oppression is seen to be as much an issue of representation as it is of economic or political exploitation. The approach is synonymous with the ‘Holy Trinity’ of postcolonial theorists – Edward Said (e.g. 1978), Gayatri Spivak (e.g. 1988), and Homi Bhabha (1994). Said was primarily concerned with the ways in which representations of self and other occur within systems of colonial subjugation, and the construction of oppositionary, binarised identities between coloniser and colonised, the latter constructed as an objectified yardstick by which to measure the superiority of the former. Said also discussed the complicity of civil society, and in particular ‘the academy’, in building and reifying these binaries. Whilst Said was chiefly influenced by Bourdieu and Foucault, Spivak took the theories of Derrida and Gramsci as her starting point. She argued that global hegemonies were maintained through the ‘silencing’ and objectification of colonial subalterns, unable to represent or ‘subjectivise’ themselves owing to unequal access to the means of knowledge production and dissemination. She advanced a critique of contemporary Western social theorists, whom she saw to have been perpetuating the objectivity of subalterns, and in particular of women in the Global South. Bhabha’s work chiefly concerns the hybridities of identity that emerged as a result of the colonial project, influenced by the earlier works of Fanon. He has been credited for introducing linguistic and metaphysical elements into postcolonial discourse. Other notable entries come from Samir Amin (1988) and Valentin-Yves Mudimbe (1988). Amin, who coined the term *Eurocentrism* in his book of the same name, was highly critical of the imperial telos of Europe, and its Graeco-Roman creation myth. He argued that historiography was ultimately subjective, and thus its inclusion into popular narratives and discourse was loaded with power dynamics and suppression. Mudimbe extended Said’s critique of Oriental representations into the canon of ‘Africanism’, arguing that representations of the continent were underpinned by similar subjectivities, through a close and careful genealogical analysis (see also: Achebe, 1977).

The postcolonial critique had a profound effect on anthropological and archaeological theory and praxis during the 1980s and 1990s, catalysing what would come to be known as ‘the reflexive turn’ in the social sciences. The chief aim of reflexive scholars was to both interrogate their own subjectivities in the construction of interpretations, and to discuss and problematise the histories of Western sciences as active constituents to the colonial project. Most relevant to the present discussion are the archaeological entries in this tradition, owing to the close relationship between colonial archaeology and Eurocentric historiographies. Bernal’s *Black Athena* (1987), discussed above, was certainly amongst the first and most notable works to discuss and problematise this relationship – however, Bernal’s lack of archaeological credentials, and the subsequent closing of the institutional ranks, prevented his thesis from bringing about the institutional introspection it perhaps should have. Instead, it was Trigger’s broadly-disseminated ‘Alternative Archaeologies’ (1984) that instigated the late-Twentieth Century wave of archaeological reflexivity. Despite its broad influence, Trigger’s paper was reasonably tame in its critique – whilst he correctly diagnosed the endemic nationalism of early archaeology, his colonialist and imperialist archaeologies were presented as contextually-dependent, effectively ending with Empire. Trigger’s theoretical approaches were elaborated by the foundational ‘post-processual’ works of Hodder (1985) and Shanks and Tilley (1987), whilst later volumes from Kohl and Fawcett (1995) and Díaz-Andreu and Champion (1996) fleshed out Trigger’s brief critique of nationalist archaeology. Contributors to the latter two volumes highlighted the bipartite relationship of nationalism and archaeology, pointing to the prestige-hunting and chauvinism of early European archaeologists and their patrons, and the close links shared between early archaeology and nascent European supremacism. Lynn Meskell was among the first to bring postcolonial critique to archaeology with her edited volume *Archaeology Under Fire* (1998), which saw contributors discussing the role of archaeology as a means to colonise, represent, and ultimately *control* populations in the Near East. Whilst discussions on African archaeology had experienced something of a renaissance since McIntosh and McIntosh first unveiled the findings from their initial excavations at Jenne-Jeno in 1979, historiographical critiques of Africanist archaeologies have been far less prominent than those advanced by Near Eastern scholars – although a vocal group of researchers have advanced critical theories (e.g. LaViolette and Fleisher, 2005; Kusimba *et al.*, 2006)

The postcolonial critique is highly evident in the racial equality movements, and in one side of the so-called ‘culture war’, happening today. It is notable that, whilst the racial justice movement does have significant Marxist overtones, the stated aims of the project are ultimately *discursive*, rather than *materialistic*. Of particular note is the #RhodesMustFall movement, which is directly concerned with the impacts of Eurocentric iconophilia on the drive for racial equity. Founded in 2013, the movement is international in scope, chiefly focussed on the veneration of noted colonialist and arguable genocidaire Cecil Rhodes in South Africa and the UK (see Nyamnjoh, 2016) Adherents have sought to remove statues honouring Rhodes, citing the negative psychological effects on Persons of Colour from having to encounter such blasé symbols of oppression on a daily basis (see

Robertson, 2021). The *raison d'être* of #RhodesMustFall – to remove statues of colonisers, thus challenging Eurocentric iconophilia and whitewashed historiographies – has inspired global protest movements since, culminating in the global diasporic unrest following the murder of George Floyd in 2020. These protests saw statues of Winston Churchill being defaced, Stonewall Jackson quietly removed, and Edward Colston dumped in the Severn. Despite the vitriol of right-wing press pundits, the stated aims of responsible agents was not to ‘rewrite history’, rather, they were seeking to challenge the brand of history being broadcast to members of former and current colonial and neo-colonial states, imbued with Eurocentric totalism, opposition, and teleology (see Brus *et al.*, 2020). In so-doing, they are building on a rich tradition of pedagogical critique, manifested today in the #DecoloniseTheCurriculum movement. Activists in this tradition have sought to highlight to perpetuation of the key Eurocentric myths throughout school curricula, resulting in both structural violence against students of Colour, and the inadequate and potentially propagandistic syllabus delivered to White students (e.g. Charles, 2019; Doharty. 2019; Priggs, 2020). What both movements demonstrate is that Eurocentric narratives continue to form a key part of Westerners’ habitual development, broadcast to them from childhood in items of ‘national heritage’, school curricula, and through popular media.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW: ARCHAEOLOGY AND SOCIETY

Having established both the genealogy for, and a working model of, Eurocentrism, I now turn to the means through which knowledge of the past is produced, disseminated, and consumed in contemporary British society. Of particular concern are the ways in which: (i) social discourses can affect the production of knowledge in academic spaces; (ii) how the past is disseminated in formal education (i.e. schools); and (iii) how up-to-date the knowledge presented in informal educational media (films, TV, *etc.*) is. These are well-populated fields of research, and as such there is a solid foundation on which to build the current study, however, there are points where the literature fails to address fundamental issues in the relationship between Eurocentrism and historiography. This is especially pertinent in the case of receptions of Eurocentric archaeologies, a theme which has seen very little inquiry. As such, I will conclude this chapter with a brief outline of relevant theories from Pierre Bourdieu concerning the ways in which knowledge circulates throughout societies which, alongside the postcolonial literature outlined above, serve as the central theoretical basis for the present discussion.

Academic Knowledge Creation

As I discuss in the previous chapter, many of the central tenets to Eurocentric theory have either been *authored* or *authorised* by the academic agents of the past few centuries. The means through which broader narratives of subjugation became embedded in academic research is thus of vital importance to the present study, both as a way to destabilise their legitimacy, and to investigate the extent to which social discourses continue to be reflected within ‘the academy’. The relationship between individuals and society, agents and their structure, has been one of the definitive foci of the social sciences over the past century, with many key theses positioning ‘agency’ and ‘structure’ as closely entwined, rather than as polar opposites (e.g. Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1979). The extent to which this dialectic is mobilised *within* the academy has also been discussed comprehensively. Below, I review texts in this tradition, discussing structural influences on the production of ‘new’ knowledge at the (i) *collegiate* (between colleagues); (ii) *institutional* (university administration, central government); and (iii) *structural* (‘society’ as a whole) levels.

Collegiate Level

Much has been written on how the direction of research is shaped by inter-collegiate discourse, disagreement, and disownment. Prior to the 1960s, there was an implicit, broad consensus that science was gradually pushing human understanding towards some universal ‘truth’, in a logical and sequential manner. Academic research was thus seen as thoroughly embedded within the observable world. However, in 1962, Thomas Kuhn proposed that, whilst the purpose of science remained to solve problems (and was thus still anchored to the world outside of the ivory tower), the ways in which problems are identified and addressed is the result of inter-collegiate negotiation, rather than a sequential progression through objective, observable ‘truths’. His concept of the ‘paradigm shift’

thus holds that enquiries are not grounded in external, objective observation so much as collective, scientific subjectivity. Whilst several high-profile contemporaries of Kuhn sought to challenge his thesis, their revisions were ultimately superficial (ironically echoing the entire basis of the paradigm shift). Popper (1963), for example, argued that whilst science *was* in pursuit of universal, objective truth, enquiry was ultimately borne at least partially of inter-collegiate discourse, whilst Lakatos (1970) sought to bridge the narrow gap between his colleagues with the concept of the ‘research programme’. Laudan (1977) provides another slight variation with his concept of the ‘research tradition’. Despite their differences, the above are united in the belief that academic exchange functions to facilitate and instigate research *internally*, as colleagues collectively develop, are bound by, and attempt to circumvent or disrupt collective interests, methodologies, and vocabularies, whether seeking universal truth or the next Interesting Thing.

The role of colleagues in the *production* of knowledge is largely focussed on peer review. Hailed as the ‘gold standard’ of academic oversight, quality control, and ethical supervision, the role colleagues play in inspecting, conferring, and ultimately endorsing or rejecting a project for grant funding is one of the defining features of academic practice. However, the deficits of the system have been something of a hot topic in recent years. A key theme is that, as socialised individuals in society, and not necessarily paragons of faultless scientific neutrality and objectivity, peer reviewers can reflect the same biases and subjectivities as the rest of the population. On the one hand, some have demonstrated that minority researchers are less likely to be awarded funds in single-blind reviews (van Arensbergen *et al.*, 2012; Jerrim, 2019). On the other, researchers have also argued that review panel members can defer to ‘groupthink’ in decision making, or defer to more ‘senior’ or experienced colleagues (van Arensbergen *et al.*, 2014; Derrick and Samuel, 2018). In conjunction, these perspectives nullify the idea of peer review as an infallible agora of ideas and experience. However, these issues become more insidious when considered in conjunction with the notion of research paradigms/programmes/traditions outlined above. ‘Trends’ in research function according to the establishment of academic norms which, whilst ephemeral, for their time serve to govern the boundaries of ‘acceptable’ or ‘valid’ academic discourse. Accordingly, grant panels are ultimately likely to function according to, and ultimately enforce, these norms, thus stifling innovation and ‘paradigm shifts’ in favour of disciplinary conservatism – an effect which has been noted in a number of studies on the issue (e.g. Bourdieu, 1988; Squazzoni and Gandelli, 2012; Hicks, 2012; van Arensbergen and van den Bessellar, 2012).

Institutional Level

The ability of institutional-level actors in government and industry to directly instigate academic research is ostensibly constrained by the Haldane Principle (see Haldane *et al.*, 1918). Haldane and his colleagues argued that universities should have autonomy from government interference, proposing that research councils be established to oversee funds and grant awards. A major revision came in 1971, when the Baron Rothschild proposed to curtail the autonomy of research councils by transferring 25% of their funds back to governmental departments, who could then commission ‘applied’ research identified as being in the immediate ‘public interest’. These changes were ultimately repealed (see Parker, 2016), however, the Rothschild Report is notable for its shift in

rhetoric. Universities were cast as ‘contracters’, government ‘the consumer’, rather than both being seen as public servants engaged in work for the public good. The process of research is thus posited as a chiefly economic, transactional activity. Whilst some have argued against the Haldane Principle as elitist ‘ivory towerism’ (e.g. Kitcher, 2001; Yoshida, 2012), others have gone further, suggesting models for research directly circumnavigate the principle in all but name. The Triple Helix Model, proposed by Leydesdorff and Etzkowitz in 1998, argues that contemporary research and innovation should amount to a measured exchange between universities, government, and industry – a sentiment shared broadly by the authors of the Mode 2 research programme (e.g. Gibbons *et al.*, 1994; Nowotny *et al.*, 2001), although in their case it is less an idealistic assertion than normative observation.

Despite the nominal independence and autonomy of research councils, all are still reliant on external funding in order to produce new research. Haldane Principle or no, these funds tend to have certain contingencies attached, whether they are explicit or implied. An extreme manifestation of these issues is represented in 2011’s so-called ‘Haldanegate’, which saw the Arts & Humanities Research Council announce the ‘big society’ (a Conservative Party soundbite) as a key research ‘theme’ that would receive priority funding. Whether or not ‘Haldanegate’ did represent a genuine attempt to circumnavigate the Principle, it exemplifies another key issue with publicly funded research: research ‘themes’, and directional funding. As a way to demonstrate democratic accountability, and to steer research towards the ‘public interest’, research councils have increasingly been using research ‘themes’ for funding priority, sometimes in conjunction with relevant government departments. Chubb and Reid (2018), interviewing an interdisciplinary sample of academics, report both anxiety and confusion surrounding the utility of themed research, both an affront to academic freedom, and a discursive comment on the ‘worthlessness’ of research areas outside of the themes *de jure*. Indeed, this anxiety is potentially reflective of concerning findings from Belfiore (2015), who notes a number of parallels between research themes and government policy. Gutiérrez-Rodríguez (2015) furthermore places the idea of themed research in with the broader neoliberalisation of university research. In the tradition of Rothschild’s 1971 intervention, the concept of ‘knowledge production’ is currently bound up in the economic rhetoric of utility, ‘value for money’, and fiscal returns. Through ‘themed’ research programmes, ‘applied’ and ‘interdisciplinary’ perspectives are privileged over ‘pure’ science, deemed irrelevant, esoteric knowledge that the public should have no interest in funding.

These issues are further manifested in the institutional *receptions* of research. By shifting focus towards ‘valuable’ research, which provides economic payback, agents in government and the private sector essentially position academic knowledge as a market commodity. Research which fits in with this model in turn leads to further institutional and career capital for individual researchers, and their universities, enabling further research, for which they draw further public funds neoliberalised knowledge is central to the Triple Helix Model. Its authors propose that innovation in the ‘knowledge economy’ is essentially driven by business, mediated by government, and conducted in universities - presented as a Good Thing. However, Benner and Sandström (2000) counter that this precedent risks undermining the independence of researchers, and the integrity of

their research, instead serving as a ‘rubber stamp’ for capitalist ventures and industrial profiteering (also see Caryannis et al., 2016). Furthermore, the model is firmly rooted in STEM research, and its compatibility with humanities is not discussed by its key architects. The initial authors of the ‘Mode 2’ knowledge production model advance a more holistic critique, arguing that knowledge itself, rather than strictly STEM innovation, is commodified by and for universities (see Nowotny et al., 2003). Belfiore (2015) argues that the current reception of university research represents an imperfect, neoliberal analogy, and one fundamentally rooted in ‘bad economics’. An emphasis on STEM or applied research for innovation, and the subsequent side-lining of humanities and pure disciplines, overwrites any notion of intrinsic value that scholastic study may have. The need to ‘justify’ funding for the arts is, as Gutiérrez-Rodríguez (2016) points out, a new phenomenon, reflective more of our current socio-cultural episteme than ‘good sense’ or tradition.

Structural Level

There has been a wealth of discussion on the role of structural forces in influencing the direction and instigation of research since the early Twentieth Century – centred broadly on the extent to which a researcher’s context affects their work. Notable early entries in this tradition come from Bukharin and Hessen, with their contributions to the 1931 ‘Science at the Crossroads’ conference on behalf of the USSR (see Skordoulis, 2015). The authors argued that the dominant mode of social capital production is reflected in the scientific innovation of a society – thus, the capitalistic dichotomy between ‘pure’ and ‘applied’ sciences serves to delineate what is ‘useful’ for capital production and industry. Similar conclusions were reached by Grossmann in 1935, and Bernal in 1939. Althusser (e.g. 1965) later elaborated on this theme through a variation on Bachelard’s (1938) notion of the epistemological rupture, arguing that ideology functioned in opposition to science, which was ultimately seeking ‘pure’ truth. The epistemological break came with the removal of ideology from scientific observation, thus percolating ‘reality’ or ‘objective truth’. Foucault (1966) followed Althusser shortly with his idea of the *epistémè*. Related also to Kuhn’s paradigm, the *epistémè* in which research is being conducted serves as the mutually-constitutive field of scientific-social exchange, with the normative protocols of both serving to facilitate, instigate, or obscure the construction of ‘knowledge’. Crucially, the *epistémè* is seen by Foucault as essentially neutral. This stands in contrast to Bourdieu’s (1977) idea of the *doxa*, which shares more with Althusser’s epistemology than Foucault’s *epistémè*. As a fundamentally ideological construction, the *doxa* serves to limit the scope of knowledge production according to the hegemonic ‘rules’ on the contemporary field of discourse, and is thus something that a search for ‘truth’ will seek to challenge, rather than unconsciously reify.

These factors also affect the *production* of new knowledge – largely through structural influences on university funding practices. Of particular contention in recent years is the ‘impact agenda’, which has emerged in tandem with the ‘neoliberalisation’ of the university. Proponents of the agenda seek to assure the accountability of research to their public funders by ensuring that any work produced will be suitably ‘outward-facing’ in scope, will reflect the ‘public interest’, and thus represent good ‘value for money’. For MacGregor (2013), the extension of the impact agenda represents a further manifestation of research commodification. Questions of ‘impact’ may be seen as a paraphrasing of

‘utility’, and thus the conversation again centres on the transactional ‘worth’ of research which, as both MacGregor and Gutiérrez-Rodríguez (2015) highlight, tips the scales once again in favour of STEM and ‘applied’ knowledge, rather than ‘pure’ sciences and the arts. Arts and humanities scholars are in effect left ‘fighting over scraps’, and falling over themselves to find some way to demonstrate the short-term ‘worth’ of their projects. Chubb and Reid (2018) report their respondents speaking of feeling as though they need to self-censor when writing their grant application, to adopt the rhetoric of businesspersons, rather than academics. Of even greater concern, however, is the very definition of ‘impact’, and how it is understood amongst colleagues. Whilst peers do conduct impact assessments, Derrick and Samuel (2018) have shown that the process is poorly understood and executed, who see the process as a means to ‘sell’ Great British science to politicians as well as society more broadly, and are thus highly influenced by contemporary structural concerns, and regressive nationalisms, in their assessments.

Structural effects on the *reception* of academic research are ultimately bound by the same broad, epistemic subjectivities as affect its instigation and production. However, as Bourdieu notes in *Homo Academicus* (1988), the societal reception of research has potentially the greatest effect on the career capital of the researcher, their ability to conduct future research, and the ability of other to continue in their tradition. These issues have been compounded by the quasi-formalisation of structural receptions under the ‘impact agenda’, where notions of ‘value for money’ research place an effective price-tag on an academics’ ability to engage in public outreach (see Dallyn *et al.*, 2015). Grand and her colleagues (2015) have noted that this has left researchers feeling aggrieved, and actually *less* motivated to engage in outreach and engagement, since the intrinsic value for sharing research with the community has been reduced to yet another hoop to jump through in the new knowledge economy.

Archaeological Research

Effects at the collegiate level have huge ramifications for archaeological research, as they do everywhere in academia. For one, there have been a number of notable research paradigms since the inception of the discipline, from the Culture History of Childe (1935), Clarke’s Processualism (1973), and finally to the Post-Processualism of Hodder (1985). However, archaeology in the new millennium has been characterised by a *bricolage* of the defining principles of these approaches. Chapman’s recent work on Nebelivka (e.g. Chapman *et al.*, 2019), for example, combines culture-historical concerns, with processual methodologies, and a post-processual focus on the role of hermeneutics and phenomenology. Increased globalisation and communication also means that the idea of the intra-departmental ‘school’ or ethos is fast becoming outdated – Chapman’s Nebelivka project includes researchers from six countries and nine institutions. Discussions on collegiate research instigation will need to take the fluidity of paradigmatic approaches, and the broadening research community, into account. It would be instructive to attempt to map out any themes or trends, be they dominant or ephemeral, in the current research landscape.

The vast majority of excavator work within the UK is developer-funded. The ethics, efficacies, and issues of the practice have been discussed widely (e.g., Schlada-Hall, 1999; Fulford *et al.*, 2011;

Orange and Perring, 2018), along with the potential for community- or crowd-funded archaeology (Simpson and Williams, 2008; Bonacchi *et al.*, 2015). Less widely discussed, however, is the affect of funding councils on university-based research. The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) is the main body which dispenses funds for archaeological projects, using the means (directive funding, ‘impact’ metrics) problematised above. The role of these mechanisms in shaping archaeological research is thus of interest to the present discussion. One of the only archaeologically-specific examinations on the role of funding bodies in heritage research in the Anglophone sphere comes from Elisabeth Niklasson, with her 2016 discussion on EU funding and heritage research. She argues that EU funding bodies are essentially entangled within the politicisation of heritage, explicitly and implicitly prioritising research which underscores and legitimates notions of the pan-European identity. She also argues that these same agencies ultimately nullify the efficacy of their own systems of checks and balances *against* the politicisation of research through this discursive exercise. The extent to which these same patterns may be represented within British funding councils is of vital concern.

The Past in ‘Formal’ Education

If the means through which social structures and political agents manipulate academic praxis are subtle, these same influences on school history curricula are more akin to a discursive sledgehammer. A politically loaded issue since the advent of compulsory education, history curricula are often seen as a key ideological battleground, shaping the minds of the next generation of citizens (and voters), and a place to represent the ‘spirit of the nation’ *de jure*. There is no Haldane Principle for schools – and successive governments since the first national curriculum of the late 1980s have made educational content their exclusive purview, brushing over complex academic debates over the causes and effects of historical events in favour of a highly simplified, often borderline jingoistic, Anglo-centric narrative. There are increasing voices calling for the ‘decolonisation’ of the curriculum, initially alongside the social justice movements of the mid-2010s, but with renewed energy following the post-2020 resurgence of #BlackLivesMatter. However, this has entrenched educational reform firmly behind ‘culture war’ battle-lines, and as such the curriculum remains firmly, resolutely, ‘colonised’. Below, I discuss perspectives from both sides of this debate, along with discussions around archaeological contributions (or lack thereof) to school history curricula.

Background: Developing a National Curriculum

The first widespread schooling in the UK occurred during the Nineteenth Century. Prior to the introduction of compulsory education in the 1880s, most schools were maintained as a route into imperial service, either through the East India Company or British Military Colleges. As such, the syllabi on offer were both highly Eurocentric, and nationalistic. Hearl (1976: 252) highlights the emphasis on a ‘classical education’ in these schools, with students taught Latin, history (limited to Greece, Rome, and England), alongside military theory and mathematics. Teleological narratives of supremacy were thus entrenched within the colonial educational system, emphasising the Western, and in particular the British, origin myths in the halcyon civilisations of antiquity. With the advent of compulsory schooling, history curricula become the ideal vector for Hobsbawm’s ‘romantic

nationalism’, preparing the next generation for Imperial Citizenship. Cole (2004: 526-528) discusses the overt nationalism and supremacism of late-Nineteenth Century syllabi, with ‘domestic science’ lessons designed to combat ‘racial degeneracy’ through ‘interbreeding’; geography lessons discussing Lubbock’s three-age trajectory of social ‘development’; and Imperial history emphasising the superiority of Empire over the “cannibalistic savages” of Africa and Asia. Lidher, McIntosh, and Alexander (2020) further argue that early curricula were underpinned by three key discourses: that Britain was monoculturally White; that there were no class or regional differences in Britain; and, most importantly to the present discussion, that Britain was both *superior* (over European rivals as well as the ‘backwards’ populations of the Global South) and *innocent* – any infractions against humanist and/or Christian morality under Empire were committed only against Britain, or at the hands of her colonial rivals. Considered in conjunction with the emphasis on Imperial teleology identified by Hearl, Victorian curricula were wholly reflective of Eurocentric discourse.

What Sylvester (1994) terms the ‘Great Tradition’ in history education, prioritising the Classics and the ‘Kings and Queens of England’, was a broad consensus amongst British schools throughout the early Twentieth Century (see Phillips, 2000: 12). In the 1970s, however, a new generation of historians and history teachers came to challenge this established model, instead advocating for the ‘New History’. ‘New History’ syllabi were characterised by a focus on disciplinary methods such as primary source interrogation, thematic approaches, and contrast studies, and underpinned by a commitment to *skills learning* (Royle, 1993). Teachers felt these foci to be far more relevant than the traditional, rote-learning delivery methods (Planel, 1990). These were accompanied by an emphasis on critical thinking skills. Contemporaries argued that the pre-1970s educational paradigm left students ill-equipped for the ‘information overload’ of the postmodern era, and encouraged a more participatory teaching model, allowing students to develop their criticality with the ‘guidance’ of teachers (Longworth, 1980; Slaughter, 1989). These perspectives also allowed for the inclusion of more diversity than the Great Tradition, including both local social histories (see Labbett, 1979), and diverse world histories, and critical perspectives on Empire (e.g. Killingray, 1977). Killingray argued that the African history in textbooks and school syllabi, for example, was functionally Victorian, with images of spear-wielding tribesman and stories of intrepid White Westerners throughout, ignoring local perspectives in favour of Eurocentric, Imperial grand narratives. Following post-WWII migration, the country could no longer feign monocultural Whiteness, and as such curricula had to change accordingly.

These positions were hugely contentious, sparking a national conversation which culminated in a televised debate on the issue (*Today*, 1972). A number of authors also indicate that the criticality encouraged by New Historians ultimately led to the imposition of the first National Curriculum in 1989. As Phillips (2000: 12) notes, prior to the New History, “governments did not interfere in... history classrooms because there was no perceived need to do so”. The Great Tradition was entrenched. It is significant that, over the course of the 1980s, the UK went from having some of the most decentralised curricula in Europe, to amongst the most prescriptive (Dunn, 2000). Cole argues that the first national curricula can be seen in parallel to the Victorian tradition, with highly content-centric syllabi focussed on the ‘nuts and bolts’ of ‘British’ (English) history according to the actions

of a few generations of upper-class, English men (Cole, 2004: 521). Charting the intrigue surrounding the curriculum, Phillips argues that ‘new right’ political actors had seized on the opportunity to assure the legacy of the Thatcherite worldview, and that New Historians were seen to have ‘corrupted’ the discipline with cultural relativism (Phillips, 1998). In particular, New Historical emphasis on critique were not well-received by the conservative political establishment. Elsewhere, Phillips highlights that ‘new right’ concerns with cultural transmission, social homogeneity, and the ‘maintenance’ of national identities are fundamentally incompatible with critical pedagogies (Phillips, 2000: 13-14). Leading up to the 1991 curriculum, the critical facets of ‘new history’ were lampooned by Conservative politicians and the right-wing press, who maintained that revisionist perspectives on, for example, the British Empire demonstrated that history has been ‘corrupted by cultural relativism’, and that history teachers were increasingly ‘unpatriotic’, even ‘disloyal’ (*ibid.*; Cole, 2004; Fowler, 1990: 112).

History Education Today: The Gove Curriculum

The current curriculum, which turns ten years old this year (2023), is the brainchild of the then-Education Secretary Michael Gove. Labour governments of the 2000s did very little to renege on the Thatcherite paradigm underscoring the 1988 curriculum. However, Gove arguably doubled down on the Anglocentrism and methodological regression of early curricula, producing what has been widely criticised as an exercise in ‘nationalist mythmaking’ (e.g., Harris and Burn, 2016: 520; Lidher *et al.*, 2020; Mansfield, 2019; Vincent, 2019). Of particular concern are the core rationales of the 2013 curriculum: a focus on ‘our island story’; with an emphasis on ‘Fundamental British Values’ (FBVs). Whilst the former (discussed below) is explicit in the limited scope of historical content, the effects of FBVs on the curriculum are decidedly more covert. Mansfield (2019) has discussed the theme at length, arguing that the central logic to the FBV agenda is one of binarisation: the ‘civility’ of Britain opposed to the ‘barbarism’ of Islamic terrorism in discussions of the latter; ‘our’ democratic institutions against African, Asian, or Russian autocracies; ‘our’ tolerance against the perceived ‘intolerance’ of Arab and Gulf states. Vincent (2019) agrees, adding that the emphasis on this core rationale, combined with the content discussed below, serves to ultimately justify British colonialisation (where it is covered), perpetuating the narrative that ‘we’ ‘gave’ ‘civilisation’ to the Global South’. Mansfield also adds that a focus on ideas such as democracy, civility, and the rule of law serves to ultimately position these as primarily, and exclusively, ‘British’, an act of both cultural and historiographical violence. The perils of the FBV-centric curriculum were demonstrated in 2020, with the banning of teachers from presenting material critical of capitalism, characterised as an ‘extreme ideology’ (see *The Guardian*, 2020).

How FBVs are manifested in the current curriculum cannot be seen in isolation from the idea of ‘our island story’. The curriculum from KS1-KS3 generally focusses on an attempt at coherent narrative, beginning with the Roman occupation of England, skipping through to the Norman invasion, before covering the Early Modern Period through to the Twentieth Century in far more detail (see DfE, N.D.). This is enhanced with KS2 and KS3 case studies into a “comparative non-European society”, with (non-exhaustive) options including Ancient Egypt, Imperial China, Golden-Age Baghdad, or Mughal India (*ibid.*). Aside from this, the only explorations into non-

White histories are through the actions of British agents – English involvement in the Crusades; Imperial incursions on the Indian subcontinent; and Britain’s role in (and crucially, *the abolishment of*) the Slave Trade. Harris and Burn (2016) argue that the limited, Anglocentric scope of the current curriculum is a reaction to the perceived ‘loss’ of Western identities bought about by multiculturalism, and thus is more an attempt to rejuvenate national pride than foster criticality and historical skills. This perspective is seemingly echoed by the curriculum’s architect, writing in *the Times* in 2010 that “lessons should celebrate, not degenerate, Britain’s role through the ages, including the Empire” and that “guilt about Britain’s past is misplaced”. His supporters also emphasised that elements of the curriculum – including explorations into ‘non-European’ histories – were not prescribed in the curriculum, and as such teachers are free to reflect more diverse perspectives in their lessons.

Teachers’ ability to do so, however, is constrained by the availability of resources to them. Catherine Priggs, for example, attempted to teach a module on Mali under Musa I following the 2020 #BlackLivesMatter resurgence, but noted significant difficulties in finding appropriately-pitched resources on African histories in general (see Priggs, 2020). In many schools, textbooks represent a hugely important resource for the creation and guidance of syllabi. However, British textbook research is an underexplored area, with only one recent study on representations of Antisemitism and the Holocaust (see Foster and Kariyanni, 2017). There have been a handful of studies from other Western countries, however, discussing representations of the subject, Imperialism, and Global Others. When discussing African populations, Marmer *et al.* (2010), alongside Zagumny and Richey (2013) report a reliance on outdated notions of the ‘Primitive African’. Pousa and López Facal (2013: 112) note that Other societies are generally essentialised – India, for example, for its caste system and religious divisions, Africa as a vestige of natural resources, populated only by infantile, submissive ‘tribes’. They also highlight that colonial histories are viewed through what they term the ‘rosy tradition’ – violence on all sides generally minimised, massacres forgotten, and decolonisation mutual, consensual, and respectful (*ibid.*: 108). Weiner (2016) decries the subjectivity of Dutch textbooks, the starting point of any region’s history being when they were colonised by the West, reminiscent of whiggish, ahistorical nineteenth century thoughts on ‘world’ history. Foster and Kariyanni note that textbooks tend to characterise antisemitism as simply a ‘Nazi’ trait. Finally, discussing depictions of Islam, Zagumny and Richey also note the tendency of American textbooks to paint Muslims as followers of Mohammad, rather than as adherents to an Abrahamic religion in the Judeo-Christian tradition, thus reifying both the despotism of ‘the Orient’, and the ‘Otherness’ of Muslims.

Challenges to the Curriculum

By far the most common criticism of the current curriculum concerns its relative lack of diverse content, and the effects of this omission, both on children’s historical cognition and, in the case of BAME pupils, their self-esteem and wellbeing. Authors have noted that the key points of British history taught in the curriculum continue to conceptualise ‘the nation’ as both homogenous and exclusive (Phillips, 1998; Lidher *et al.*, 2020). By implication, Other communities are therefore presented as either having no stake in ‘the nation’, or as not belonging to it. The ramifications of

these issues are widely discussed. Ethnographic research from Traill (2007), Haydn and Harris (2010), Joseph-Salisbury (2017), and Doharty (2019) all conclude that shallow, superficial content diversity has led to the disengagement of non-White students in History lessons. They also highlight that a focus on the transatlantic slave trade as an example of ‘diverse’ history serves to reinforce feelings of inadequacy, shame, and victimhood amongst Black students, and prejudicial notions of cultural inferiority amongst their White peers. Harris and Burn (2016) highlight that the current approach to History positions it as a canon of knowledge to be passed on, rather than as a discipline to be practiced. There are two common criticisms of this model. On the one hand, some have pointed out that skills learning is generally preferred in a school context. Studies from Haydn and Harris (2010), and Harris and Reynolds (2014) demonstrate that students are more engaged by skills learning, and prefer the wider cultural scope offered by less prescriptive syllabi. A similar study on teachers from Harris and Burn (2016) shows that most teachers consider skills-oriented learning to be more important than the current content lessons (see also Atkinson *et al.*, 2018).

Alternative approaches have been suggested and trialled by archaeologists, educationalists, and historians. The ancient past has not typically featured on curricula, with the ubiquitous exception of explorations into Greek, Roman, and/or Egyptian histories (see Planel, 1990; Corbishley, 2011). This is problematic in itself, once again serving to reinforce ideas around Eurocentric exceptionalism and imperial teleology. However, Garrison (1990) has argued that archaeology, if used correctly in the curriculum, could serve to actually alleviate these discourses. He suggests that our insights on precolonial Africa could serve as a vital counterpoint to the current focus on chattel slavery, and that lessons on Great Zimbabwe or the Swahili Coast would help establish a positive framework on which to configure the Black British identity. This notion is reinforced by similar discussions at undergraduate level. Hutchings and La Salle have demonstrated that first-year courses on precolonial Africa and the Americas have led students to question problematic depictions of these regions throughout popular media (Hutchings and La Salle, 2014: 50). Similarly an intervention from Whitburn, Hussein, and Muhamad (2012) saw secondary school students learning West African history through the tradition of oral histories. The authors argue that lessons in this style allow students the opportunity to widen their historical enquiry skills beyond the bibliophilic ‘Western’ tradition. Whitburn and Yemoh also argued that the use of pre-colonial African civilisation as a point of comparison with Medieval Europe could greatly aid students’ comparative skills (Whitburn and Yemoh, 2012). However, once again these authors note that a significant barrier in these approaches is a lack of subject specialism, teacher training, and student resources. Even the most idealistic of teachers do not have the time to replan entire schemes of work, especially as they have most likely not been trained in ‘alternative’ historical ontologies.

However, along with the practical barriers to educational reform, are the political questions the notion raises. There has been little back-peddalling on the governmental side since the imposition of the Gove curriculum ten years ago and, with the recent ‘culture war’ headlines and the Conservative lurch to the political right, rhetoric has grown even more hostile. The current Prime Minister (as of 16/11/2022) vowed during his leadership campaign to put an end to “woke nonsense”, including

“replacing the school curriculum with anti-British propaganda” (in *The Guardian*, 2022). The then- and current Equalities minister similarly argued in March 2022 that she did not support ‘decolonising’ curricula since they were not ‘colonised’ in the first place, in support of the hugely controversial Sewell Report (*CRED*, 2021) which had reached similar conclusions (in *The Spectator*, 2022). Indeed, the now-Education Secretary likened efforts to decolonise curricula to Soviet or Chinese censorship (on *Chopper’s Politics*, 2021) – raising questions (or perhaps providing answers) as to how the minister found herself in her current post. The reasons for this fervent resistance to reform also belie the *importance* of more diverse curricula. As Lidher, McIntosh, and Alexander (2020: 79) highlight, schools are the most trusted, ubiquitous, and important ‘heritage-broker’ in today’s society (see also, Grosvenor, 2000: 150). Huge amounts of authority are placed on the curriculum to present ‘the facts’ of the past. If these ‘facts’ are rooted in Eurocentric dogma, defended by zealous ideologues, then it is these narratives which are neutralised, objectified, and totalistically canonised.

Implications for the Present Research

The debates around the history curriculum have dominated the national conversation on school education for around fifty years, with barely any let-up. The current model, awash with nationalist and supremacist rhetoric and concepts, is hugely unpopular with a vocal majority of educationalists, teachers, and historians. These groups highlight two main issues: minority students are not represented in curricula; and accordingly *all* students are receiving a warped, inaccurate overview of the historical narrative. This is symptomatic of the shift towards highly prescribed *substantive content*, the diminished regard of *disciplinary skills*, and the bare faced demonisation of *critical thinking* theories in the classroom. Interventions led by teachers aimed at rectifying these issues on the micro-scale have been highly effective. However, issues with resources, comprehension, and the interference and internalisation of broader social biases have been a significant stumbling-block in these efforts, and their precise effects have been broadly under-discussed. As such, research is needed into the content of educational resources, and the sources of knowledge drawn on by students in the construction of their historical understandings, according to the broad framework for historiographical Eurocentrism outlined in the previous chapter.

The Past in ‘*Informal*’ Media

Amongst both schoolchildren and the adult population, the historical content presented in the curriculum is furnished, embellished, and enhanced through presentations in the past throughout different forms of media. Indeed, given the aforementioned lack of much ancient history (beyond sparse coverage of the Classical canon), it could be argued that ‘informal’ educational media represent the primary broker of distant past narratives in British society. As such, the extent to which *presentations* of the past in media are reflective of Eurocentric discourses are of vital concern. This question is especially pertinent given the discursive power and influence of media, compared with ‘official’ channels of outreach and engagement traditionally utilised by members of ‘the academy’.

Below, and throughout the present study, my main focus is presentations of archaeology and Ancient History ‘on screen’, that is, through TV and in films.

The Relationship Between Archaeology and Media

Archaeological presentations throughout popular media have a long and storied history. Public interest in our work was initially captured during the 1840s; with representations invariably coloured by the geopolitics and ideologies of the Colonial Era (Kulik, 2007: 114). In particular, scholars highlight how Western Asian (Malley, 2012a), Zimbabwean, Egyptian and Greek (Duesterberg, 2015) archaeologies were effectively subsumed into the ‘western’ developmental narrative in scholarly work, and popular media. Malley (2012a) argues that this project, in tandem with other machinations of the colonial enterprise, served to popularise the teleological narratives at the heart of expansionist rhetoric, positioning the regions as ‘our’ patrimony. Discussing the agents and agendas behind early archaeology-media collaboration, Thornton has argued that the mutually beneficial format of early publications set the tone for the following century, with stories and analyses heavily simplified, and imbued with jingoism and nationalism as a ‘lowest common denominator’ appeal to the everyday reader (*ibid.*). This collaboration also saw the emergence of the ‘adventurer archaeologist’ stereotype, heavily exploited throughout the next century, both as a reflection of contemporary colonial archaeologists, and as a means to market archaeology as an endearing, dangerous pursuit (*ibid.*, Holtorf, 2007). Reflecting the work of contemporary post-colonial archaeologists (e.g. González-Ruibal, 2010), Duesterberg argues that archaeology in popular print was fundamentally concerned with identities during this period, utilised to establish national foundational myths, enshrine young empires in glory, and project contemporary ideology into the distant past (Duesterberg, 2015).

The post-war period saw significant transformations in both the consumption of media, and the formalisation of archaeology. Print media remained a staple, with the Ancient Mediterranean and Ancient Egypt proving an enduring focus for both factual and fictional popular works, the latter imbued with mystic exoticisms and Orientalism (Holtorf, 2008a; Dobson, 2020). This period also saw the rise of ‘alternative archaeologies’. Typified by the works of Erik von Däniken, many have noted that interpretations of ancient astronauts and secret histories rely on Eurocentric dogma, perpetuating notions of ‘western’ cultural primacy (“well if *we* didn’t build the pyramids, it *must* have been aliens!”) (Fagan and Feder, 2006; Moshenska, 2017a; Schlada-Hall, 1999: 154 cf. Holtorf, 2005). This era also saw the growing popularity of archaeology and archaeological narratives on screen, in both narrative and documentary format. On the former, the Classical World remained a fixture, with films such as *Jason and The Argonauts* (1963) commanding astronomical budgets and impressive box-office returns. The growing popularity and accessibility of television also saw a boom in archaeological documentaries – often in the ‘procedural’ format of Mortimer Wheeler’s classic *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral?* (1952-1959). These programmes served to in some ways liberate The

Archaeologist from their pith-helmetted, adventurous colonial stereotype, now a Serious Scientist, in line with broader changes within the discipline (see Fowler, 2007; Holtorf, 2007). However, as Clack and Brittain (2007) point out, the idea of the reformed, scientific archaeologist also serves to emphasise the authority of archaeological narratives actively and *retroactively* in the minds of consumers, re-legitimising new and older Eurocentric undertones to these discussions.

The contemporary era of media production is fundamentally characterised by *diversity* – of technology, if not content. Alongside traditional print and broadcast media, a host of new technologies have allowed for new ways of engaging with the past to come to the fore. Gaming is one example, characterised by Gardner (2007: 256) as an “inadvertently educational medium”, which offers unprecedented immersion in past worlds for players (also, Livingston *et al.*, 2016). This new mode of engagement, however, risks further entrenching Eurocentric discourses *through* this immersive process (see Lozano, 2020) – Gardner (2007) highlights the teleological, patrimonial narratives emphasised in games concerning Roman contexts, with Roman characters subjectivised and Others exoticised. In games, however, as with news and broadcast media (the latter discussed fully below), focus is maintained on the Egypto-Classical tradition. Maldonado (2016), for example has demonstrated a heavy skew towards stories concerning these themes in the UK’s news media. These discussions are also often bound to geopolitical events. During the Iraq war, allusions to the roots of [Western] civilisation in Mesopotamia were weaponised to reinforce notions of Western patrimony (Malley, 2012b; Hamilakis, 2009; Pollock, 2005). This was echoed in discussions of Islamic State iconoclasm in the past decade, as De Cesari (2015) and Harmanşah (2015) discuss. Since 2016, scholars have also noted the re-emergence of nationalism as a central theme in archaeological news coverage (e.g. Brophy, 2018). Barclay and Brophy (2020) highlight a number of stories contributing to what they have termed the Brexit *Mythos*, in which news publications have somehow immortalised the concept of British isolationism (and, indeed, of ‘Britishness’) through erroneous comparisons with neolithic archaeology.

Some have also sought to utilise Big Data gleaned through *social* media to make conclusions on the use of the medium as informally educational. Bonacchi, Altaweel and Krzyzanska (2018), for example, demonstrate how elements of the heritage narrative were hijacked by ‘new nationalist’ actors in the run up to, and aftermath of, the Brexit referendum. Another highly pertinent study to the present discussion comes from Chiara Bonacchi, with her recent (2022) exploration into the role of heritage in neo-nationalist populist rhetoric. Drawing on Big Data, she demonstrates how ‘common knowledge’ perceptions around the Roman Empire, Iron Age and Medieval periods are shared, propagated, and weaponised in support of anti-immigrant rhetoric – migrants, for example, being blamed for the fall of the Roman Empire, echoing Imperial-era paranoia around ethnic ‘dilution’ and degeneration. Her corpus of millions of data-points thus serves as a useful test for the scalability of the arguments and data presented in the below discussion.

Archaeology on Screen: Current Issues

Archaeological documentaries are big business in the UK, and a number of authors argue that they represent our best possible means for public outreach (Kulik, 2006; Holtorf, 2007; Brittain and Clack, 2007). However, scholars have indicated issues with documentary content, and the conference of authority and authenticity by filmmakers. Taylor (2007) and Hobden (2013) both point out that ‘classical civilisation’ and the Ancient Mediterranean remain by far the most popular subject for British documentaries, commanding astronomical budgets and prime time viewing slots. Others have been irked by the oversimplification of narratives in documentaries, which can gloss over complex academic debates in favour of an authoritative ‘how things were’ presentation (Clack and Brittain, 2007: 11). Van Dyke (2006) highlights how ‘experts’ are deployed in talking-heads style documentaries to authorise a particular narrative, with shots carefully manicured to emphasise the scholar’s knowledge and intellect (mahogany-lined offices, overburdened bookshelves, etc.). Piccini (2007) and Hobden (2013) also note the cinematic techniques that are employed in reconstructive programmes, including sepia-toned camera filters, and shots of well-known identity markers (e.g. amphitheatres, hieroglyphs) as B-roll footage to emphasise the ‘authenticity’ of the material. Kulik discusses the media agents involved in the production of documentary content, and how industrial interests ultimately affect the quality of outputs (Kulik, 2006). In particular, she highlights how the marketisation of broadcasting since the 1990s has meant that programmes have to appeal to a broad church of viewers, resulting in a reliance on well-trodden themes (Greece, Rome, etc.), simplified content, and sensationalised narratives ready to compete with dramatic outputs from other networks.

Whilst the issues of authenticity in ‘factual’ documentary programmes have received a decent amount of attention, ‘alternative archaeology’ documentaries remain oddly underexplored in the literature. This omission is particularly striking as ‘alternative archaeology’ content often occupies the extreme end of all of the spectra highlighted above regarding sensationalism, authenticity, and eurocentrism. Moshenska does include televised ‘alternative archaeology’ in his recent overview of the phenomenon, highlighting both the implicitly racist frameworks around which theories are constructed, and the logical fallacies in their presentation (Moshenska, 2017a). Other references are older. In 2007, Taylor noted with concern the uncritical presentation of diffusionist, ‘alternative’ theories in supposedly ‘good’ or ‘high brow’ British programmes (Taylor, 2007: 194). Fowler, in the same volume, offered optimistically that audiences were able to discern between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ archaeology on television, although his judgement was based more on format than content (comparing archaeology-themed reality shows with, for example, blue-chip documentaries) (Fowler, 2007: 92).

When discussing archaeology in dramatic film and television, scholars tend to focus on presentations of archaeologists, rather than archaeological narratives. This line of enquiry has yielded some pertinent discussions. In a look at the past century of archaeological film, Hall highlights how problematic discourses are propagated in archaeo-cinema, particularly in North African contexts (Hall, 2004). The plots of these pictures often centre on a crude amalgamation of the ‘white saviour’ and ‘archaeological adventurer’ stock characters, who struggle against supernatural, ancient forces imbued with exoticising, racist overtones. Hiscock (2012) agrees, pointing out how the plots in archaeo-cinema pictures often employ the same tropes as ‘alternative archaeological’ theories, and argues that this further entrenches supremacist discourses. Pyburn adds that films in this tradition also reinforce the ‘preeminence’ of colonial science over local knowledge (Pyburn, 2008). Some scholars disagree. Holtorf, for example, argues that films like *Indiana Jones* are actually just good PR, and maintain public interest in archaeology (Holtorf, 2008b). Pyburn counters that this interpretation glosses over the coloniality embedded in these films (Pyburn, 2008; see also, Marwick, 2010). The handling of archaeological narratives in period pictures has also been covered by a handful of authors. Hiscock discusses the works of director Roland Emmerich, noting that the plots of his ‘historic’ blockbusters often rely on ‘ancient astronaut’ conspiracy theories (Hiscock, 2012: 174). Malley extends this critique further, arguing that many science fiction films deploy tropes and critical vocabulary borrowed from archaeology (Malley, 2018). ‘Lost world’ plots are presented as allegorical to colonial archaeology, implicitly reinforcing ‘western’ epistemological hegemony, whilst ‘alien encounter’ narratives often recycle ‘alternative’ conspiracy theories on human cultural development (*ibid.*). Hiscock (2012) argues that these tropes, along with a focus on the Ancient Mediterranean, are so prevalent in cinema for chiefly economic reasons. Studios exist to make money, and exploiting tried and tested formulae is a sure-fire way to make a return. Moshenska (2017b) and Holtorf (2008a) have argued that, despite the significant animosity towards depictions in archaeo-cinema felt by academic archaeologists, our fictionalised colleagues are our most visible brand ambassadors. As such it is imperative that we work with commercial stakeholders in the film industry, rather than fall into greater introversion.

The Past in the Media: Remaining Questions

Scholarship on archaeological representations in media is, fortunately, plentiful. Authors have demonstrated the initial emergence of popular culture archaeology as both a function of, and constituent to, Nineteenth Century Imperialist discourse. Whilst the post-war pivot towards ‘scientific’ archaeology did dampen archaeological caricatures, they also served to add a new veneer of legitimacy to earlier prejudicial discourses, which have been further amplified through the exclusivity of subject matter presented to audiences today. Key questions remain, however, with regards to archaeological and ancient historical representations in on-screen media. Whilst colleagues have emphasised that screen media sees a continuation from earlier eras of knowledge dissemination,

the discussions outlined above need bringing up-to-date, with an empirically-grounded review of recent popular media and its potentially Eurocentric biases. Similar work needs to be carried out in order to assess how these narratives are *received* by audiences, and the role they play in shaping peoples' historical understandings, a point not addressed in the above reviewed literature.

Knowledge in Society: The Bourdieusian Perspective

Pierre Bourdieu's practice theory (1977) provides some insights into the means through which knowledge is transmitted, received, and exchanged throughout society. In conjunction with the postcolonial literature discussed in the previous chapter, this theory could serve as a model around which to frame the present discussion. Key issues which run through the above discussions are: (i) the entrenchment of Eurocentric discourse; (ii) the objectification of knowledge; and (iii) the use of archaeology in narrative construction.

In *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, (1977), Bourdieu argued that an individual's perception of the world is a constant negotiation between their *habitus*, or lived experiences, and the *doxa*, the 'common sense', 'self-evident' rules which govern social discourse. As is discussed in the previous chapter, Eurocentric narratives of totality, teleology, and opposition have been deeply embedded in Western hegemonic discourses since at least the Enlightenment. Chief amongst these discourses are issues of 'us' and 'them': 'our' civility, 'their' barbarism; our 'development' and 'their' stagnation'; *etc.* have formed a core part of our historiographical lexicon. This is, of course, in conjunction with the broader patrimonial narratives surrounding the Graeco-Roman roots of Western civilisation, and thus the superiority of the Euro-American tradition throughout time and space. These themes have been constantly reified across media, school curricula, and public discourse for more than a century, either overtly, or implicitly through repeated exposure to these themes, and thus could form a significant part of the contemporary heritage *doxa*, reinforced by agents' habitual, often non-conscious, exposure to them. As Bourdieu notes, these tropes are also self-perpetuating. Cultural outputs are themselves the result of negotiation between creators and consumers, and between the *habitus* of either and the structural *doxa* they inhabit. Themes or motifs that are directly informed by these factors (e.g. research on the Classical tradition; curricula that reinforce the alterity of Others; Europe-centric period films) offer the user, student, or consumer 'safe' content, which they have a passing familiarity and interest in, which in turn represents a sound investment of time and resources the researcher, funder, teacher, or producer. The repetition of this cycle throughout modes of dissemination and productions further entrenches a version of the heritage narrative, a direct consequence of Empire, further into our collective understanding.

These issues are compounded by the perceived 'authority' of disseminating agents to present 'authentic', objectified knowledge. Bourdieu (1977; 1984) conceptualises 'authenticity' as both subjective and discursive. As I discuss above, the 'objectivity' of colonial science has served as a facade

to obscure ultimately prejudicial narratives, which are only maintained through the authority of the agents producing and disseminating this knowledge. Power, in this conception, is drawn from holding the means to create representations of a narrative, and present them as objective. For Bourdieu (1988), the authority to present 'objective' knowledge is gained through symbolic and discursive capital. Media agents draw symbolic capital through the deployment of authority signifiers in context - for example, the archaeological 'expert' replete with bowtie and mahogany bookshelves, who authorises a narrative on behalf of a documentary production team (see Van Dyke, 2006 - above). Discursive capital is formed through a dynamic relationship between the producers and consumers of media. By adhering to 'the rules' of the *doxa*, producers and disseminators are able to capitalise on 'common knowledge', and present the public with something that they 'already know'. This in turn lends producers greater scope to authorise other narratives. These issues are even more pernicious when it comes to 'official' educational representations, either through academic research or, more likely, through school curricula. Schools and teachers are awarded huge amounts of discursive capital through their function as authorised channels of knowledge. Moreover, school-age pupils are both highly receptive to knowledge as presented by teachers, and are less equipped to challenge or critique the 'objective' knowledge they are presented *with*. Bourdieu situates the school as a primary space for both the socialisation, and *de facto indoctrination* of the populace for precisely these reasons. When the same flawed theses that are presented in school as objective are then echoed throughout 'informal' education media in a persons' lifetime, the objectivity of this knowledge is further entrenched, and attempts to challenge it are further hampered.

The practice of narrative construction can also be understood through the lens of capital. Symbolic and discursive capital may be called upon to authorise and authenticate narratives, but it is chiefly economic capital which ultimately allows research to be conducted, and media to be produced and disseminated. As a number of the above authors note, the agencies in control of this process are increasingly profit-driven - either directly, in the case of media producers, or through the neoliberalised academy and the push for 'high impact' research. Content from the former is typically simplified in order to draw in consumers, and thus maximise profits through the construction of a familiar, Eurocentric narrative. The means through which 'impact' is defined, along with the broader effect of social discourses on the production of research, *could* mean that a similar effect occurs on the latter. Also for media producers, alongside the designers of curricula are the underpinning issues of *cultural capital*. Subjective perspectives which emphasise the Western and British developmental narrative are neutralised through the presentation of this knowledge as inherently 'useful' - thus by implication knowledge outside of this canon 'useless'. Frequent invocation of Classical themes in everyday conversation is seen as the mark of the cultured, the well-educated, the informed. As such, the dissemination of knowledge on these themes and on the Eurocentric heritage narrative in general occurs under a veneer of socialisation and education, rather than a discursive means to reify historical power imbalances. Without the complication of other

knowledge, or knowledge of Others, agents are unable to challenge the *doxic* assumptions presented through this narrative. And yet, since knowledge on Others is not culturally ‘useful’, its presentation is not ‘important’, allowing the established cultural narrative to re-cycle throughout social discourse.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Given the diverse range of questions that are to be addressed through the course of this research, methodologies have been divided according to the phase of research that they correspond to. This project ultimately concerns ‘big questions’ concerning social ‘grand narratives’. Addressing these contentions through empirical research, and with the time and resources available to me, required the distillation of these themes into highly targeted, manageable stages of data collection, the results of which can be scaled up in order to address the original research questions. I have therefore chosen to follow a hypothesis-testing methodological model, designed according to the ‘middle range theory’ sociological tradition.

All of the methods utilised for data collection, storage, and analysis during the course of this research have been approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee (#20263/01).

Phase (i) – Production of Knowledge

Hypothesis – ‘the metrics used to define ‘public interest’ in research funding ultimately hinder the diversity of archaeological research in the UK’

Primary research for Phase (i) consists of two stages – a review of three secondary datasets, and a series of remote interviews.

Secondary Data

- **WoS data**

The first dataset which was utilised was the Web of Science (WoS) database of published research. In order to assess the topography of the British archaeological and heritage research landscape, a series of filters were applied to this database in order to glean a sample of papers for analysis. Analysed papers were all: (i) from researchers at a UK university; (ii) published between 2010 and 2020; (iii) prefixed with a funding statement, implying that the publication included primary data, and that the underlying research had been qualitatively assessed by peers, and was thus not a review or polemic piece; and (iv) a peer-reviewed journal article, rather than book chapter, monograph, or similar. Applying these filters to the database yielded 702 papers for discussion (see Appendix III for the full list).

Data for these publications was then downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet, detailing: (i) the paper title and abstract; (ii) author details, including home institution; (iii) publication year; (iv) number of citations, as tracked by WoS; and (v) details about the research funder.

In order to assess the geographical and temporal context of any data underpinning publications, their titles and abstracts were combed through manually. If this data was not made evident in either

paper title or abstract, or if papers had no specific geographical and/or temporal rooting, they were scored 'N/A', totalling 66 for geographical context, and 69 for temporal. The total number of publications for each context was then tallied and compared.

Citation data was utilised in order to assess the scholarly impact of papers in each geographical and temporal category. This was done by calculating the mean number of citations within each category. Citation data was also drawn upon in order to create a sub-sample of the top 100 most impactful publications amongst a scholarly audience which, in consideration of the number of papers with the same number of citations, resulted in a sub-sample of 107 papers, all with more than 30 citations.

This sub-sample was then analysed according to the frequency of different geographical and/or temporal themes, along with data pertaining to the source of funding for the underpinning primary research. This was done in order to assess the relative impact of research sponsored by these different funding bodies.

- **UKRI data**

In order to assess the comparative funding landscape for British research, a number of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests were made to UK Research & Innovation (UKRI), the publicly funded body which disseminates monies from the treasury to each of its seven research councils in order to sponsor research at British universities. UKRI was chosen as the key funding case study owing to its ostensible transparency and accountability as a public institution, its status as the largest funder of British research, and its relationship with the treasury, which could potentially provide opportunities for government to circumvent the Haldane Principle through directed funding, as discussed in the last chapter with relation to 2011's 'Haldanegate' scandal.

FOI disclosures made by UKRI concerned: (i) the total number of funded/unfunded applications made to UKRI bodies from 2005-2022, according to 11 generic internal categories; (ii) the years in which these applications were made; and (iii) the stage at which unsuccessful applications were ultimately rejected. A further request for clarification yielded data pertaining to the years in which each UKRI research council began to receive applications for archaeology and/or heritage projects. This narrowing the period under analysis to 2011-2022, since the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC), who fund much archaeological and heritage research, did not receive applications in archaeology and heritage until this date.

This data was then analysed according to the total number of applications within each category, their relative rates of acceptance/rejection (which was also compared with the total ratio across UKRI and its constituent research councils), which was further differentiated by year, in order to assess any particular trends in UKRI funding decisions. The stage at which unsuccessful applications were rejected was also analysed, again to test for any trends in UKRI funding decisions.

- **REF data**

The final secondary dataset utilised for this research concerned the impact case studies submitted by British universities to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) assessments in 2014 and 2021. This was done in order to assess what university departments designate as ‘good’ research impact and outreach, and to compare this with the comparative data concerning the British research and funding landscapes.

Whilst all REF impact case studies are published online via the respective REF2014 and REF2021 portals, these were not downloadable. As such, data concerning the projects was combed through manually via these portals, with findings recorded in an Excel spreadsheet. Key data included: (i) the paper titles; (ii) submitting institutions; (iii) the geographical and temporal rooting of any underpinning datasets (scored as N/A if these were not readily apparent from paper titles or summaries); (iv) the geographical location of any noted research impact; and (v) the mode of impact utilised.

This data was then analysed. Initially, the number of case studies claiming impact in each geographical area was tallied. This was then compared with submissions’ underpinning datasets, in order to assess the rooting of data driving impact in each geographical area. These figures were compared between each REF assessment in order to assess any developments which may have been brought about by either the 2014 REF, or broader geopolitical or societal events during the period (e.g. the 2016 Brexit referendum, or the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic). Finally, the mode of impact was also analysed between both REF assessments.

This data was then compared with the data gathered when assessing the broad UK research landscape through the WoS database. Key data elements that were analysed included the percentage of the total dataset drawing on data from each geographical and temporal context, in order to assess whether REF impact case study returns are representative of the broader research landscape. In order to ensure that this data was comparable, the WoS data was broken down into two cohorts: publications from 2010-2014; and publications from 2015-2019, roughly corresponding to the assessment dates for each REF assessment.

Research Interviews

This data was supplemented using data from a series of research interviews, conducted earlier this year (2023). Participants for these interviews: (i) were all active or former researchers at a UK institutions; (ii) had submitted at least one application for UKRI funding since 2005.

Initially, sampling was conducted using an open call, asking administrators at British university archaeology departments to circulate an invitation to take part in the study, which at this stage also included a brief questionnaire. This yielded no respondents. Recruitment was then attempted by forwarding an invitation to take part to members of a relevant professional network, University

Archaeology UK (UAUK). This attempt saw one questionnaire respondent, who did not consent to take part in an interview. The study was then redesigned to focus entirely on qualitative interviews, since data from the WoS database, UKRI disclosures, and the REF returns provided plentiful material for quantitative analysis. Interview participants were finally pre-selected by cross-referencing authors of the REF impact case studies with the UKRI Gateway to Research, to appraise whether participants had received UKRI funding. This did create a sampling bias towards participants who had had successful applications. However, throughout the preliminary interview process, it became clear that most participants had received in many cases more rejections than accepted applications, and as such were able to comment on both funding decisions. Otherwise, invitees were stratified dynamically according to key demographics of gender, academic rank, location of university, and age of university. Of 31 potential participants approached, a total sample of 11 participants were interviewed. No further interviews were deemed necessary since saturation had been reached on a number of key issues, and there was broad homogeneity across responses.

Interviews followed a semi-structured format. This was done in order to ensure the relatability of interviews to each other, whilst allowing for flexibility within each interview to allow for the richest data capture possible (see Weller, 2014). Interviews were split into three sections: (i) questions concerning participants’ research, and the extent to which collegiate dialogue and collaboration was important to them; (ii) questions concerning their experiences applying for funding, both with UKRI and other bodies – at this stage, additional questions were also asked to participants who had had a role in administering funds through peer or panel review; and (iii) questions concerning participants perspectives on the importance of archaeology and heritage research in contemporary British society. Interviews broadly followed an inverted funnel model, starting with more specific questions and gradually opening out to more broad, open-ended questions (see fig. 3.1 for the questioning route).

Questions concerning research/collegiate dialogue
How have your research interests changed over the course of your career? [What interested you about this area?]
Is this a niche of your department? [What sort of thing do your colleagues work on? / Do you work collaboratively within your department, or with colleagues elsewhere?]
Questions concerning funding applications
Tell me about your most recent experience applying for research funding...[and with UKRI]
Would you say that this experience has been typical of your funding applications?
Has the funding process changed much since your first application?
Do you feel as though your area of interest is represented well in themed funding calls?
Questions for funding reviewers
What is the nature of the discussions on panels? [purely qualitative/impact/etc.]
Do you notice much difference between UKRI funding panel discussions and other panels you may have sat on?
Questions concerning the role of archaeology and heritage research
What are your opinions on the role of arch. and heritage research in wider society?
Who do you conduct research for?

Figure 3.1: P1 questioning route

Since all interviews took place over remote technologies (Microsoft Teams for 10, and a single interview via Zoom), recording and transcription of interviews was conducted automatically. Transcripts were then checked over, and uploaded to the ATLAS.ti qualitative analysis software. Transcripts were then coded inductively with a number of key themes emerging for discussion.

Phase (ii) – Dissemination of Knowledge

Hypothesis – ‘school curricula and media presentations rely on outdated tropes and stereotypes when presenting archaeological material’

There were four research stages within Phase (ii): (i) qualitative review of history textbooks; (ii) a questionnaire for Year 9 pupils in English secondary schools; (iii) a quantitative, population-level analysis of British-produced screen media; and (iv) a qualitative analysis of a number of documentaries, films, and television programmes discussing various historical themes.

Textbook research

This research was formulated through an adaptation of the methods designed by Foster and Kariyianni (2017; Kariyianni 2022, personal communication). Initially, a sample of nine textbooks was identified and selected for analysis. These were all: (i) from a major publisher, and thus in wide circulation in England; (ii) published for the current history curriculum (2013-present); and (iii) designed for Key Stage 3 (KS3) pupils (ages 11-14), since KS3 represents the highest level of compulsory history education before pupils specialise for the GCSE certification.

Textbooks were initially read through critically, in order to formulate points for a data collection sheet, which could be employed across the sample. This initial reading was informed by the postcolonial approaches to otherness and essentialism outlined above, with a focus on how comparisons between European and Other societies are drawn, and the narratives that were constructed through their contact and exchange.

Following this initial reading, I compiled a data collection sheet, detailing key themes from across the textbook sample for comparison. These themes were fundamentally grounded in the textbook content, which saw a number of motifs and areas of study repeated across the sample (see Table 3.1 for a list of questions from the collection sheets). The majority of books in the sample followed a chronological structure, and as such this was also followed on the data collection sheet. Books were then read through again, and data was gathered on the books’ content, their use of images, and the primary sources utilised by authors.

Content from all collection sheets were then analysed in tandem, in order to glean themes for analysis and discussion. Reflecting the structure of the majority of textbooks (and thus how information is presented to pupils), it was decided that these themes should be chronological, focussing on: (i) pre- and non-colonial histories; (ii) colonisation; (iii) the slave trade; and (iv) diasporic and post-colonial histories. The analysis was conducted to bridge postcolonial approaches to representation and

narrative construction, outlined above, with the content of the textbook sample, according to these points of cultural contact.

Theme	Question
Representations	How are Others represented in images?
	What primary sources are used to discuss Others?
Pre-colonial histories	What pre-Medieval history discussed?
	How is pre-1450s cultural contact discussed?
	How/are pre- and non-colonial histories discussed?
Colonial histories	How are 'other' histories presented?
	How did 'colonialism' start?
	How is colonial/anti-colonial violence discussed?
	How are individual colonisers presented?
	What drove the end of colonialism?
	Were there benefits/drawbacks for colonised peoples?
The Slave Trade	How is the inception of the slave trade discussed?
	How is the reality of the slave trade handled?
	What drove the abolition of the slave trade?
Diasporic histories	How is the history of antisemitism discussed?
	What about the history of racism?
	Were racism and antisemitism widespread?
	What are the causes of terrorism?

Figure 3.2: Themes and questions from textbook data collection sheets

Schools' Questionnaire

Given the issues faced with recruiting sample schools to participate in research noted in the introduction to this research, sampling was conducted largely by convenience, although efforts were made to ensure a good spread across geographical location and school demographics. One school was recruited through a personal connection, and the other was approached via email. Participating teachers were asked to nominate two Year 9 classes within their school to complete the questionnaire, and participant information sheets and consent forms (for both student participants and their responsible adults), and hard-copy questionnaires were posted to the schools. Of a total possible questionnaire sample of ~120, 55 questionnaires were returned.

Questionnaires had four sections: (i) a 'quiz', with questions concerning various facets of the archaeological and ancient historical past both within Europe and the Global South; (ii) a section providing participants with a number of contentious statements on global history, asking them to declare their position on these statements on a four-part Likert scale (strongly disagree-disagree-agree-strongly agree), along with free-answer boxes for participants to elaborate on these positions; (iii) a section questioning participants on their media consumption habits and sources of knowledge; and (iv) a free-answer section asking participants questions on their perceptions and experiences studying history in school (see Appendix I for the full questionnaire). Questionnaires were compiled with reference to Bell's (2007) guidelines for designing surveys for children, and thus had simplified

language, along with less negative questioning than the adults' questionnaires. Across both children's and adults' questionnaires four-part Likert scales were used without a possible 'neutral' response, in order to 'force' participants to make a declaration on the issue under discussion (see Frary, 1996). Once returned, hard copy questionnaire responses were entered into the REDcap application within the UCL Data Safe Haven (DSH) before the originals were destroyed. Responses were then analysed. Responses provided insights into participants' historical knowledge and worldviews, along with the sources of information utilised in order to develop these, as well as their perspectives on the function and utility of the current national curriculum.

Quantitative media analysis

In order to develop population-level insights into the wide array of historical media seen on-screen, an API from Apify.com was utilised to scrape key data from the International Movie Database (IMDb). The filters assigned to this API included: (i) titles with the 'history' tag; (ii) titles that were produced by, or in conjunction with, a British studio; and (iii) titles which were either a documentary, film, documentary film, TV series, or short. Upon analysis, shorts were discounted, ultimately since they typically had extremely low levels of engagement and were made by smaller and independent producers, and as such could not be said to be likely to influence many viewers' historical worldviews.

Data returned by the API included the titles of features, their descriptions, along with data pertaining to the number of 'ratings' titles received by IMDb members, and the average 'rating' these titles received. This data was downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. There were a total of 1173 returned to analyse (NB, following analysis it became clear that at least one relevant documentary series, 2010's *The Lost Kingdoms of Africa*, was not recognised by the API, since it had not been tagged with 'history').

These results were combed through manually. Initially, titles and descriptions were analysed, in order to assess the geographical and temporal context of the content in question. Where this information was not ascertainable from the title and description, the title was scored as 'N/A'. The total number of titles concerning each theme was then tallied and compared, in order to build up a picture of the historical themes available to viewers of British screen media.

In order to reduce categories, and thus simplify analysis, these temporal and geographical contexts were combined into larger groups of families. These were then accordingly analysed in tandem with each other.

Finally, the number of ratings, and mean ratings of titles, were considered. In order to appraise the relative popularity of each geographical and temporal theme was calculated by the mean number of ratings, regardless of the 'star' rating given to individual titles. In this instance, the number of ratings given was taken as a proxy for the popularity of individual titles, since only unique IMDb members can rate an individual title only once. Whilst this does present some issues, since members are

international, and there is no way to only view the number of ratings given by British users. However, in the absence of any other metrics or means to calculate relative popularity of titles, it was decided that this method would be suitable for the analysis necessary. The mean ratings given to titles were also analysed, with additional mean calculations made across thematic, geographical, and/or temporal contexts, in order to appraise the sentiment towards titles within each category.

Qualitative media analysis

The media sample for qualitative analysis was drawn directly from the Phase (iii) questionnaire responses. Participants were asked to note down the names of any TV series, documentaries, or feature films concerning historical themes that they had watched recently, along with the general themes that were covered in content that they tended to watch. The sample was then drawn from these two responses. Many responses concerned more recent historical themes, in line with the wider media landscape, and were thus beyond the scope of this research. More pertinent titles and themes were then sampled according to the frequency with which they were named by respondents. Content on the Global South was extremely poorly represented in participants responses. However, a small number of titles named by respondents concerning these themes were nonetheless analysed, in order to build a comprehensive picture of the content available to viewers.

What phenomena are being discussed?
How is archaeology engaged with?
How are archaeologists engaged with?
How are limitations of evidence or interpretations discussed?
What big ideas are employed?
How are they discussed?
How is knowledge authorised?
Why is the thing under discussion important?
Is patrimony employed?
Are cross-cultural comparisons drawn?
Are cross-temporal comparisons drawn?

Figure 3.3: Data collection sheet questions for non-fiction titles

Who are the protagonists?
How are they depicted?
What are their motivations?
Antagonists?
How are they depicted?
What are their motivations?
What is the central tension of the film?
Is patrimony stated/implied?
How is historical society presented?
What is the significance of the events depicted?
Are there parallels with current affairs?
Are there parallels with current research?

Figure 3.4: Data collection sheet questions for fiction titles

For data-gathering and analysis, titles were split into two categories: fiction and non-fiction (in both cases including both TV productions and feature films). A smaller sub-sample of titles in each category was initially watched through, and key themes and contentions noted down in order to prepare a data collection sheet (see figs. 3.2 and 3.3). Data collection sheets were then compiled, and the whole sample watched through, whilst data was gathered from the titles. Films were analysed in their entirety. For each TV series, three episodes were sampled at random, using a random number generator to select the episodes to analyse.

Data across the sample was then analysed according to the key theories underpinning this research, and in tandem with quantitative media data.

Phase (iii) – Consumption of Knowledge

Hypothesis – “common knowledge’ on archaeology and heritage discourses is not an accurate reflection of current archaeological scholarship’

Data for phase (iii) was collected in two stages: an online questionnaire, and a series of remote interviews.

Questionnaire Data

Participants for the questionnaire stage of Phase (iii) were recruited using Facebook’s paid advertising service. A recruitment poster was designed (see 3.4), giving key details about the project, what participation would involve, and the incentive to enter a prize draw for one of two £50 Amazon vouchers.



RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

A PhD project at the UCL Institute of Archaeology is currently recruiting participants to take part in a short online questionnaire.

You will be asked a series of questions about your knowledge, understanding, and perceptions of ancient history, archaeology, and heritage.

This project is being conducted in order to investigate how well archaeology and ancient history are understood in British society, in order to inform better public engagement from academic archaeologists.

Your responses to the questionnaire will remain anonymous. Click the link for further details. Complete the questionnaire to be entered into a draw for a £50 Amazon voucher.

Researcher: tcrnkn0@ucl.ac.uk | Primary investigator: andrew.gardner@ucl.ac.uk

UCL

This project has been approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee (project ID 20263/001).

If you are:

- Over the age of 18
- A UK resident
- Not professionally involved in archaeology, heritage, or history

Then you can:

- Win a £50 Amazon voucher
- Help to improve academic practice and outreach

By:

- Taking part in a brief online questionnaire

Figure 3.5: Recruitment poster for questionnaire participants

508 questionnaires were completed, exceeding the benchmark for questionnaire validity of 400, as suggested by Rowley (2014) with an advertising spend of £300, working out to just under £0.60 per

participant, a far lower cost than the typical recruitment cost benchmark of £1 per participant using traditional advertising methods, and far cheaper than comparative studies drawing on similar recruitment methods (e.g. Shaver *et al.*, 2019; see also: Arigo *et al.*, 2018). There was also a high level of organic engagement, with users sharing the survey link to their own personal networks. The targeting feature was also very useful in ensuring that the total sample remained representative of the UK population according to gender and age, since underrepresented demographics could be easily targeted, as has been demonstrated by Shaver *et al.* (2019), and Lorenzo *et al.* (2012).

Within the questionnaires, which were hosted on the REDcap application in the UCL DSH, participants were initially asked to fill in some basic demographical data. They were then guided through several stages of questioning, including: (i) an ‘icebreaker’ exercise, concerning their perceptions of ‘big concepts’ in world archaeology; (ii) questions around the sources of information participants used to build up their historical knowledge; (iii) questions concerning the importance of archaeology and heritage to contemporary society; (iv) their memory of studying history in school; (v) an exercise asking participants to self-declare their knowledge on various historical societies, on an annotated five-point scale; and (vi) an exercise where participants were presented with a number of polemical statements on global history, asked to declare their position on them on a four-point Likert scale (strongly disagree-disagree-agree-strongly agree). This latter section also included a free-answer box for participants to expand on their positions (after Boynton and Greenhalgh, 2004) (see Appendix II for the questionnaire). This meant that the more ‘sensitive’ questions, or those concerning topics which require the most investment from participants, are placed at the end of the questionnaire, in the hope that participants would not be ‘turned off’ by their appearance at an earlier stage (see Frary, 1996).

The design of the main research instrument for task (iii), concerning the importance of archaeology and heritage, changed following the conduct of the initial pilot questionnaires. Initially, participants were asked to ‘score’ six reasons for the importance of archaeology and heritage on a 10-point scale. However, resulted in the majority of participants scoring each criterion highly, thus providing little differential data for analysis. As such, later participants were asked to ‘rank’ these criteria from most to least important. This adaptation means that there are fewer responses from this instrument analysed, with only 340 participants. The remainder of the questionnaire was unchanged following the return of pilot questionnaires, and as such all have the complete number of responses from across the sample.

Analysis was conducted in several stages, with the complete data having been downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet. Initially, free-answer responses to questions concerning sources of knowledge in the media were analysed, in order to formulate a sample for Phase (ii) analysis (see above). Free-answer responses throughout the questionnaire were then coded inductively, yielding a number of key themes for discussion, particularly for the final questionnaire instrument concerning contentious statements on global history.

Population-level insights were then gathered, utilising quantitative data, alongside coded free-answer responses, in order to develop a picture on the distribution of knowledge and perspectives on historical narratives across the whole questionnaire sample. The sample was then broken down into a number of sub-populations according to key demographics, including age band, highest level of education, private or comprehensive education, and urban/rural residence. Age bands and school type were further used to inform whether participants had studied any iteration of the national curriculum. Data was then compared across and between these groups.

Finally, Likert responses to the final questionnaire instrument were utilised to calculate participants' subscription to Eurocentric historiographies (the EC score), scored on a scale of -2 (most sympathy for Eurocentric positions) to 2 (most sympathy for anti-Eurocentric positions). These scores were then compared, both across and between the sub-populations identified above, and according to participants' self-declared knowledge levels, media consumption habits, and memories of studying history in school, in an attempt to identify and isolate any key factors which may influence individuals' subscription to Eurocentric positions. During analysis across and between groups, and drawing on these factors, a t-test was run on any significant variance in order to test for statistical significance.

Research interviews

Interview participants were recruited by self-referral. At the end of the questionnaire, participants were asked if they would be happy to be contacted to take part in a remote interview. Of around 160 participants who indicated that they were happy to be contacted, around 100 were approached, resulting in a total of 40 interviews being conducted. Self-referring participants were also asked to report some basic demographical data (age band, gender, location, ethnicity, highest education level), in order to build a stratified interview sample from respondents.

Interviews followed a semi-structured format, again to ensure that whilst results were comparable, there was scope to adjust the questioning route in order to glean the richest data possible. Once again, an inverted funnel structure was broadly followed, and questions were split into three groups: (i) questions concerning participants' experiences with the past; (ii) questions concerning participants' experiences learning about the past; and (iii) questions concerning participants' perspectives on the importance of the past (see fig. 3.5 for the full questioning route).

Since all interviews took place over remote technologies, recording and transcription of interviews was conducted automatically. Transcripts were then checked over, and uploaded to the ATLAS.ti qualitative analysis software. Transcripts were then coded inductively with a number of key themes emerging for discussion.

Questions concerning experiencing heritage
What does the term 'heritage' mean? [Is it cultural? Personal?]
What would the world look like if we didn't discuss learn about our heritage?
Do you feel as though all heritages and histories are celebrated equally? [Is it important that they are?]
What role does 'the past' play in the present?
Questions concerning learning about heritage
Please tell me about your experiences learning history in school...
Were you taught anything in school that you now think (/know) to be substantively wrong?
Where did you learn about this?
How do presentations of heritage and the past differ between schooling/formal education and in the media?
Do you feel as though any specific topics are over- or under-represented in schools and media?
Questions concerning heritage in society
Can learning about the past ever occur 'neutrally'? Or will those who distribute knowledge on the past always be following some agenda?

Figure 3.6: P3 questioning route

CHAPTER FOUR

ACADEMIC RESEARCH RESULTS

The first phase of the research represented here concerns the production of knowledge within ‘the academy’. Initially, this discussion will centre on a number of datasets concerning the research and funding landscape for archaeology and heritage research in the UK, along with their intersection with the Research Excellence Framework (REF) Impact Case Studies. These results will then be discussed according to the perceptions of these mechanisms by active archaeological and heritage researchers, gained through a series of interviews which ran earlier this year (2023). Results demonstrate the fundamental diversity of contemporary archaeology and heritage research, which stands in contrast with both case study selection for REF appraisal, and less formalised avenues for knowledge dissemination, discussed in later chapters.

British Archaeology and Heritage Research

Three key datasets were utilised in building a picture of the present research and funding landscape in the UK. In order to assess the themes, time periods, and geographical regions discussed most frequently by researchers, a sample of publications was drawn from the Web of Science database. These publications were all journal articles dated between 2010 and 2020, involving researchers at UK institutions, and all include a funding declaration, indicating both that the authors and their respective projects had been audited by peers at the developmental stage, and that publications involved some degree of primary data-collection. The funding landscape in particular is discussed with reference to data disclosed by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) following a series of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. Finally, this data is compared with the REF Impact Case Studies from both 2014 and 2021.

The Research Landscape: Web of Science Data

Applying the above filters to the Web of Science database yielded a total of 703 publications to analyse. These were combed through manually, and the primary temporal and geographical context of their primary datasets was highlighted. Where these were not discernible from the paper’s title and/or abstract, these were scored as ‘N/A’, totalling 66 (temporal) and 69 (geographical), respectively. In order to gauge the scholarly impact of these papers, the average number of references within each sub-category was also calculated. Finally, the funding agencies behind the most impactful papers were analysed.

- **Temporal Context of Published Research**

The time periods explored in published research outputs are displayed in fig. 4.1 below. it is interesting to note the high proportion of papers drawing primarily on datasets from the pre-Colonial period across the Global South, the Americas, and Oceania, with only the Neolithic period seeing a comparative number of publications. It is also interesting to see the comparatively fewer numbers of studies concerning the Classical Period, along with the ‘Civilisations’ period (defined as the emergence of ‘primary civilisations’ beyond the Egypto-Classical sphere), given the ubiquity of

these themes in historical archaeological, and popular culture outputs (discussed in following chapters).

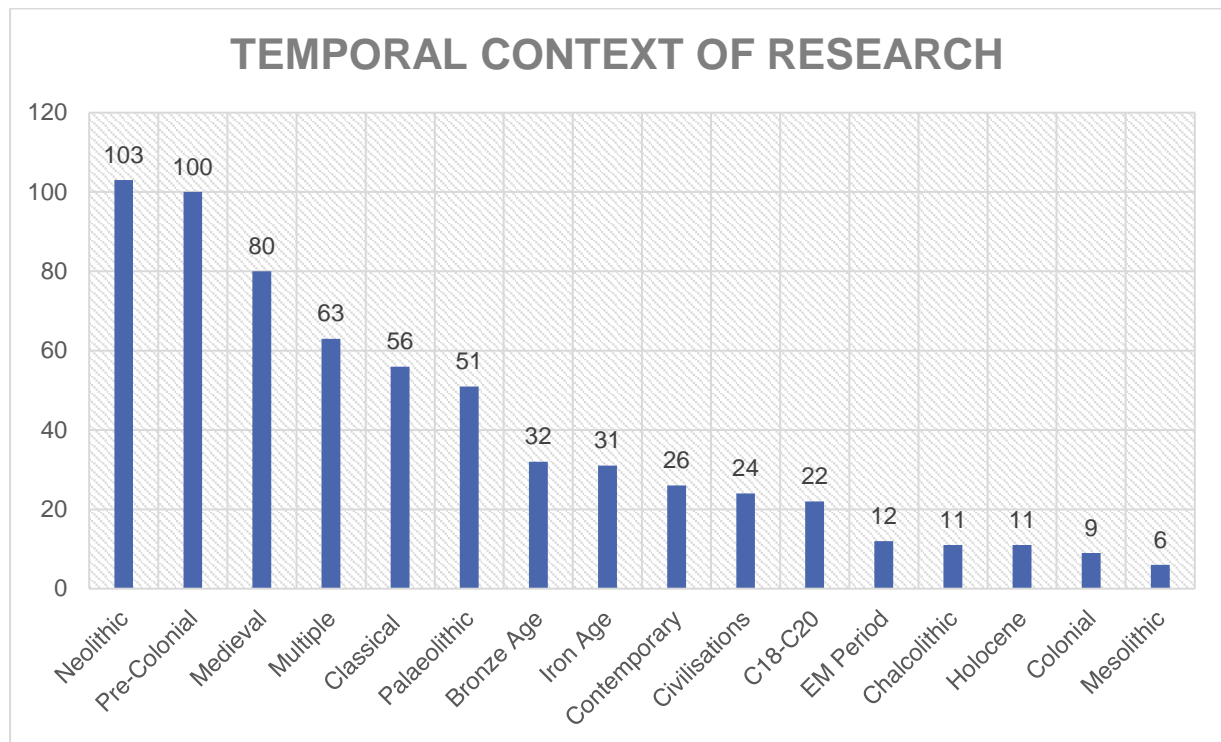


Figure 4.1: Temporal context of archaeological research (from WoS data)

Period	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bronze Age	3	2	1	1	3	4	2	2	5	5	4
C18-C20	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	9	4	1	3
Chalcolithic	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	1	2	1	1
Civilisations	1	0	0	1	1	3	5	3	2	2	7
Classical	2	2	0	2	2	2	7	11	11	4	12
Colonial	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	2
Contemporary	0	1	2	0	0	2	4	4	7	2	4
EM Period	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	2	1	3
Holocene	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	4	2
Iron Age	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	5	5	13	3
Medieval	1	2	2	5	8	4	6	11	12	9	20
Mesolithic	0	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0
Multiple	3	0	2	1	3	7	10	12	8	6	10
Neolithic	4	4	2	6	4	13	9	15	16	18	12
Palaeolithic	3	1	1	1	4	5	6	11	3	12	3
Pre-Colonial	0	4	5	8	5	6	10	15	20	14	14

Table 4.1: Temporal spread of archaeological research, 2010-2020 (from WoS data).

Breaking down temporal approaches by the year of publication (see table 4.1) reveals little in the way of broader trends in any one theme in particular, with a couple of exceptions. Discussions on the Medieval period, for example, have increased steadily, reaching a peak of 20 distinct publications in 2020, a figure only matched by the number of publications on the pre-Colonial period in 2018. This also may represent a peak for discussions on the pre-Colonial Global South, a trend also possibly reflected in research into the Bronze Age. However, for the most part, these figures demonstrate a general trend towards more published research across all time periods.

This broadly flat, diverse temporal landscape is partially reflected in the scholarly impact (measured by Web of Science citations) of papers on these time periods (see fig. 4.2)

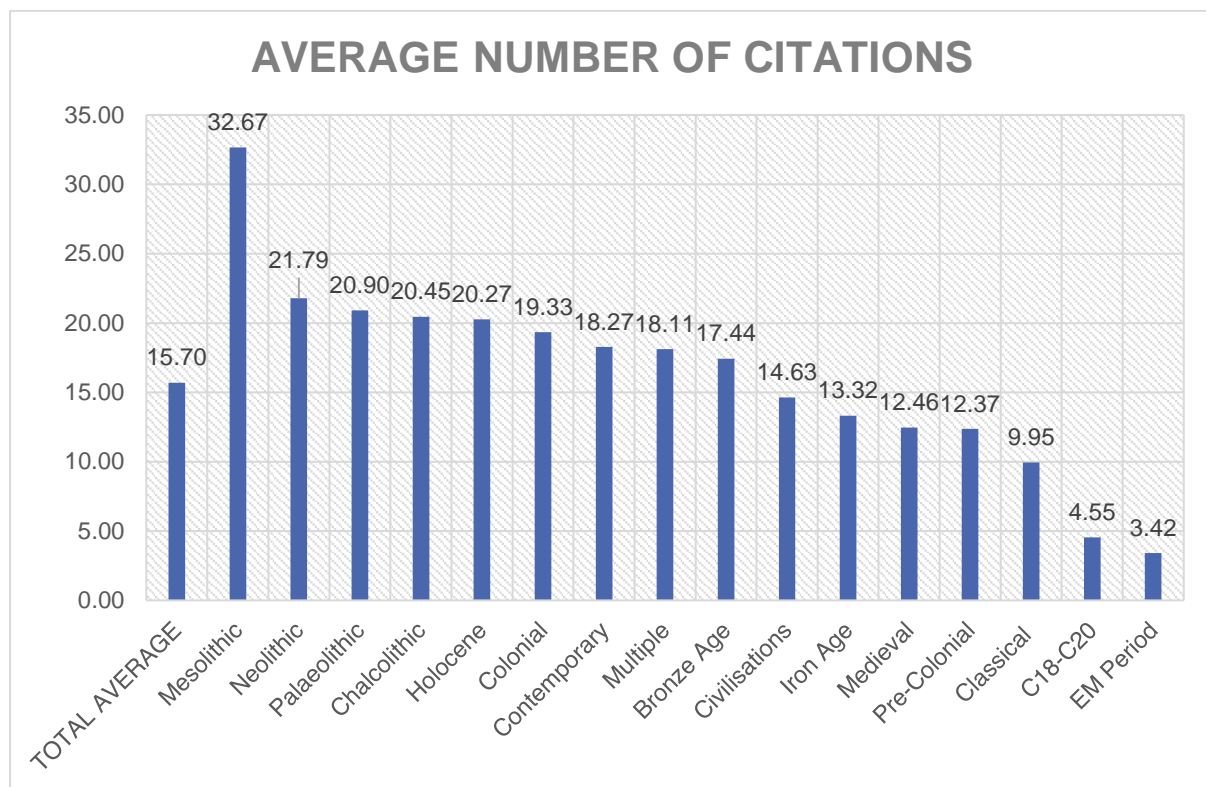


Figure 4.2: average citations for temporal research contexts (from WoS data)

With the exception of papers on the Mesolithic (of which there are few, with extremely high levels of scholarly impact), and those on post-Medieval Europe (with far lower levels of impact), the majority of themes boast an average number of references within a range of ± 6 from the average across the sample (15.7). It is again interesting to see that publications on the Egypto-Classical tradition occupy the lower end of this scale, considering the popularity of these themes amongst other agencies disseminating knowledge on the archaeological past. It is also interesting to note that the most scholarly impact is felt for publications concerning the more distant past.

- **Geographical Context of Published Research**

The geographical context of research over the previous decade further reflects this broad sense of diversity (see fig. 4.3 below).

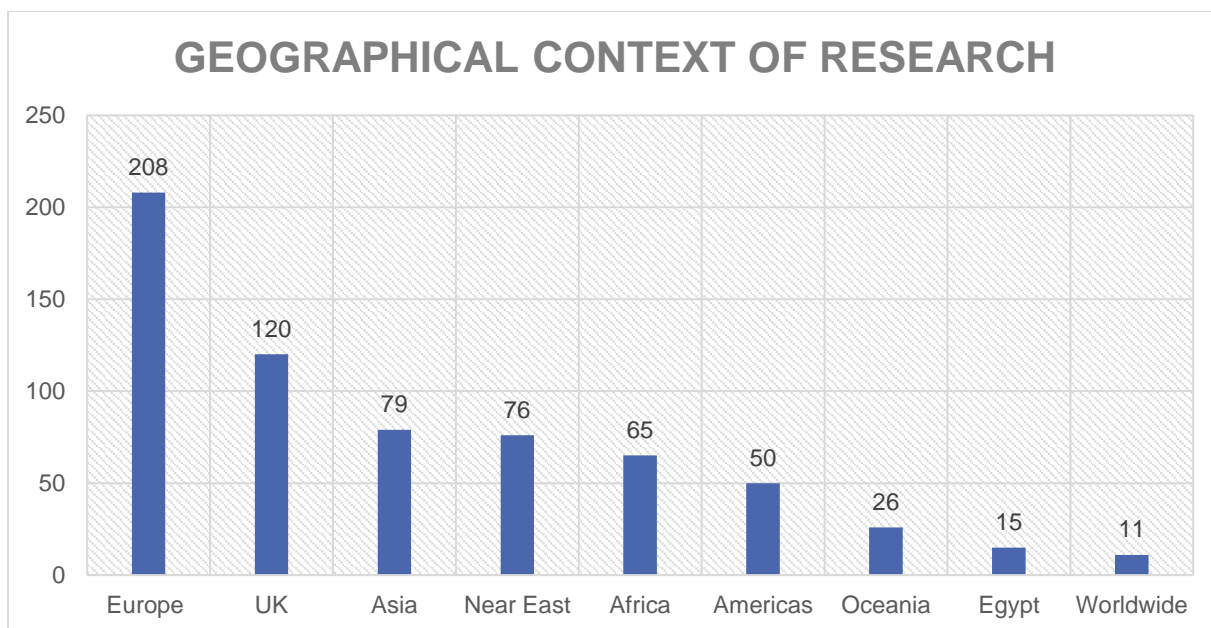


Figure 4.3: geographical context of archaeological research (from WoS data)

Although research utilising British and/or European datasets comprises around 50% of the whole sample, there is good representation of other global traditions, including archaeology of Africa, the Americas, and Oceania. Egyptology, despite its pedigree within British archaeology, is one of the least-discussed themes amongst the selected publications, along with comparative studies. It is also notable that, even amongst researchers based at British universities, and despite the political upheaval of the past decade, research in pan-European contexts is so much more ubiquitous than that concerning the British Isles exclusively.

PLACE	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Africa	1	0	4	2	6	1	4	13	9	15	5
Americas	0	2	1	4	1	4	7	8	11	6	6
Asia	5	4	1	2	5	11	9	7	10	12	13
Egypt	0	1	0	0	1	0	3	3	4	0	3
Europe	7	3	6	11	11	11	24	35	30	36	34
Near East	3	3	0	5	2	10	6	16	14	11	6
Oceania	0	4	0	0	1	1	1	3	3	5	8
UK	2	3	2	5	10	5	13	20	20	14	26
Worldwide	2	1	2	0	1	2	1	0	1	1	0

Table 4.2: geographical context of archaeological research, 2010-2020 (from WoS data)

This may in fact be partially explained *by* the political upheaval of the last decade. As is shown table 4.2, whilst pan-European data had been more popular throughout the first half of the decade, British research had begun to trail European research more closely in the two years prior to the 2016 Brexit referendum. *Following* the referendum, there is a sharp uptick in pan-European research, more than

doubling from 2015-2016, and increasing almost another 50% from 2016-17, potentially reflecting colleagues' eagerness to demonstrate continued close relations across the English Channel, and a continued scholarly *status quo*.

It is also possible that the sharp drop-off in research throughout the Global South, and in particular in Africa and the Near East is another consequence of 'real world' events, namely, the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, bucking an otherwise steadily upward trend. Interestingly, collaboration with colleagues in North America, Australia, and New Zealand does not appear to have suffered. Given that travel was not possible for the majority of the year, it is possible that collaboration with colleagues in Western states continued, whereas publication on the Global South is seen to require the in-person participation of British archaeologists, rather than collaboration with local colleagues. The pandemic also likely explains the sharp uptick in UK-based research in 2020.

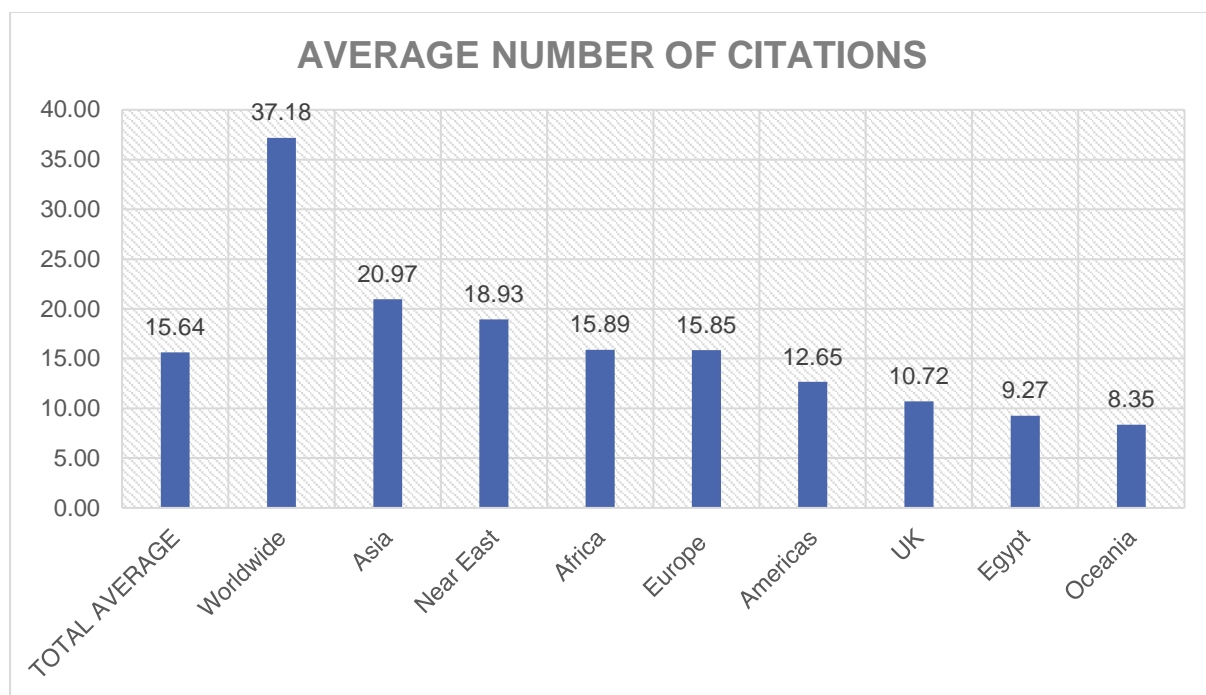


Figure 4.4: average citations for geographical research contexts (from WoS data)

Notably, the scholarly impact of publications according to geographical context is even flatter than temporal context, with only the limited, extremely high-impact comparative studies, and research utilising data from Oceania, straying beyond ± 6 from the average of 15.64 (see fig. 4.4). It is also interesting to see the comparative weight of papers concerning Asian, Near Eastern, and African contexts, compared with those from Europe and the UK. Once again, the relatively low impact of discussions on Ancient Egypt stands at-odds with prevailing narratives outside of 'the academy' (see Chapter Six).

- **Geographical versus Temporal Contexts**

In order to assess the nature of research outputs in different contexts, geographical and temporal contexts were compiled together from the sample data. Results are displayed in table 4.3.

	Africa	Americas	Asia	Egypt	Europe	NE	Oceania	UK	Worldwide
Bronze Age	0	0	6	1	12	9	0	4	0
C18-C20	1	1	0	0	6	2	0	13	0
Chalcolithic	0	0	5	0	4	1	0	0	0
Civilisations	2	0	17	0	2	4	0	0	0
Classical	0	0	0	12	26	2	0	17	0
Colonial	0	5	0	0	0	0	3	0	1
Contemporary	2	1	0	0	1	4	1	9	0
EM Period	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	7	0
Holocene	3	1	1	0	3	1	1	1	0
Iron Age	0	0	4	0	15	1	0	10	0
Medieval	0	0	5	0	40	4	0	30	0
Mesolithic	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	1	0
Multiple	7	1	7	1	22	6	1	13	6
Neolithic	4	0	19	1	41	29	0	9	2
Palaeolithic	10	0	5	0	21	8	1	4	1
Pre-Colonial	34	40	8	0	0	1	17	0	0

Table 4.3: geographical and temporal contexts of archaeological publications (from WoS data)

It is notable that, for Africa in particular, the majority of discussions centre on the historical pre-Colonial period, rather than the palaeolithic and periods of ‘early human origins’. As I highlight in Chapter One, colonial-era archaeology saw the continent more as a repository of our collected, early humanity, rather than as a valid cultural context with archaeology and histories worth exploring. These results are also reflected in those from the Americas and Oceania. The popularity of discussions on the European Medieval period also eclipses that of the Classical period, which once again stands in stark opposition to earlier phases of archaeological exploration, which privileged the halcyon Graeco-Roman era at the expense of ‘The Dark Ages’. Finally, contentious as the term has (rightfully) become, discussions on the ‘civilisations’ phenomenon in the Global South do at the very least demonstrate a means through which to challenge Western-centric historiographies around cultural development. Examples from outside of Eurasia in this tradition are, however, rare.

- **Most Impactful Research Funders**

In order to better contextualise the REF and FOI data discussed below, the funding bodies for the most impactful 107 papers (those with more than 30 citations) were compared (see table 4.4)

FUNDER	TOTAL	UKRI	Other	ERC	Leverhulme Trust	NSF	British Academy	Marie-Curie	Wellcome Trust
Number	107	38	34	9	7	7	5	4	3
Reference average	55.76	64.39	58.2	57.0	72.43	60.1	51.80	47.75	34.33

Table 4.4: funders of most impactful research (from WoS data)

These figures demonstrate that UKRI bodies, mostly the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) fund the most impactful archaeological research in the UK by number, and are second to the far more modest number of

publications sponsored by the Leverhulme Trust in terms of mean references. Other agencies (a broad collection of smaller foundations, along with national and international trusts) between them sponsor slightly less than UKRI, followed by a sharp drop-off for other well-known bodies, such as the European Research Council (ERC), the Leverhulme Trust, the US National Science Foundation (NSF), and the British Academy. These figures demonstrate the discursive weight of research sponsored by UKRI, and thus indirectly by the British taxpayer.

The Funding Landscape: UKRI FOI Data

The following data was gleaned through the three FOI requests made to UKRI between December 2020 and January 2023. The first, shown in the table 4.5, details the total number of funded and unfunded applications to UKRI between 2005 (when UKRI was incorporated) and 2022.

	TOTAL	FUNDED	UNFUNDED	%FUNDED	%UNFUNDED
Archaeological Theory	11	3	8	27.3%	72.7%
Archaeology Of Human Origins	64	13	51	20.3%	79.7%
Archaeology of Literate Soc.	83	25	58	30.1%	69.9%
Industrial Archaeology	4	0	4	0.0%	100.0%
Landscape & Environ. Archaeol.	117	20	97	17.1%	82.9%
Maritime Archaeology	8	2	6	25.0%	75.0%
Palaeobiology	685	168	517	24.5%	75.5%
Prehistoric Archaeology	128	40	88	31.3%	68.8%
Quaternary Science	54	14	40	25.9%	74.1%
Science-Based Archaeology	654	137	517	20.9%	79.1%
Heritage	1092	190	902	17.4%	82.6%
Total	2900	612	2288	21.1%	78.9%

Table 4.5: funded/unfunded applications by subdiscipline (from UKRI data)

21.1% of applications in archaeology and heritage are successful – broadly similar to that of UKRI as a whole at 21%, and of NERC, at 20%, higher than that of the MRC at 17%, and Innovate UK at 6%, and lower than the success rates of the BBSRC (28%), the AHRC (26%), the FLF (25%) and the STFC (43%) – the councils to which these applications were made. There is thus no evidence to suggest that projects in archaeology and heritage are much more or less likely to be funded. The success rates of applications do, however, fluctuate between the different subdisciplines under this broad umbrella, as identified by UKRI. Of subdisciplines which have made a significant number of applications, some are significantly lower, such as ‘heritage management’, at 17.4%, compared with 30.1% in ‘archaeology of literate society’ and 31.3% in ‘prehistoric archaeology’. ‘Heritage management’ has also seen by far the most applications, at 1,092, or roughly 38% of all applications submitted. It is thus significant that this subdiscipline also has the highest rejection rate – 31% of *all* applications during this period were rejected from heritage management scholars.

These figures are even more stark when considered alongside the data revealed in the latest disclosure, concerning the time frames at which different UKRI councils began accepting applications for archaeology and heritage projects (see table 4.6). It is highly notable that the AHRC did not receive applications for archaeology and heritage prior to 2011, considering their importance as research funders over the last decade, as discussed above. The AHRC are also more likely than the other large UKRI funder of archaeological research, NERC, to sponsor more explicitly ‘heritage management’ projects, along with less ‘scientific’ approaches, which fall more under the remit for NERC. A further FOI request was therefore made for the number of funded and unfunded applications, broken down by year from 2011 (see table 4.7).

Council	Year
AHRC	2011
NERC	2005
FLF	2018
MRC	2010
IUK	2018
ESRC	2008
BBSRC	2007
RE	2018
STFC	2015

Table 4.6: year of first archaeology or heritage applications for UKRI councils (from UKRI data)

	Year	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	Total	ALL
Arch. Theory	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
	U/F	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	1	1	8	
Arch of H.O.	F	2	6	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	13	62
	U/F	10	5	5	3	5	2	4	4	4	4	2	1	49	
Arch. of L.S.	F	3	1	2	2	1	3	1	2	5	3	2	0	25	83
	U/F	12	2	7	3	4	2	5	3	6	6	6	2	58	
Industrial Arch.	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
	U/F	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	4	
L&E Arch..	F	3	3	1	1	3	1	3	0	1	1	3	0	20	117
	U/F	14	6	5	10	8	8	7	11	7	9	7	5	97	
Maritime Arch	F	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	8
	U/F	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	6	
Palaeobiology	F	8	6	3	2	0	4	3	1	3	1	7	2	40	189
	U/F	12	14	5	8	11	16	10	21	15	15	14	8	149	
Pre-H Arch.	F	9	5	1	4	6	4	2	1	4	0	4	0	40	128
	U/F	15	4	1	9	13	7	13	6	8	5	5	2	88	
Q. Science	F	2	6	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	14	54
	U/F	5	6	2	9	6	2	2	3	0	2	1	2	40	
Sc.-Based Arch.	F	10	6	4	6	5	7	1	2	3	1	8	2	55	272
	U/F	39	14	12	19	19	19	12	24	19	20	9	11	217	
Heritage	F	35	15	5	6	7	12	6	20	12	22	44	6	190	1090
	U/F	96	15	17	28	32	44	41	110	85	152	249	31	900	

Table 4.7: funded/unfunded applications by subdiscipline and year (from UKRI data)

It is interesting to note the broadly steady figures for submission of applications, and their acceptance, year-on-year across all sub-disciplines throughout the period, especially considering the

broad *increase* in publications, as demonstrated by the Web of Science data above. This may be reflective of a wider push for publication – ‘publish or perish’ – meaning that researchers are feeling compelled to produce more literature per funded project. It may also be representative of the growing impact agenda as demonstrated through the expansion of the Research Excellence Framework, discussed fully below.

These figures also show that the majority of submissions for both ‘palaeobiology’ and ‘science-based archaeology’ thus occurred in the five years from 2005, dropping off to a far lower rate for the past decade. Heritage applications, by contrast, have largely occurred within this last decade. This does, however, mean that the rejection rate for heritage projects is more proportional to other more popular sub-disciplines, although the far higher number means that rejected heritage projects make up an even larger proportion of overall rejections for this period (56%) (see table 4.8).

	TOTAL	FUNDED	UNFUNDED	%FUNDED	%UNFUNDED
Archaeological Theory	11	3	8	27.3%	72.7%
Archaeology Of Human Origins	62	13	49	21.0%	79.0%
Archaeology of Literate Soc.	83	25	58	30.1%	69.9%
Industrial Archaeology	4	0	4	0.0%	100.0%
Landscape & Environ. Archaeol.	117	20	97	17.1%	82.9%
Maritime Archaeology	8	2	6	25.0%	75.0%
Palaeobiology	189	40	149	21.2%	78.8%
Prehistoric Archaeology	128	40	88	31.3%	68.8%
Quaternary Science	54	14	40	25.9%	74.1%
Science-Based Archaeology	272	55	217	20.2%	79.8%
Heritage	1090	190	900	17.4%	82.6%
Total	2018	402	1616	19.9%	80.1%

Table 4.8: funded/unfunded applications by subdiscipline, 2011-2022 (from UKRI data)

Given the higher proportion of more ‘science-based’ archaeological projects prior to 2011, the flat distribution of applications throughout the period of 2005-2022, as shown in table 4.9, is surprising. An increase in applications in 2011 actually resulted in lower proportional ‘funded’ decisions, whilst a smaller number of applications in 2012 saw a higher proportion. Otherwise, applications and ‘funded’ decisions remain remarkably consistent, despite the introduction of another major funding council, along with nine additional sub-disciplines. The means through which this was achieved are not immediately evident, although it is likely a consequence of directed funding, potentially through themed research calls.

Year	FUNDED	%FUNDED	UNFUNDED	%UNFUNDED	TOTAL
2005	16	18%	74	82%	90
2006	35	26%	98	74%	133
2007	44	30%	101	70%	145
2008	46	28%	121	72%	167
2009	40	23%	132	77%	172
2010	33	18%	155	82%	188
2011	73	26%	206	74%	279
2012	49	42%	68	58%	117
2013	18	24%	56	76%	74
2014	23	20%	90	80%	113
2015	25	20%	101	80%	126
2016	33	24%	106	76%	139
2017	19	16%	99	84%	118
2018	33	14%	196	86%	229
2019	34	19%	149	81%	183
2020	33	13%	226	87%	259
2021	77	19%	326	81%	403
2022	20	23%	66	77%	86
TOTAL	651	22%	2370	78%	3021

Table 4.9: total funded/unfunded applications by year (from UKRI data)

Another FOI request concerned the stage at which unsuccessful applications were ultimately rejected by UKRI reviewers (see table 4.10)

	FBNF	Interview	Panel	Office	PR	EOI	N/A
Archaeological Theory	3	0	4	1	0	0	0
Archaeology Of Human Origins	4	1	34	5	6	0	1
Archaeology of Literate Soc.	28	0	17	3	10	0	0
Industrial Archaeology	0	0	3	0	1	0	0
Landscape & Environ. Archaeol.	20	0	51	11	15	0	0
Maritime Archaeology	1	0	5	0	0	0	0
Palaeobiology	0	0	338	149	12	0	18
Prehistoric Archaeology	26	0	37	13	12	0	0
Quaternary Science	0	0	28	4	7	0	1
Science-Based Archaeology	12	0	290	171	24	0	20
Heritage	172	1	123	97	483	3	0

Table 4.10: unsuccessful applications by subdiscipline and rejection stage (from UKRI data)

These figures raise a number of questions. For one, despite the weight placed on peer review (PR) as the ‘gold standard’ of academic oversight, for the most part, only scholars working in ‘heritage’ can expect their applications to be directly rejected by their peers. This may partially be a case of

semantics, since all panels operate using the peer review process, and the high levels of ‘office review’ rejections from more traditionally ‘science-based’ subdisciplines (palaeobiology; science-based archaeology) may represent a collation of peer-review scores at the office stage to administer rejections, as is also the case at the AHRC. Heritage scholars are also the only cohort whose applications have been rejected at the Expression of Interest (EOI) stage, although with only three rejections, this is not particularly significant. Of far more concern, however, is the large proportion of heritage projects which have been designated by reviewers at ‘fundable, but not funded’ (FBNF). This designation will have been taken at the administrative level of the panel, likely the AHRC, following on from both peer and panel review. This is thus the most likely stage of grant review to be influenced by wider political and/or societal concerns. The disproportionate representation of ‘heritage’ here, comprising over 15% of all heritage applications, 19% of heritage rejections, and indeed, 5% of *all* funding decisions made across the entire period, raises questions over the decisions that are being made. The extent to which these decisions may affect actual research outputs may also be represented, along with the REF agenda, in the Web of Science data, as I discuss below.

The Impact Agenda: REF, and its Disproportionality

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) formally succeeded the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) in 2008, with the first assessment taking place in 2014. The assessment focuses on three discrete criteria: (i) the quality of research outputs; (ii) the research environment, in how it fosters these outputs; and (iii) the impact of research outputs. For the 2014 assessment, these were weighted at 65%; 15%; and 20%, respectively. ‘Impact’ for 2014 was also broadly-defined as ‘reach’ and ‘significance’. For 2021, the weighting shifted, to 60% for quality of research outputs, 15% for research environment, and 25% for impact, which was also redefined to specify impact *beyond academia*.

As part of the impact assessment for both 2014 and 2021, universities were required to submit impact case studies for appraisal, weighted to the number of staff on full-time contracts at their institution. Below, I analyse the impact case study content for both 2014 and 2021, focussing on the geographical and temporal contexts of the data sets underpinning the research used to drive impact, along with the type of impact, and geographical context in which impact was delivered. I then compare these findings with the WOS data discussed above. In all cases, I include the same categories of geographical and temporal data as represented in the WOS survey.

- **REF2014**

The 2014 REF assessment saw 103 impact assessment case studies submitted by universities. There is a degree of temporal diversity, as demonstrated in the fig. 4.5, with data from 15 time periods being showcased in order to drive impact.

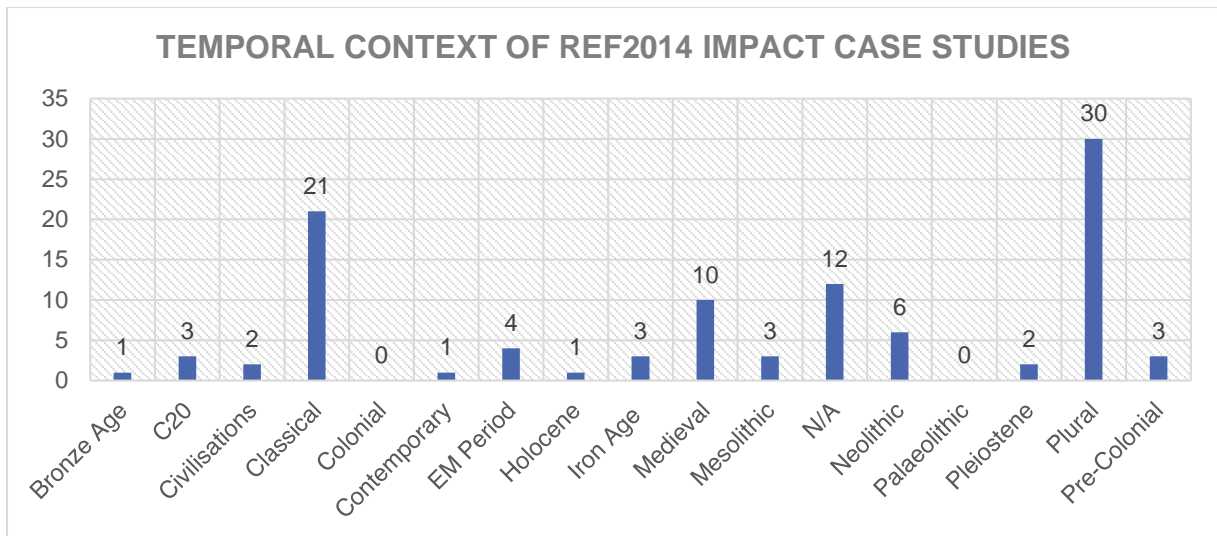


Figure 4.5: temporal context of data from REF2014 case studies (from REF data)

However, these figures also demonstrate a heavy skew towards both multi-temporal case studies, and those concerning a facet of Egypto-Classical Tradition. Those without an immediately discernible temporal context score 12, and there are 10 examples from the Medieval period. Otherwise, figures for other time periods number six or less, with no examples from either the European colonial period, or the Palaeolithic.

Attempts to drive impact, as assessed for the REF, also have a significant geographical spread, as shown in the fig. 4.6. A number of case studies noted driving impact in more than one country, and as such, for the 102 case studies, impact was driven in 158 geographical contexts.

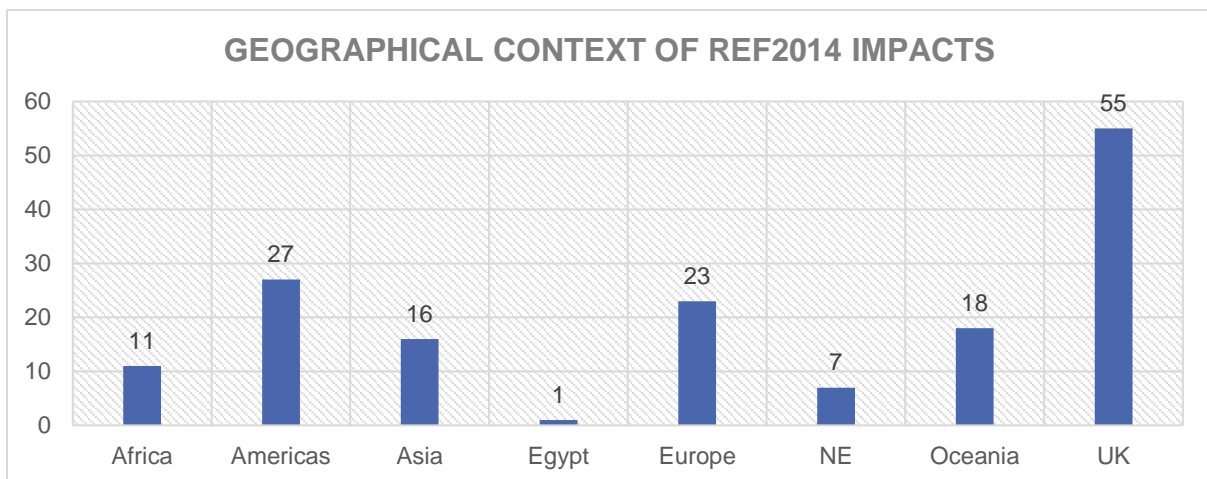


Figure 4.6: geographical context of impacts from REF2014 case studies (from REF data)

The vast majority of impacts occur in the UK and across Europe and the Americas, totalling around 66%. A smaller, though not insignificant portion of studies claim wider impact across Asia, Oceania, Africa and the Near East, with a sole example from Egypt. It can thus be claimed that researchers from UK universities served a broadly international group of stakeholders, delivering significant impacts and driving engagement across six continents.

However, the same cannot be said for the *data* being utilised in driving these impacts. Fig. 4.7 below displays the geographical context of primary datasets utilised in the 2014 impact case studies:

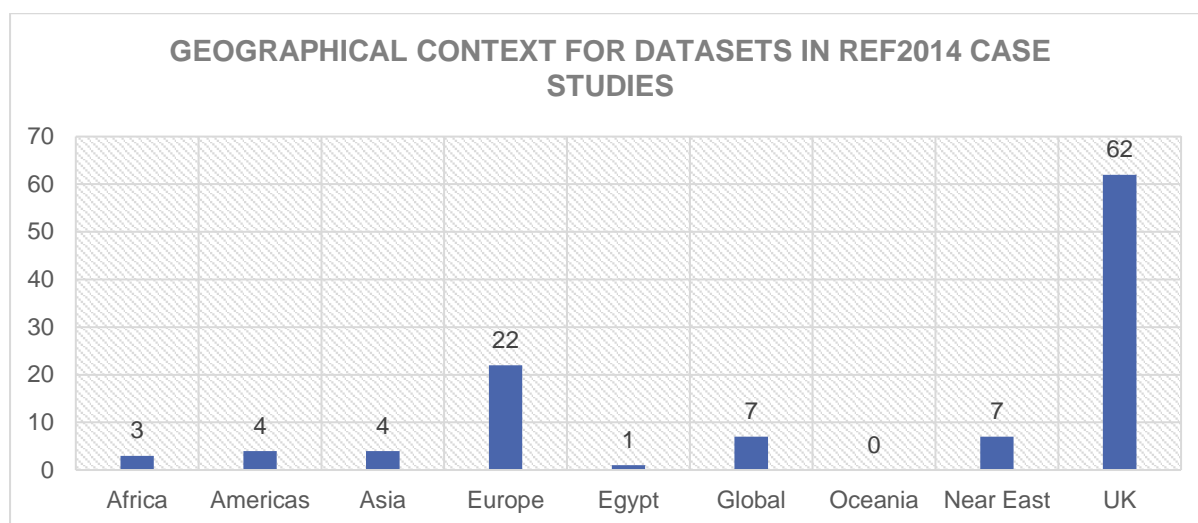


Figure 4.7: geographical context of data from REF2014 case studies (from REF data)

A clear majority – over 75% of the 110 datasets drawn upon – come from a British or European context. Only four datasets are drawn upon for Africa – all from Northern countries (one from Cape Verde, two from Libya, and one from Egypt), and there is thus no representation from sub-Saharan Africa, despite impact being claimed there. The model being sought and endorsed here is thus less internationalist, more arguably neocolonial in nature, with data from the core (Europe, UK) being drawn upon to drive impact in the periphery (the Global South), with the latter seemingly unable to provide historical data sufficiently impactful to be used to drive engagement.

This is made more stark when considering the relationship between data and impact. For the African cases, the studies in Cape Verde and Libya are only drawn upon to drive impact in their home countries, and not abroad – only the Egyptian study has sought to drive impact in the UK. The same goes for all but one example from Asia, and four of the seven Near Eastern datasets. When considering the extent to which data is being *imported* to drive impact within the UK, it is clear that, in the majority of cases, only data from Europe is being utilised (see table 4.11)

Africa	Americas	Asia	Egypt	Europe	NE	Worldwide	Total	CASE STUDIES
0	0	1	1	14	3	1	20	102

Table 4.11: geographical context of data driving impact in the UK from REF2014 case studies (from REF data)

20% of case studies involve using data from abroad to drive impact in a British context. Of these, almost 75% come from Europe, with none from Africa or the Americas. Considering the extent to which historical scholarship has served to denigrate the archaeology and historical sophistication of these latter regions in particular, the lack of engagement in revisionist perspectives as recently as 2014 reads as a missed opportunity to counteract these narratives.

This is especially pertinent considering the mode of impact sought in the majority of assessed case studies (see fig. 4.8).

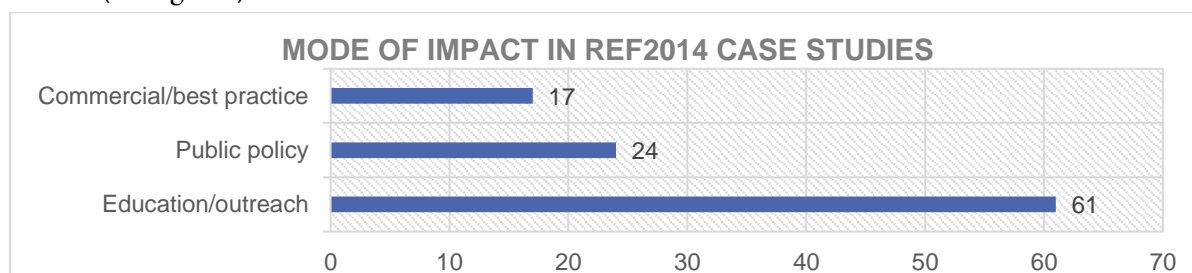


Figure 4.8: mode of impact from REF2014 case studies (from REF data)

In 60% of cases, researchers sought to drive impact through education and outreach, far eclipsing impact through public policy (including conservation efforts), and through best practice and commercial applications (generally through archaeological-scientific methodological developments). A modal analysis of all three criteria above would thus conclude that the ‘typical’ impact case study involves educating the public or interest groups in classical archaeology, with datasets drawn from across the UK or Europe.

- **REF2021**

There were fewer impact case studies for REF2021 than 2014, with 58 submissions from British universities. Once again, the data underpinning these case studies is drawn from a broad temporal range, with 14 different contexts represented. These results are displayed in fig. 4.9.

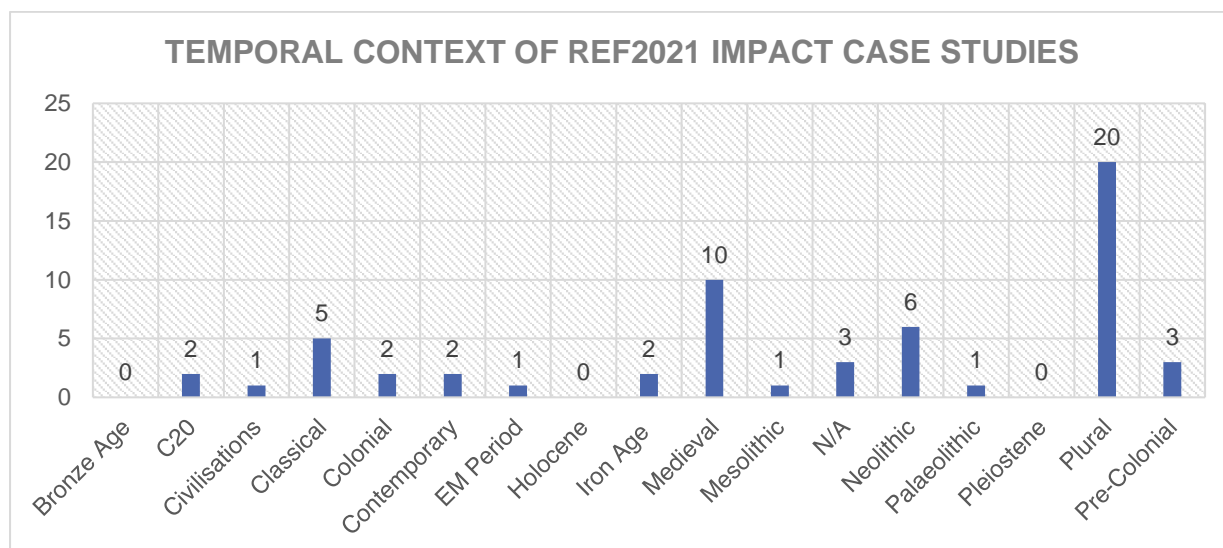


Figure 4.9: temporal context of data from REF2021 case studies (from REF data)

Once again, the most popular datasets were drawn from a wider timescale, rather than a singular context, with an even greater proportion represented in the 2021 case studies. There has also been a sharp drop-off in studies concerning the Classical Period, and a comparative growth in those

concerning the Medieval and Neolithic periods. This is interesting, considering the ramifications of Brexit on both public discourse throughout the period, considering that the Classical Period is necessarily European, whereas discussions on the Medieval or Neolithic could be drawn upon more feasibly from an exclusively British perspective.

Euroscepticism is not, however, represented in the geographical spread of impact for the 2021 case studies which, despite only having 58 submissions, claim impact from 102 different geographical contexts (see fig. 4.10)

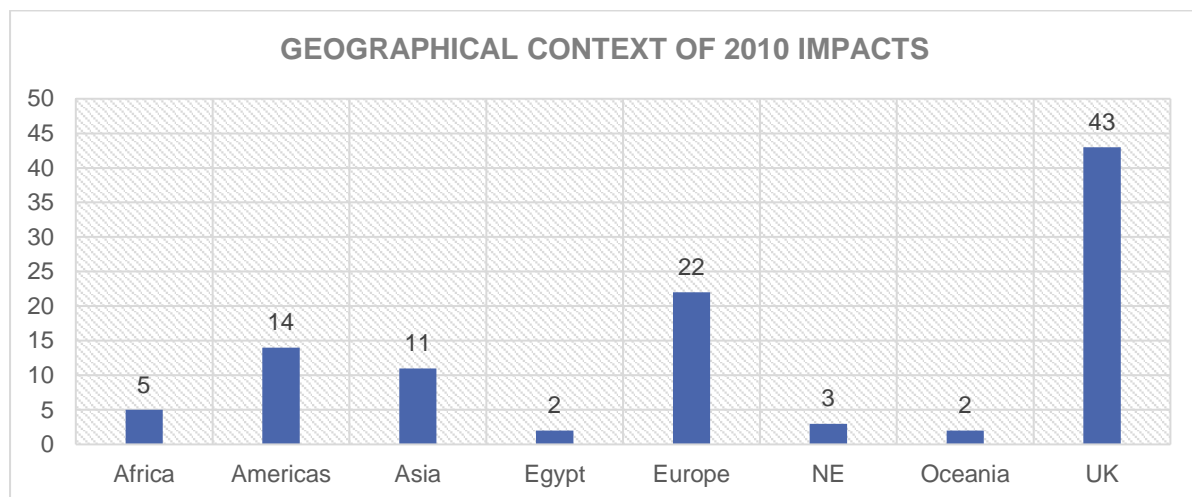


Figure 4.10: geographical context of impacts from REF2021 case studies (from REF data)

Here, impacts within the UK and Europe have increased moderately, but at the apparent cost of a more internationalist scope, with all other contexts dropping off, as shown in table 4.12. Whilst decreases have, with the exception of Oceania, been moderate, this could in any case speak to a more Anglo- and Eurocentric trend in driving research impact, and it is notable for this to have coincided with the increase in (neo)populist rhetoric towards the latter half of the decade.

REGION	2014	%	2021	%
Africa	11	7%	5	5%
Americas	27	17%	14	14%
Asia	16	10%	11	11%
Egypt	1	1%	2	2%
Europe	23	15%	22	22%
NE	7	4%	3	3%
Oceania	18	11%	2	2%
UK	55	35%	43	42%

Table 4.12: geographical context of impacts from REF2014 and REF2021 case studies (from REF data)

This is arguably reflected in the geographical context of datasets for the 2021 REF (see fig. 4.11)

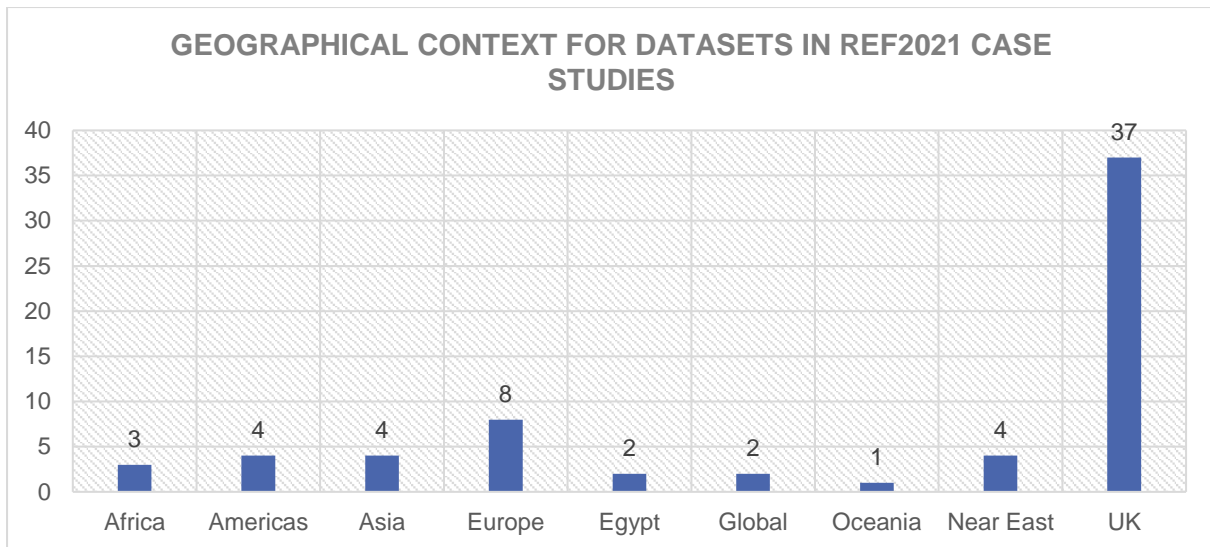


Figure 4.11: temporal context of data from REF2014 case studies (from REF data)

There is a wider pool of data represented here, as is shown in table 4.13, with a significant decrease in data from Europe and wider global contexts leading to extremely moderate increases across most other contexts, with the exception of data from the UK, which remains broadly flat across the two case study submission samples.

	2014 %		2021 %	
Africa	3	3%	3	5%
Americas	4	4%	4	6%
Asia	4	4%	4	6%
Europe	22	20%	8	12%
Egypt	1	1%	2	3%
Global	7	6%	2	3%
Oceania	0	0%	1	2%
NE	7	6%	4	6%
UK	62	56%	37	57%

Table 4.13: geographical context of data from REF2014 and REF2021 case studies (from REF data)

This data is also siloed within its geographical context when it comes to driving impact for the 2021 case studies, to an even greater extent than in 2014. Imports of data to drive impact within the UK during this period have more than halved, with only six examples of data from overseas being drawn upon (see table 4.14)

Africa	Americas	Asia	Egypt	Europe	NE	Worldwide	Total	CASE STUDIES
1	1	0	0	2	0	2	6	59

Table 4.14: geographical context of data driving impact in the UK from REF2021 case studies (from REF data)

Of this much smaller sample, there is greater diversity than in the 2014 REF, with one example from Africa, and another from the Americas. There has again been a sharp decrease in European data being utilised, dropping from 14% of total case studies to 3%, potentially reflecting the perceived necessities of the Brexit agenda in academic research outputs.

There was little change in the mode of impact drawn upon by submitting institutions between the assessments, with the preference for education and outreach remaining evident, at a flat 60%. There is a decrease in those seeking to drive impact through commercial partnership and best practice, perhaps as a result of the shift towards impact being gauged specifically outside academia, and a corresponding rise in public policy and conservation outcomes (see fig. 4.12)

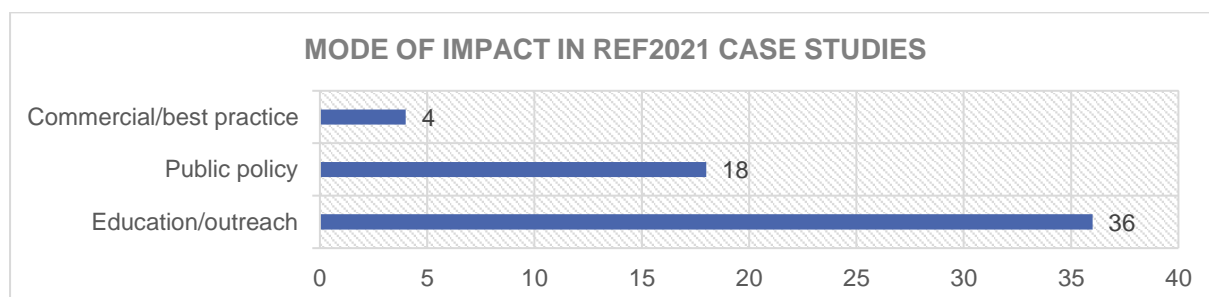


Figure 4.12: temporal context of data from REF2021 case studies (from REF data)

- **REF vs Archaeological Scholarship**

In both cases, there is a disconnect between datasets utilised as part of the REF impact case study sample, and comparative archaeological scholarship. This is initially felt acutely when the time periods of the whole WoS sample are considered alongside data from both REF assessments (see fig. 4.13)

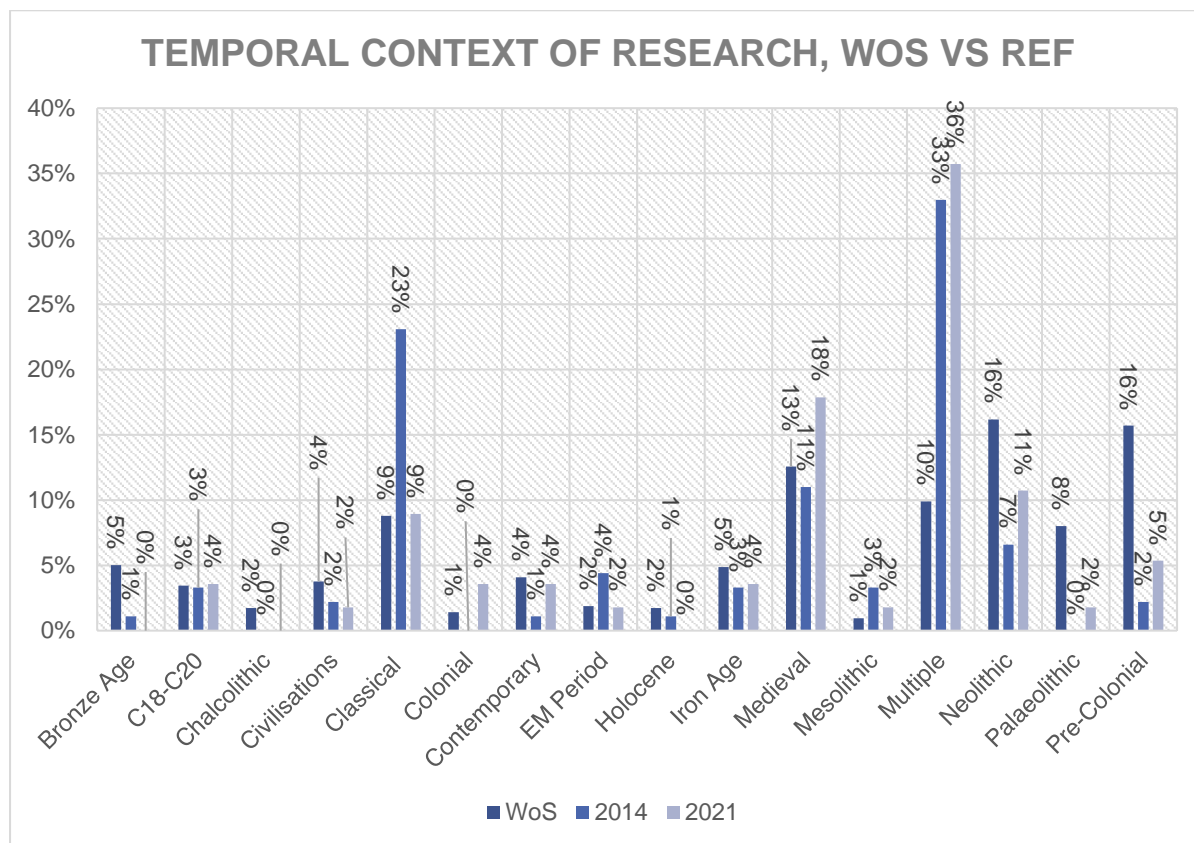


Figure 4.13: temporal context of data from REF case studies and WoS data

The most notable differences here are in the disparities between discussions on the Classical Period in the literature versus the 2014 REF case studies, and the far higher number of discussions on the pre-Colonial Global South in the former, compared with both REF samples. The Classics-centric nature of the 2014 REF, whilst completely at-odds with archaeological research beyond the assessment, does at least appear to be rectified by the time of the 2021 REF. Discussions on the pre-Colonial period, whilst increasing slightly for 2021, remain extremely low when compared with published literature across the period. This is highly notable, considering that, aside from the above-mentioned 2014 focus on Classical Antiquity, and an unrepresentative skew towards time-spanning projects in both rounds of the REF, the under-representation of discussions on the pre-Colonial Global South are the only real difference between the WoS data and REF assessments.

TIME	WoS	2014	2021
Bronze Age	5%	1%	0%
C18-C20	3%	3%	4%
Chalcolithic	2%	0%	0%
Civilisations	4%	2%	2%
Classical	9%	23%	9%
Colonial	1%	0%	4%
Contemporary	4%	1%	4%
EM Period	2%	4%	2%
Holocene	2%	1%	0%
Iron Age	5%	3%	4%
Medieval	13%	11%	18%
Mesolithic	1%	3%	2%
Multiple	10%	33%	36%
Neolithic	16%	7%	11%
Palaeolithic	8%	0%	2%
Pre-Colonial	16%	2%	5%

Table 4.14: temporal context of data from REF case studies and WoS data

There are similar concerns when the geographical context of datasets are considered. For closer analysis, in this instance the WoS data were subdivided into two periods; 2010-2014 (fig. 4.14), and 2014-2019 (fig. 4.15), roughly reflecting the period covered by each successive REF assessment.

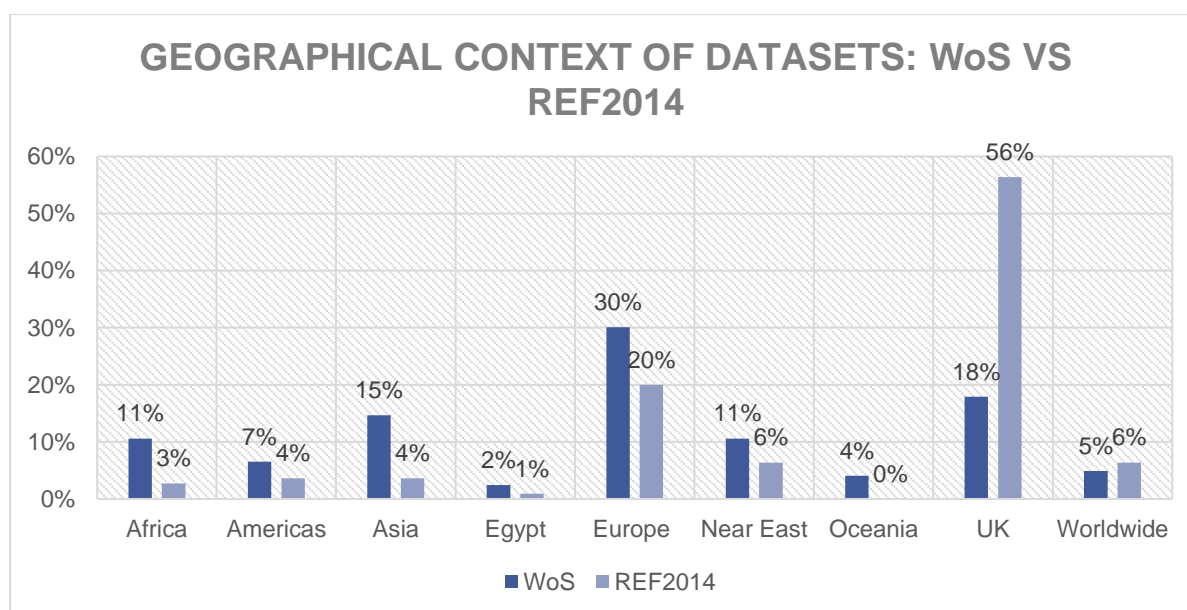


Figure 4.14: geographical context of data from REF2014 case studies and WoS data

The datasets for REF2014 were grossly over-representative of research conducted within the UK, at the expense of every other geographical context, beyond research with a broadly international approach, which is roughly in line. The most under-represented areas include research drawing on African and Asian datasets, with a disparity of around 75% in both cases. Europe is also under-represented by around 30%. These issues persist in the data underpinning research for the 2021 REF (see fig. 4.15).

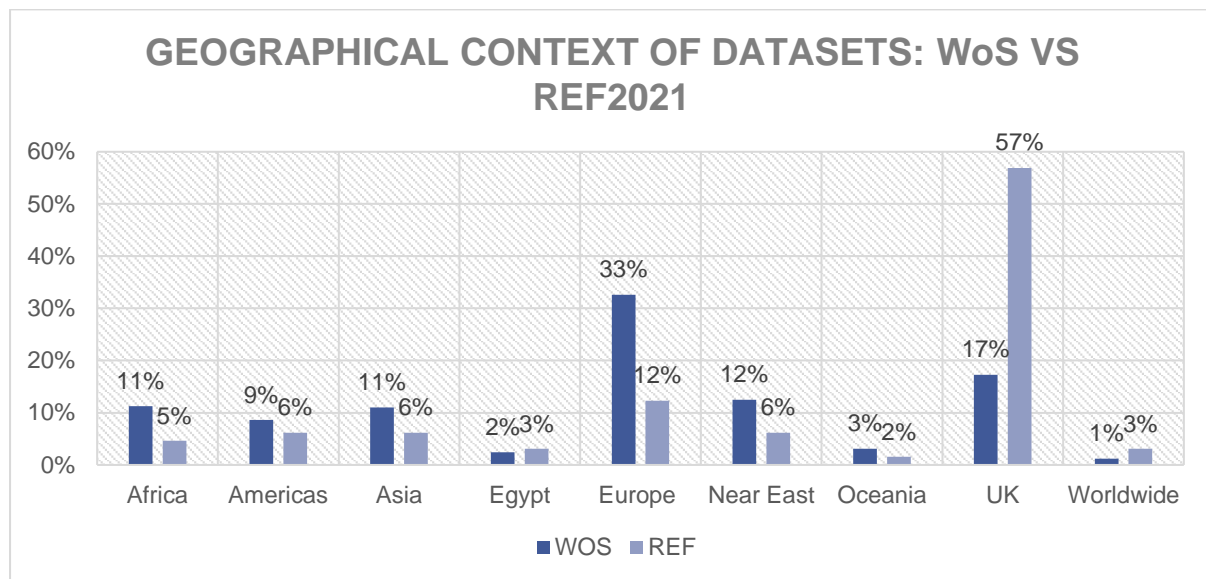


Figure 4.15: geographical context of data from REF2014 case studies and WoS data

Research utilising British datasets remain grossly over-represented. Despite slight improvements, research utilising datasets from across the Global South, and in particular Africa and Asia, alongside the Near East, also remain highly under-represented, by around 50% in each case. Interestingly, given the political events of the 2015-2019 period, the most underrepresented context in this case is actually European data, by around 65%. This is driven both by the seemingly intentional uptick in European research on the whole, and the seemingly intentional cutback of European data for the REF assessment.

It is, however, interesting that the REF results from 2014 have had seemingly no impact on actual research outputs over the subsequent five years. Given the function of the REF as an audit on the quality of university research, it might be expected that favourable outcomes from one assessment year might lead researchers to bring their work more in-line with what has been designated as ‘good’ research by the auditor. It may also be expected that funding bodies would seek to sponsor more research which is supposedly in the ‘public interest’ (if the REF can serve as such a proxy). However, in reality, it appears as though the REF functions on an entirely different plane than on-the-ground research activities. Figures across most geographical contexts, Europe notwithstanding, are broadly flat across both assessment periods, and onwards.

The question, then, is the precise role that the REF plays when it comes to the production and dissemination of British archaeology and heritage research. Since the results of the 2014 assessment have been of no identifiable consequence to the contexts in which researchers are working, any effect would likely be felt in the types of research that are being designated for driving impact in the future. This may be reflected in the changes in the mode of impact that researchers sought to deliver between the two assessment periods (see table 4.15) with the least popular mode of impact seeing most of its proportion shift towards ‘public policy’, and the most popular maintaining its proportion.

	2014		2021	
Education/outreach	61	60%	36	62%
Public policy	24	24%	18	31%
Commercial/best practice	17	17%	4	7%

Table 4.15: modes of outreach for REF2014 and REF2021 impact case studies (from REF data)

If this is the case, and is also represented in the *content* of research chosen for a public engagement and impact push, then this could set a dangerous, and fundamentally outdated, precedent, whereby ‘the public’ are given access to a highly selective, unrepresentative sample of archaeological work, generally on themes which are already saturated throughout popular discourse on the past. Indeed, it is possible that this saturation is in fact guiding decisions *to* push these themes in the first place, as there is already a proven ‘market’ for knowledge on the Classical, British Medieval, and European prehistoric periods. This would thus position our role in the ‘knowledge economy’ as ultimately reflectors of a poorly-gauged ‘public interest’, rather than vectors for ‘new’ knowledge.

Academics’ Perspectives on the Research Landscape

There are a number of questions that this data does not directly address, chiefly, the extent to which any degree of structural influence on research is actually *felt* by active researchers. Accordingly, a series of interviews were run with researchers, concerning the motivations behind their research, their sources of inspiration, their experiences applying for, reviewing, and/or administering UKRI and other research funds, along with their perspectives on the nature and importance of archaeology and heritage in contemporary British society.

The Sample

There were a total of 11 interview participants. In the absence of any population-level demographical data concerning archaeological and heritage researchers, an effort was made to ensure an equal gender balance amongst participants, along with a good spread along other demographics, including participants’ ethnicities, the age of researchers’ institutions; whether or not institutions belong to the Russell Group; along with participants’ academic rank, and the year in which they were awarded their PhD (if applicable) (see table 4.16 for breakdown of participant demographics).

GENDER		RANK		AGE OF UNI		AREA OF RESIDENCE	
M	6	N/A	1	Pre 1800s	2	SE England	1
F	5	Lecturer	2	1800s	3	SW England	2
ETHNICITY		Snr Lect.	1	1900-1960	1	Midlands	2
White	10	Asc. Prof	1	1960-pres.	5	NE England	3
Mixed	1	Reader	2	AWARDED PhD		NW England	2
AGE BAND		Prof	4	1980s	2	Wales	1
35-44	4	RUSSELL GROUP?		1990s	0		
45-54	3	Y	6	2000s	5		
55-64	2	N	5	2010s	3		
65+	2			N/A	1		

Table 4.16: participant demographics

The sample accordingly has a good gender balance, has a good range of age brackets and geographical locations represented, and a good spread of academic ranks and PhD dates (serving as a proxy for career stage). The sample is, however, comprised of mostly White individuals, and is skewed slightly towards those at Russell Group institutions.

Results

Inductive coding of interview transcripts revealed a number of themes for discussion, which correlate broadly to the multi-level analysis of academic knowledge production discussed in Chapter Two. Accordingly, the discussion below will centre on influences on the instigation, production, and reception of research: (i) at the collegiate level; (ii) at the institutional level; and (iii) at the structural level.

Collegiate Level

There was almost universal agreement amongst participants that discussion and collaboration with colleagues is an important source of inspiration when defining the course of research. Discussing the role that colleagues play in developing research, Participant #187 remarked that “it’s those coffee chats where someone says ‘I’m doing this’, and I say ‘can I have some samples?’... Yeah. It’s a really collaborative environment really”, adding that the absence of informal discussion during the pandemic brought the utility of these interactions into relief: “I was kind of taken aback by [this] because it’s been two years, in my office by myself!”. Similarly, when asked where they draw most of their inspiration from, Participant #3 responded: “Reading other peoples’ research and getting ideas and inspiration, but also discussing with colleagues, and often at conferences”. Participant #24 agreed, adding that “it’s the informal conversations which allow ideas to be bounced around in a much more flexible and open-ended way”. Participant #126 noted that their current key research interest emerged from one such conversation: “I had got talking to a colleague of mine... at a conference... we went out for a meal in the evening and got talking, and he’s been doing this work... and [he] was saying, ‘did I think my approach to involving people living in [local] communities in

digging would work in [this context]?’ And I said ‘yes, I think it would!’”. Participant #115 posited that informal networking is itself fundamental to archaeology’s disciplinary identity: “I think it’s very important for archaeologists... our work relies on team working, in the field, or in the lab, or wherever it is”.

Colleagues also note the importance of collegiate discourse in *interdisciplinary* settings. In the case of Participant #24, a Professor Emeritus, such discussions formed the basis of their career, characterised by innovative, transdisciplinary research: “It started off from random meetings where I met with a very senior geochemist and some young geneticists ... we met in the informal way you mentioned, you know, over drinks or whatever”, noting that their informal conversations later led to frequent collaborations. Discussing the distinction between disciplinary and interdisciplinary discussion, they also remarked that “it’s those interdisciplinary conversations that have made me kind of sit up and think. Which doesn’t mean that my conversations with fellow archaeologists haven’t been stimulating and important”. This point was also raised by #126, who noted the importance of “a culture within your university where people are... interdisciplinary, to get people thinking along [these] lines”.

Participant #126 also discussed the role of interdisciplinary university departments in expanding individual research interests and horizons:

One of the reasons I like it is because at [my first university] I was in the Archaeology Department, which was a fantastic department, but I only ever saw archaeologists... [at my current university] we don't even have an archaeology department. I'm in history and humanities. But because of that, I'm constantly seeing colleagues who work in other areas, people in psychology, in art and design, in health and social care and in rural health, you know... it's never easy to put together a transdisciplinary proposal, but at least I've got the network, so we can start to make these things happen.

Others also mentioned the advantages of a diverse pool of interest in their departments. Participant #36, for example, despite labelling themselves a “lone wolf” in terms of research interests, noted that “I’ve done collaboration on nuclear archaeology... I’ve done work on archaeology of football with another member of staff... everybody sort of works together in different ways”. #54 also mentioned that “‘cos if someone dug up a bunch of bones, [colleagues will] end up saying ‘I’ve heard you could do [something] with that!’, so yeah, in the last year, I’ve collaborated with a professor from religious studies trying to track down some ancient sites... you know, something I know absolutely nothing about, but they needed a specialist!”. It is notable that these participants are chiefly engaged in very different forms of research, #126 in medieval archaeology and public engagement, #36 defining themselves as a “dirt archaeologist” with a particular interest in Amerindian archaeology and heritage

issues, and #54 in osteoarchaeology and archaeological science. Others, whilst not interdisciplinary, nonetheless noted the importance of their respective research clusters within their institutions: “I think one of the reasons why the move to [my current university] has been such a good decision for me was because I’ve become part of the bioarchaeology and forensic anthropology group, and it’s a really lovely team” (#143); “I started in 2020, and I was part of a group hire... so us as a research cluster, but the rest of the department is fairly traditional” (#90).

Interestingly, a number of participants also alluded to their foundational role in building up departmental research interest clusters. Participant #115, for example, noted that, when they joined their department, “there [were less than 10] archaeologists... and so we really got the chance to develop the research of the department in the way that we wanted.”, adding that there were now a number of students researching these specific interests at their department. Similarly, Participant #24 added: “we built up quite a group... there were quite a few postdocs and so forth working with me, and also some of my colleagues in the department that had a similar [interest]”. A similar scenario was discussed by #54: “the lab has expanded massively. We’ve now got a third permanent member of staff. And in the last 2-3 years we’ve had 10 postdocs... and probably about 20 PhD students. So yeah, it’s been a big growth market within [my university]”. If not entirely unexpected, it is still interesting to note the role that these clusters play in perpetuating certain themes and approaches to archaeological praxis, particularly within their institutions. Indeed, despite the growth of internet technologies and globalisation, the importance of actual, corporeal proximity and collegiate dialogue still arguably represents ideas around the research paradigm: institutions who garner a reputation for a specific specialism or approach attract student- and collaborative practitioners according to this reputation, thus further entrenching the institutional identity, and potentially enriching the sub-disciplinary discussion and research portfolios of those at these institutions, again enhancing their reputation. The extent to which these are manifested in actual research outputs are, however, less clear.

For a number of participants, the opportunities presented through collegiate discussion also lend themselves to active research collaboration. Participant #115 highlighted, for example, that “we do quite a lot of projects together [within our department], and also have a lot of collaborative projects outside of the university”, adding that “not [all research happens] through informal discussion or personal networks, of course, but often it does... those personal connections are quite important”. Balancing partnerships between the university department and external collaborators is a common theme for discussion, with #143 noting that “I did a lot of collaborative work at my former institution, both with colleagues in the department and also with external organisations”. Similarly, although Participant #8 holds a unique research approach in their department, they nonetheless note frequent collaboration “with members of [their] department, but often with members of other institutions as well”.

It is important to note, however, that the interests and approaches of all three of these participants could broadly be considered ‘archaeological sciences’. Those practicing more humanities-oriented approaches, or straddling the two, note greater difficulty when it comes to collaborating with colleagues. Whilst still engaging in collaborative work, Participant #187 nonetheless remarked: “we’re divided between the sciences and the humanities at this institution, in terms of our location. And I am very much in the humanities side, but I feel like I do a lot of sciences stuff... If you don’t feel that you belong completely to each of the two camps, it can be isolating”. Participant #90 also noted their frustration with departmental collaboration: “there’s perhaps more potential for collaboration than I think some of my colleagues realise... most of my teaching is either very generic, level 1 introduction to archaeology, or it’s highly specialised South American Amazonian archaeology. And that’s the way I think they see me”. Similarly, although Participant #36 is able to collaborate with colleagues, this is rarely within their Americanist field of specialism: “we’re very focused in on British archaeology... so most of my colleagues really focus on British archaeology. But *their* specialisms really overlap though” (emphasis mine). These participants provide examples of the need, perceived or otherwise, for researchers to compromise their primary interests in some way in order to collaborate with colleagues, further demonstrating the collegiate effect on defining and producing research. These participants are all keen to collaborate with colleagues, and two are actively involved in doing so, engaging with research in areas which are outside of their own specific interests. This process can thus be seen as providing both means for expansion, and a limit to, these research interests – the former since colleagues will, through collaboration, doubtless be exposed to research beyond their own remit. They are limiting, however, since the more time colleagues spend outside of their own research interests, the less time they have to dedicate to them, and as such this process could be seen, to some extent, as one of normative control.

Some participants, however, proposed that disciplinary archaeology and heritage is not inherently collaborative. Participant #169, for example, noted that “people who are particularly successful and are solo researchers, possibly haven’t worked in large teams... and when you do become part of a team, you don’t necessarily have any experience in running a large project, in leading people, in managing the workload or in the finances. And I think that’s where a lot of quite the unhappiness comes from... if you come up as a chemist, you will have been part of a lab group from undergraduates. And if you carry on in that field, you will always be part of a team”. #187 also added that “I feel there’s a really interesting tension, I think, between the cultural archaeological side of things, which tends to be that single scholar model, and the more scientific environment, which tends to be more of a team working together, and lead PI with a group of scientists or postdocs, or PhDs working at different levels. And so those create very different management structures, and very different into traditions of intellectual knowledge ownership”. They later added that, owing to the aforementioned split of department between ‘the scientific’ and humanities: “I think it forces me more into the single scholar model than perhaps I would be if I was located into the same location”.

Institutional Level

The role of others in changing (thus potentially limiting) research interests is more acutely felt at the institutional level. Whilst participants did highlight new ideas and approaches catalysed by collegial dialogue, another often-cited reason for changing research interests was the pursuit of funding. Often, this took place in the early stages of participants' careers, as per #187: "the only real postdoc [positions] that I was interviewed for were ones that were using scientific methodologies. And so, I started as a cultural archaeologist, and then went into work more in the biosciences side of archaeology... the trajectory was shaped by what was being funded at the time, and therefore, the need to keep up with that in order to have a job". Similarly, Participant #54 recounted: "I always consider myself more of a human osteologist really, but then a job came up as an animal bone person and I got it. And since then, I've been much more animal focused". For Participant #90, a shift was made by *perceived*, rather than necessarily actual, demand: "I [was] very heavily into postmodern theory, post-processual archaeology... I got to the end of my Master's realising I had essentially no skills under my belt. I couldn't actually do anything with archaeological data... so I sort of tacked towards computational analysis".

A more direct, if potentially less seismic, means through which research directions are institutionally mediated is through themed funding calls. There is a broad consensus that, as noted by Participant #143, "it would be a real stretch for me to push my research to fit into those themes. I don't think I've ever seen a themed call and gone 'oh that's perfect for me!'". Some, such as #54, said that a poor fit led them to actively avoid applying for themed funding: "I've never applied to one, I've never seen one that really suits me. I see them about, and I think 'could I wrangle it to that?' And I always think 'well, not really'. You know, it'd be a stretch. I consider it high risk". Others discussed the need to tailor proposals to fit into the themes, rather than avoiding them outright. When asked if they felt as if their interests were often represented in funding calls, Participant #36 responded: "No... they're really problematic, because oftentimes your research is only tangentially related to [the theme]. So you have to really rewrite everything to make it work". Participant #90 noted that a lack of representative funding calls had actually prevented collaborative work from happening: "it's been [at the] prospective stages, and it's never quite worked out". Finally, Participant #187 discussed logistical issues when responding to themed funding calls, and, interestingly, given the figures above, sought to differentiate the experience with themed funding for archaeology and heritage scholars: "often [themed calls] come out so fast, even if you did think there's a relevancy, unless you've already got the team ready to go. It's very hard to target, at least from my prehistory perspective. I've had a lot of chat around how unworkable themed funding is for archaeology in particular... but some of the Heritage focused stuff in my institution has been very successful with some of these themed calls".

Others spoke to the utility (or lack thereof) of themed funding calls. Participant #115 noted that "sometimes we're doing projects for government agencies or large national charities, and they want

some useful outcome from it – methodology or something – so that's fine, and you expect that if you're gonna be taking the money from that funder". #126 also sought to deliver a balanced perspective on certain funding calls: "there is a heritage theme now, [and] that's been very dynamic, but it has focused particularly on the biggest issues that are facing heritage at the moment: culture wars-type stuff about the malign uses of heritage; restitution; and those sorts of issues. I think it's working well on those", although they had earlier noted that their experience advising a funding call had not been quite so successful: "I was actually on the advice group for [a heritage-focussed funding call], but that was a bit vague. I don't think that worked terribly well". Participant #143 discussed themed calls in the context of public accountability: "I think the focus has changed... to the types of topics that the funding councils feel that they need to be *seen* to be funding, because they are accountable to taxpayers, I think that plays a big part of it" (emphasis orig.). When they were asked what sort of research areas were being encapsulated within this push for accountability, #143 responded: "I think they relate to issues that are important and relevant to the public today.... whether that's issues around, for instance, gender identity, climate change, and inequality, all very important and very big issues that do need consideration. And I think they are driving quite a lot of the agenda".

Beyond the definition of new research angles, participants also discussed the process of applying for funds in depth. There was much allusion to how time-consuming the process could be (for example, from #115: "I did find myself wondering when I finished writing this [proposal] 'why do I always volunteer to do this?' ... it can be quite a painful procedure"). Participant #143 noted that they had "just stepped off of the funding treadmill... it was at a point where one was going in and getting rejected, I was recycling it, and going back in again. I've made a conscious decision to break that habit because... [it] was distracting me from actually writing the publications and doing the lab work". Participant #3 also discussed time constraints with relation to acceptance rates, remarking of larger grants that "you have a lot of people investing a lot of time into something that the odds are showing you're not going to get".

When asked how the funding landscape had changed since their first application, #143 noted that "there's less funding... and it's more competitive". This reflects a general consensus amongst participants, particularly for archaeology and heritage projects. Participant #54 stated that: "We're living off the scraps from the table, particularly [compared with] someone who does scientific research ... now, increasingly, we're having to get small grants just to fund travel, to fund hotel stays and museums, all this sort of stuff". They later added that a recent application "was rejected narrowly, it was right on the border, quite a lot [of applications] that have the grading it had to get funded, and I really poured my heart and soul into it, and I was devastated, and that that just shows that I was naïve, because however good it is, you need to be lucky, and I totally understand that now because everything's so competitive". Participant #97 also remarked, of a recent application for funding from the Leverhulme Trust: "I didn't get that one, I got letters saying how competitive the

process was, which I found rather interesting because I think they had about four or five applications and they were granting five. Which seems not that competitive, but I can't complain!"

The effects of this lack of funding on the research process were also discussed. For #54, these effects were felt most acutely by their PhD students: "so we might find some ideal material in the National Museum of Scotland, but [with] the travel and accommodation expenses and all the logistical stuff around that, we're not gonna bother. We're gonna find some inferior material in [our local museum], which is a 5-minute walk away". Participant #90 spoke of being unable to expand their research interests as a result of unsuccessful funding applications in other areas: "I'd love to branch out. I've tried several times, but the funding landscape hasn't worked out". Similarly, #126 spoke of being unable to secure funding to conduct research in their area of interest: "I think mediaeval [archaeology] is difficult. If you look at the data, the mediaeval period is not particularly well funded. You can get funding if you've got a human remains story, you know, a big cemetery thing, you can do that, I think, because that's using scientific evidence". Whilst it would be unfeasible to suggest that all academic researchers should have access to as much funding as they need to conduct research in whatever their area of interest is, it is nonetheless worrying to hear of the scope of fundable projects being reduced, colleagues being unable to expand their personal research interests, or perceptions of underfunding for whole sub-disciplines.

Participants were, however, on the whole at pains to not place the burden of these deficits on any funding agencies in general, and the AHRC in particular. As #24 noted, "they have to be conscious of what the Secretary of State is saying, of what the universities are saying... they have a lot of masters". Speaking on inter- and intra-council competition, Participant #187 also added: "I don't think people fully understand, unless you've been to a panel and watched a very clever English professor, or history professor, take up all the history grants so that they're at the top and archaeology is falling down. And I think that was the first panel I actually went to!". Acknowledging, if tempering the sense of disciplinary solidarity, #169 noted that "at the moment it feels that humanities are pulling together, because there's a perceived threat... and I think there's strength in numbers. But if it comes to it, and it's your department or mine... yeah, I think things are always easier when there aren't externalities putting pressure on a situation".

That is not to say, however, that perceptions of the AHRC and UKRI are uniformly positive across the board. There were positive sentiments about the career that UKRI had enabled successful participants to build, as was the case for #97, who remarked that "I'd be very positive about AHRC overall. I mean, I would be, because I've probably got 7 out of 8 [grants that I had applied for]". Similarly, their previous comments about under resourcing for PhD students notwithstanding, #54 did concede that "the system within UKRI is quite good, with the exception of PhD funding. I think the PhD funding bit is screwed, but other than that I think it works well... of all the systems I've

come across, I think UKRI is a little bit fairer than the rest.”. The general object of praise within the UKRI was a perception of the agency as ultimately open and transparent with its review processes. Elaborating on their appraisal of the body, #54 continued: “it’s the different stages of rigour, I guess. They’re pretty clear in their guidance, and in saying what they want.”. #115 added that “I would say that UKRI are interested in the research... if you can write a clear narrative explaining what you’re gonna find out, and why it’s important, that’s the key objective”, whilst #187 remarked that, in contrast with other schemes: “you get your... peer review back from two or three people... and then you can write a PI response, and then it goes to panel, and *then* you find out whether you’ve been funded or not”.

However, although the *transparency* of UKRI’s processes was generally popular amongst participants, the nature of these processes, particularly with regards to peer review and evaluation, drew criticism from across the sample. Comparing UKRI with European bodies, Participant #143 posited that: “I think when a reviewer is ranking a project, you know that there is a lot of bias that comes into it, [and] as this [review] pool gets smaller, there tends to be a greater tendency to rely on what the evaluators know of the applicant, or the application/ or the applicants’ institution... So my sense is that this can affect the outcomes more significantly compared to European Commission panels that I’ve been involved in”. Discussing their experiences serving on review panels, #115 added that the fairness of a review “depends on the way that the panel is chaired, and who the chair is, and who the individuals are who are given different proposals to talk about, and their perspective on them, and their evaluation of them. This is where the role of the chair is quite important because it is possible to have the situation where you have a very strident or assertive panel member, who is able to make their feelings, uh, felt”, adding later that: “I think possibly there is scope for... more moderation... so that there’s less opportunity for noisy people to make their own way, basically”. Participant #187, whilst not disagreeing with the problematic effects of certain personal dynamics on UKRI councils, suggested that panel members could ‘generally’ discern reviews made in bad faith: “panels are usually quite alert to where it looks like there’s internal competition between groups... UKRI aren’t like the ERC, where you can say you want to exclude reviewers because they’re in direct competition. But if someone does write obviously driven by something that’s competitive, it shows up, and it makes for a bad peer review. And you normally can see that... people are intuitive and very smart about these things, on the whole”.

Other issues with UKRI review posited by participants included a lack of reviewer expertise, and the conservatism of panels in general. On the former, Participant #3 suggested that: “I think when you’re reading an application, if the methods are unfamiliar to you, then it can negatively impact your impression of the project. Whereas actually if you then read a project where you totally understand what they’re doing, and you totally get it, I think it’s easier for you to assess it naturally”. Discussing their experiences with reviewers, #90 added that “I think it’s because reviewers don’t necessarily have the background to assess the questions that are being asked, so in order to bring them up to speed,

you need to spend a substantial part of quite a small document to that end”. On the conservatism of review panels, #169 noted: “it is a difficulty that peer review means that we tend to make incremental changes, not step changes”, adding that a reviewer for a highly complex mathematical project that they had been involved in had questioned the necessity of funding the project since “this is easy!”, without an appropriate grounding in the field on which they were commenting. #187 agrees, arguing that “on the whole... I would say that panels are conservative... that doesn’t mean that they’re not looking for ambitious projects, or they’re not looking for things which are timely, but I’ve seen people who otherwise would be wanting to do absolutely cutting edge, ‘out there’ ideas, restrict themselves to things that are less risky within that context. I also think that part of the discussions are about feasibility, like, people don’t want to waste money”.

This idea around good research providing ‘value for money’ was acutely present around discussions on ‘impact’ in research. Some felt as though discussions around ‘impact’ had risen in prominence for the UKRI application process. #3, for example, who conducts most of their research abroad, when asked if the application process had changed much since their first application with UKRI, remarked that “obviously the application [process] has changed. When I have done previous applications they used to have.... pathways to impact, and now that’s integrated into the actual application, but I don’t feel a disadvantage in terms of the fact that I was generating impact overseas as opposed to generating impact in the UK”. This latter point is interesting, given the prominence given to UK-based research in REF submissions, as discussed earlier. #187 also discussed the prominence of ‘impact’ in panel discussions in the UK, through their experience as a reviewer: “UKRI, you can tell it’s designed by committee... the originality, significance, rigor, it’s through everything. But UKRI tend to go beyond these different sections, [and] they want you to comment on public outreach and impact, which isn’t often part of other funding schemes in Europe”. They went on to clarify, however, that “on the whole, I would say that the vast majority of discussion is about the feasibility and academic significance of grants... The impact is important, but it’s much more about the intellectual impact...”. This is reflected in responses to questions surrounding the feedback given to participants for UKRI applications, with #90 noting that “[review comments] tend to be on the quality of the of the actual research”, as opposed to comments on ‘impact’. #54 similarly replied: “Yeah, some of it was methodological. Some of it was thematic, some of it was about scale”. Tying discussions around impact with the broader panel dynamic, #24 stated that “It’s up to the chair whether it’s discussed at panel level and, yeah, when I’ve been the chair of things, I’ve put something on the agenda for discussion like that”.

Structural Level

Structural impacts on research are two-fold. On the one hand are the somewhat contrived *appeals* to broader social structures mediated through the ‘impact’ agenda. On the other are the more covert influences felt by elements of participants’ *habitus* and *doxa*. Participants had generally positive

perspectives on producing research that generated public impact. #115, for example, remarked that “I think it’s important to do applied research where you can see some societal benefit or practical outcome ... I don’t have problem with the impact agenda. I understand the reasons for it. So I think it’s not a massive issue”. Similarly, #126 added: “And that public engagement thing... it’s just absolutely fundamental, because the capacity is there to make a positive difference beyond our research interests... we have moral responsibility to do it if we can”. #143 also noted that “I do give a lot of consideration to impact and how it might manifest”, whilst #169 questioned: “by and large it’s public money, [who am I to do] a really cool job without that duty to pay back?”. Finally, #97 noted their initial scepticism of ‘impact’ and public engagement: “I think for quite a lot of my career I’ve been struggling to create as much high quality research in academic terms, and not really thinking about public impacts”, before noting that “I need to find somebody, or a team of people, who are really good at doing the work on the ground, and getting that impact stuff arranged”.

On the other hand, there was significant discussion from participants around the ways in which their own upbringings and life experiences had defined their research priorities. For a number, including #115, the bases of their research interests had been with them from childhood: “since being a child I was interested in the stories of buildings and landscapes... I grew up in the middle of a Bronze Age field system and, so I was interested in it from an early age”. #24 also spoke of the influence of early experiences participating in local digs: “there was a great romance in the past, but then I found, to my surprise, that when I started getting on digs, it was still quite romantic, even though I’ve headed towards the scientific end”. Similarly, Participant #169, whose specialism straddles medieval heritage and digital technologies, spoke of the influence of their father’s early interest in computing on their eventual research career. They also noted the importance of their undergraduate degree: “the lecturers that I found the most fascinating, the funniest, the most likely to go off on amazing tangents, that just open your eyes to a whole new area, happened to be in the medieval period”. These sentiments were shared by #126, who noted that “I specialise in the medieval period, which I was interested in from university”.

Participants also spoke of the broad influence of current events on their research. Participant #3, for example, whose research largely centres on landscape and environmental archaeology, noted that “obviously we went through Brexit, and we have changes in Land Management policies and strategies... sometimes when I read about those, it does spark interest”. #3 similarly remarked that “I think I do [get inspiration] from some things in the media”. Participant #143 also stated, succinctly, that “I think the new-ness comes from outside”, when referring to their research interests. Discussing their shift towards more engagement-led research, Participant #126 remembered: “I think with the work at [my first university], so we started off with school kids, and that was just an absolute joy and it was unexpectedly good in terms of the positive impact it had”, going on to explain how the drive

to engage schoolchildren in the archaeological process had come to define one of their research priorities for the more recent part of their career.

Discussions around structural effects on the *receptions* of research were similarly split between ‘impact’, and influence. On the former, conversations around the REF took prominence. Some took issue with, as per #126: “a problem with REF [is that] putting in interdisciplinary publications is really difficult”. Similarly, #3 posited that “I think REF discourages transdisciplinary research, because then if you submit a paper to the REF that doesn’t neatly fall into a certain category it discourages people from doing that type of research”. Others questioned the legitimacy of the ways in which impact is gauged under the scheme: “I think from one REF cycle to another impact means something a little bit different. You know, once community engagement was considered reasonably good impact, now it’s considered no good at all really, or not good enough... I still don’t think UKRI have caught on to it, archaeologists do great impact all over the place, all the time, and although perhaps we don’t evidence it in quite the way REF likes, or quite the way UKRI likes” (Participant #54); “both within the application stage, and through to REF submission stage, it is not valued... researchers feel [that] they shouldn’t be doing it because it’s too risky” (Participant #126). Participant #97 spoke of the difficulties in evidencing ‘impact’ for the REF: “you know, trying to document [impact] for a REF impact case study would be impossible because [my research outreach] was done purely on the basis of any time I could find to do it”. Participant #90 also noted that “in purely cynical terms, impact means a high REF score. If you wanna boil it down to basics, it means you’re creating research that’s four-star, highly internationally relevant publications”. Participant #169, who had served on the REF selection committee for their previous institution, provided a more measured perspective: “I know REF has a mixed reception, but it’s trying to do such good things and it’s doing it in such a fair and open way”.

At the end of each interview, participants were asked one or both of the following questions:

- What are your opinions on the importance of archaeology and/or heritage in contemporary British society?
- Who do you conduct research for?

The responses yielded interesting results concerning the extent to which structural concerns are central to participants’ research outlooks.

Responding to the question around the importance of archaeology and heritage, participants were keen to emphasise the extent to which our research could address current human challenges: “I think they relate, at a basic level to how we ask critically about our past. And I think that that’s the basic thing in terms of how we relate that to who we are... and that’s very important now in terms of

sustainability and climate change, we can all model what the world might be like in 50 years, and we don't spend enough time thinking about what the world would be like in 2000 years" (Participant #24); "All of our natural world, even mediated through our lived experience of it, and what other people have done on the land, and in our settlements for centuries. And we have to keep re-examining it, because otherwise we end up with chocolate box histories, of, like, pretty, nice things that happened, that never existed" (Participant #169). Others highlighted the role our disciplines play in encouraging public debate, such as #115: "I think it can have a very important and constructive role as a forum to promote debate and discussion, to bring people together to look at heritage issues". The concept of drawing people together was also brought up by Participant #143: "I think [heritage] plays a really important role in giving the public a sense of place, and a sense of identity, and perhaps even a sense of purpose as well", and #169: "maybe your connection that goes back generations, or even centuries, but the joy and enthusiasm and interest, bring us together, [and are], I think, what makes society". Others cautioned against the political ramifications of discussions around heritage, highlighting our responsibility in them, for example: "I think there is fantastic scope for all kinds of societal benefits, but there's also potentially quite difficult or negative impacts for heritage, and I think heritage is generally not problematized sufficiently in the discourse. So people don't necessarily realise, [or] recognise the ways that heritage or the past is drawn on to exclude people, or to create narratives which are politically motivated" (#115).

Responses to the question concerning who participants conducted their research for were surprisingly homogenous. In most cases, participants first said that they conducted research for themselves, followed by indicating an additional sense of wider social responsibility: "Yes, I'm doing it because I enjoy doing it, but I feel that there is a responsibility on me as somebody in a position to do [the] work that I do" (#143); "So [I] do it for myself. But also I think that it has some useful role, it does have some aspects which are practically valuable in terms of societal development in terms of sustainability and climate change and ecological change and management" (#115); "I conduct research to satisfy my own personal curiosity, and if I can bring people along for the ride, then that's great" (#90). For other participants, social service came first, before personal interest was also considered: "we have statutory obligations and one of them is to preserve the record... that said, I should say me, shouldn't I? I enjoy it! No, I am fascinated by it" (#169); "a lot of my research is potentially for society, I suppose, like answering things that maybe the public are interested in, as well as just academics. I know that there are probably a group of archaeological geeks who might find this interesting, but I also hope that some of the work is interesting to people beyond academia" (#3). There were two outliers; Participant #6: "I don't do it for anyone specifically, I do it because it's the right thing to do. And there are so many different audiences that I can't pick all of them. [But] I put a lot of effort into making sure that the research that I do is not just accessible in publications, or open access publications, but accessible through physical places, people can come

and talk to me and engage in that way”; and Participant #187: “my students, the future... I don't know if I do research for the public”.

Conclusions: Academic Knowledge Creation and the ‘Ivory Tower’

The findings discussed above provide some insight into the topography of the research, funding, and impact landscape for archaeological researchers in the UK. On the one hand, it is clear that researchers are pursuing a highly diverse set of interests, utilising data from multiple time periods and wide-ranging geographical contexts. This engagement goes beyond surface-level, with around 50% of all sampled publications concerning contexts beyond the UK and Europe. There also appears to have been a significant reduction in Classically-oriented archaeologies, compared with the scholarship of the Early 20th Century, in favour of these more diverse enquiries. This diversity is also manifested in the scholarly impact delivered by sampled publications, with discussions on the Global South seeing average or above-average numbers of citations. The picture is less clear in data received from UKRI. It is notable that funding for ‘scientific’ archaeological research has decreased proportionally as more humanities and social-scientific research has been included. However, the processes through which these decisions are made are less clear, and thus speak to the opacity of public research funding. This is felt especially acutely in the high levels of research, in particular applications made for ‘heritage’ projects, which receive a ‘fundable but not funded’ score from research councils. A lack of oversight and scrutiny in this area leaves the process open to subjectivity and structural influence affecting gatekeepers to research funding, and thus the creation of ‘new knowledge’. Of particular concern, however, is the role of the REF in ‘showcasing’ academic impact. Comparative to the diverse research landscape, REF returns for archaeology and heritage have an extremely narrow focus, with a chief concern with the UK and Europe. Most of the research evidenced beyond Europe and submitted to the REF is not utilised to generate impact outside of the locale in which data was gathered, whilst data from the UK and Europe *is* drawn on to drive impact in the Global South and elsewhere. Works discussed in the previous chapter highlight the extent to which much ‘optimisation’ and ‘neoliberalisation’ of academic research is in effect self-censorial: academics and institutional administrators ultimately seek to deliver what they *think* funding agencies and government expect from their research. This data suggests that a similar process may be occurring with regards to delivering *nationalist* research, leading institutions to submit REF returns which are fundamentally out-of-step with the broader research landscape, emphasising a fundamentally Eurocentric perspective, at the expense of research in the Global South. As I demonstrate in later chapters, the levels of knowledge on diverse histories disseminated outside of the academy, and held by members of the British public, is such that almost *any* effective impact in the UK, drawing on datasets from the Global South, would inevitably serve to destabilise deeply problematic, outdated conceptions of the global past. A failure to draw on these in the REF returns thus represents a huge missed opportunity.

The differing levels of influence on the production of academic research also paints a diverse picture of the relationships amongst archaeological and heritage practitioners, their institutions and funders, and the wider structures in which they all inhabit. In general, the diverse research landscape appears to be upheld through scholarly interest clusters, largely proximal, which may serve as a contemporary iteration of Kuhn's 'research paradigms' (1962), albeit characterised by plurality, rather than strict disciplinary unity. Academics appear largely to be pursuing *their* interests, the scope of their enquiries being challenged and expanded through collegiate dialogue and collaboration. However, there are forces mediating both of these processes. On the one hand, many participants reported their explicit research interests being essentially 'set' *prior* to their careers, either from childhood or their early university education. Whilst questions around creating 'impact' do not explicitly lead on the instigation of research in most cases, colleagues do generally consider the 'outside world' during the research process. There are also clear limitations placed on the course of research through our current funding infrastructure. For one, it is concerning to see the number of participants who reported *changing* their research interests and approaches as a perceived or real response to potential funding allocations. This could represent a fundamental, if covert, circumvention of the Haldane principle, with active researchers aligning themselves more closely with stated or perceived research priorities at the structural and political level. It is significant that a number of such participants moved from humanities and/or theory-driven approaches to more 'scientific', utilitarian methodologies. These interviews also reveal that concerns with the peer and panel review processes reported for other disciplines (and discussed in Chapter Two) are also present in funding allocations for archaeology and heritage. Participants who had served on panels in particular note the problems that can arise through personal rivalries, subjectivities, 'big' personalities, and unqualified reviewers. Less-than-robust checks and balances here, combined with, for example, the high levels of FBNF funding decisions, and a general lack of oversight into panel decisions, strongly implies several routes for structural and/or political concerns to become entangled in the research process, potentially limiting the scope of 'new' knowledge production. This theme is further reflected in participants' perspectives on the fundamental conservatism of research panels.

These findings are not without limitations, and further investigation would serve to clarify and strengthen any interpretations made. As highlighted in the introduction to this research, significant difficulties were faced when attempting to draw data from UKRI concerning applications for funding. Effective collaboration with UKRI, with greater access to the far richer data that they hold, would doubtless provide greater context to any trends in research funding over the study period. A larger sample of academic researchers for interview would also strengthen the extent to which conclusions could be said to be generalisable. However, the homogeneity across many responses during data collection in some cases led to saturation and data redundancy, and as such this data can still be said to provide an insight into the knowledge production and funding processes within contemporary archaeological scholarship.

CHAPTER FIVE

HISTORY IN SCHOOLS

Criticisms of the current curriculum, outlined in Chapter Three, suggest that the historical content taught to pupils in England is wildly out-of-step with the diverse landscape of British archaeological and heritage research. These critiques assert that the post-2013 national curriculum in particular is imbued with regressive, nationalistic ideologies, with fundamentally Eurocentric underpinnings. However, as I noted when reviewing these works, a key defence of those in support of the curriculum has been to highlight its flexibility, with limited, typically broad prescriptions on the curriculum guidance itself, allowing for teachers to bring their own expertise into the classroom, and adapt topics as they see fit, within the broad confines of the specification. Drawing on this flexibility, however, would require both appropriate teacher expertise and, crucially, *adequate resources*. Similarly, whilst several of the works reviewed in Chapter Three do draw on ethnographic data in discussing the damaging effects of the present curriculum on students' mental health and sense of self, discussions on the role that the curriculum plays in shaping students' historical worldviews have not been as widely explored. Here, I seek to address both of these contentions, focussing in the first instance on a review of current history textbooks which are widely used to support lessons in English classrooms. I then turn to questionnaire data gathered from Year 9 pupils in two English secondary schools, ultimately demonstrating the damaging narratives being perpetuated, consumed, and thus replicated, through the current history curriculum.

Textbook Review

A sample of textbooks were analysed according to: (i) the *content* of the textbook – the information that they contained and, perhaps more importantly, that which they omitted; (ii) the *presentation* of this knowledge – how historical events are discussed, and the ultimate narrative that the book is propagating; and (iii) the *representation* of Others – what images and sources are used to represent cultural Others, and the effect that this has on the ultimate narrative of the textbook.

Sample

Textbook name	Publisher	Author	Year published	Years covered
KS3 Book II	Oxford	A. Wilkes	2015	1509-1745
KS3 Book III	Oxford	A. Wilkes	2015	1745-1901
KS3 Book IV	Oxford	A. Wilkes	2015	1901-present
Understanding History	Hodder	M. Reilly et al.	2019	AD79-present
Medieval Britain	Collins	R. Peal	2016	410-1509
Early Modern Britain	Collins	R. Peal	2016	1509-1760
Modern Britain	Collins	R. Peal	2017	1760-1900
Exploring History I	Pearson	R. Rees et al.	2017	N/A - thematic
Exploring History II	Pearson	R. Rees et al.	2018	N/A - thematic

Table 5.1: Textbook Sample

A total of nine textbooks were sampled (see table 5.1). These were all from large publishing houses, and thus likely to be in circulation in English schools. They were also all published for the current curriculum, the earliest in 2015, and the latest 2018. Completed data collection sheets are also included in Appendix IV.

The data and analysis throughout this review has been published elsewhere (see Nagre, 2023).

Pre- and non-colonial histories

As per the national curriculum (Department for Education 2013), all four textbook series under discussion include at least one case study into ‘non-Western history’ (*ibid.*). Thematically, there is little variation in these case studies. Wilkes (2015b), and Rees *et al.* (2018) discuss Mughal India, with the latter (Rees *et al.* 2017) elsewhere discussing the Islamic Golden Age, alongside Peal (2016a) and Riley *et al.* (2018). Additionally, Rees *et al.* (2018) are the only authors to include a case study from pre-Colonial Africa. There is also little variation in the space dedicated to these topics, typically 2-4 pages, thus representing a very small fraction of available space.

Discussions on non-Western history, where included, are typically within chapters dedicated to a facet of *British* history. Rees *et al.* (2017), along with Peal (2016b), and Riley *et al.* (2018), place their discussions on Islamic history within the broader context of the Crusades, whilst Rees *et al.* (2018) and Wilkes’ (2015b) discussions on Mughal India are in chapters dedicated to the British colonisation of the subcontinent. This mode of presentation risks relegating Other histories to a mere footnote in the more important narrative of British history. More worrying is a lack of any *real* engagement with indigenous history, particularly as Peal (2016b; 2017), Wilkes (2015a; 2015b), and Riley *et al.* (2018) do discuss the colonisation of the Americas and Australasia. Similarly, with the exception of Rees *et al.* (2018), the lack of any form of African history prior to colonisation and/or the slave trade risks reducing Black history to an extended act of submission to European powers.

Of more concern, however, are the Eurocentric narratives reified in the presentation of pre-colonial histories. One key discourse which is represented in all textbooks covering the Crusades is that of Islamic aggression, fanaticism, and otherness. Rees *et al.* (2017), along with Peal (2016b), and Riley *et al.* (2019) posit the infractions of the Seljuk Empire against the Byzantine as being the root cause of the Crusades – according to Rees *et al.*, ‘in the twelfth century, the Muslim world came together and placed the Christians under increasing pressure’ (2017: 82). This interpretation neglects the geopolitical and theological complexities at the heart of the conflict, instead emphasising the simplistic ‘virtuous Christendom vs militaristic Islam’ narrative. The language used by Rees *et al.* is particularly demonstrative of this, as Islamic factions are said to have represented a ‘threat to Jerusalem’ (2017, 82), having ‘spread... to Arabia’s tribes [before] attacking other countries’ (2017: 76). Similarly, in his description of Islam, Peal states that ‘the world had never seen such an electrifying combination of religious and military force’ (Peal 2016a, 54), echoing the ‘thundering hordes’ interpretation of early Islam long-since disregarded as both simplistic and fundamentally orientalist (see Avni, 2014)

Authors who discuss Mughal India tend to emphasise that, in the words of Wilkes (2016b: 114), ‘people from all over the world... have tried to conquer India’. Rees *et al.* add that the current rulers had ‘invaded India from Afghanistan in the early 1500s. The wars of conquest were bloody and brutal, in which countless people were killed and enslaved’ (2018: 144). This implied link between India and colonisation risks entrenching ideas around ‘Oriental’ submissiveness, and could serve to naturalise British imperialism by placing it within a broader narrative of subjugation. Wilkes also dedicates a section in his brief overview of pre-Colonial Indian history to an exploration of the Caste system, and a discussion on India’s religious sectarianism, describing the Mughal Shah as ‘a fanatical Muslim [who] picked on followers of India’s other religions’ (2016b: 115). These discourses serve to over-emphasise the divisions in Indian society, legitimating colonial conquest as a peace-making exercise, whilst reinforcing notions of Islamic fanaticism and Oriental despotism on the part of Mughal rulers.

Of the greatest concern, however, are the master narratives that appear to underpin many of the all-to-brief discussions around indigenous populations across the ‘New World’. Their broad omission, noted above, is problematic in itself, as it speaks to the colonial fallacy that posited the Americas and Australasia as *terra nullius*, and thus sidestepping any awkward questions on conquest and/or genocide. The authors who *do* mention indigenous communities use language more reminiscent of turn-of-the-century colonial ‘anthropologists’ than critical, up-to-date scholarship. Peal, for example, describes the Taino as ‘a peaceful native people... who did not wear clothes, and spent their lives farming, fishing, and smoking’ (2016b: 25), the Aztec as a ‘Stone Age civilisation’ (26), and Aboriginals as a ‘nomadic hunter-gatherer people’ (9). In his chapter on Anglo-French imperial rivalries, Wilkes includes a box on Amerindian ‘tribes’ who inhabited North America, noting that the settlers ‘usually drove the tribes away and destroyed the forests so that they could farm the land’. This both conceptualises Amerindians as a part of the landscape (i.e. not ‘cultured’, neglecting any details around their social or political organisation), and as a *barrier* to ‘culture’, who must be driven away before land can be exploited properly, mirroring Locke’s justification for Amerindian genocide (see Locke, 1980 [1689]). This narrative is further exemplified in Riley *et al.*’s discussion on Aboriginal populations, who are described as a ‘very spiritual people...[who] did not wear clothes and never washed... [and] spent their lives covered in a mixture of animal fat, sand, dust, and sweat... they had no need for farming, permanent houses, or money’ (Riley *et al.*, 2019: 164). These descriptions do little more than assert the primitive otherness of Aboriginal peoples, and are the only evidence concerning the community within the textbook.

These issues are compounded by the sparse *representations* of precolonial Others throughout the textbook sample. Peal includes only a copperplate print of Saladin (2016a, 59), whilst elsewhere both he and Riley *et al.* include a European print of naked Tainos meeting Columbus, reinforcing their primitivist interpretations of indigenous histories (Peal 2016b, 7; Riley *et al.* 2019: 129). The latter also includes an 1847 neoclassical painting showing victorious crusaders and a number of dead

Muslim soldiers after the fall of Jerusalem (*ibid.*: 33). Riley *et al.* (2019: 117-121), along with Wilkes (2015b: 115) do also include Mughal imperial portraits, and the depictions of Others in a regal and celebratory context does provide a necessary counterpoint to the above, and to many of the other images used in their books (see below). Otherwise, Wilkes' only other image takes the form of an essentialising cartoon of 'American Indians', replete with feather headdresses, as part of a discussion on thanksgiving (Wilkes 2015c: 92-94). Praise should be given to Rees *et al.*, who, in their 2018 edition, include an engraving of pre-colonial Benin (thus countering the thus-far ubiquitous 'uncivilised native' depictions) (100), and also include the only primary sources detailing pre-Colonial societies, in 2017 from both European and Islamic authors writing on the Crusades (82; 95), and in 2018 with Olaudah Equiano's description of Benin, and Leo Africanus' of Timbuktu (101-102). The lack of written sources otherwise serves to propagate an idea of the textbook's omniscience, and authorial objectivity. It is implied that 'native' peoples either could not or chose not to speak for or represent themselves, and that the only valid metric to consider their cultural realities is the historical enquiry of the present day.

The Colonial Period

Historical foci for discussions of the Colonial Period-proper do not divert a great deal from Indian and sanitised 'New World' contexts. There is thus minimal engagement with the colonisation of Africa. This is especially problematic, given discussions on postcolonial Africa which, as I demonstrate below, serve to reify tropes associated with the neediness and socio-economic instability of African states *after* the end of Empire, and the above noted scant attention paid to the relative wealth and stability of African communities prior to colonialism. This could thus serve to ahistoricise and immortalise these ideas, without discussions on the transformative effects of colonialism and neocolonialism on the continent.

Textbook authors tend to minimise the violence of European colonialists as they built their empires, reflecting the 'rosy tradition' conceptualised by Pousa and López Facal (2013). Whilst Rees *et al.* (2018: 134-139) do discuss the expansion of empire throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in regions including India, the Americas, and East Asia, this is explored purely through the lens of *European* exploration, mercantilism, and rivalry. 'Natives' of any of these regions are not mentioned, again reifying the *terra nullius* fallacy, effectively erasing Other experiences, and colonial violence. Peal does acknowledge both the existence of Amerindian populations, and the violent means through which they were subjugated, and also actively problematises the *terra nullius* fallacy: "[European explorers] often described the Americas as 'virgin' territory, meaning an untouched and uninhabited wilderness. This was only true because the native population had no immunity to diseases carried by the Europeans' (2016b: 25). However, his discussions also tend to emphasise the technological and military prowess of Europeans, in many ways casting them as the heroic protagonist of the period – for example, 'though the Aztecs were fearsome warriors, they were still a stone age civilisation' (*ibid.*: 26). This is mirrored by Rees *et al.* (2018: 134-139) Riley *et al.* (2019:

129; 161) and Wilkes (2015a: 38-39) who dedicate most of their respective discussions on the emergence of empire to the swashbuckling explorers, privateers, and pirates that established colonies overseas, with little or no mention of the ‘natives’ that they subjugated. Elsewhere, Wilkes does mention that a series of wars were fought by the East India Company in order to gain control over the subcontinent (2018b: 116-117), but again ultimately casts the Company as plucky underdogs, citing that, for example, ‘at the battle of Plassey... 3000 company soldiers defeated an Indian army of over 40,000’. Wilkes’ brief discussion on the colonisation of Africa focuses purely on the economic incentive *behind* the annexation – Europeans were ‘attracted to Africa because of valuable raw materials... and cheap labour’ (2015: 138), echoing the problematic conceptualisation of Africa as a panacea of natural resources broadly devoid of ‘culture’.

The same may often be said about discussions on violence between coloniser and colonised, with the actions of the former often minimised, and the latter delegitimised as active resistance, instead cast as senseless destruction and murder. Two authors (Riley *et al.* 2019, 165; Peal 2016b: 11) do discuss anti-Aboriginal violence. However, Riley *et al.* posit action as a result of rogue agents *despite* interventions of the British state, thus nullifying any state-level complicity in the Tasmanian genocide, described by the authors as a ‘brutal war over the island of Tasmania’ (165), implying legitimate, bipartisan action. Peal (2016b, 11) fortunately does indicate the the genocidal outcome of the conflict – ‘the worst abuses occurred on the island of Tasmania, where British settlers hunted and systematically killed the native population’ – whilst also providing a measured discussion of the Indian rebellion, which is the key foci across most textbooks when discussing colonial violence (68). Whilst Wilkes (2015b, 118) does concede to some mid-term causes to the rebellion – ‘the Seapoys were a very unhappy bunch’ – his interpretation ultimately hinges on the ‘rumoured’ (emphasis mine) use of animal fats in gun lubricant, dedicating a whole page to the significance of this to the ‘mutiny’ (*ibid.*, 119). This interpretation, shared by Riley *et al.* (2019, 181), trivialises the causes of the rebellion as the misunderstanding of religious natives, and not as the spark to a generations’ worth of resentment for a foreign, corporate entity. Both Wilkes and Riley *et al.* also discuss the Cawnpore Massacre, demonstrative, to Riley *et al.*, of ‘terrible atrocities on *both sides*’ (emphasis mine) (*ibid.*), *before* the British response to the rebellion is detailed, which runs the risk of the 10,000 or so dead Indians being presented as a form of justice – as per Wilkes: ‘the massacre of 200 British women and children at Cawnpore...outraged the British...revenge was violent, bloody, and swift!’ (2015b, 120). Peal provides a more nuanced perspective, rooting the conflict in ‘growing discontent, which bubbled over in May 1857’, and is also the only account to mention the fact that the rebels attempted to re-instate the Mughal Shah to power. The failure of the other books to mention this serves to delegitimise the rebellion as a frenzied bloodbath, rather than as an attempt at regime change through both political and military means.

These issues persist in the sparse discussions around the end of the colonial period evident in the textbook sample – only engaged with seriously by Wilkes (2015c). His main focus is the African

independence movement, and seems more concerned with demonstrating British impunity from other Europeans' colonial crimes than delivering an objective account of events. He states, for example, that 'Belgium and Portugal ruled their colonies very harshly and were determined to hold onto them as long as possible' (139), but that 'in the British colonies, independence for African nations was achieved fairly peacefully. There were riots in some places like Kenya, but on the whole the transfer of power went smoothly' (140). This is a flagrant and fundamental misrepresentation of independence in Africa in general, and the Kenyan independence movement in particular. One must assume that the 'riots' he refers to are in fact part of the Mau Mau rebellion, an armed, organised insurgency from 1952 until 1960, the British response to which involved detention and brutal torture of Kenyan citizens, and the eventual hanging of up to 150,000 suspects. In referring to the uprising as 'riots', Wilkes is once again delegitimising organised political action, and brushing over crimes against humanity committed by the British, in favour of sanitised discourse which props up a master narrative of British geniality and historical infallibility.

A number of textbooks include a section weighing up the pros and cons of Empire for colonised peoples. Whilst this is an ultimately reductive exercise, sections do include a degree of balance and allow students to exercise their critical thinking faculties. However, when considered in conjunction with the minimisations of colonial violence discussed above, authors tend to err on the side of simplistic, often pro-Imperial rhetoric, underscored with Eurocentric narratives of totality and teleology. These are most evident in the content presented by Wilkes (2015b; 2015c), and Riley *et al.* (2019). Wilkes' later textbook (2015c: 134; 139), along with that from Riley *et al.* (2019: 182) both cite economic exploitation as a major drawback for Indians during the Raj, along with the forced adaptation of British 'values' and 'customs'. Riley *et al.* also add that the British 'did little to help' during the various famines in India – but do not mention a key cause of the famines as being the Raj-imposed shift from sustenance farming to cash crops in the Bengal. However, these simplified 'cons' are pitted against 'pros' including 'improving the lives of Indians through justice, education, and irrigation schemes' (Riley *et al.* 2019: 182), '[building] post offices... hospitals and schools... increasing India's life expectancy by 11 years' (Peal, 2015c: 68), and that 'Queen Victoria herself said that Britain's role was to "protect the poor natives and advance civilisation"' (Wilkes 2015c: 139). These sources also fixate on the building of railways as a valid metric for the morality and benevolence of the British Empire. Ultimately, these positions carry the implication that some material exploitation are the cost of doing business for groups undergoing 'civilisation'.

There is, on the whole, much wider use of images for the colonial period than pre-colonial. However, these often serve to underscore the pejorative narratives outlined above, alongside the general submissiveness of 'native' populations. In discussions on India, Western oil paintings showing the East India Company's various political and military victories are popular (see Wilkes 2016b: 118; 2016c: 178; Peal, 2017: 8; Rees *et al.*, 2018: 146; Riley *et al.*, 2019: 178-179). Aside from the Western gaze and quasi-canonisation of colonialists, there is nothing overtly problematic in these images. Peal

(2017: 69), alongside Wilkes (2015b: 120) and Riley *et al.* (2019: 181) also include images of Indian rebels' harsh punishments at the hands of the British following the rebellion, which goes some way to counter the genial master narrative gleaned from the text. However Riley *et al.* (*ibid.*) include British paintings depicting the massacre at Cawnpore *before* these images, once again discursively positioning the former as 'justice' for the latter. Images depicting 'everyday life' in the colonies tend to feature 'natives' according to the colonial gaze, thus often as 'props' in portraits of white settlers (Wilkes, 2015b: 122; 2015c: 139) and often without asking students to critically reflect on the image purpose and provenance. The most egregious example of this can be found in Wilkes (2015c, 139), where the author includes a photograph of a White settler lounging on a hammock, supported on the heads of his African servants, with the caption 'an *amazing* photograph showing a white European settler using local men as servants at his colonial mansion in *Africa*' (emphasis mine). This apparent celebration of the degradation of African bodies, alongside the homogenisation of the continent, add insult to the existing injury of racist tropes depicting Africans as necessarily servile and submissive. Although by no means redemptive, Wilkes does also include one of the only purely 'positive' images of Africans across the textbook sample, with a celebratory photograph of Julius Nyerere following his victory at the first Tanzanian elections (140).

Written sources are once again not drawn upon often in discussing the Colonial Period. Wilkes (2016b: 120-121) only includes two, both from British authors, and both vilifying the violence of Indian 'mutineers' following the uprising, representing both a fundamental imbalance, and the silencing of Other voices in favour of that of the coloniser. His third 2016 textbooks also includes two sources, both discussing the 'good' or 'bad' of the British empire, although these are fortunately on either side of the debate, with one from an Indian author (Wilkes, 2016c: 134).

The slave trade

Perhaps owing to its established pedigree within British curricula, discussions on the slave trade are generally plentiful, and provide a greater degree of accuracy than other themes. Discussions broadly cover the inception of the slave trade, the practices of slavers and the brutality of the trade, and abolition.

A key issue with discussions around the inception of the slave trade is the extent to which authors minimise the extent of British complicity. In a clear parallel to the above discussion on colonial violence in Africa, Riley *et al.* (2019: 129-130) and Peal both emphasise that 'the practice had already been developed by Portugal and Spain' (Peal, 2017: 22), which begs the question: if Iberia jumped off a cliff, should Britain be excused for doing so too? Wilkes (2015b: 78) Rees *et al.* (2018: 126), and Peal (2019: 23) place transatlantic slavery within the broader global tradition from the dawn of 'urban society', although do fortunately indicate that 'nothing had ever been as systematic as the transatlantic slave trade' (*ibid.*). Rees *et al.* (102) also highlight that 'slavery and slave trading existed in Africa long before Europeans began buying African slaves', echoing the consistently victim-blaming perspectives popular during the slave trade itself, and brushing over the comparative

systems of indentured feudal labour across the globe, positioning slavery as ‘an African problem’, *exploited* rather than *conceived* by Europeans.

Positions on the reality of the slave trade are generally less apologist than those of its inception. All textbooks that discuss the slave trade in depth (Wilkes, 2015b; Peal, 2016c; Rees *et al.*, 2018; Riley *et al.*, 2019) dedicate a good amount of space to explorations of the brutality of the middle passage, the dehumanisation of slave auctions, and the mistreatment of enslaved people, and most also include discussions on the tasks that these people would be expected to perform, and punishments for minor and major infractions. Riley *et al.*, for example, write that ‘The enslaved Africans suffered extreme hardship and cruelty... their suffering made some traders fabulously rich’ (2019: 130) although express a perhaps reductive perspective when linking the trade to sugar plantations: ‘The slaves’ lives were made terrible so people in Europe could enjoy a sweet treat’ (132). The textbooks are also clear in Britain’s complicity in these proceedings as the world’s largest empire, and controller of the largest slaving network.

Discussions around the abolition of slavery within the British Empire are similarly comprehensive, although they do stray at points back towards Eurocentric self-congratulation. Slave rebellions are often, rightly, covered, as is the case with Peal (2017: 25) in his discussion of the Maroons, Wilkes (2015b: 87) on the Haitian revolution, and Rees *et al.* (2018: 118) and Riley *et al.*’s (2019: 133) more general discussions. However, only in the case of the latter and Wilkes (2015b: 88) are revolts, revolutions, and resistance incorporated discretely within the discussion around abolition – and in the case of Wilkes, language can err on the side of delegitimising resistance: ‘slaves *murdered* their white masters’ (*ibid.*) (emphasis mine). Peal notes the influence of slave literature on the British abolition campaign, and Rees *et al.*, along with Riley *et al.* also note the active campaigning of Black abolitionists. However, in all cases, authors highlight that freedom was essentially ‘given’ to enslaved Africans, thanks largely to the actions of White campaigners. All also note Britain’s role in attempting to enforce global abolition following the dismantling of Britain’s own slave network. Accordingly, whilst no details are spared in discussing the brutality of the slave trade, during discussions on abolition the narrative once again shifts to emphasise the benevolence of the British Empire as a bastion of global liberty, whilst minimising the agency exercised by subjugated Africans in achieving their own freedom.

There are plentiful visual and written sources presented in discussions on slavery. Visual sources represent the cold logistics that went into the trade, the humiliation of slave auctions, and the brutal treatment of enslaved people themselves, and these negative depictions are almost always counterbalanced with portraits of Black campaigners, dressed in suits or Regency Era finery. Written sources are often again from formerly enslaved people, with some space given to White abolitionists. The key issue here is the *frequency* of sources discussing the Slave Trade, when compared with those focussing on other facets of Global South histories. Indeed, this is not only an issue of primary sources, but in content as a whole. With the exception of the preceding discussion on Medieval

African history from Rees *et al.* (2018), the theme of ‘slavery’ represents the only meaningful engagement with Black history, and the majority of space given to histories of those from the Global South in general, across the sample. Wilkes (2015b), for example, includes ten images of Black people in his textbook, eight of which include those currently enslaved, and two formerly enslaved. This serves to essentialise Black history as solely associated with the brutality of the slave trade and its direct aftermath, thus both simplifying complex historical narratives, and reinforcing the trope of African submission and servility.

Post-colonial and diasporic history

Post-colonial and diasporic histories are discussed in a limited number of textbooks, and referenced in a few more. The themes that are of interest here are (i) the nature of post-colonial states; (ii) the emergence of racism; (iii) the emergence of antisemitism; and (iv) ‘terrorism’. On the whole, these issues are not discussed with a sufficient degree of nuance, and as such risk reifying reductive tropes already entrenched through the above discussions.

Country	Ruler	Date of independence	The price of freedom?
Algeria	France	1962	Independence was only achieved after unrest and an armed rebellion.
Angola	Portugal	1975	There was a civil war in Angola between 1975 and 2002.
Congo	France	1960	Congo had a civil war after independence and its first president was assassinated.
Ghana	Britain	1957	Ghana’s government has been plagued by rebellion and corruption.
Kenya	Britain	1963	Kenya was ruled as a one-party state until 1992.
Mauritania	France	1960	In a military coup, Mauritania’s first president was overthrown.
Mozambique	Portugal	1975	Mozambique suffers from famine and poverty due to civil war, a lack of food supplies, and debt.
Nigeria	Britain	1960	Since independence, Nigeria has been under almost constant military rule.
Senegal	France	1960	Senegal was ruled as a virtual one-party government until the 1980s.
Uganda	Britain	1962	A turbulent period led to over a million deaths.
Zimbabwe	Britain	1980	Zimbabwe won independence after the black majority defeated the white minority. Tension continues.

Table 5.2: *the ‘price of freedom’ for African countries* (from Wilkes, 2015c: 141)

Discussions around post-colonial states are highly pejorative, problematic, and limited, with only Wilkes (2015c) seriously engaging with the theme, and then, only with reference to the Indian subcontinent and Africa. On the former, his main focus is partition. Whilst he does highlight British complicity in the affair to an extent, his account focusses more on the violence committed between

Hindus and Muslims, thus reifying the trope of ‘native’ savagery (see Wilkes, 2015c: 134). His discussion on Africa is even more reductive (140-141). Following a discussion on ‘Africa today’, which emphasises that the continent includes ‘some of the worlds poorest countries’, the author presents a table in which he lists the ill-fortune that has befallen the African continent since independence, noting these as the ‘price of freedom’ (see Table 5.2). Positioning political or economy instability as such negates entirely the culpability of colonial powers in destabilising the region, particularly as nowhere in the series of textbooks does Wilkes provide students with any counter-narrative for pre-colonial Africa. He also notes that ‘despite offers of loans and aid from richer countries, the problems of poverty and long-term debt remain’ (141). The master narrative of colonialism as civilising mission, and the post-colonial geniality of the West, thus ensues here, giving students the impression that any and all issues in contemporary Africa are not because of colonisation, but because of *independence*.

Discussions on the history of racism tend to oversimplify its causes, and its effects into the present day. A number of authors appear to be consciously avoiding the term ‘racism’, instead making veiled references to the belief systems underpinning, for example, colonialism. Peal (2017: 7) highlights both that ‘many English settlers saw Native American tribes as simple ‘savages’, and became increasingly brutal in their treatment of them’ (2017: 7), and the discrepancy between British treatment of White and Other colonies (75), but stops short of decrying either of these as racist, nor engages with the concept anywhere in the book. Others emphasise racism’s contextual association with the slave trade. Wilkes (2015b: 90-91) discusses the pejorative rhetoric behind anti-abolitionist discourse which, whilst a useful exercise in demonstrating how widespread these beliefs were at the time, ultimately serves to simplify the narrative through associating racism purely to a ‘bad’ historical context. Rees *et al.*’s discussion on racism during the slave trade is far more critical: ‘supporters of slavery... did so by claiming that Black people were inferior to White people, saying that they were stupid, lazy, and that slavery was good. These ideas spread during the 18th and 19th centuries and it became common for people of European descent to consider themselves superior to people of African descent’ (Rees *et al.*, 2018: 124). The authors also link these theories with the need for a Civil Rights Movement during the 1960s. The historiographical discussion here is most welcome, as it provides students with the opportunity to explore how a historically-contingent idea such as racism has come to ubiquity, whilst noting the agency and resistance of those denigrated by the same idea. Wilkes’ final textbook unfortunately fares worst than that discussed above. He states that Italian Fascists ‘believed that... some races and nations were superior to others’ (Wilkes 2015c: 69) and that ‘Hitler said that the best races were the ‘pure’ ones that hadn’t interbred and ‘mixed’ with others... the master race of pure Germans had the right to dominate ‘inferior’ races’ (74). This gross oversimplification serves to position racism as a ‘fascist’ problem, and thus by association Britain’s role in ‘defeating’ racism along with the Nazis, when in fact many of the theories that Hitler espoused had been developed by Britons, practiced and perfected in British colonies, and exercised in British society. Of greatest concern is Wilkes’ definition of eugenics as ‘the *scientific* study of how to *improve*

races' (emphasis mine) (76). Without problematising this definition, Wilkes effectively legitimates the 'scientific' credentials of the 'empirical' base for racism, passing off the grounding theory for a number of genocides and apartheid governments, alongside countless lynchings, forced sterilisations, and ghettoisations as an innocuous scientific pursuit.

Content around the Holocaust is, on the whole, better, although a few textbooks fall back on the all-too-familiar trope of painting antisemitism as a purely 'Nazi' problem. Once again, Wilkes (2015c: 75) only draws the concept into focus in his discussion on Hitler, and provides no historical context to the ubiquity of antisemitism throughout Europe and the West, both during the twentieth century and throughout history. Riley *et al.* provide slightly more context, discussing antisemitism in Medieval Britain and the nineteenth century (although noting that by this point 'Britain had become a more tolerant place for Jews... there was still antisemitism, but Jews were becoming more integrated into British society'), along with the pogroms in Eastern Europe (Riley *et al.*, 2019: 197), before turning to a full account of Nazism and the Holocaust in a later chapter (222-227). Their approach would be significantly strengthened if more effort was made to incorporate these discussions, so that students would be able to see them as part of the same discourse. A similar approach is taken by Rees *et al.* (2017: 181) in demonstrating the roots of antisemitism in the early centuries CE. However, throughout the sample, there is once again a clear association between antisemitism and Nazism. Wilkes makes no effort to outline the European antisemitic tradition, instead opening his discussion on the Holocaust with 'Hitler reserved his greatest hatred for the Jews. He saw them as an inferior race that cared more about themselves than the greatness of Germany' (2015c: 75). This reductive perspective both nullifies the ubiquity of antisemitism, and casts Britain in the role of the historical 'Good Guy' by defeating the Nazis – and thus by implication antisemitism. There is also no effort to link the concepts of antisemitism and racism, despite their shared vocabularies and entangled histories – the antisemitic *limpieza de sangre* policies of post-*reconquista* Iberia being the first attempt to quantify the 'inferiority' of Others based on their 'blood', for example.

Only Wilkes (2015c) and Riley *et al.* (2019) discuss the concept of 'terrorism' at the turn of the present century. Wilkes' interpretation is reductive, inasmuch as attacks like 9/11 are explained as al-Qaeda 'dislike the USA because they believe Americans interfere too much in the Middle East' (Wilkes, 2015c: 165), thus neglecting the true complexity of the issue. However, he does place terrorism within a broader world context, citing other, non-Islamic factions such as the IRA as comparative groups. Riley *et al.*'s conclusions are more reductive still. The root cause for terrorism is said to be 'Muslim mistrust of the West' (Riley *et al.*, 2019: 242), and the success of al-Qaeda is placed with the charismatic leadership of bin Laden. Both authors are, however, at pains to note that Islamic terrorism is not a reflection of Qur'anic teachings, that attacks are perpetrated only by groups taking an 'extreme' interpretation of scripture, and that attacks are carried out for both religious *and political* reasons.

Authors discussing post-colonial and diasporic histories have not tended to illustrate their points with many images. When used, most of these centre on the Holocaust and pre-war antisemitism in Germany, although where this is discussed there is generally a good balance of empowering images and those detailing the atrocities. Rees *et al.* (2017: 146) do include an image of the 1965 March on Selma, whilst both Wilkes (2015c: 145) and Riley *et al.* (2019: 196) also provide photographs of notable Commonwealth migrants to Britain, along with their descendants. This does little, in Wilkes' case, to serve as a counterpoint to his earlier use of photographs of 'starving African children' (2015c: 140), used to illustrate the above-mentioned point about the neediness of post-colonial Africa, a tired discursive and visual trope delivered without nuance, which serves to entrench problematic and Eurocentric perceptions of contemporary Africa even further in students' consciousness.

There is a similar paucity of written sources, with the exception of those on antisemitism in Nazi Germany. One particularly useful set of sources is, however, utilised by Wilkes in his discussion on racism within the anti-abolitionist movement (Wilkes 2015b, 90). The author provides students with a number of highly problematic perspectives on the 'moral good' of slavery, argued on highly racist grounds, from contemporary eugenicists and stadial theorists, and asks students to reflect on these. More tasks like this from across the sample would have been welcome, in order to allow students to comprehend more specifically how contemporary racist discourse is historically contextualised and contingent.

Underlying Narratives in KS3 Textbooks

The sample of current Key Stage 3 history textbooks discussed above demonstrates the persistence of colonial, nationalist, and Eurocentric narratives in contemporary pedagogical discourse. A paucity in content concerning the pre-Colonial Global South creates an impression of ahistoricity, history officially 'beginning' with the arrival of Europeans. Where included, discussions on pre-colonial histories typically echo colonial narratives of 'primitive natives', underscoring the inferiority of Other populations *versus* Europeans. This in turn sets the stage for discussions on colonialism, which typically underplay the corporeal, structural, and ideological violence of empire, instead perpetuating the idea of colonialism as a 'great civilising mission', highlighting the infrastructure and systems of morality 'given' by Europeans to subjugated communities, unable to 'develop' indigenous 'civilisation' of their own. Discussions on the slave trade are generally better. However, authors tend to appeal to historical repentance, in highlighting Britain's post-abolition role as liberators-in-chief on the global stage. A wider issue points to the comparative over-representation of slavery as a historical theme, with far fewer examples of discussions around the achievements of Black and Other populations outside of this context. Finally, discussions on diasporic and post-colonial histories generally posit both the deficits in Other post-colonial states, and downplay the roots and extent of racism within the European tradition. The extent to which these narratives serve to guide the historical worldviews of students will now be considered.

Questionnaire Data

Significant difficulties faced in attempting to recruit schools to take part in this research, and to glean completed questionnaires from participating schools, have meant that the data presented here is not as wide-ranging as had been hoped, with only two participating schools. That said, the similarities between the underlying narratives running through textbook content, and pupils' questionnaire responses, are striking, particularly when considered alongside the results from the adults' questionnaire, discussed in Chapter Seven (see Appendix V for full questionnaire responses).

The Sample

Questionnaires have been handed out to two schools in the UK. From these, I received a total of 55 completed questionnaires: 47 from School 1 (an academy school in a Southern English Town), and 8 from School 2 (a rural, fee-paying school in the North of England). Questionnaires were handed out to two Year 9 classes (age 13-14) in each school.

The demography of pupils returning completed questionnaires, in terms of gender and ethnicity, are shown in figs. 5.1 and 5.2 below.

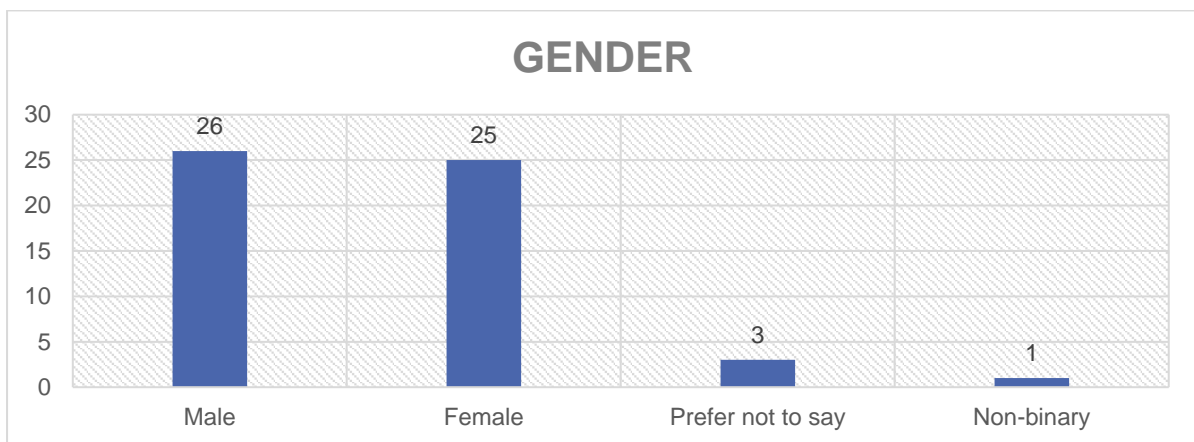


Figure 5.1: participants' gender

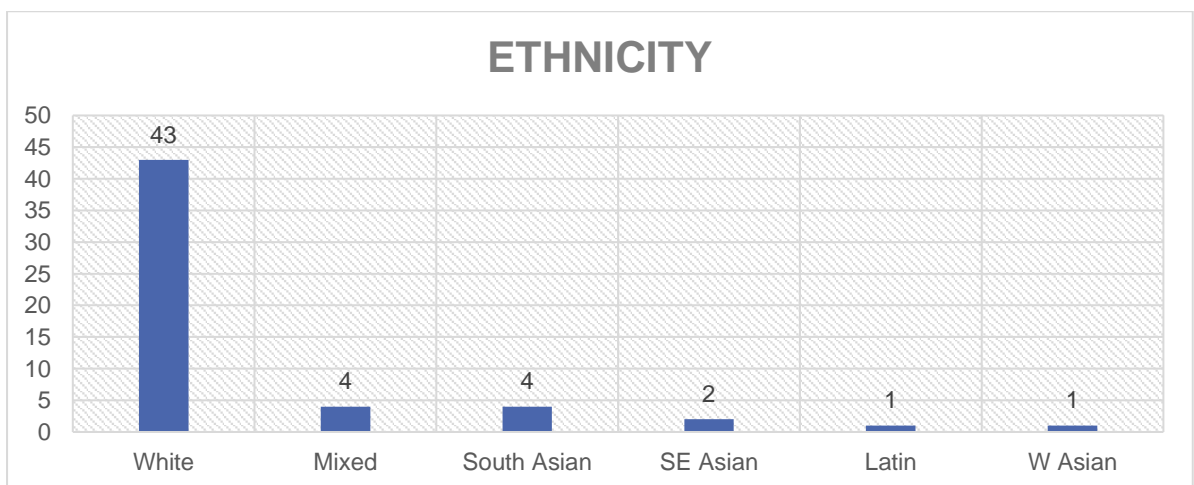


Figure 5.2: participants' ethnicities

There is accordingly a good gender balance, and the sample demonstrates some ethnic diversity. Participants were also asked to self-identify the extent to which they were interested in archaeology and the ancient past on a 5-part Likert scale, as shown in fig. 5.3.

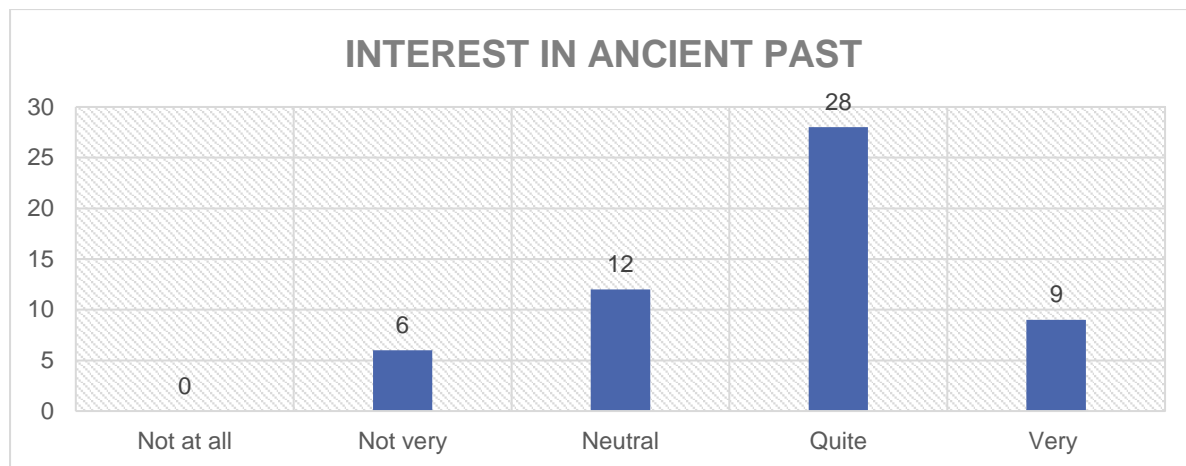


Figure 5.3: *participants' self-declared interest in the ancient past*

Interest levels are thus reasonably high, with 67% of participants defining as either being 'quite interested' or 'very interested' in the ancient past, 22% giving neutral responses, and only 11% declaring that they were 'not very interested'. The lack of any participants identifying that they are 'not at all interested' is also notable.

'Quiz' Section One – 'Ancient Civilisations'

Both sections in the 'quiz' portion of the questionnaire consisted of multiple choice questions, which were designed to test both participants' knowledge, and their *perceptions* of global histories. There were accordingly several questions reflecting elements of the 'Western' historical narrative, in order to gauge the extent to which this has been accepted by students, and a number which would likely fall outside of participants' prior knowledge. This latter set of questions has proven useful in assessing the extent to which students may 'fill in' historical unknowns through reference to their prior knowledge, potentially as delivered through school curricula.

The first question in this section concerned early literacy – 'which ancient society are thought to have 'invented' writing?'. As shown in fig. 5.5, are highly interesting, considering the possibility of this process of 'gap filling'. The 'correct' (if contentious answer) – the Sumerians – was the second-least selected response, with only around 7% of participants doing so. By contrast, over 70% selected 'the Ancient Greeks', with an additional 16% selecting 'the Roman Empire'. These responses demonstrate a low level of knowledge concerning the archaeological past, likely a reflection of the relative lack of inclusion of these themes outside of primary school curricula. However, they also speak to the high level of perceived importance awarded to actors in the Classical Tradition, thought to be the primary innovators of literacy. This is arguably a reflection of the discursive weight and importance of these themes, both in public discourse, and potentially during participants' early education, where, as discussed in Chapter Two, units of study concerning the Classical Tradition are common. It is also interesting to note the favour that pupils give to Classical societies when

attempting to ‘fill in’ historical unknowns, with twice as many participants guessing that the Roman Empire has invented literacy as the Sumerians, three times as many as the Mali Empire.

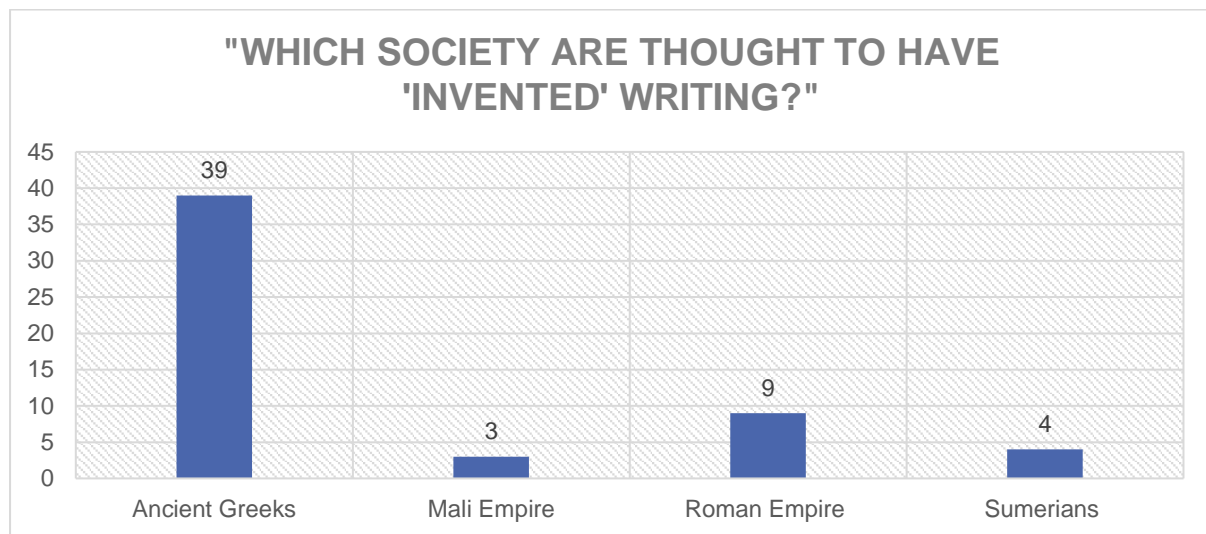


Figure 5.4: responses to Question 1

The next question – ‘which empire conquered England in the First Century CE?’ – elicited a large number of correct responses from participants (see fig. 5.6), with almost 80% of participants selecting ‘The Roman Empire’. This could again speak to the extent to which discussions on the Classics are emphasised in public historical discourse, including in participants’ early-years curricula. It is interesting to consider what possession of this knowledge in particular says about the facets of Classical histories which are emphasised and understood by students. The Roman conquest in particular could be drawn upon to underscore ideas around ‘our’ Classical antecedents, patrimony, and thus could serve as a facet to wider teleological discourses.

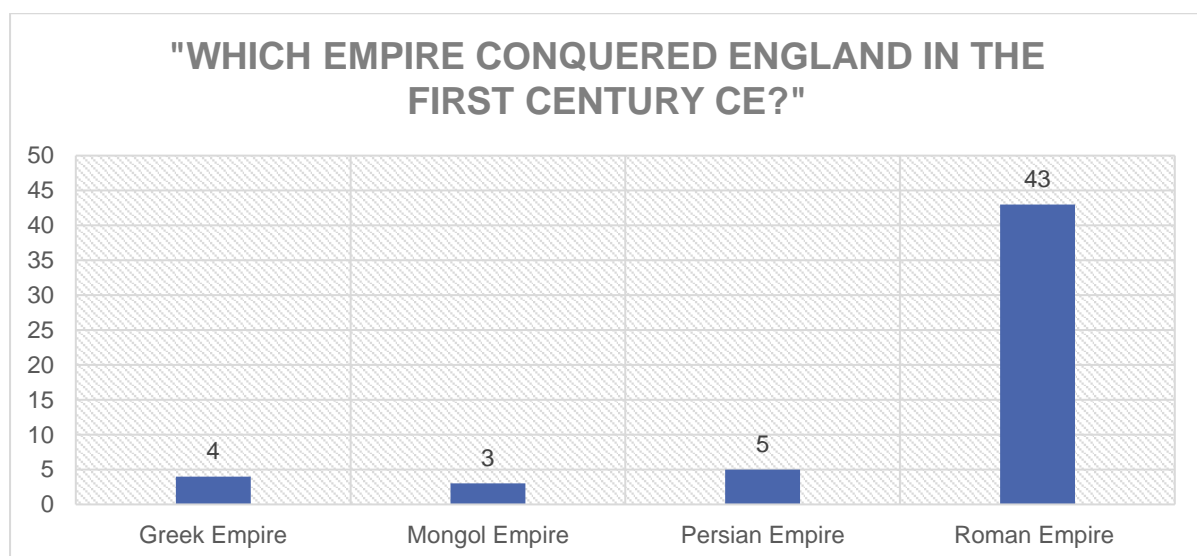


Figure 5.5: responses to Question 2

The next question – ‘which city is said to be the ‘birthplace’ of democracy?’ – elicited a similar number of correct responses, with over 90% of participants selecting ‘Athens’ (see fig. 5.7). This could again speak to a certain teleological emphasis in the way that knowledge of the past, and the

Classics in particular are delivered to students. ‘Democracy’ is a fundamental cornerstone of the ‘Western’ self-identity, its ‘foundation’ in Ancient Greece frequently employed throughout public discourse as demonstrative of the Eurocentric historical *telos*, and our patrimony over Classical Antiquity.

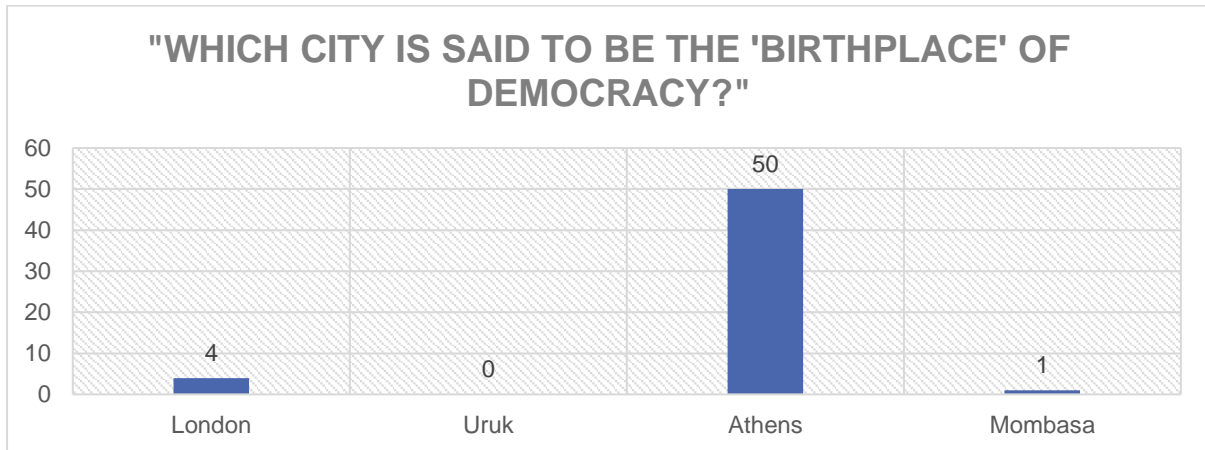


Figure 5.6: responses to Question 3

The same cannot be said, however, for knowledge on Ancient Egyptian society. The fourth question – ‘which ancient society built the Valley of the Kings’ – saw highly mixed responses from participants (see fig. 5.8). Whilst around 30% of participants correctly selected ‘Ancient Egypt’, the majority of nearly 40% selected ‘the Byzantine Empire’. This could suggest that participants had not learned as much about Ancient Egyptian society during their early school years as the Classical Tradition-proper. It is also interesting to consider how this ‘historical unknown’ was responded to. Since the Byzantine Tradition is not featured prominently in either school curricula, nor public discourse, it cannot be expected that pupils will have had any familiarity with this theme. Indeed, every other option *besides* Ancient Egypt could be considered a more ‘obscure’ historical group, and yet pupils did not ‘fill in’ this unknown by referring to the only society that *is* a prominent feature in public historical discourse. This thus strengthens the interpretation that incorrect ‘guesses’ favouring the Classical Tradition are not merely a factor of pupils’ familiarity with them, conceptually, but a consequence of active veneration.

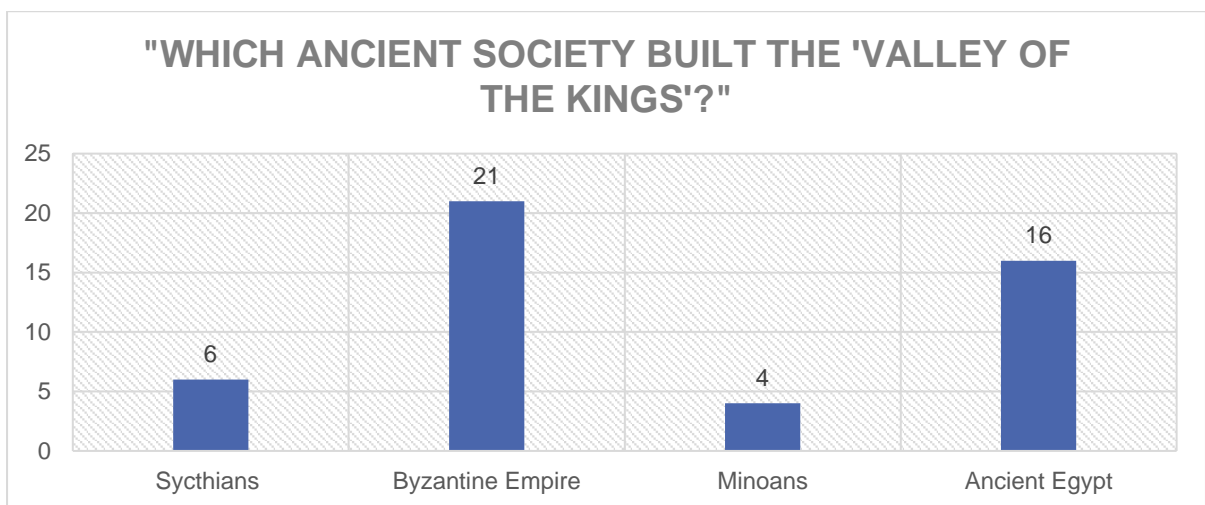


Figure 5.7: responses to Question 4

The next question elicited very interesting responses from participants. When asked ‘in which region have the earliest stone tools been found?’, the majority of participants (around 35%) selected ‘Central Asia’, rather than the correct response (East Africa), which was selected by around 25% of participants (see fig. 5.8). Unlike in the questions discussed above, there was a reasonably flat spread across all four possible responses. What is notable is that participants will have studied human evolution, including the ‘out of Africa’ model, at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 2, and as such should be aware that biological humans had in fact emerged from East Africa. It is, admittedly, less likely that the development of lithic technologies would have featured during these lessons, however, the fact that 75% of participants do not associate the site of our *biological* development with meaningful, early *cultural* development is highly notable. This could be a reflection of the ahistoricising, or absent, discussions on pre-Colonial Africa evident in the textbook sample discussed above, and the ensuing narrative of cultural stagnation and primitivity.

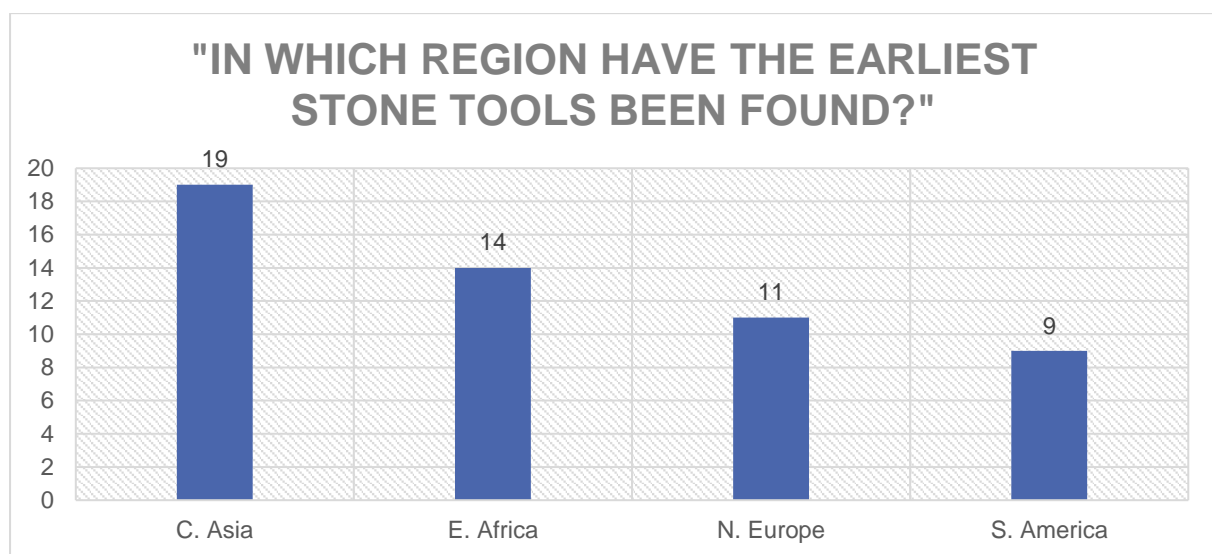


Figure 5.8: responses to Question 5

Responses to Question 6 – ‘which of the following countries have never been colonised?’ – provided similar insight into the extent to which contemporary narratives of victimhood and alterity may influence pupils’ cognition of historical events (see fig. 5.9). The majority of participants (around 35%) selected ‘China’, potentially a reflection of the regional hegemony and well-publicised economic power of the contemporary Chinese state. Despite the fact that a significant portion of the KS3 history curriculum is concerned with the various invasions, colonisations, and conquests of the British isles, around a quarter of participants nonetheless selected ‘England’. This could be a reflection of the ultimate narrative of British and English superiority and historical primacy, evident throughout the textbook sample. Only 20% selected the correct answer, Ethiopia, which may again speak to the entrenched narrative of African submission and servility which runs through the textbook sample.

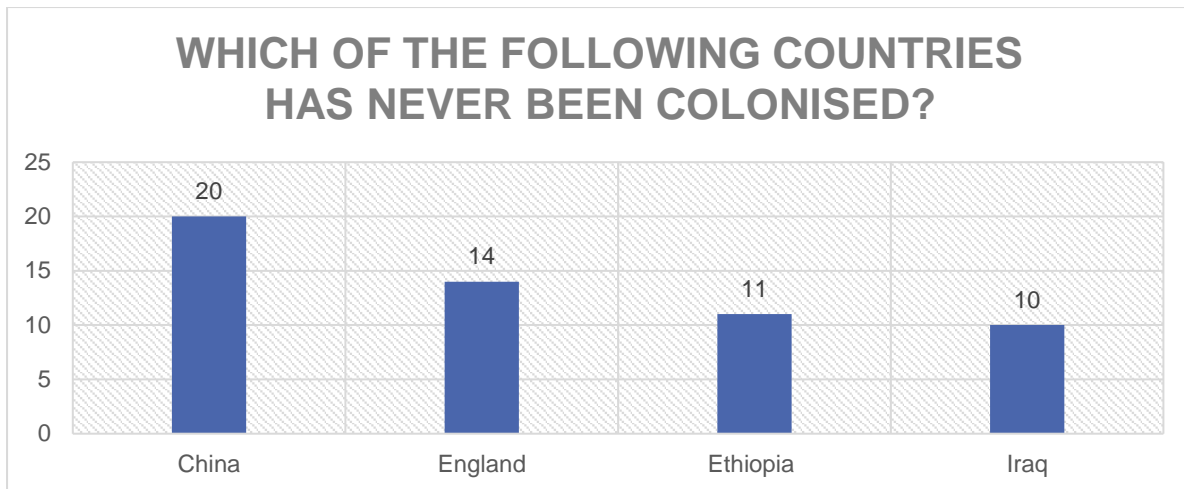


Figure 5.9: responses to Question 6

Narratives of superiority are also arguably behind responses to Question 7: ‘which of the following regions is referred to as the ‘cradle of civilisation?’’ (see fig. 5.10). A clear majority of nearly 55% of participants selected ‘Western Europe’. This could belie an entrenched synaptic link amongst participants between our own cultural context, and the very concept of ‘civilisation’, echoing narratives of both Eurocentric totalism and teleology. The correct answer – Western Asia – was only selected by around 20% of participants, which may again reflect the extent to which discussions on the region, both within history curricula and public discourse, serve to underline its *contemporary* or recent instability, *versus* the development and stability of the contemporary West.

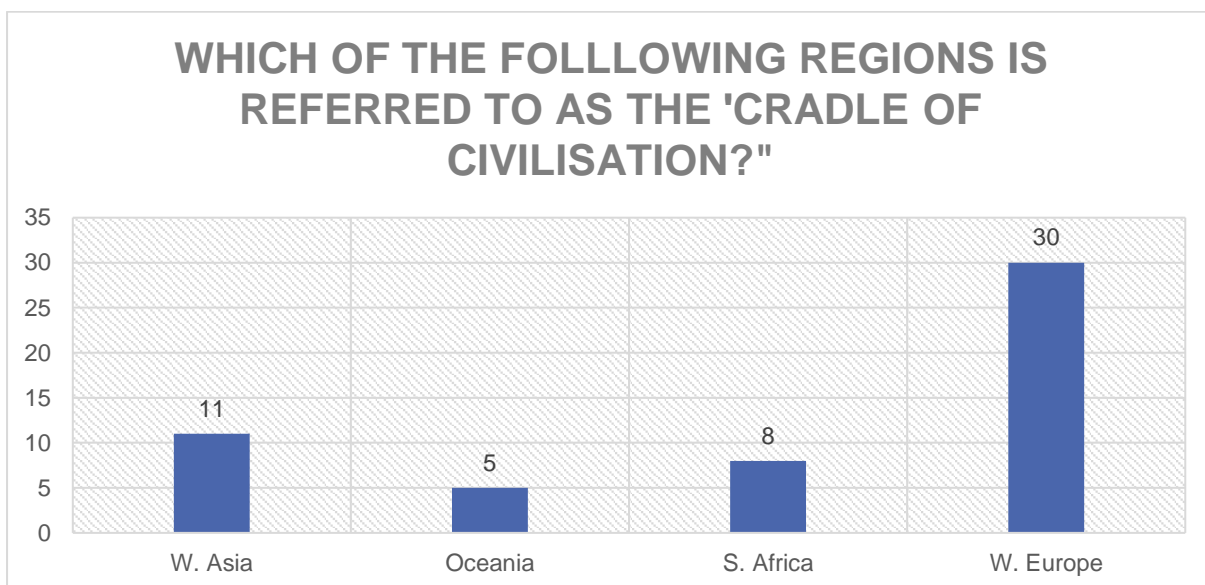


Figure 5.10: responses to Question 7

Question 8 – ‘which of the following empires was the longest-lasting?’ – once again saw a large number of pupils ‘filling in’ historical unknowns through an assumption of Classical pre-eminence. The majority of participants – 60% – selected ‘the Roman Empire’. A further 27% selected ‘the British Empire’, whilst only 7% selected one arguably ‘correct’ answer – the Kingdom of Kush. This may be a consequence of these same narratives of perpetual African inferiority and alterity, since on the questionnaire, the option read: ‘the Kingdom of Kush (modern-day Sudan).

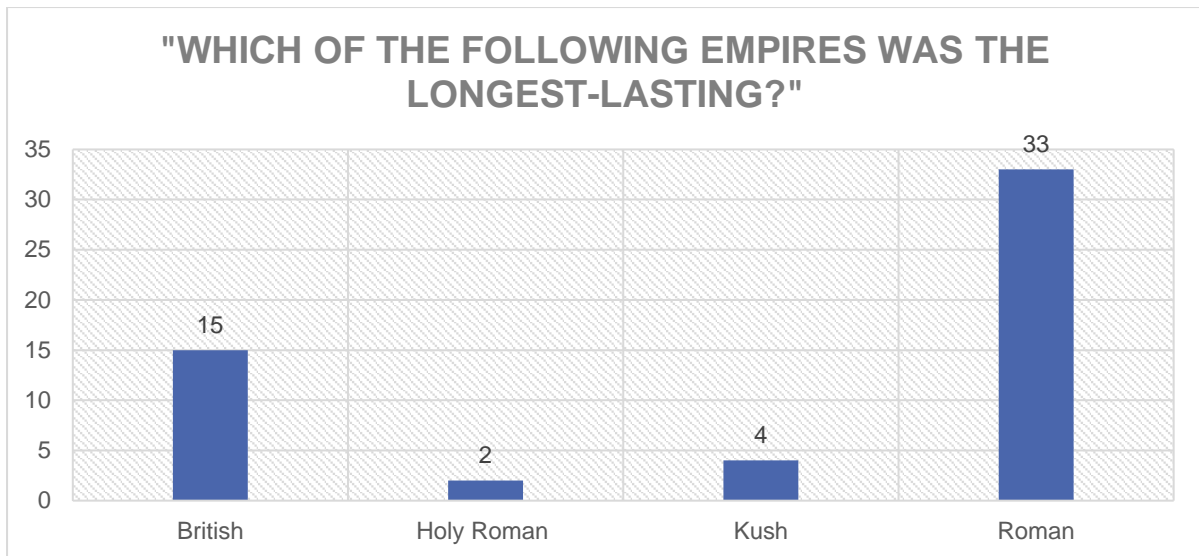


Figure 5.11: responses to Question 8

This is also reflected in the responses to the final question in this section (see fig. 5.12). When participants were asked ‘where in the world were the earliest cities built?’, a large majority of respondents (over 70%), again selected ‘modern-day Greece’. A further 20% selected ‘modern-day Italy’, leaving less than 10% of participants selecting the correct answer: ‘modern-day Iraq’. This is notable on two fronts. On the one hand, these responses arguably speak again to the extent to which discourse on the *historical* Near East is conceptualised by students according to *contemporary*, highly derogatory narratives of instability and stagnation. On the other hand, this is once again evidence of pupils seeking to address historical unknowns through an assumption of the foundational role of actors in Classical Antiquity, responses for Greece and Italy totalling over 90% between them. It is also interesting that no pupils selected ‘the modern-day USA’. This does suggest that pupils are aware of the relatively young age of the USA, but could also imply a lack of faith in the developmental credentials of Indigenous American groups, which would be in-line with the overarching representation of the ‘New World’ as *terra nullius* throughout the textbook sample.

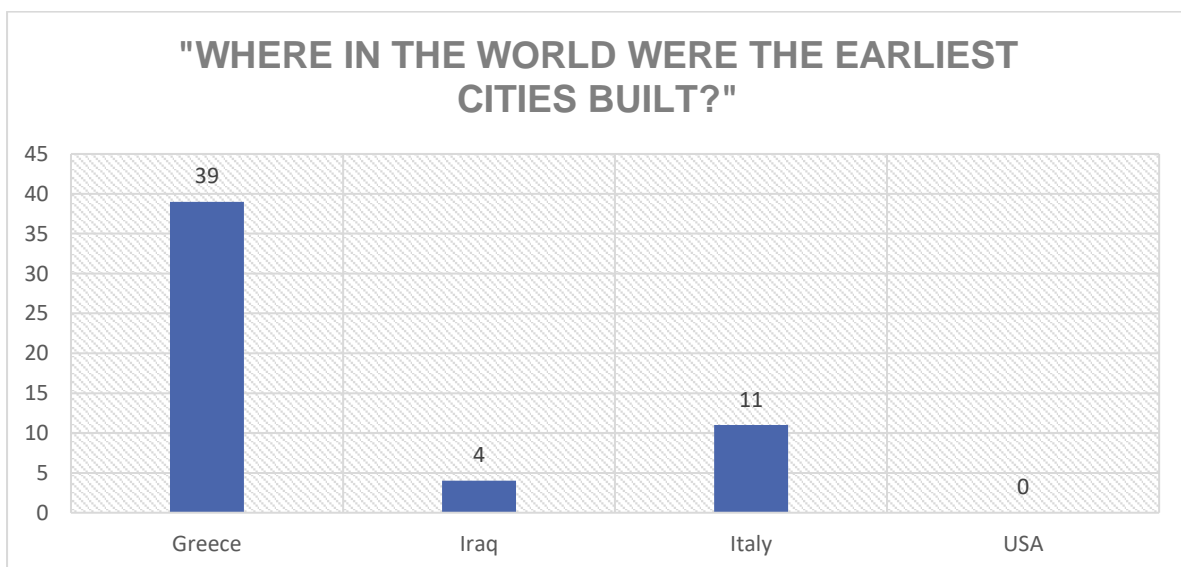


Figure 5.12: responses to Question 9

'Quiz' Section Two – 'Odd one Out'

The second (and final) section of the 'quiz' portion of the questionnaire saw participants being presented with four historical societies, and asked to select which did *not* exhibit a particular trait.

The first question did, despite responses to Question 4 above, demonstrate a passing knowledge of Ancient Egyptian society, along with that of the Roman Empire. When asked 'which of the following did *not* build pyramids?', the majority of participants selected the correct answer, 'the Roman Empire' (nearly 85%) (see fig. 5.13). No participants selected 'Ancient Egypt'.

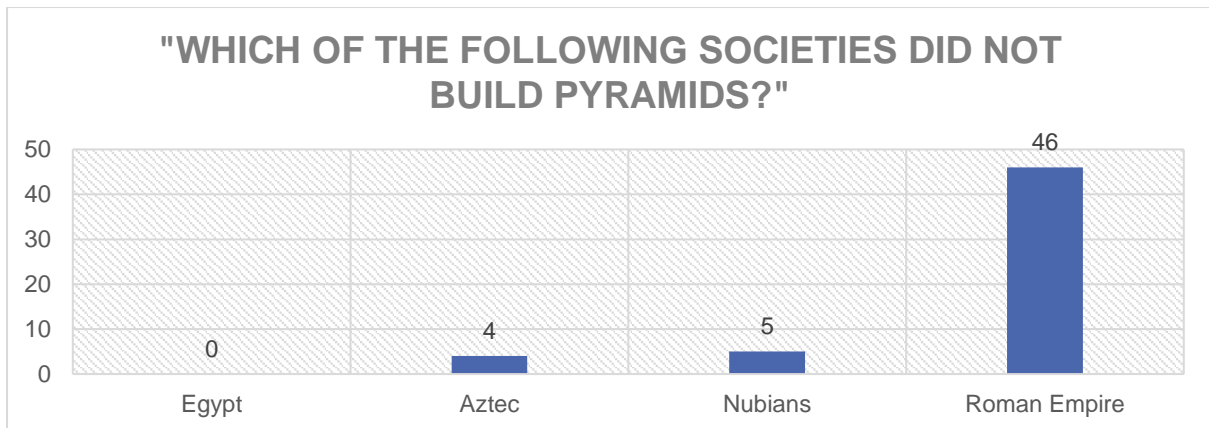


Figure 5.13: responses to Question 10

Responses to Question 11 were especially interesting. When asked to identify 'which of the following was *not* one of the 'first civilisations'', the only two 'primary civilisations' of the four options were the most frequently selected (see fig. 5.14). Once again, the contemporary geographical locale inhabited by these historical societies was noted at this stage in the questionnaire, so that the options were: 'the Sumerians (modern-day Iraq)'; 'the Aztec (modern-day Mexico)'; and 'the Indus Valley Civilisation (modern-day India)'. It is thus again possible that participants 'filled in' this answer with reference to their 'knowledge' on these areas, guided and mediated through problematic curriculum content (see above), and loaded media presentations (discussed in the next chapter).

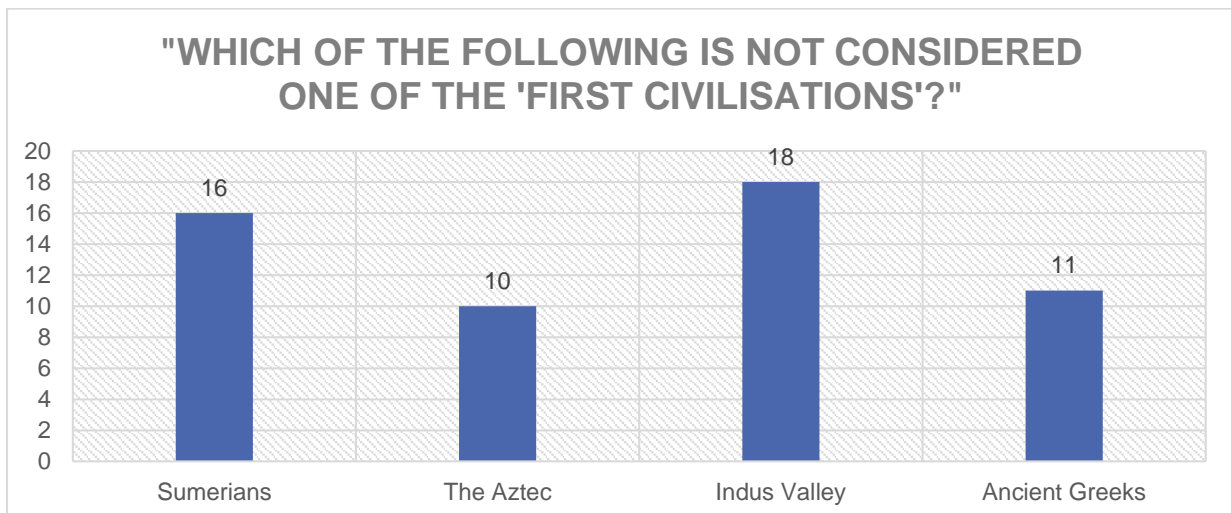


Figure 5.14: responses to Question 11

The next question saw a high proportion of correct responses, with around 75% of participants identifying ‘Boston (modern-day USA)’ as the city which had not been the capital of an empire (see fig. 5.15). It is nonetheless notable that the next highest proportion of participants (nearly 20%) selected ‘Zanzibar (modern-day Tanzania), and it is again possible that negative contemporary depictions, along with a general paucity in African histories throughout the curriculum, may be leading pupils to deduce incorrect assumptions concerning the history of the region.

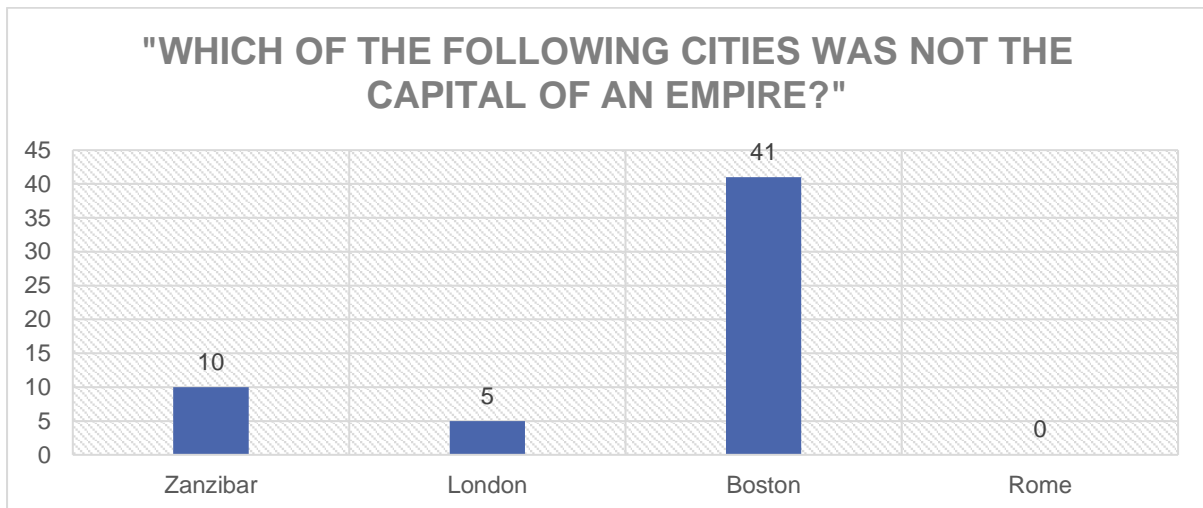


Figure 5.15: responses to Question 12

The final question in the ‘quiz’ section concerned ancient libraries – ‘which of the following ancient cities did *not* contain a famous library?’. The number of participants who selected ‘Ephesus (modern-day Turkey)’ is interesting, as it could signal the extent to which pupils’ knowledge on the Classics may be skewed towards the Western Mediterranean, with Asia Minor representing a highly important arena throughout antiquity (see fig. 5.16). However, with the exception of Alexandria, the spread of responses to this question in particular are fairly flat, and it is notable that in this instance, participants did not seem to cluster around the explicitly ‘Roman’ option of ‘Ostia (modern-day Italy).

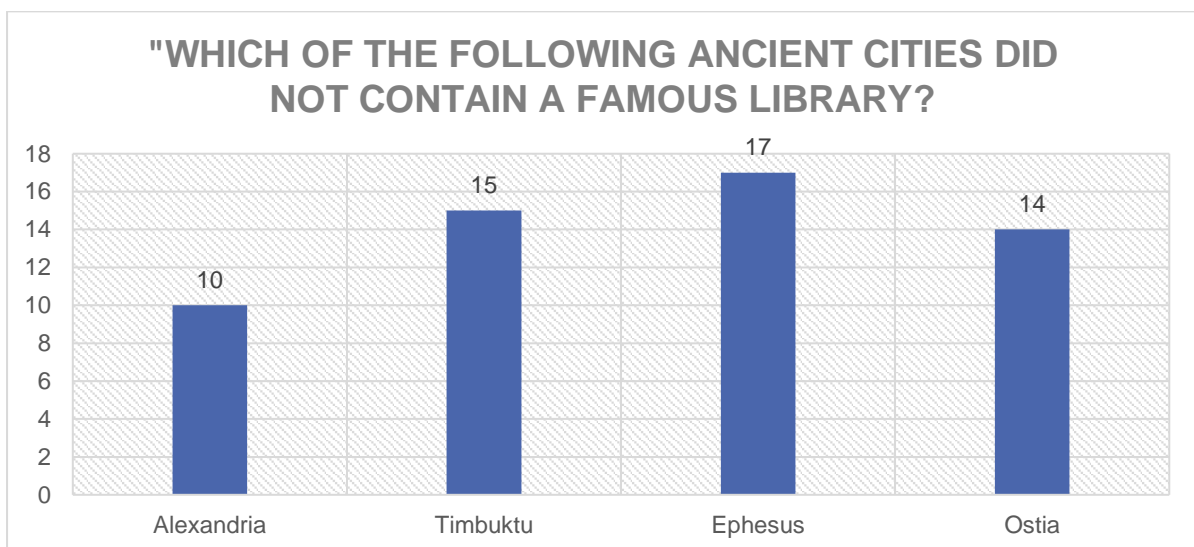


Figure 5.16: responses to Question 13

Questionnaire – ‘Agree to Disagree’

The ‘Agree to Disagree’ section saw participants being presented with four highly polemical statements on the past, and asked to define their position on these statements on a four-part Likert scale. This section also included a free answer box, where participants were asked to explain their position.

- **“Historically, Europeans have always been far more developed than any other group on Earth”**

The first statement concerned global narratives of development. The responses are concerning (see fig. 5.17). Although no participants selected ‘completely agree’, over 55% did select ‘somewhat agree’, and less than 10% selected ‘completely disagree’. The distribution of these results is striking, and could echo the highly Eurocentric narratives of development presented to pupils throughout the textbook sample discussed above.

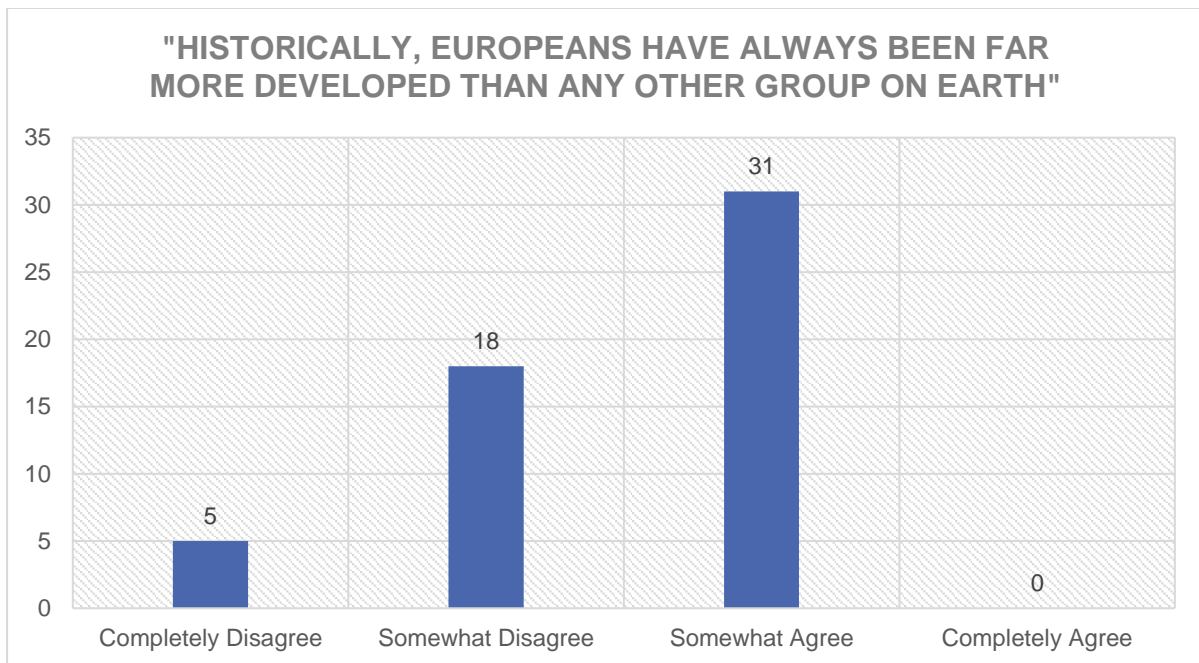


Figure 5.17: responses to Statement 1

One student who selected ‘completely disagree’ justified their position on relativistic grounds: “being developed is affected by multiple factors but you can develop in a different way”. Most other pupils disagreeing with the statement to any extent did so by presenting evidence to the contrary. This was often non-specific: “because I feel like many other continents have been well developed in the past and present”; “because other countries were also as developed as Europeans”; “because dating back in time there has been a variety of power distributed”. Others did name specific regions or societies who served to challenge this notion: “because countries in West of Asia have much more developed technology”; “Byzantine empire & other middle eastern empires were extremely powerful”; “countries like Tokyo are way more advanced and developed than Europeans”; “African cities were the most civilised in the world and only fell because of interference from the European slave trade”. This latter point is especially interesting, as it represents a core facet of Afrocentrist

theory, which does not appear throughout the curricula analysed over the course of this research. Another student pointed to an apparent paucity of evidence of Global South histories in rejecting the statement: “it is unknown to how far places such as modern day Egypt and Ethiopia developed”, raising questions over the role of archaeological narratives in school curricula. A final, smaller group of students rejected the statement by taking it at face value, (correctly) pointing out other Western societies outside of Europe who had similar levels of infrastructure: “as other countries such as Australia and America have been very developed”; “Other continents like North and South America or Asia are also very developed in different ways”; “America invented nukes”.

Two students, whilst accepting the statement, nonetheless pointed out the negative implications of our ‘development’: “Europe has had the chance to take slaves and resources from countries meaning they don’t have the ability to develop like Europeans”; “Europeans have taken other countries as slaves and also taken their resources making it harder for them to develop”. These responses are interesting, as they belie the extent to which a focus on these negative aspects of African history in particular can lead to ‘eternalised’ narratives of Global South inferiority. Other pupils gave responses which echo geographical theories of development: “Europeans are pretty much all high income countries which shows that they must of developed ahead of everyone”; “I [somewhat agree] to this statement as even in world war 2 and further back we have always had a lot more resources”. The majority of those agreeing with the notion, however, did so through a deployment of historical evidence. Notably, much of this concerned the Classical Tradition: “Ancient Rome was remarkably ahead of its time. The Greeks and British too were creating inventions never seen before”; “dating back 1000s of years to Romans and Greek were the most advanced in the world”; “As seen in British empire and Roman empire... have clearly overcome many different societies”; “the Greeks and the Romans started practically everything, so Europeans have been developing faster”. “I somewhat agree as romans are known for their knowledge and how they developed countries”; This latter response is especially interesting, since it establishes a link between imperialism, ‘development’, and the role of the imperialist as the genial ‘developer’. This idea is echoed in other responses: “As their armies have evidently dominated the rest of the world it can only mean they are more developed”; “They had some of the biggest empires, which led to some of the most developed countries today”. Two further students spoke of the technological advances of Europeans: “we invented loads of buildings e.g. Eiffel tower and Big Ben”; “Historically, Europeans have invented and discovered important things in the world that helped humanity evolve technologically”.

Three participants pointed to socio-political factors as evidence for our development – two note: “because now people migrate to Europe for better healthcare”; “more immigrants are coming over to Europe due to our development i.e. healthcare. Another student highlights other key facets to the Eurocentric development narrative: “from my knowledge, I can understand that Europe (as a continent) has always been innovative in its ways of democracy, religion, and philosophy, which often leads to further influence on other nations and front foot breaks in the way of historical development”. A final student noted curriculum shortcomings in explaining their lack of knowledge to the contrary: “This is because I know of more European empires and have been taught more of this. Therefore it seemed the logical answer”.

- **“It is not fair to compare different societies from different time periods or areas, or to rank them according to how ‘advanced’ they are”**

Statement 2 concerned the extent to which totalistic narrative construction is justifiable. The results in this case are clearer, with 67% of participants agreeing that universal comparative metrics are not fair (see fig. 5.18).

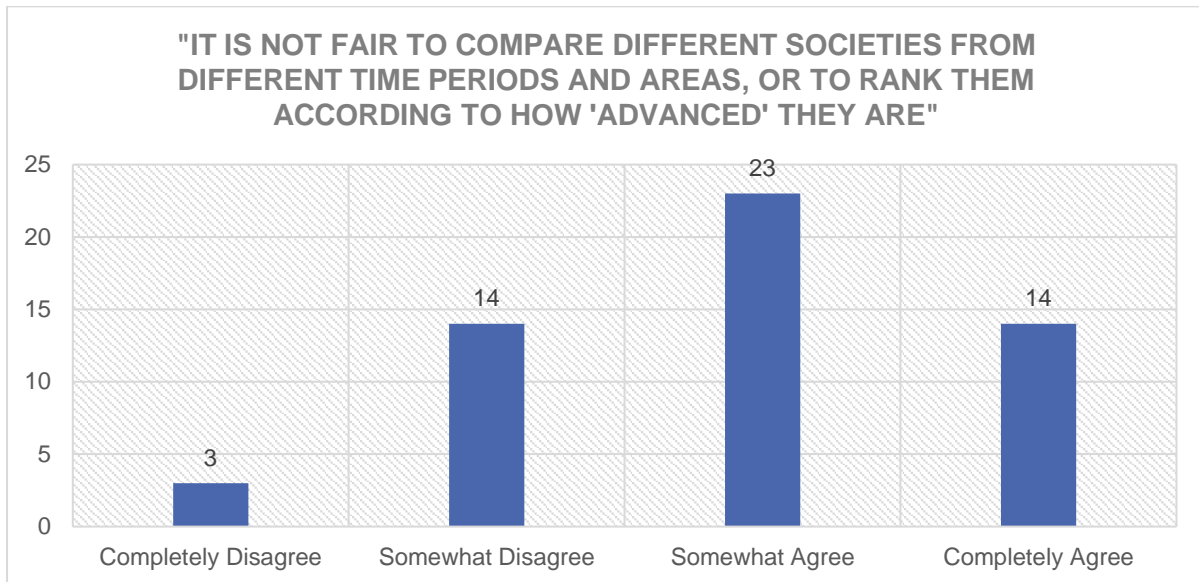


Figure 5.18: responses to Statement 2

Two of those disagreeing with the statement did so on absolute grounds: “That’s how things are ranked”; “I don’t have a clue why is wouldn’t be fair”. The majority, however, spoke to the analytical advantages of such a system of comparison: “As this allows us to see who may have been the most powerful at that period of time”; “It helps to explain and figure out what they were like and how they compare to modern society.”; with a final student also drawing on the example of Classical Antiquity: “comparing different societies lets us see how they have developed in different ways; Europe somewhat regressed after the fall of Rome”. Others offered more tempered perspectives, largely temporally-centred: “Different societies had different potential to advance, they would have had different resources, cultures, even populations, that could stop or stall their development drastically”; “things don’t stay the same. it isn’t fair to compare the early 1900s to now as of how advanced we are”.

Amongst those agreeing with the statement, there were a number who drew on specific factors which may have inhibited ‘development’, in explaining why comparisons are not fair. Chief amongst these were environmental disadvantages: “The resources would have been different in each area, where now trade is easier”; “countries face different challenges like natural disasters and wars so we cannot rank them”, whilst others indicated other developmental issues more generally: “Societies could have developed later on in time but still be just as advanced”; “everyone had different opportunities and they were imbalances at certain periods in time”. One participant noted that ‘some’ societies – by inference, largely those in the Global South – were disadvantaged as “how advanced they are is based on when they were discovered, so it is not fair to judge them for something

they cannot control”. It is highly notable to see the idea that histories outside of Europe did not ‘begin’ until colonisation so cogently being drawn upon in the construction of this students’ historical worldview, and a damning indictment on the textbook and curriculum content, discussed above. Finally, a small number of participants agreed with the statement on relativistic grounds: “Everyone is different and the times you lived in reflect that. If you lived in a different time period to another society, they shouldn’t be compared”; “Being ‘advanced’ is completely subjective to what a person sees in a civilisation. It could be their political development to their agricultural development within society, and therefore impossible to gauge”.

- **“The modern West inherited most of our cultural characteristics from Ancient Greece and Rome”**

This next statement concerned the extent of Western patrimony in Classical Antiquity. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given responses throughout the survey, there is a high degree of subscription to this sentiment, with over 75% of participants agreeing with the notion, and none selecting ‘completely disagree’ (see fig. 5.19). This in itself is particularly interesting when considered alongside the ‘Quiz’ responses outlined above, which saw actors in the Classical tradition being favoured over those from the Global South consistently. Accordingly, it is possible that participants were, to a certain degree, proxying the contemporary West in the Graeco-Roman tradition, and drawing on narratives concerning European hegemony in order to fill in a number of historical unknowns, in conjunction with more negative depictions of the contemporary Global South.

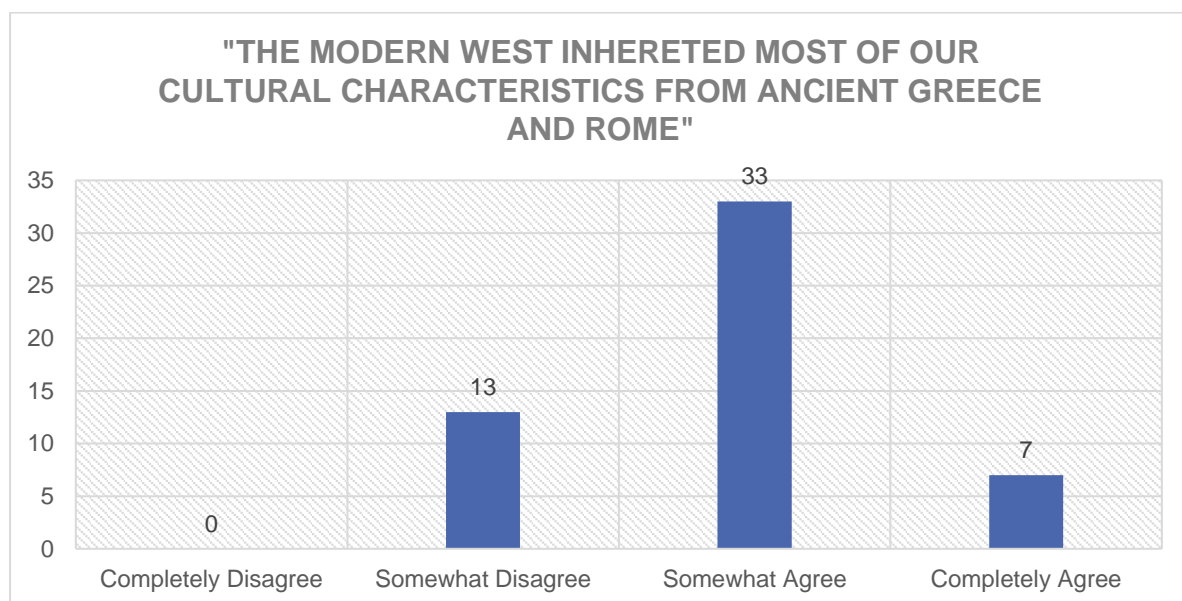


Figure 5.19: responses to Statement 3

Three of those disagreeing with the statement highlighted the flexible and dynamic nature of culture: “because as people evolve and travel to other places, cultures spread”; “yes they started here but the world has grown and moved on completely”; “each place made their own creations and inventions”. However, interestingly, the majority of ‘somewhat disagree’ responses were justified by way of a partial acceptance of the influence of the Graeco-Roman tradition: “whilst many technologies and cultures from Greece and Rome were incorporated, there is still culture left from other places”; “Yes,

we inherit many things and ideas from Greece and Rome, but many other areas we learn so much, such as France!"; "Some but not all of our characteristics from Greece and Rome".

These partial responses were mirrored by some of those who selected 'somewhat agree' in response to the statement: "Lots of our language and traditions have become influenced by Greece and Rome however there were lots of different ethnicities and tribes which held their own unique cultures"; "Although Ancient Rome and the Greeks had a huge impact on our modern society, nations such as France and Italy also had a significant impact". However, the majority of 'agree' responses were justified through numerous examples of 'what the Romans did for us': "Astrology, maths, and many more things came from the Ancient Romans + Greeks and also when they took over England, we would have picked up things from them"; "We inherited a lot of writing and ethical views as well as religion from Greece and Rome"; "We have inherited some ancient languages from Ancient Rome and developed education from Greece"; "Ideas such as reading, writing, building structures such as libraries and roads have all come (at least in part) from these civilisations. Even modern languages in the west are built off of Latin"; "They were some of the first cities/towns"; "In Modern days, we know that most language were based off Greek words and maybe not all culture but languages have developed from Greece and Rome".

It is interesting to see the factors commonly drawn out here, of linguistics, technology, pedagogy, ethics, and urbanism, given how frequently these ideas are propagated in public discourse to underscore ideas around Eurocentric teleology (discussed in relation to the media in the next chapter). Some participants went further still, emphasising the Graeco-Roman tradition as foundational to our own culture: "The essence of British politics starts from the democratic and philosophical beliefs of the ancient Greeks. They laid the footwork for our society to grow into a modern version of their beliefs". Finally, two other participants echoed again the imperial-development narrative: "As we were conquered by the Roman empire at one point and they helped develop us a lot"; "Because I believe especially the Roman Empire invaded many countries and changed many things".

- **"Prior to colonisation, groups in Africa had developed 'civilisations' to rival those in Europe"**

The final statement concerned the narrative of African inferiority and stagnation *versus* Western superiority and development. The results are skewed slightly against this notion, with 55% of participants responding in the affirmative. (see fig. 5.20). However, this does leave nearly 45% of disagreeing with the statement. Whilst, given the ubiquity of this master narrative throughout the textbook sample, these results are not surprising, it is still concerning to see the full extent of subscription to this narrative amongst the sample population. It must be noted, however, that the free-answer responses did reveal an ambiguity within the question, leading to some participants to misunderstand its meaning (e.g. "African civilisations weren't built to rival but to live like normal people"). These responses totalled three of those who disagreed with the statement, and five of those who agreed, resulting in a consistent margin of 45%:55% if these results were to be discounted.

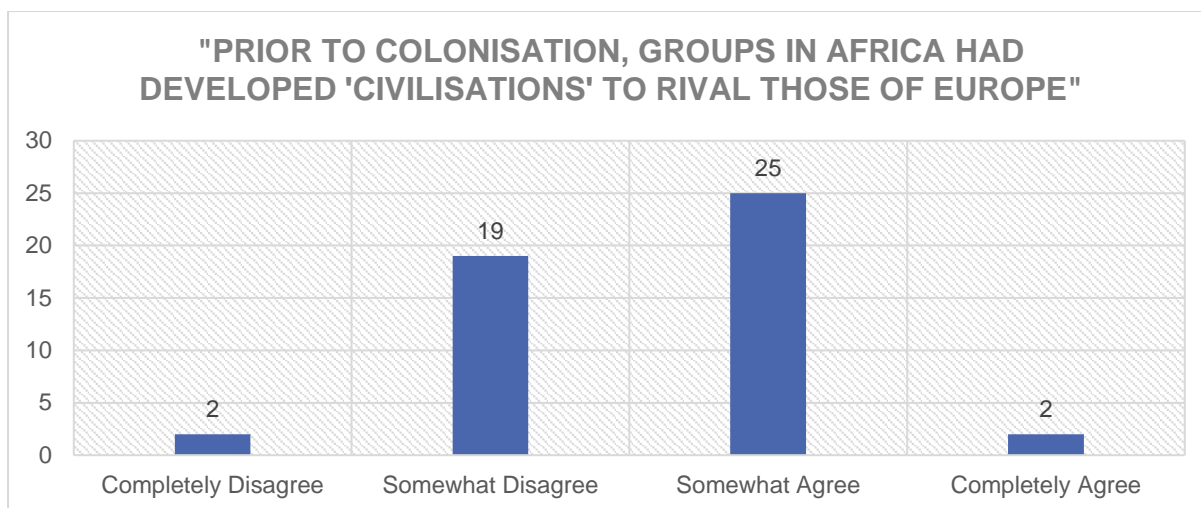


Figure 5.20: responses to Statement 4

Those who disagreed with the statement were broadly split between those who sought to emphasise the European role in ‘developing’ African ‘civilisations’, and those who indicated the extent to which pre-Colonial African society was fundamentally primitive. Responses in the former camp include: “Because to when you are colonised, you get your main country to help develop your country”; and “Britain basically developed everyone”. Those in the latter include allusions to the apparent military and technological inferiority of pre-Colonial African groups: “As they were so easily taken over”; “machinery v man-made objects. guns and arms v spears and tribes”; and the far more concise: “tribes.”. There was also one partial rejection, with the participant noting that “Africa had created a very advanced and stable society, however they did not rival those of Europe at the time”.

The majority of those who agreed with the statement sought to present evidence in support of their positions: “There were 5 major kingdoms in Africa prior to colonisation”; “Because they had huge buildings and civilisations e.g. Egypt having all of their emperors and huge empires”; “This is because of places like Lagos”. Others highlighted various facets of the colonial and pre-colonial political and economic systems, both as evidence for African ‘civilisation’: “They would have been as good... as European cities... They were trading partners. Guns for slaves”; and as an explanation for the ‘degeneration’ of the continent: “due to the slave trade they could have developed this for protection from other countries”; “African civilisations were extremely advanced, they had a lot of potential to advance, rooted in their richness in natural resources and they would have been difficult competitors if they were given the opportunity, however certain events such as the slave trade and colonisations stopped their growth”; “Africans used to be very rich in raw minerals”; “Africa may have created civilisations as countries were just using Africa for raw materials”. The emphasis on the material richness of Africa is especially interesting, considering the extent to which this was emphasised throughout the textbook sample, despite its pedigree as a facet to imperialist discourses. One participant also noted the apparent paucity of evidence behind this position: “We had never seen what Africa was like before colonisation maybe they were more advanced?”. Finally, one participant did suggest a relativist model through which the concept of ‘civilisation’ may be indexed: “A civilisation in my opinion is defined by the efficiency and happiness and cohesion of its people”.

Eurocentric Positions

In order to gauge the extent of Eurocentric sentiment demonstrated by participants during the final research task, and to compare between populations, responses were coded on a scale of -2 – 2. Responses which completely agreed with the Eurocentric position was scored -2; somewhat agreed scored -1; somewhat disagreed was scored 1; and completely disagree 2. The average score for Eurocentric sentiment (EC score) across the sample population is -0.16 (see fig. 5.20 for the full distribution). This indicates that participants are on the whole more ‘for’ Eurocentric narratives than ‘against’. This score is also significantly lower (i.e. more in favour of Eurocentric discourses) than the comparative score for the adult sample population, as discussed in Chapter Seven, which is 0.72.

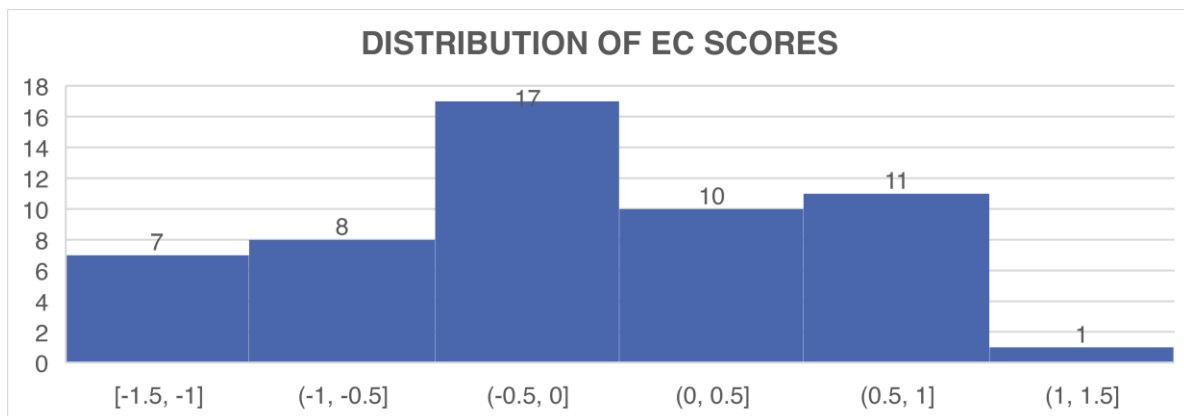


Figure 5.21: EC scores across sample population

Owing to the smaller sample size, it is not possible to analyse demographical sub-populations. However, participants’ scores in the first ‘quiz’ section were compared with EC scores, in order to ascertain whether either greater knowledge on the Ancient Past, or a tendency to fill in historical unknowns without reference to established Eurocentric narratives in public and pedagogical discourse, had any effect on participants’ subscription to Eurocentric narratives. However, as shown in fig. 5.21, there is little correlation between the quiz score and EC scores of participants.

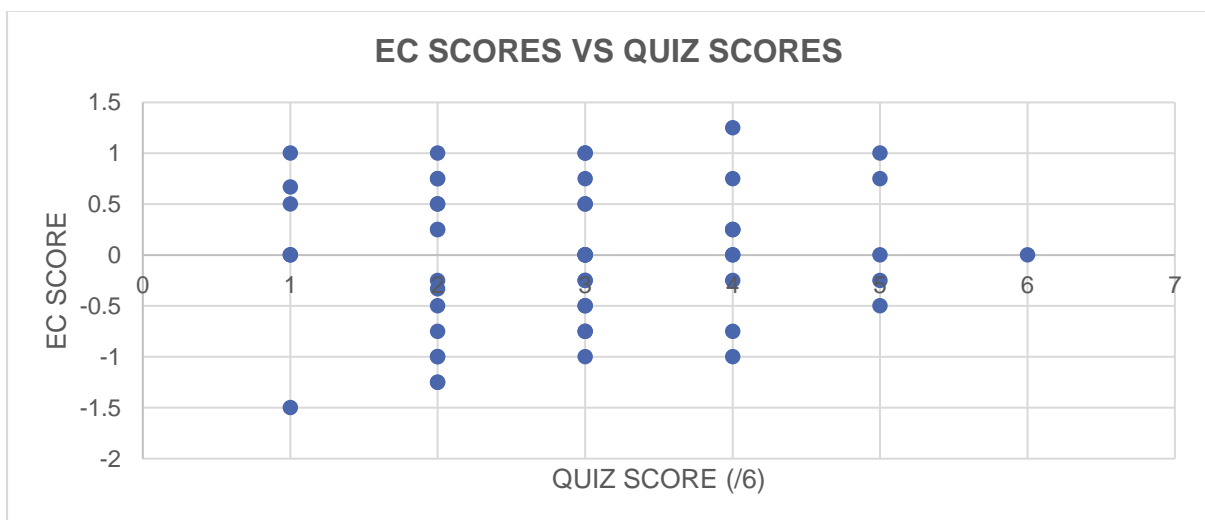


Figure 5.22: EC scores vs quiz scores

Conclusions: Eurocentric narratives and formative development

The above results speak to the continued manifestation of problematic, regressive historical narratives throughout the national curriculum, and the effects of these narratives on students' historical worldviews. The textbook review in particular reveals a concerning reliance on outdated tropes and Eurocentric master narratives in representing the past. Echoing discussions from educationalists concerning national curriculum content, it is clear that many of the resources available to support delivery of this curriculum is similarly imbued with ideas of Western superiority, and Other inferiority. They are also underpinned with principles of totality, opposition, and teleology. Totality, through the reification of Western developmental models as representing the pinnacle of human achievement, and the implied omniscience of contemporary Western historical enquiry. Oppositional narratives are demonstrated through the comparisons drawn, either overtly or covertly, between societies in the Global South, and the West, with the former typically represented diametrically to the 'development' of 'Western civilisation', as either stagnant, primitive, or otherwise inferior. Textbooks also on the whole reinforce the Eurocentric *telos* of global development, the Western agent seen as the primary actor across the sweep of human history.

These ideas are, concerningly, arguably reflected in the questionnaire responses from a sample of Year 9 students. Throughout both sections of the initial 'quiz', participants consistently asserted the pre-eminence of historical European actors, and in particular those from the Classical Tradition. Since it is unlikely that participants would necessarily already know the 'correct' answers to these questions, it appears as though students are drawing on contemporary representations of the West and the Global South in deducing which historical society to attribute particular achievements to, or those gleaned from the limited scope of their formal history education. This interpretation is reinforced by participants responses during the 'Agree to Disagree' exercise, with participants across the sample returning a total EC score of -0.16, demonstrating significantly greater subscription to Eurocentric narratives than the comparable adults' population, discussed in Chapter Seven. Responses to the polemical statements put to students saw considerable support for the ideas of totality, opposition, and teleology. Particularly interesting is the extent to which participants saw the Graeco-Roman tradition as 'our' direct cultural antecedent, considering the historical primacy awarded to actors in Classical Antiquity by this same sample population. The free-answer sections to the questionnaire also saw many participants echoing elements of Eurocentric discourses perpetuated throughout the textbook sample, particularly those concerning the Western developmental narrative, and the primitive nature of pre-Colonial societies in the Global South.

The relatively small sample size for the questionnaire does present limitations when considering the extent to which these results are generalisable. However, the high degree of similarity between the questionnaire responses, and the narratives presented in the textbook sample, is significant. In conjunction, these results serve to strengthen existing perspectives on both the problematic, Eurocentric rooting of the current history curriculum, and the damaging effects of these narratives on pupils' historical cognition and worldviews.

CHAPTER SIX

THE PAST ON SCREEN

Alongside ‘formal’ education, presentations through various forms of media represent a key arena for the dissemination and consumption of knowledge on the past. Any comprehensive discussion on the pathways of this knowledge in contemporary Britain would thus be remiss in not considering the content of this media. As I highlight in the previous chapter, deficits in school curricula and classroom resources have had a profound effect on students’ historical worldviews. Does popular media serve to further entrench these narratives, or decentre them? How representative of contemporary scholarship are British media presentations? What perceptions of Self and Other can be gleaned from their discussions? Below, I consider these questions, focussing on British screen media (films, television programmes, documentaries) as a case study. I initially discuss insights gleaned from population-level analysis, considering all historical content produced by, or in conjunction with, a British studio (according to IMDb, N.D.). I then present results from a close analysis of a sample of 18 individual titles, identified by questionnaire participants as having especially high levels of engagement. These results ultimately echo the discourses prevalent in history textbooks, and thus serve to contextualise the Phase (iii) questionnaire and interview data, discussed in the next chapter.

Population-level Insights: Quantitative Data

Using an API to scrape IMDb for British-produced content tagged with ‘History’ returned 1173 results (see Appendix VI for the full sample).

First-level data: themes, popularity, and ratings

Inductive coding of content title and description yielded 46 distinct thematic, temporal, and/or geographical themes into which most titles could be categorised (there were also 170 which could not be coded inductively, owing to a lack of clear description). The number of titles in each category reveals stark disparities in the historical themes presented through screen media, as is demonstrated in the chart below.

The figures demonstrate a heavy skew towards the events of the Twentieth Century, and in particular those surrounding World War I, II, and the Cold War. There is also an emphasis on popular culture programming (focussing on the biographies of notable entertainers and artists, or the history of a particular cultural movement, for example), ‘general’ histories (focussing on the broad history of a specific phenomenon, often taking a quasi-global perspective e.g. *How Earth Works*, 2013; *Epic Warrior Women*, 2018), along with true crime, and entertainment (e.g. *Brainiac: History Abuse*, 2005). At the other end of the spectrum, content concerning the Global South and historically persecuted groups (including the Jewish population, those enslaved during the Transatlantic Trade, and African populations) is particularly poorly represented, with only one

programme each for pre-Colonial African history and Jewish history (not directly concerned with the Holocaust, or Nazi Germany). Indeed, content on the Global South and historically persecuted groups only makes up around 6% of all historical content produced, with a total of 68 titles.

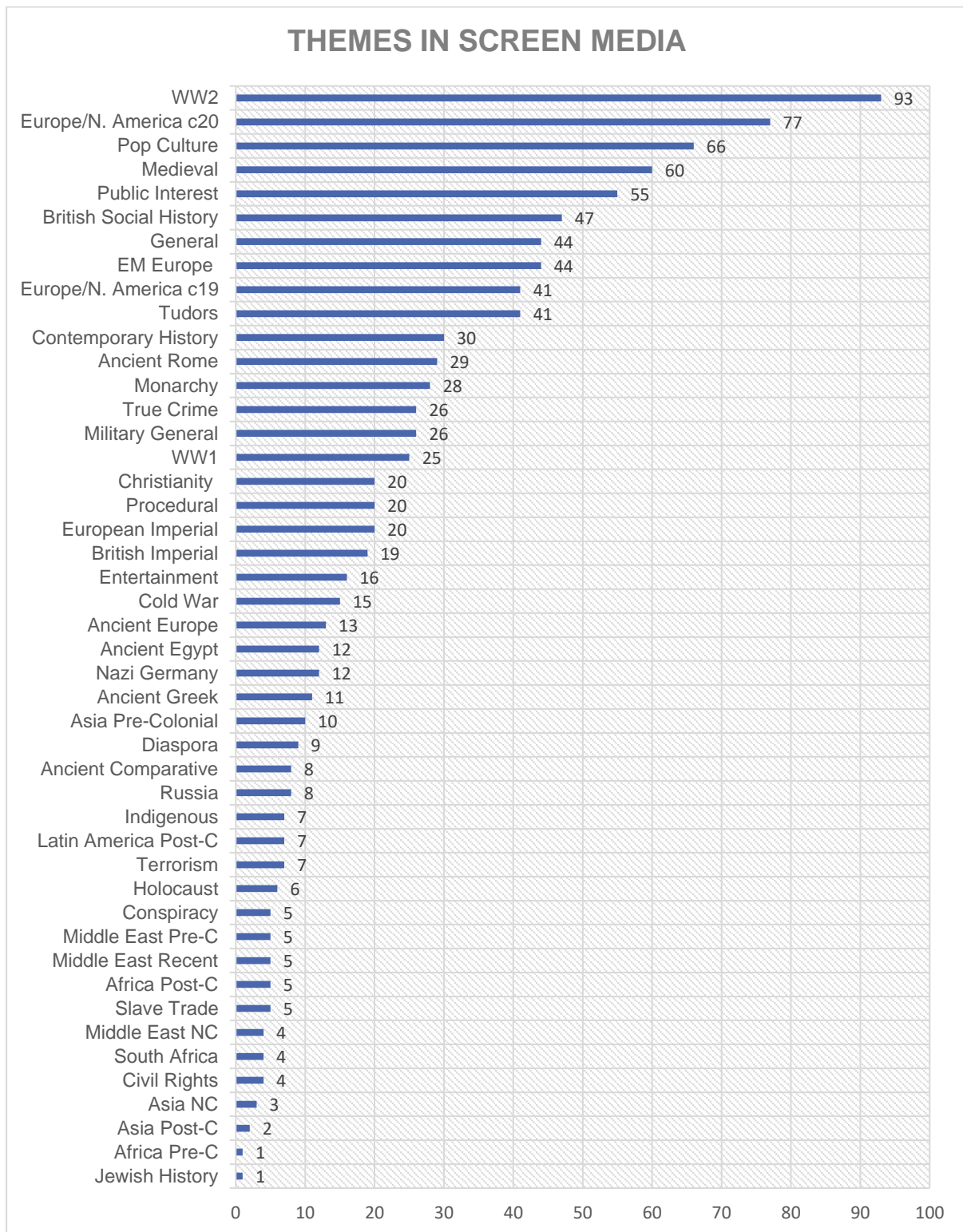


Figure 6.1: themes in screen media (from IMDb data)

Despite this, certain themes along these lines are extremely over-represented when it comes to the number of ratings given by IMDb members, indicating high levels of engagement. This is initially notable when considering the net number of ratings given to titles in a particular theme, with the top 10 themes shown in table 6.1, in which the Slave Trade and post-Colonial Africa are both represented, despite the far smaller number of titles within these themes. More stark, however, are the top 10 categories by *average* ratings, shown in table 6.2.

	CODE	#	Net
	WW2	93	2155985
Europe/N. America c20		77	1766648
Medieval		60	1511644
Monarchy		28	1039357
Slave Trade		5	736620
EM Europe		44	618212
Africa Post-C		5	601742
Terrorism		7	595033
Cold War		15	453961
Tudors		41	427818

Table 6.1: most popular themes in screen media (net) (from IMDb data)

	CODE	#	Mean
Slave Trade		5	147324.00
Africa Post-C		5	120348.40
Terrorism		7	85004.71
Monarchy		28	37119.89
Cold War		15	30264.07
Medieval		60	25194.07
Civil Rights		4	23252.50
WW2		93	23182.63
Europe/N. America c20		77	22943.48
Ancient Greek		11	15744.64

Table 6.2: most popular themes in screen media (mean) (from IMDb data)

Represented in both tables, and comprising the three most popular themes by average ratings, is content which centres on fundamentally ‘negative’ conceptions or portrayals of those from the Global South. As was the case in the textbook sample discussed in the last chapter, the key theme around which to base discussions on the Black population remains as the Slave Trade, which, whilst warranting discussion and interrogation, risks entrenching narratives surrounding Black submission and servility. Also featuring highly are discussions on post-Colonial African history. Whilst this theme is not problematic in and of itself, the titles in question do appear to exclusively emphasise the instability and violence of the continent following the formal dismantling of Empire (see titles and descriptions in table 6.3 below).

TITLE	DESCRIPTION
Hotel Rwanda (2004)	Paul Rusesabagina, a hotel manager, houses over a thousand Tutsi refugees during their struggle against the Hutu militia in Rwanda, Africa.
The Last King of Scotland (2006)	Based on the events of the brutal Ugandan dictator Idi Amin’s regime as seen by his personal physician during the 1970s.
The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind (2019)	Against all the odds, a thirteen-year-old boy in Malawi invents an unconventional way to save his family and village from famine.
Shooting Dogs (2005)	A Catholic Priest and an English teacher get stranded in a school in Kigali during the 1994 Rwandan genocide.
Badamasi (2021)	A flawed Army General attempts to guide an impossible African country through a viciously strained era in this first of its kind, authorised biopic, based on real events.

Table 6.3: descriptions of post-colonial Africa titles (from IMDb data)

It is not as if these stories should not be told, nor that these are necessarily ‘bad’ or inaccurate films. The issue is that, with only one single exploration of Africa prior to colonisation, and no engagement with the continent during the colonial period, an emphasis on war, famine, genocide, and political instability only served to reify existing, damaging tropes concerning Africa, and indeed risks *immortalising* them. Thus, as was the case in the textbook sample discussed above, the only image of Africa given to those who engage with historical media on screen is inherently negative, and arguably serves to reinforce the fundamental justificatory logic of Empire: ‘We are bringing civilisation to Them. If We leave, They will not be able to manage Their affairs without violence, poverty, and social decay’.

The third highest-scoring by average rating category concerns [Islamic] terrorism. There is thus hugely disproportionate engagement with content concerning the Global South and historically persecuted groups which *emphasises* elements of the Eurocentric master narrative discussed throughout the course of this research (African servility and submissiveness, post-Imperial social decay in Africa, and Islamic violent militarism). This stands in contrast with engagement figures for more positive aspects of Global South history, as demonstrated in the bottom 10 themes by net and average engagement, shown in tables 6.4 and 6.5 below:

THEME	#	Ratings
Africa Pre-C	1	35
Asia Post-C	2	135
Jewish History	1	286
Indigenous	7	299
Middle East NC	4	421
Military General	26	936
Ancient	8	1117
Comparative		
Asia NC	3	1290
Ancient Europe	13	2520
Public Interest	55	2991

Table 6.4: least popular themes in screen media (net) (from IMDb data)

THEME	#	Ratings
Africa Pre-C	1	35.00
Military General	26	36.00
Indigenous	7	42.71
Public Interest	55	54.38
Asia Post-C	2	67.50
Middle East NC	4	105.25
Ancient	8	139.63
Comparative		
Ancient Europe	13	193.85
Jewish History	1	286.00
Entertainment	16	308.50

Table 6.5: least popular themes in screen media (mean) (from IMDb data)

It must be noted that the sole example of content concerning pre-Colonial African history is from this year (2023), and as such the number of ratings are likely to rise over the coming months. However, the lack of broad engagement with elements of Indigenous, non- and post-Colonial Asian histories, and non-Colonial Middle Eastern histories again mirrors the presentation of historical knowledge in history textbooks, and could thus represent the further entrenchment of problematic, outdated narratives within British popular discourse.

Second-level data: themes, times, and places

The themes presented in screen media can also be grouped together into distinct families, either geographically, temporally, or thematically. These groupings give further insight into the uneven landscape of British popular discussion on the past.

On the one hand, grouping categories by geographical region demonstrates a heavy skew towards content concerning the Western world (i.e. Europe, North America, or their perceived antecedents in, for example, the Classical Tradition), comprising over three quarters of the 760 geographically identifiable titles (see fig. 6.2).

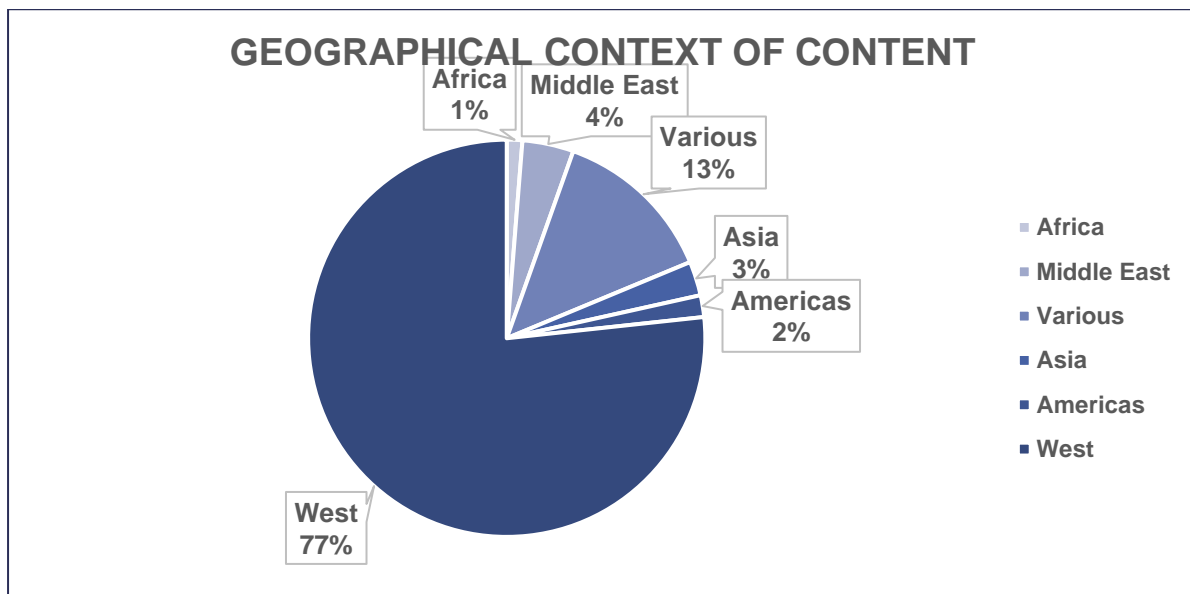


Figure 6.2: geographical contexts of media content (from IMDb data)

However, this stands in contrast with the net number of ratings given by IMDb members to titles (see table 6.6). Despite having the lowest number of titles, those concerning Africa have the second-highest number of ratings, again indicating the popularity of fundamentally reductive representations of the continent. It should be noted, however, that this broad geographical grouping also contains titles on South Africa towards the end of the Apartheid regime, and there are thus some more positive discussions than those outlined above. The context with the lowest number of ratings, the Americas (comprising the region as a whole pre-Columbus, and the recent history of Central and South America) command only 0.3% of the total number of verified engagements, calling into question the strength of knowledge on these themes throughout British society, particularly considering their broad absence from the pedagogical materials reviewed in the previous Chapter.

It is also interesting to note the comparatively low mean rating for content concerning the African context, despite the higher level of overall engagement, which could go some way to explain the lower number of programming on Africa, since less well-received content may lead studios to avoid these contexts altogether. However, as I discuss in Chapter Two, most studios are fundamentally capitalist enterprises, and are thus more concerned with the number of engagements than the quality

of output, *per se*. Depending on the content of reviews, then, it may be that producers are proxying public opinion (and thus appetite for more content) in qualitative assessments of this content, which could speak to the far lower figures for historical discussions on Africa in particular.

Context	#	Net Ratings	Mean Ratings	Rating
Africa	10	655665	54644.33	6.52
Middle East	33	633483	17995.24	7.2
Various	105	386217	2608.9	7.19
Asia	22	126173	3291.54	7.13
Americas	14	38705	2764.64	7.24
West	606	10182409	398776.5	7.13

Table 6.6: geographical contexts of media content, with ratings information (from IMDb data)

When breaking themes down by temporal context, there is a greater degree of plurality, although discussions on the period following on from 1850 maintains a clear majority. This is no great surprise, considering the overwhelming popularity of themes such as the Second World War amongst producers of media. The least popular time period for discussion is 500-1500, which is perhaps surprising, given the popularity of Medieval themes overall, as shown in fig. 6.3.

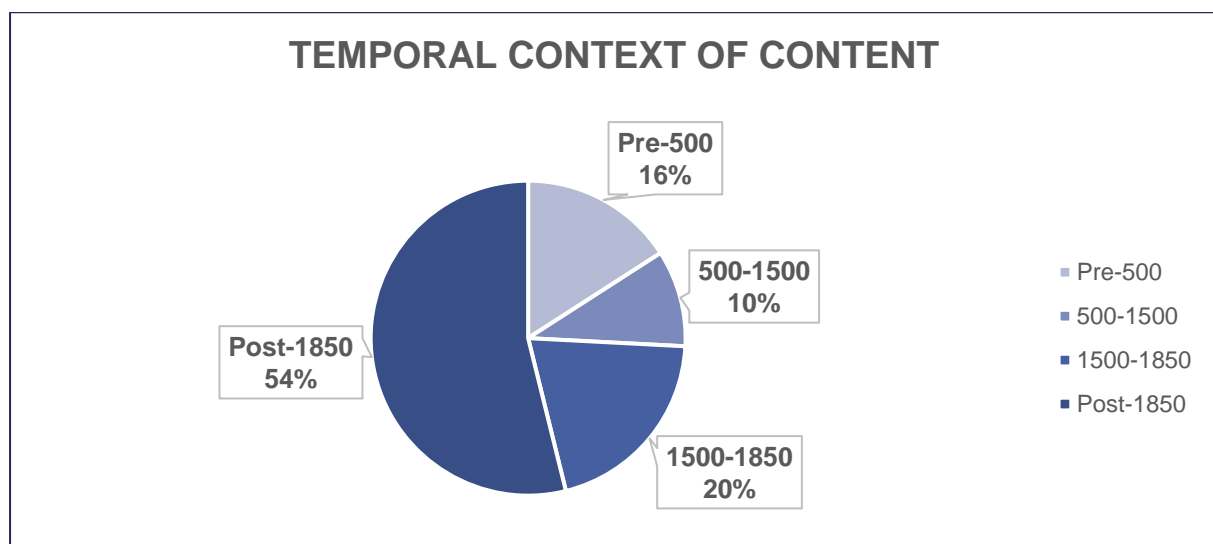


Figure 6.3: temporal contexts of media content (from IMDb data)

A steady number of titles concerning the earliest phase of history demonstrates the popularity of these themes amongst producers of media. They might also be taken as evidence for the British enthusiasm for content concerning the distant past. However, as is shown in table 6.7, the net and mean number of verified engagements for pre-500 content is extremely low by comparison with other time periods. This is likely a consequence of folding Classical themes in with demonstrably less popular discussions on the distant past in the Global South, as is demonstrated below when these themes are separated out. However, the ubiquity of discussions on the pre-500 past is still surprising, considering their wide lack of engagement.

Temporal	#	Net Ratings	Mean Ratings	Rating
Pre-500	101	580181	3746.32	7.06
500-1500	63	1512934	12812.03	7.04
1500-1850	129	2013088	36711.63	6.86
Post-1850	342	6574215	22473.79	7.22

Table 6.7: temporal contexts of media content, with ratings information (from IMDb data)

By far the greatest degree of plurality may be found by grouping content thematically. Once again, the greatest number of programmes produced concern the recent Euro-American sphere, with around 30% of categorisable titles. Conflict is also a popular theme, again not surprising given the popularity of discussions on the World Wars and the Cold War, as is more ‘low-brow’, entertainment-based programming, including popular culture and public interest content. Middling themes include Classical Antiquity (including Ancient Greece, Rome, and Egypt), Colonial histories, and disciplinary discussions. Finally, the lower end of the spectrum includes content on the contemporary and pre-colonial global south, along with colonial histories.

This grouping does not seem coincidental. As is noted above, discussions on the Global South in general, with the exception of content on post-Colonial Africa, are not typically very well engaged with. Similarly, frank and objective discussions on the reality of the British Empire are likely to draw a degree of controversy, which producers of media may be seeking to steer clear of

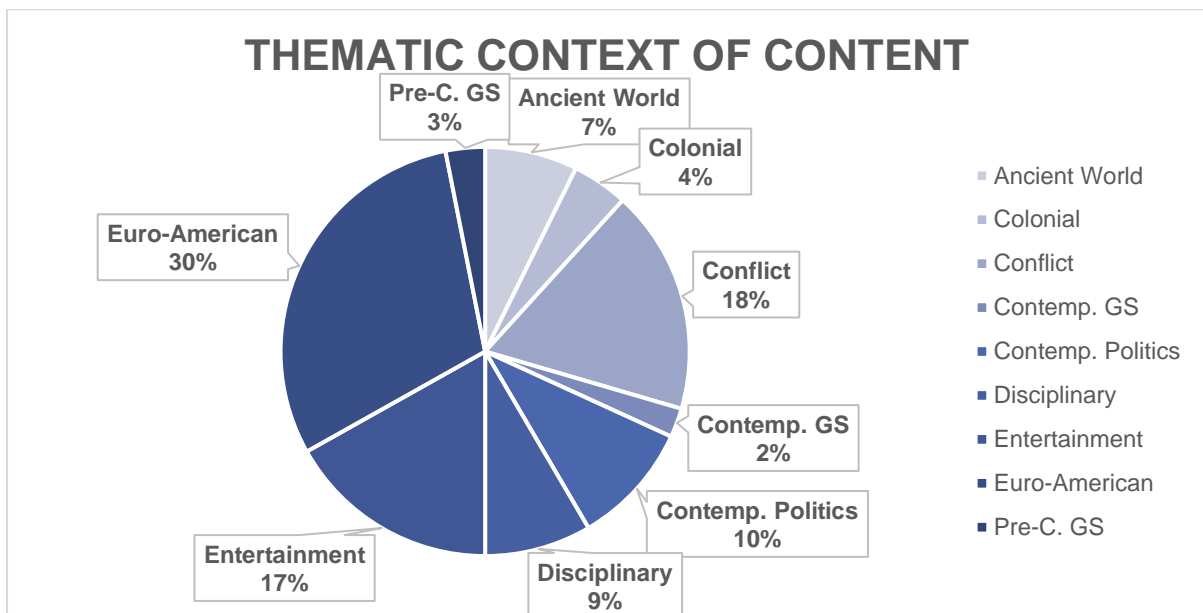


Figure 6.4: thematic contexts of media content (from IMDb data)

This disparity is not, however, reflected in the levels of engagement with these themes (see table 6.8) with the exception of discussions on the pre-Colonial Global South, which have the lowest level of engagement across all divisions of this dataset. Content concerning the Colonial period has amongst the highest levels of engagement, along with discussions on the contemporary Global South. The issues with the content of the latter notwithstanding, the lower number of titles produced for content on these themes thus raises interesting questions. Is there a genuine or only a perceived lack

of interest in these themes? How does this affect their production? And what does this say of the quality of programming? It is notable that discussions on both the pre-Colonial Global South and the Colonial Period, along with the contemporary Global South, all do have generally lower ratings than the average, which again may be being taken as a proxy for public opinion and appetite for these themes in programming.

Thematic	#	Net Ratings	Mean Ratings	Rating
Ancient World	73	439845	5071.27	7.25
Colonial	44	967058	53024.43	6.68
Conflict	177	2797948	11663.43	7.36
Contemp. GS	23	713381	28195.06	7.05
Contemp. Politics	97	1160109	24323.86	7.44
Disciplinary	84	173538	2726.31	7.22
Entertainment	168	162828	1221.69	7.28
Euro-American	299	5767152	17427.4	7
Pre-C. GS	31	141626	2326.17	6.95

Table 6.8: thematic contexts of media content, with ratings information (from IMDb data)

The time perspective

In order to assess the role of impact and engagement in maintaining thematic foci, and/or preventing alternative themes being explored, it is necessary to consider the timescale of releases, alongside their net engagement levels. This was tested according to the first-level themes outlined above. Four themes were used as a case study: the ubiquitous Medieval Period; the less popular but nonetheless consistently explored Ancient Rome; the more contentious British Empire; and the underexplored but highly popular post-Colonial Africa.

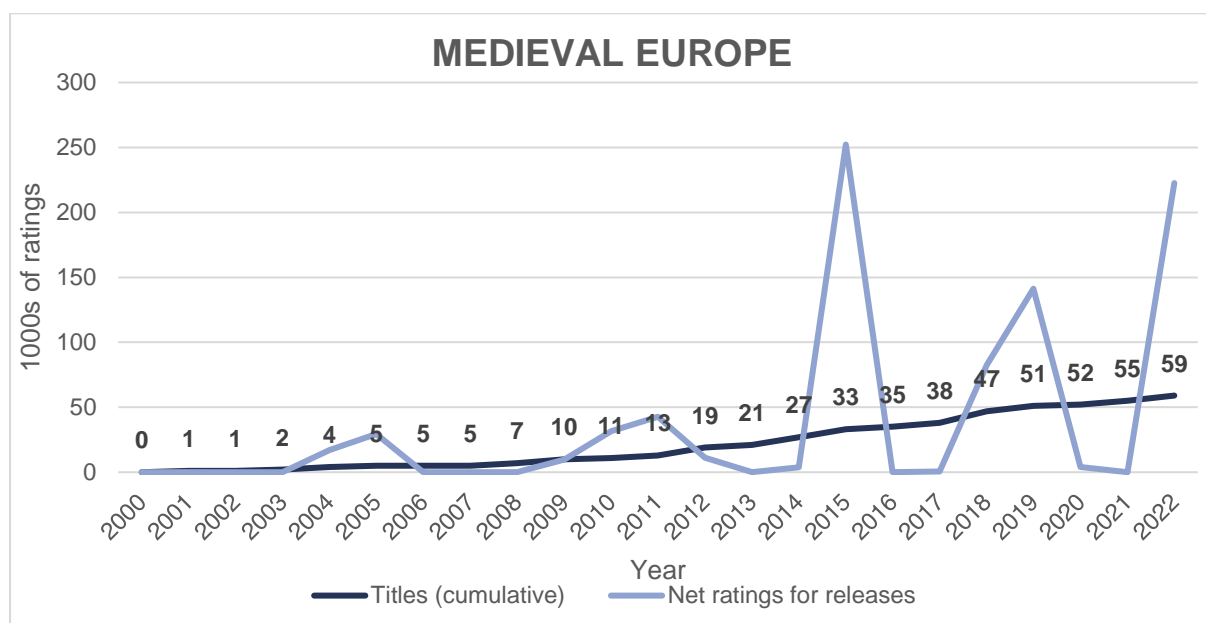


Figure 6.5: releases concerning Medieval Europe by year, with total ratings (from IMDb data)

Releases on the Medieval Period have been broadly consistent in the present century, with only the period from 2005-2007 seeing any real stagnation with releases. By contrast, the engagement level of titles varies wildly, with moderate spikes of under 50,000 in 2005 and 2007 a peak of over 250,000 in 2015. Crucially, therefore, it appears as though engagement levels have no real bearing on the number of titles actually released, which are fairly consistent.

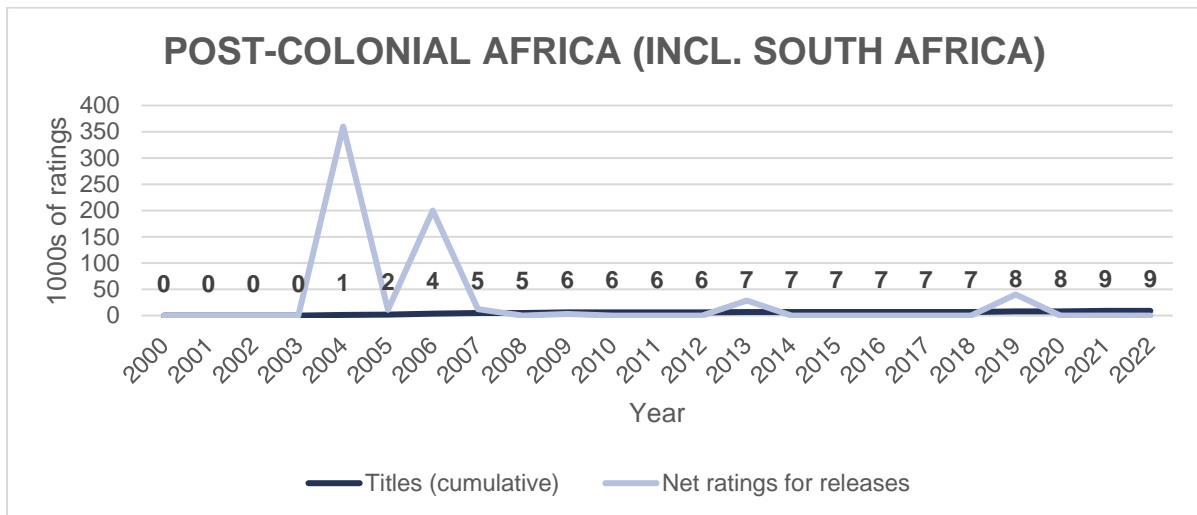


Figure 6.6: releases concerning Post-Colonial Africa by year, with total ratings (from IMDb data)

This stands in contrast to the comparative data from post-Colonial Africa (into which data from South African contexts was also included, as the total number of titles remain extremely low). Here, extremely large spikes in 2004 and 2006 lead to a moderate increase in releases, which then remain broadly stagnant throughout the rest of the time period. The period of 2005-2007 could thus potentially be seen as studios attempting to cash in on the success of the 2004 title, leading to diminished returns, and eventual stagnation.

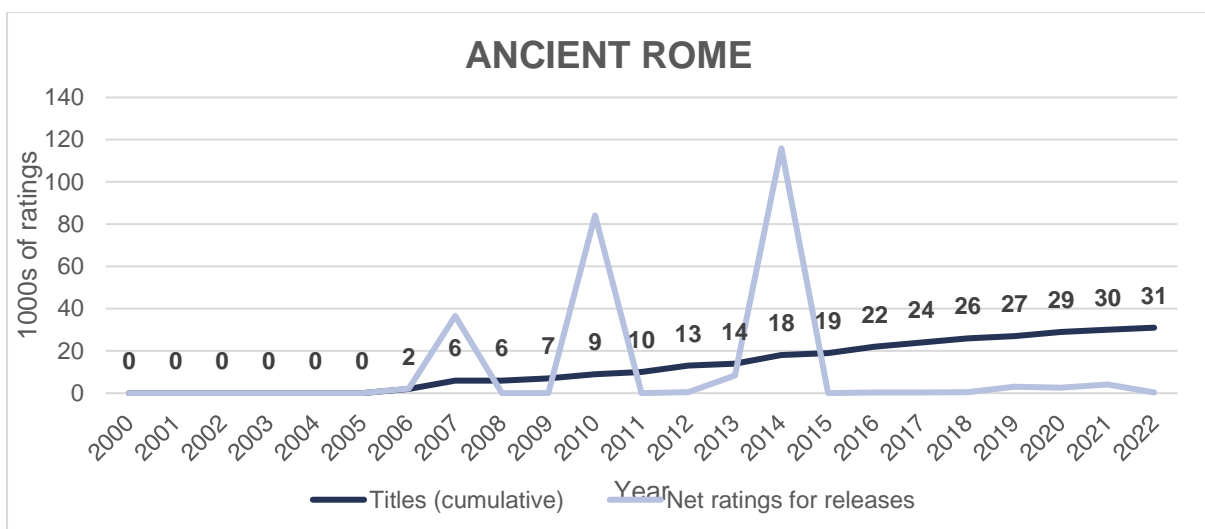


Figure 6.7: releases concerning Ancient Rome by year, with total ratings (from IMDb data)

The pattern for Ancient Roman content follows a broadly similar pattern to that of Medieval Europe, with peaks and troughs in engagement levels seemingly having little impact on the steady release of titles. Peaks in 2007, 2010, and 2014 are not followed-up with an increase in releases, and broadly stagnant engagement from 2015-2022 is nonetheless accompanied by consistent new releases, year-on-year.

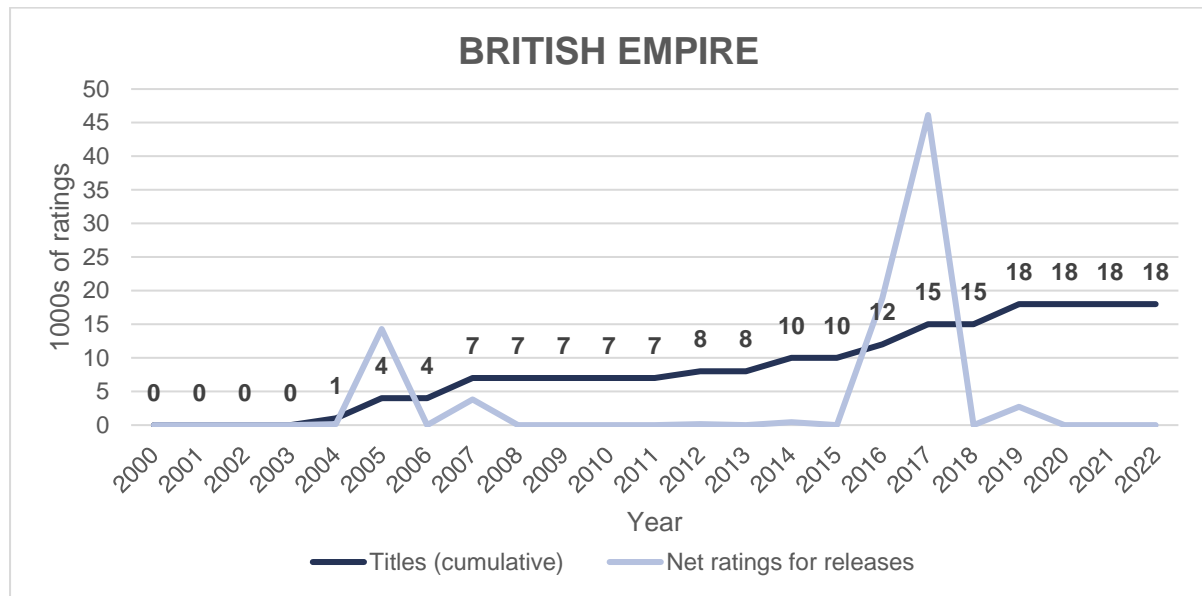


Figure 6.8: releases concerning the British Empire by year, with total ratings (from IMDb data)

Finally, the potentially most contentious topic, British Imperialism, is arguably most demonstrative of the engagement incentive at work. Two peaks, in 2005 and 2017, are followed by a moderate increase in releases over the next couple of years, which fail to achieve the same level of engagement, leading to a period of release stagnation. These peaks are also far lower than those comparable from other themes, with around 15,000 engagements in 2005, and 45,000 in 2017.

This data gives the impression that themes with a proven track record of high engagement (e.g. the Roman Empire, the Medieval Period), are favoured for media production, even though the majority of releases within these themes do not reach the higher levels of engagement that a handful do. These may thus be seen as ‘consistent performers’, of which there is already a proven baseline of interest, as evidenced by titles with extremely high levels of engagement. By contrast, themes which are ‘riskier’, including to some extent post-Colonial Africa, but most notable content concerning the British Empire, do not tend to draw the same levels of engagement, even, in the case of the latter, for the most successful titles in these themes. It is thus arguable that a degree of fiscal conservatism may be preventing the production and release of less widely-explored facets of the historical narrative, with studios and producers preferring to continue delivering consistent releases concerning well-trodden topics, with which a degree of engagement can be almost guaranteed. Questions remain, however, on the actual *content* of these releases, and the narratives which they present to consumers.

Qualitative Analysis of Media Outputs

Qualitative assessment of media content was focussed largely on content in the pre-500 temporal family discussed above. A sample of titles, both documentary and dramatised, was drawn from the Phase (iii) questionnaire responses, and analysed inductively for narratives, themes, and approaches consistent with Eurocentric historiographies. In both instances, these will be discussed according to the cultural group under discussion: (i) Northern Europe; (ii) the Classical Tradition; and (iii) the Global South (see Appendix VII for completed data collection sheets).

Sample

As data was being gathered through the Phase (iii) questionnaire, participants who identified as engaging with historical documentaries, along with period films and TV shows, were asked to note down any examples of titles which they could remember watching. These were then tallied, with respect also paid to prevalent themes that participants identified as being of particular interest. Whilst programmes on the history of the Global South were not widely engaged with across the sample, an effort was made to incorporate at least one title in each category for comparison. The resulting sample (see table 6.9) includes 16 titles: 9 documentary, and 7 dramatised. For series, three episodes were sampled at random, whilst films were watched in their entirety.

NAME	YEAR	CONTEXT	#NAMED	FORMAT	STUDIO	SAMPLE
Mary Beard's Ultimate Rome	2016	Rome	36	Documentary	BBC	1, 2, 4
Civilisations	2018	Eclectic	12	Documentary	BBC	1,4, 6
Secrets of the Saqqara Tomb	2020	Egypt	30	Documentary	Netflix	N/A
Stonehenge: The Lost Circle Revealed	2021	Britain BC	12	Documentary	BBC	N/A
Lost Treasures of Rome	2022	Rome	9	Documentary	C4	3, 5, 6
Art of Persia	2020	ME/NE	5	Documentary	BBC	1, 2, 3
A Greek Odyssey w/ Bettany Hughes	2020	Greece	14	Documentary	Channel 5	1, 2, 3
Celts: Blood, Iron, and Sacrifice	2015	Britain BC	8	Documentary	BBC	1, 2, 3
Egypt's Lost Pyramid	2019	Egypt	6	Documentary	C4	N/A
Gladiator	2000	Rome	75	Film	Universal	N/A
300	2006	Greece	48	Film	Warner Bros	N/A
Troy	2004	Greece	48	Film	Warner Bros	N/A
Kingdom of Heaven	2005	Crusades	15	Film	20th Century Fox	N/A
Apocolypto	2006	Americas	6	Film	20th Century Fox	N/A
Rome	2005	Rome	44	TV Series	BBC/HBO	S1E8, S2E6, S2E9
Vikings	2013	Medieval	89	TV Series	History/Amazon	S2E3, S5E4, S5E5

Table 6.9: media sample

Dramatic releases were also discussed with relation to existing literature on the titles under review, where authors are able to provide greater context to my findings, both according to the historical time periods and cultures depicted, and the contemporary receptions of the titles.

Documentary Content

Northern Europe

There are two dedicated productions on pre- and early-historical Northern Europe within the media sample, and the theme is also discussed in one episode of *Civilisation* (2018a), and one episode of *Mary Beard's Ultimate Rome* (2016b). Common themes discussed throughout these titles include the nature of early-historical European society, its relationship to contemporary Europe, and the interactions between Northern Europeans and the Roman Empire.

There is much discussion on the technological and socio-economic 'complexity', along with the broad cosmopolitanism, of pre-Roman Europe. In *Stonehenge: the Lost Circle Revealed* (2021), producers advance their theses using 'scientific' means, including interviews with experts demonstrating, for example, geochemical analysis and experimental archaeology. Through this evidence, the host concludes that "we've seen evidence for a complex belief system, and of connection between communities widely separated in the landscape" (59:40). DNA evidence is also utilised: "Archaeological, and now genetic studies, show how farmers spread west across Europe, around the coasts and along major rivers" (26:05). Others utilise less 'objective' techniques. In *Celts: Blood, Iron, and Sacrifice* (2015), for example, whilst the hosts do utilise techniques including expert interviews, the resulting theses begin to err towards the sensationalised, presented as objective. In episode one (2015a), for example, the hosts discuss the origins of the Celtic culture with linguist John Koch, who posits "I've no doubt that the Celts were here [Portugal]. As well as saying that the Celts lived near the source of the Danube, Herodotus in our first good reference to the Celts writing in the 5th Century BC, says that they also lived beyond the Pillars of Hercules" (44:25). Elsewhere in the same episode, an interview with an archaeologist at Hallstatt in Germany leads one of the hosts to assert "The extraordinary finds at Hallstatt revealed the Celts as wealthy, industrious, and technologically sophisticated" (42:53), and the other to remark "It's an example of this Mediterranean influence I think centuries before Mediterranean influence really takes off with the Roman empire" (36:27). The idea of early pre-eminence is also picked up by Simon Schama in the first episode of *Civilisation* (2018a). Given the show's art history remit, its reliance on artefact reading could perhaps be forgiven, were the host not making such sweeping claims as the birth of the idea of beauty being drawn from a European artefact: "now we are not supposed to say, us amateurs in this field, we're not supposed to talk about art, we're not supposed to talk about the birth of a refined sensibility. I'm going to do that nonetheless, I don't care how anachronistic it is! With this tiny piece from Brassempouy, it seems to me that we have, right in front of us, the dawn of the idea of beauty" (27:20).

Pre-Roman Northern Europe is thus positioned as technologically pre-eminent, socially complex, regionally connected, and potentially the birthplace of aestheticism. How are these characteristics related to the contemporary inhabitants of the continent? It is interesting that the production with the biggest contribution from active archaeological researchers employs the least patrimonial rhetoric, with only an aside from Mike Parker Pearson explaining the importance of local engagement and outreach even vaguely touching on the idea: “It’s what we do this for, just to tell the story. They’re really engaged. It’s their landscape, it’s where they live, you know, it’s what happened under their feet 5,000 years ago, you know, where they walk” (*Stonehenge*, 2021: 32:39)”. The same cannot be said for the team behind *Celts*, which is full of references to ‘our ancestors’. Opening the first episode, for example, one of the hosts remarks of a bog body: “We now know that this man shared a common culture that spanned Europe, from Turkey to Portugal. We know this because he was one of *our* pre-historic ancestors. A Celt” (emphasis mine) (2:42). The hosts also use John Koch’s thesis to demonstrate a line of succession between Celts and contemporary Britons: ““this early Celtic [language] has clear links to later Celtic languages spoken in Britain and Ireland, such as Gaelic, Welsh, and Cornish” (49:55). Elsewhere in the same episode, discussing the trade links between Europe and early Britain, a host posits that “This new theory suggests that, rather than being invaded by Iron Age Celts, *our* Celtic heritage arrived in Britain during the Bronze Age, using a very different mechanism” (emphasis mine) (48:22).

There is wide discussion across the sample on the Romano-Gallic wars, their significance, and at times their continued effects into the present day. Mary Beard, for example, problematises Roman propaganda depictions of Celts, saying of one example from towards the end of the empire: “Actually, the World of the new West was nothing like this. It’s true, the political unity had collapsed, and there was plenty of destructive military conflict. But what emerged were a series of rival powers, which were in-effect mini-Romes, who were in fact trying to buy into the prestige of Roman-ness, rather than buy out of it” (*Mary Beard’s Ultimate Rome*, episode 4: 54:34). She also remarks in the same episode that “the very words ‘barbarian’ and ‘vandal’ now conjure up an image of wanton destruction of all that is good and civilised. But that popular image, powerful as it is, is quite unfair” (53:56). This theme is picked up in *Celts*, infused with an even greater sense of Roman aggression. Discussing the final confrontation of Caesar and Vercingetorix, for example, the hosts posit that “what was at stake was the future of Europe, and the civilisation that would shape it. On the one hand, centralised, modern Rome, on the other, an Iron Age culture that had its roots deep in prehistory” (*Celts*, episode 2: 05:45). In the final episode, centring on an exploration of Roman Britain, the rhetoric becomes even more hyperbolic, asserting in the preamble that “This is the story of the last stand of the Celts. It’s a tale of righteous rebellion... but most of all it’s the story of a formidable warrior queen, the first Great British hero, Boudicca” (04:26). Detailing the mythical origins of Boudicca’s rebellion, a host notes that, when she attempted to initially resist Roman occupation, “Boudicca was violently flogged, and her daughters were raped... Boudicca became determined to extract revenge, for her family, her tribe, and for the entire Celtic world... she was a

Briton. A Queen, and a Celt” (19:52), accompanied with a live-action reconstruction. They later note that “the destruction of the druid stronghold of Mona was part of an endgame in the Roman’s quest to annihilate an ancient culture. They wanted no one to be in doubt as to who was in charge, or that the Roman view of civilisation had triumphed over the barbarian Celt” (44:45). The narrative of British underdogs *versus* authoritarian continental empire is such that one must wonder the extent to which *Celts* in particular was informed by, and potentially contributive to, anti-EU rhetoric in the run-up to the 2016 Brexit referendum.

The Classical Tradition

Five productions in the sample are focused on an aspect of Classical Antiquity: two on Ancient Rome, two on Ancient Egypt, and one on Ancient Greece. There is also a brief discussion of the Minoan Tradition in *Civilisations* (2018a). General themes for discussion include descriptions of the various historical societies, the means through which this knowledge is presented, and the relevance of the Classical Tradition to contemporary Western society, thus ‘our’ degree of patrimony over it.

Perhaps owing to the fact that the documentaries concerning the Roman Empire within this sample are generally procedural, or the more ‘high brow’ offering from Mary Beard, there is a wide lack of superlatives and hyperbole when it comes to descriptions of Roman society. The narrator of *Lost Secrets of Rome* (2022a) does note that “The Roman empire was the most powerful on earth, and this amphitheatre, the magnificent coliseum, was its monument” (45:43); and elsewhere that Hadrian’s Wall “defined the most Northern edge of the greatest empire the world had ever seen” (2022b: 01:24). Mary Beard similarly notes that “[the Romans] wondered just as much as we do about what set them apart!” (2015a: 03:45). However, far more space is given to critical appraisal of the ‘bad’ aspects of Roman society, whether in terms of the function of propaganda in maintaining imperial power (*Lost Secrets of Rome*, 2022a: 38:55); their militarism and violence (*Ultimate Rome*, 2015a: 14:12); or the extent of slavery and entrenched inequalities (*ibid.*, 2015b: 46:40). There is also a good deal of discussion on the cosmopolitanism of the Roman Empire, with the producers of *Lost Secrets* highlighting that “in the 3rd Century, African-born emperor Septimius Severus came to Britain to rule the Roman empire from York” whilst discussing African influences on the recently excavated Carlisle bathhouse (2022b: 51:18). Ancient Greek society is not afforded such measured, critical perspectivism. Instead, the sole offering in the sample discussing Greece exclusively is loaded with sweeping statements of the foundational sophistication of Hellenic populations, the majority of which actually concern the Eurocentric *telos* of cultural development, and as such will be discussed below. The producers of *Bettany Hughes’ Greek Odyssey* do very briefly allude to the cosmopolitanism of the Classical world, with the host mentioning references to “the Ethiopian Andromeda” in the myth of Perseus, “a clue that the Greeks had strong relations with Africa and the East” (41:33). However, most comparisons, where they are included, serve to emphasise Hellenic superiority. Discussing the Frescoes at Aktori, the host notes that “If you think of the Ancient

Egyptian art of this time... it is quite stiff and formal, whereas these paintings just flow across the walls” (18:40)”. These themes are also discussed in *Civilisation*, with the host calling Minoan paintings “the first truly social art the world had seen” (2019a: 29:28). The Minoans themselves are said to have been “, migrants from Western Asia [who] seeded Europe’s first great civilisation, the culture of the Minoans” (27:25), echoing diffusionistic narratives of social development. Both programmes on Ancient Egypt sampled followed a strictly procedural structure, and made very few references to the nature of Egyptian society in superlative terms.

There is far more discussion within this theme on the nature of archaeological inquiry. The team behind *Lost Secrets of Rome* consistently use evidence from type sites to underscore their theses, which serves both to engage the consumer with the archaeological process, and to reinforce the underlying narratives of the programme. Quernstones at Vindolanda, for example, are taken as “startling evidence that Romans and conquered Britons were living side-by-side “(2022: 48:29). There are also a large number of digital reconstructions used to further immerse viewers, again reinforcing conviction in interpretive conclusions. There is, however, no mention of the potential limitations of either archaeological evidence, nor resulting interpretations. This could thus be seen as reinforcing the authorial objectivity of media producers, at the expense of genuine, critical engagement with the interpretive process which might otherwise be afforded through such close documentation of the archaeological process. The positioning of archaeological interlocutors as quasi-omniscient is far more acutely felt in *Egypt’s Lost Pyramid*, all the more problematic owing to the cultural context of excavation, and the (neo)colonial dynamics of Egyptology. In this programme, it is 14 minutes before any of the non-White team engaged in excavating the pyramid in question is seen to offer any degree of expertise. The viewer instead follows an English Egyptologist, who appears to have little formal involvement in the excavation beyond the documentary production. Nevertheless, he is portrayed as a font of knowledge and interpretation, with numerous long shots of him assessing the site alone, without any consultation from the excavating team, and the narrator at one point noting that “Dr Chris Naunton returns to the newly discovered pyramid, to try and work out how the thieves could have breached its tight security” (32:15). *Secrets of the Saqqara Tomb* (2020), fortunately, provides a far more Egyptian-led impression of contemporary Egyptology. The vast majority of the team are Egyptian and speak in Arabic, with the exception of a British-Arabic Osteologist, who addresses the camera in English but her colleagues in Arabic. Archaeological practice in the country is also placed within a firmly indigenous tradition, with the site foreman remarking that “I became a foreman because it is the work of my forefathers. My father, grandfather, great-grandfather were all foremen” (27:30), and a digger adding “I’ve been working here a long time. My father worked here before me... when I’m working, my thoughts are with what’s in front of me. It’s not just mindless, digging, no. When you’re holding the mattock, you have to make some sense, Are you doing to find something? You have to be prepared” (1:03:10), thus also problematising the trope of the ignorant ‘native’ archaeological labourer.

Titles on Ancient Rome and Greece are littered with references to ‘our’ relationship to the ‘Great Civilisations’ of European Antiquity. Mary Beard introduces each episode of *Ultimate Rome* by reminding the viewer that the Roman Empire “has framed the geography of modern Europe, and defined the way we think of Empire now, transforming the Western world through revolutions in trade, agriculture, art, law, and architecture” (e.g. 2015a: 2:49). Elsewhere, she credits a large number of Roman ‘innovations’ as representing a kind of starting point to traits ‘we’ now associate with ‘our’ society, and ‘our’ place in the world – *terra sigilata*, for example, is described as representing “one of the first examples of globalisation” (2015b: 39:11). Beard also notes that “Aqueducts, towns, roads... are the classic stereotypes of the Roman Empire. They’re what it ‘did for us’. But more than just clever engineering projects, the Romans could imagine them all fitting together” (*ibid.*, 12:59), that Roman legal systems “have a very familiar feel” (*ibid.*, 26:24), Roman roads with mile-markers represented “an entirely new Roman way of thinking about the world... for the first time, you can place yourself in the world” (*ibid.*, 07:30), and that “[ornamental goblets] point to that other great marker of Roman presence on the landscape: towns. The Romans sponsored the greatest programme of urbanisation in history, and in Western Europe, their cities still often underlie our own” (*ibid.*, 11:07). Concluding the final episode she does however provide a more critical perspective, noting that “the image of Rome... has acted like a benchmark for so many later empires. Britain, Russia, America, even Nazi Germany have all tried to recreate what they saw as the glory of ancient Rome” (2015c: 57:04). Content discussing Hellenic populations is even more oblique. According to Bettany Hughes’ preamble: “A cradle of civilisation, the Greece of the Ancient World hotheaded everything from democracy to medicine. It gave us the Olympics, engineering triumphs, and some of the most epic stories of all time. Stories that have been passed down thousands of years, and that still influence us today (e.g. 2018a: 00:28)”. She also describes bathing as “another great pastime we have to thank the Greeks for” (*ibid.*, 21:20), and Pythagoras as “an ancient Greek whose mathematical genius touches all of our lives” (*ibid.*, 34:14). Elsewhere, she notes that “The Greek tradition in wine-making is the oldest in the world... it was from here that it spread to Spain, Portugal, and France” (2018b: 21:49), that “Santorini pioneered sailing technologies centuries before other civilisations in the Aegean” (*ibid.*, 11:38), and describes Minoan proto-aqueducts on Crete as “the beginning of civilisation as we know it” (38:51). Similar parallels are drawn in *Civilisation*, with Simon Schama asserting that Minoan frescoes at Santorini “raised the ghost of a seagoing civilisation. A clear ancestor of our own” (2018a: 28:48).

The Global South

The Global South is the explicit focus of one programme, *Art of Persia* (2020), and elements of non- and pre-Colonial Global South histories are also touched on in all three episodes sampled from *Civilisations* (2018). Key themes for discussion are representations of society in the Global South, their interactions and other cultural groups, and the mechanisms which brought about the end of cultural traditions under discussion.

In the preamble to each episode of *Art of Persia*, the viewer is told that “This is a land known by two names. The first is Persia. Ancient. Mysterious. A place of adventure, of mighty temples and palaces built by powerful kings. A land of unimaginable beauty. The other is Iran. Isolated. Proud. Defiant.” (e.g. 2020a: 00:15). This is accompanied by contrasting imagery, the description of Persia with colourful palaces, beautiful scenery, art and archaeology, and Iran with long shots of women in black Niqab. This sets the tone for the rest of the programme, where extensive discussions on pre-Islamic Persian innovations, and the ‘preservation’ of the ‘Persian culture’ are pitted against the domineering forces of Islam throughout the region’s history. The host spends a good amount of the first episode discussing the historical significance of the Persian Empire (“I’m going to start at the birthplace of Persia’s civilisation, at one of the world’s first cities, and discover the mysterious writing of its people” (1:45)), where there is also a mention of the progressive labour practices during the construction of Persepolis, with people receiving payment for their labour and, “surprisingly”, evidence for female labourers and overseers (30:05). The second episode also features an explanation of the tenets and significance of Zoroastrianism. However, as I discuss below, these are contrasted with arguably highly Orientalist discussions on the role of Islam in Iranian history. In the first episode of *Civilisation* (2018a), the host discusses the Maya empire, focussing partially on practice of human sacrifice. He does, however, describe Petra as “one of the most spectacular civilisations in all of human history” (40:10). An antidote to the material discussed below, episode 4 of *Civilisations* sees Mary Beard dismissing a number of Islamic stereotypes, including the belief in rigidly-enforced iconoclasm: “there are many famous sayings and stories which condemn idolatry, and give warning about the dangers of images... but in the ancient city of Istanbul itself, a very different image of Islam fields our vision.. Islam is absolutely not an artless religion” (33:30). Elsewhere, in episode 6 of *Civilisations*, David Olusoga gives a necessarily brief precis of a number of societies fundamentally affected by European colonialism, including the Kingdom of Benin, the Aztecs, and Imperial Japan, noting that the former boasted “one of the largest earthwork walls in the world” (5:25).

Discussions on Global South cultural contacts in *Art of Persia* follow the same pro-‘Persian’, arguably anti-Islamic formula identified above. On the one hand, the host discusses the cultural importance and weight of the Persian Empire, along with its cosmopolitanism. In the first episode, for example, she notes that “the Persians can seem like a mystery at the edge of the Western imagination, in the Old Testament, or battling Alexander and the Romans in Classical history. But the ripples of Persia’s art and language have travelled outwards throughout the world, transforming culture across Europe and Asia” (01:17), whilst also discussing the entanglements of various Persian factions with the Roman Empire, and evidence for a broad cultural hegemony, a frieze at Persepolis depicting peoples from South-East Europe, Pakistan, and Nubia coming to pay tribute to the Persian King. This is also infused with a sense of Persian benevolence, an expert interviewee noting that “the Jews who were brought to Babylon by the previous Babylonian king were allowed to go back to their homeland. So Cyrus enjoys a particularly important position both for us Iranians as well as for Christians and also the Jewish people” (22:35). Much of the second episode is spent discussing

'Islamic' attempts to dampen Persian culture, and the systematic and structural violence involved in doing so (“[weapons in Zoroastrian fire temples] were used in defence to ward off looters and invaders from the fire temples. This particular mace head has been dated to the 7th Century, so it’s tempting to imagine it used in anger against the invading Arab Muslims, who came to fight the Persian armies, and to extinguish the flames at the Zoroastrian temples” (2020b: 09:34)).

The whole series, however, focusses on the tenacity of the Persian culture, when faced with such existential threats as Islam. Introducing the first episode, for example, host notes that “The Persian civilisation, and the art and culture it produced, was once the envy of the ancient world. But, over the centuries, Persia was invaded again and again by brutal conquerors, greedy for her lambs and treasures. They brought with them new laws, new languages, and a new religion. But Persian culture survived, even thrived” (2020a: 03:57). The viewer is thus placed as a supporter of the Persian cause, Persia as the protagonist. Later discussions on the ‘victory’ of Persian cultural traditions are thus presented with an air of catharsis, as ‘our’ character assures victory over the *de facto* antagonist of Islam: “by the middle of the 9th Century, Persian words, ideas, and practices, were wrapping themselves around the Caliphate like ivy” (2020b; 27:30). There is far more critical engagement with the role of conquest and colonisation in episode 6 of *Civilisations*. The host initially introduces the viewer to the damaging effects of European coloniality on historiographical narratives: “almost everybody in the 19th century believed that Africans lacked the technical ability to produce great art, and the cultural sophistication needed to appreciate it... it was believed that the people of the dark continent had no history, no culture, and were incapable of generating this thing called ‘civilisation’” (2018c: 2:42). He goes on to discuss the structural violence of European colonists in the Americas (“[Catholic missionaries] set about the wholesale destruction of the Aztec religion” (*ibid.*, 20:26), West Africa (“The Benin Bronzes came to Britain as the spoils of an act of plunder” (*ibid.*, 4:18), and the Indian subcontinent (“What this building [Government House] said was that European reason and rationality had triumphed over what the British increasingly regarded as Oriental superstition and despotism” (*ibid.*, 57:20). These critical perspectives are not shared wholesale by the host of episode 1, for whom the main act of cultural violence worth discussing is the IS-led iconoclasm of Palmyra, noting that “In Mosul, in a matter of hours, ISIS destroyed the work of centuries” (2018a: 1:30). He goes on to assert the universality of the site: “the significance of Palmyra was at once local and universal. It’s there for believers, unbelievers, the East and West” (*ibid.*, 3:45), and the barbarism of those who destroyed it: “We can spend a lot of time debating what civilisation is or isn’t but when it’s opposite shows up in all of its brutality, and cruelty, and intolerance, and lust for destruction, we know what civilisation is, we know it as the shock of imminent loss, as a mutilation on the body of our humanity” (4:22).

Dramatised Content

Northern Europe

One title (*Vikings*) is almost entirely centred on Northern European characters, who also feature prominently in *Kingdom of Heaven*. These portrayals will be discussed according to the contrasting depictions of Vikings and Britons in *Vikings*, and the function of religion for characters in *Kingdom of Heaven*.

Episode 3 of the second season of *Vikings* features the titular faction forming a raiding party to strike deep into Southern England. Contrasting depictions of Nordic and English characters are interesting, especially considering that the programme is an Irish-Canadian production. The episode opens with a monologue from the English king, imbued with a stereotypically upper-class English snobbishness, and delivered in a correspondingly clipped register: “It is no surprise to me that these Northmen have arrived in Wessex. After I heard about their raids in Northumbria, I realised it was only a matter of time before they came ashore here... I am horror-stricken when I foresee what they will do to my descendants and their subjects. And now it is our turn to deal with these ruffians, these Pagans, but deal with them we shall, and must.” (2014: 00:57). He is also seen to be cruel and callous, offering an English bishop the “opportunity for martyrdom”, sending him to treat with the Vikings encamped at Winchester (*ibid.*, 23:26). The Vikings themselves are decidedly less calculating, and driven by simpler desires, with one asking an English interlocutor “will there be treasure there?”, to grin and cheer from the raiding party when receiving an affirmative response (04:41). During scenes of conflict between the groups, the Vikings are portrayed as possessing clear physical and military supremacy, easily dispatching a larger force at Winchester with their savage fighting style (*ibid.*, from 09:50). This contrast is drawn further as Vikings receive terms from the king’s bishop, where the alpha-masculinity of the Vikings is demonstrated by the muscular, bearded warriors laughing at the overweight, short bishop as he fails to mount his horse to flee in terror (*ibid.*, 32:35). That is not to say, however, that Vikings are portrayed as inherently more moralistic. Indeed, during the sack of Winchester, the Vikings are seen to carry out acts of wanton and cruel violence, including tying the bishop of Winchester Cathedral to a post and using him for target practice (*ibid.*, 15:57). In later episodes, the fanatical godliness of the English is contrasted with Viking paganism, the latter of which is barely engaged with, thus presenting an impression of near-atheism. In season 5, episode 4, an English warrior-monk instructs a new English king to blockade the city of York, occupied by a Viking faction, to starve the occupiers out, as he was instructed by God in a dream, proclaiming that “against these devils and pagans, we are the wrath of god” (2017a: 18:14).

As protagonists, the godliness of Northern Europeans is also emphasised in *Kingdom of Heaven*. However, as in *Vikings*, this is presented as an ultimately negative characteristic. From the opening scene, Christian fundamentalism is presented as necessitating acts of cruelty, with a priest instructing a gravedigger: “It was a suicide. Cut her head off. Return the axe afterwards” (2005: 03:26), later informing the deceased’s husband “If you take the Crusade, you may relieve your wife’s position in

hell... she was a suicide. She is in hell. Though what she does there without a head..." (*ibid.* 11:06). Later, as crusaders prepare to sail for Jerusalem, a priest instructs all those passing that "to kill an infidel is not murder. It is the path to heaven" (*ibid.*, 25:54). This is imbued with a sense of intolerance, with a crusader (and later chief antagonist) remarking that "when the king is dead there will be no place for friends of Muslims in Jerusalem" (*ibid.*, 30:03). These sentiments later spill over into the fanatical. When an anti-war member of the Christian court announces that "We must not go to war with Saladin! We do not want it, and we may not win it", an assorted group of Templars shout "blasphemy!", whilst one of their number proclaims that "an army of Jesus Christ, that bears his cross, cannot be beaten... there must be war. God wills it" (*ibid.*, 1:14:55). Indeed, the distinction between protagonist and antagonist within the Christian faction appears to be drawn exclusively according to religious fundamentalism. For example, a priest remarks to the main protagonist that "I put no stock in religion. By the word 'religion' I've seen the lunacy of fanatics of every denomination be called the will of god. Holiness is in right action, and courage, on behalf of those who cannot defend themselves" (51:11). Later, the main protagonist channels these sentiments into his final battle speech:

"It has fallen to us to defend Jerusalem... None of us took this city from Muslims. No Muslim of the great army now coming against us was born when this city was lost. We fight over an offence we did not give, against those who were not alive to be offended. What is Jerusalem? Your holy places lie under the Jewish temple the Romans pulled down. The Muslim places of worship lie over yours. Which is more holy? The wall? The Mosque? The Sepulchre? Who has claim? No one has claim! All have claim! We fight, not to defend these stones, but the people living within these walls" (2:04:05).

That this film was produced and released during the 2003 Iraq war, and a period of acute tension and instability in Western Asia, demonstrates the extent to which contemporary political discourse may be drawn into dramatic media. Themes around religious fanaticism *versus* quasi-agnostic morality could be seen as a direct proxy of Western engagement in these conflicts, regardless of the faith of on-screen fanatics. Indeed, as I discuss below, this parallel is even more potent when depictions of the Muslim faction are considered.

Literature on both *Kingdom of Heaven* and *Vikings* has tended to also emphasise the role of religiosity as a means to proxy the similarities and differences between audiences, and the characters on-screen. D'Arcens (2009), for example, discusses the extent to which the 'Good Guys' of the former are presented as essentially contemporary, secular humanists. She and Lindley (2007) link this characterisation to the geopolitical climate of the early 2000s, where the battle between religious fanaticism and post-Christian enlightenment was still, according to partisan, Western rhetoric, being fought in the Near East. Lindley adds that this ultimately serves to eternalise, and thus justify, this moral crusade, also noting that the 'myth' of the secular, multi-cultural Jerusalem embedded in the film's narrative could be seen in parallel to Euro-American political rhetoric. The Ba'athist regime

was, of course, typically presented during this period as inherently intolerant, again standing in opposition to the cosmopolitan, multicultural Western world. Schlimm (2010) further adds that, against the wanton violence of the Bad Crusaders, that of the Good, quasi-secular Crusader is presented as just, even necessary, to vanquish the otherwise fanatical actors on both sides of the religious schism. It is these Good Crusaders, Schlimm postulates, that are presented as a proxy for the European coalition invading Iraq, leading him to place the production alongside the contemporary discourse from “willing intellectuals” (2010: 130) giving moral assent to the invasion.

Academic commentaries on *Vikings* have tended to focus on the presentation and contrasts between Paganism and Christianity throughout the show’s run. Although the episodes sampled and analysed above did not emphasise Norse religiosity so much as Christian theology, Erwich (2020) and Saunders (2014) both highlight that conflict and coalescence between ‘native’ polytheism and ‘imported’ Polytheism serves as a key plot device and theme in the series. For Erwich, the function that these discussions have is chiefly pedagogical, enabling audiences to consider the dialogue between historical religions, and the effect of this on our contemporary society. However, Saunders places the inherent ‘nativism’ implied through the centring of the re-imagined Viking ontology is “emblematic of larger socio-political trends associated with anti-egalitarianism, anti-modernism, and anti-globalism triggered by the post-Cold War international order” (2014: 124). This narrative, he argues, could serve as a dog-whistle for primordialist European nationalisms, monotheism placed as alien, an imposition, viewed in parallel to supra-national, liberal, globalised institutions whilst, as Burley (2019) also highlights, the rugged, proto-national paganism of the Vikings is totemic for ideas around ‘native’ cultural reclamation and resurgence.

Classical Antiquity

Depictions of Classical Antiquity are plentiful amongst sampled material, the Roman Empire being a key focus of *Rome*, which also depicts Ptolemaic Egypt, and *Gladiator*, and Hellenic groups featuring in both *300* and *Troy*. Key themes across this sample include comparisons between different groups, depictions of their respective societies, and the extent to which they are portrayed in parallel to the contemporary West.

Religion once again serves as a key distinction, both between the Romans and Ptolemies in *Rome*. We are introduced to the Ptolemaic court with an elaborate, quasi-religious ceremony, involving dark-skinned Egyptians drumming, dancing, chanting, and ululating (2005: 11:03). This is contrasted later with an image of Caesar at private worship, in a context that looks almost protestant in its asceticism and sobriety. This distinction is also drawn in the appearance of the respective groups, with Roman fashion depicted as entirely ‘normal’, by contemporary standards, with men wearing their hair cropped and faces shaved. Ptolemaic characters, by comparison, have elaborate hairstyles held together with pins, and men wear heavy makeup (see fig. 6.9 for a comparison). The sobriety of Rome versus the decadence of Egypt is further reinforced in depictions of Cleopatra, who is portrayed as young, naïve, and extremely promiscuous. Introduced to the audience writhing,

barely clothed, on a bed, she instructs her handmaiden to bring her a Roman legionary, so that she might have sex with him, which is shown graphically on-screen. In *Troy*, it is not so much religious praxis as religious fervour which draws contrast between the two Hellenic factions. For the Mycenaeans, religion or the gods are barely mentioned, and when they are, it is to disparage the godliness of the Trojans (Agamemnon, for example, notes that “they think the sun-god will protect them!” (2004: 24:17), and are also seen sacking a temple to Apollo. The Trojans, on the other hand, both frequently invoke ‘the gods’ (Hector, for example, at 11:14 mentions that “Poseidon has blessed us with calm seas”), and base strategic military decisions on ‘omens’. This is what is ultimately seen to lead to Troy’s downfall. Initially, a priest argues that “the desecration of his temple angers Apollo. The gods have cursed the Greeks” (02:03:45), and as such the Trojans should sally forth beyond the city walls to attack the Mycenaeans encampment, a move which turns out to be a tactical disaster. Later, when the apparently victorious Trojans are inspecting the proverbial Trojan Horse, Paris suggests that they burn it, and is rebuffed by a priest: ““Burn it?! This is a gift for the gods!” (02:52:44). Accordingly, the downfall of Troy is positioned as in no small part a consequence of their religious superstition, when compared with the, again quasi-agnostic, rational Mycenaeans.



Figure 6.9: Ptolemies (L) and Romans (R) in Rome (2005)

A degree of religious scepticism guides depictions of historical Spartan society in *300*. The narrator describes King Leonidas’ attempts to have war sanctioned by “the ephors, priests to the old gods... inbred swine, more creature than man, creatures who even Leonidas must bribe and beg, for no Spartan king has gone to war without the Ephors blessing” (14:30). Ephors themselves are described as “diseased old mystics, worthless remnants of a time before Sparta’s ascent from darkness” (16:58), and depicted as horrifically deformed humanoid monsters. In both *300* and *Troy*, Greek society is also imbued with tropes associated with medieval chivalry. The Spartans in the former frequently invoke cries of “for Sparta, for freedom, to the death!” (e.g., 22:59) or similar. In *Troy*, characters on both sides of the conflict are depicted as driven chiefly by honour, with Hector stating that “All my life I’ve lived by a code, and the code is simple: honour the gods, love your woman, and defend your country. Troy is mother to us all. Fight for her!” (52:53), Paris later chastising himself: “I am a coward!” (01:46:10), and Achilles demonstrating that he is prepared to commit regicide, and in all

probability die, in order to protect a priestess from heavily implied sexual assault (01:13:51). *Rome* does depict everyday life beyond the glamour of a valorised battlefield, with portrayals of general squalor in the slums of Rome itself, controlled by criminal street gangs, with wanton violence and sexual assault (e.g. 2005b). Similarly, the corruption of the Roman senate is a central theme in *Gladiator*, with a piece of early dialogue actually serving to destabilise the narrative of Roman pre-eminent virtue and morality: “[Gaius] I have seen much of the world, it is brutal and cruel and dark. Rome is the light” [Emperor] “But you have never been there! You have not seen what it has become” (2005: 24:22).

However, depictions of the protagonists throughout the titles in this sample do serve to reify ideas around Western, and specifically British, patrimony over the Classical tradition. In all cases, the actors portraying the majority of characters are White, in most cases Northern, Europeans. Again, in all cases, the majority also speak with English accents. These casting and directorial decisions serve a number of functions, intended or otherwise. On the one hand, in productions which feature more than one culture, the protagonist faction are always those speaking with an English accent. This leads audiences to potentially ‘see themselves’ in the historical narrative, ‘our’ physical appearance and speech patterns mirrored by agents in prehistory. This is further entrenched when considered with narrative themes within the productions, a key one being the propagation of ‘democracy’, and ‘freedom’. This features in *Gladiator*, where there is an early, light-hearted debate between characters on the relative merits of democracy and dictatorship (2005: 18:55). However, it is most acutely drawn in *300*. Here, the chief motivation of the Spartan soldiers, as invoked frequently, is “freedom!”. This is echoed by the Queen, who, in her speech to the Spartan council towards the end of the film, states that “I’m here for... 300 families who bleed for our rights, and for the very principles this room was built upon... send the army for the preservation of liberty. Send it for justice. Send it for law and order” (*ibid.*, 01:30:22). A commitment to the rule of law is discussed elsewhere, with King Leonidas informing a Persian emissary: “before you speak, Persian, just know that everyone in Sparta, even a king’s messenger, is held accountable for the words of his voice” (*ibid.*, 09:16). Later, as the narrator explains the ramifications of Leonidas’ failure to gain assent from the oracle to raise the army, he notes that “for he [Leonidas] must respect the word of the ephors. That is the law. And no Spartan, subject or citizen, man or woman, slave or king, is above the law” (*ibid.*, 17:21). Considered in conjunction with the highly problematic depiction of the Persian faction discussed below, this reification of teleological narratives serves to wholly perpetuate Eurocentric historical worldviews.

There has been plentiful discussion amongst Classicists concerning the content and presentation of these particular titles. Much criticism has been levelled, particularly with regards to *300* and *Troy*, concerning the authenticity of the historical reconstructions presented, written off, in the case of the latter, by both Keen (2005), and Scodel (2005) as often needlessly pedantic. Both authors point out that the characterisations of the Homeric characters are, by-and-large, consistent with the source

material. Interestingly, Keen notes that, after Homer, Priam's tactical failings on-screen are not a consequence of his godliness, so much as his "arrogantly assuming that the gods are on his side" (2005:2). I would suggest that, when considered alongside the rest of the sample, the use of religiosity as a demarcation between 'old' and 'new', 'winners' and 'losers', could provide further insight into this particular characterisation.

Criticism of *300* has been more robust, with many authors highlighting the flagrant Orientalism of the production narrative, which I discuss fully below. Considering the title alongside *Kingdom of Heaven*, D'Arcens (2009) convincingly argues that *300* was essentially billed as a "dawn of democracy epic", with 'our' clear historical proxy in the Spartans vanquishing Oriental despots through sheer masculine grit and determination, which she also links to contemporary political rhetoric surrounding the Iraq War. Plantinga (2019), along with Lauwers, Dohnt, and Huybrecht (2013) also posit the characterisation of Spartans according to the 'fascist aesthetic', with the muscular *Übermenschen* carving out their own destiny, defeating the excessive, decadent, morally decayed enemy. Burton (2016), adding to this commentary, discusses the highly inflammatory language used by Frank Miller, the author of the comic on which *300* was based, concerning society in the Near East. He also adds that the Spartan practices of (proto)eugenics, discussed by the narrator at the start of the film, could further indicate the fascistic reading of *300*. However, he ultimately argues that these tropes may have been included as a way for audiences to unpick the supposed monopoly on morality held by 'our' proxy in the film, the Spartans, and thus reflect on the nature of our own hegemony – an argument which may be convincing, had the characterisation of Persians, discussed below, not drawn so heavily on ancient, well-established Orientalist tropes, and which thus may be better placed in the context of Frank Miller's comments on the peoples of Persia.

Similar comments were made on the subtext of *Gladiator*. Wilson (2007), for example, argues that the above-mentioned depiction of Rome as an empire in decay could be seen as a commentary on imbalances of power, corruption, and crises of morality at the heart of the contemporary global hegemony, and the *Pax Americana*. For Wilson, the protagonist of Gaius Maximus could represent the post-Enlightenment martyr, liberating and refreshing the world system brought to its knees through political autocracy and social decay. Dalby (2008) agrees, arguing that the narrative of the film hinges on protagonistic democracy, *versus* antagonistic dictatorship. Both argue that this could ultimately serve to reflect both the socio-cultural anxiety of post-modernity, and as a veneration of the 'ideal', self-identified Western archetype: the warrior-liberator. As Dalby notes, although this film was produced and released prior to the Huntingtonian 'Clash of Civilisations' brought about through the 9/11 attacks and Iraq invasion, commentary on both 'our' supposed hegemonic shortcomings, and of the ways in which Western societies *should* exercise power on the world stage, is readily apparent throughout the picture.

The Global South

Depictions of groups from the Global South are central to *Apocalypto*, *300*, and *Kingdom of Heaven* and can also be found in two episodes of *Vikings*. In the latter three cases, Other societies seemingly exist as a point of comparison, and opposition, to the Westernised protagonists; only in *Apocalypto* is a non-Western society presented in and of itself for the majority of the film's runtime.

As alluded to above, the presentation of Persians in *300* is highly problematic, consisting largely of the orientalist, racialised tropes which have become a pedigree in Western depictions of 'the East'. They are also always deployed in direct opposition to the Spartans. The aforementioned proclivity towards proto-democracy and the rule of law, for example, is contrasted with a very clear depiction of Oriental Despotism. In the first ten minutes of the film, the narrator informs the audience that "[Persia has] An army of slaves, vast beyond imagining, ready to devour tiny Greece, ready to snuff out the world's one hope for reason and justice" (06:55). This is confirmed by the Persians themselves, one announcing "I am the emissary to the ruler of all the world, the god of god, king of kings!" (38:32), later threatening: "your women will be slaves, your sons, your daughters, your elders will be slaves" (40:16). The Oriental Decadence trope is also employed in a sequence in which a Greek traitor is led through the Persian camp, which features a Baphomet playing a lyre, naked, disabled women fornicating, and highly sexualised dancing (from 01:15:49) Xerxes eventually convinces the Greek to betray his countrymen by inviting him to partake in an orgy, whilst offering "every pleasure that your fellow Greeks and your false gods have denied you, I will grant you" (see fig. 6.10) (01:17:03). The Greek yields, shouting "Yes, yes, I want it. I want it all!". Along with its flagrant Orientalism, this could also be read as a retreating of the idea of decadence as the antithesis to honourable society, precipitating cultural 'decay' with a loosening of morals. The Otherness of Persians is further entrenched through their appearance. Notably multicultural, the first three Persian characters seen on screen are all Black, which may be cause for optimism over the diversity of historical cinema were the Persian faction not portrayed in the way that they are. Xerxes himself is unnaturally tall, with his voice digitally deepened to terrifying effect. His army also includes semi-mythical creatures, including giants, and an executioner with blades for hands, whilst his 'immortals' have hideously wrinkled skin, fanged teeth, and black eyes – this stands in contrast with the Spartan warriors, who are depicted as the epitome of Hellenic masculine perfection.



Figure 6.10: Ephialtes yielding to Xerxes in *300* (2006)

Depictions of Muslims in *Vikings* and *Kingdom of Heaven* are also problematic. In the latter, at least, the Saracen faction are awarded the same degree of complexity and internal rivalry as within the Kingdom of Jerusalem. However, again, internal parallels are drawn on account of religious fervour. Saladin, positioned as a ‘Good Muslim’, at one point disagrees with a courtier on tactics: [Saladin] “How many battles did the Muslims win before I arrived?” [courtier] “Few. But that is because we were sinful” [Saladin] “It is because you were unprepared” (2005: 1:35:14). Rationalism, again, trumps religion. The depiction of the fanatical Muslim faction within Saladin’s army is notable for clearly drawn historical parallels: as the final assault on Jerusalem begins, the soldiers, dressed in black robes with their faces covered, are addressed by their lieutenant: “Brothers! Brothers! God has sent you this day! You will take no prisoners. As they did, so shall it be done. *Allahu Akbar!* *Allahu Akbar!*” (*ibid.*, 2:21:53), with the chants of ‘*Allahu Akbar*’ taken up by the wider cohort. Released as it was, when newspaper headlines were dominated by depictions of ‘Islamic fundamentalism’ throughout Western Asia, and terrorist attacks on the Euro-American sphere, it is hard to believe this to not be an intentional dog-whistle. The Otherness and barbarity of Muslim characters in *Vikings* is depicted through even less subtle means. After a traitor is executed, chefs are seen with his body in the kitchens: “[cook 1] “We’ll stew the shoulder” [cook 2] “no, the stomach is best” [cook 1] “what about the tongue?” [#2] “no, we’ll keep that for the Emir!” (2017b: 38:19). Later, the Viking sailors are invited to a feast, where the Emir declares “these local spicy and exotic dishes have been especially prepared for you by my famous chefs. They will be insulted if you don’t eat your fill” (38:51). After the meal has been finished, he declares that “now we are free of that monster, whose flesh we have all just partaken!” (40:00) before laughing maniacally. There are also allusions to Oriental Decadence and eroticism, as two women are brought to the Vikings’ tent as a ‘gift’ (*ibid.*, 25:13), and it is later revealed that one of them was in fact transgender: “she...was not a she” (26:52).

Apocolypto draws on two cultural groups in its narrative – a group of Mesoamerican hunter-gatherers, and the Maya Empire. The former are portrayed as fundamentally ‘primitive’, in what can be seen as a clear example of the ‘noble savage’ archetype. The opening sequence depicts the group as almost entirely naked, running through the forest hunting a tapir using rope traps and stone-tipped spears (from 00:30). Characters have poor teeth, tattoos, and are pierced throughout the face and ears with bone ornaments. As the narrative progresses, they are seen as being effectively ‘at one’ with the rainforest, the main character using his knowledge of flora and fauna to camouflage himself, and to resist the attempts of the Maya raiding party to capture him. They are also presented as mystical; a child suffering from smallpox (“the sickness”) delivering a prophecy to Maya soldiers: “Beware the blackness of day. Beware the man who brings the jaguar. Behold him reborn from mud and earth, for the one he takes you to will cancel the sky and scratch out the earth. Scratch you out, and end your world. He’s with us now” (01:09:49). The Maya, by contrast, are portrayed as cruel, barbaric, and sadistic – the *ignoble* savage. The first shot of a Maya hunter shows that some similarities with the villagers, the key difference being that he is wearing jewellery fashioned from human mandibles (31:17). When attacking the village, Maya soldiers are sadistic, one seen taunting

a mother by dangling her baby from its feet (32:14), and other villagers are burnt alive by laughing fighters (37:12). Maya society itself is presented as in decay, with emaciated children lining the road to the capital (01:17:57), engaging in mass-deforestation (01:07:26) with rivers running dry. This stands in contrast to depictions of Maya rulers, who wear extremely colourful paint and clothing, and are seen lounging, overweight under parasols (01:22:17). The filmmakers key plot point, it appears, is the Maya practice of human sacrifice, which is depicted extremely graphically, along with the cheers, trance-like dancing, and bloodlust of the crowd (01:25:26). Mothers are also seen painting their babies with the blood of fresh sacrifices (01:26:12) which, along with the entranced dancing, gives the impression of a highly ritualistic, fanatical society. In the final scenes of the film, the protagonist is spared his fate by the startling effect on his pursuers of the sight of a Spanish galleon, with boats approaching the shore. This could be read as European *conquistadores* ultimately *liberating* the peoples of the Americas from the oppressive, brutal, Maya regime, an extremely problematic and reductive perspective, which is nonetheless reinforced by the extremely derogatory and simplistic depiction of the Maya empire.

These findings are, again, mirrored in existing academic commentary on the presentation of Others in historical productions. D’Arcens (2009), Lauwers, Dohnt, and Huybrecht (2013), and Burton (2016) are in broad agreement that the presentation of the Persians in *300* is outrageously, needlessly Orientalist. Lauwers, Dohnt, and Huybrecht in particular highlight the characterisation of Xerxes as highly homoerotic, feminine, in contrast to the stoic heterosexuality of the Spartans, especially pertinent given Said’s (1978) discussion on the masculinised West, depicted in contrast to the feminised East, in classical Orientalist discourse. D’Arcens adds that, in *Xerxes*, the filmmakers had ultimately ‘re-orientalised’ the Eastern foe. At a time when ‘our’ cultural antithesis was represented in popular discourse as the fanatical, deadly, Islamic Terrorist, the presentation of a feminine, despotic, if easily-defeated and militarily ineffective, adversary could have represented a means to reassure the Western audience of the longevity and invulnerability of ‘our’ cultural tradition and values.

In a similar vein, Schlimm (2010) argues that the presentation of Saladin, alongside other Saracens, in *Kingdom of Heaven* may again have served to reassure Western Audiences, this time of our inevitable and total victory over the *ideology* of our Eastern adversary. He convincingly posits that, in depicting Saladin as the ‘rational’ Muslim agent, filmmakers are in effect bestowing upon him the values of post-Christian humanism, as they do with the Good Crusaders. Accordingly, the ultimate master narrative, that religious fervour is incompatible with ‘correct’ moral agency, is maintained. This is particularly acute considering the extent to which the Secular Muslim of Saladin is contrasted with the “dangerously *Al-Qaeda*-like warriors” of the Religious Muslim faction, as Dalby (2008: 458) adds.

Issues of religiosity also characterise academic responses to *Apocalypto*. Yelle (2011), for example, argues that the film cannot be seen in isolation from director Clint Eastwood’s previous epic, *The Passion of the Christ* (2004), inasmuch as the ultimate narrative of both pictures serves to denigrate pre-Christian society. In the case of *Apocalypto*, Yelle argues that the highly negative characterisation

of the pre-Colonial Americas functions as a *mea culpa*, even a redemption, for European colonialism. Similarly, Aimers and Graham (2007) argue that the film is best understood through the lens of Rousseau's 'noble savage', particularly concerning the villagers, and that this depiction of pre-Christian society is wholly in-line with the pervasive Eurocentric worldview embedded within these perspectives. They also indicate a number of instances in which the filmmakers appear to make the villagers appear *more* 'primitive' than is historically accurate, and the Maya, with their wanton, sadistic violence, seemingly devoid of rationality, intentionality, even agency.

Conclusion: Representing Self and Other

This review has identified significant quantitative and qualitative issues with representations of past narratives in screen media. On the former, it is clear that an overwhelming majority of British historical screen productions chiefly discuss elements of Western history, often British narratives. The post-medieval past is the most oft-discussed theme, however there is a steady number of productions concerning the Ancient past, the vast majority of which focus on the Classical tradition. Much of this is at the expense of much engagement with the diverse histories of the Global South, with one singular title concerning pre-Colonial Africa, released this year (2023), and sparsity across other areas. Issues with representations of Africa specifically are compounded by the overwhelming popularity of the relatively few titles concerning the post-Colonial history of the continent, which are imbued with depictions of a society in collapse, key foci being famine, corruption, warfare, and genocide. Similarly popular are depictions of the recent history of Western Asia, again often focussing on the effects of warfare, corruption, and despotism, and the effects of 'Islamic' terrorism during the present century. Accordingly, at the population level, the most common, and popular, depictions of both Africa and Western Asia are fundamentally concerned with reifying extant, reductive tropes, the former relating to a lack of organisation, *civilisation*, and ensuing anarchy, the latter the effects of despotism, social decay, and barbarism. A temporal analysis of the relationship between thematic releases and popularity suggests a two-tier hierarchy between release types, 'tested' themes such as the Roman Empire and Medieval Period gaining funding for production regardless of 'trends' in popularity, with 'riskier' subjects only seeing production when there is a perceived 'market' for them. This dynamic could thus be said to passively *reflect* the entrenched historical narrative, and actively *reify* it.

These issues are further reflected in the content of the media sample selected for qualitative analysis. Documentary content concerning the Global South does, whilst sparse, provide some critical evaluation of Eurocentric historiographies, potentially equipping audiences to reappraise received, entrenched wisdom. The exception to this rule comes with discussions on Islam, adherents to which are consistently discussed in antagonistic terms. Discussions on both the Classical Tradition, and Northern Europe, are also imbued with narratives of teleology and oppositional superiority. It is interesting to note the extent to which these traditions are often played off against each other in these productions, with the Romans in particular being portrayed as powerful, omniscient founding

fathers, and prehistoric Britons and Celts as plucky underdogs, reflecting contrasting yet complimentary imagery at the heart of British national origin myths. There are significant disparities in how knowledge is authorised in documentaries. Although most fail to acknowledge the subjectivities underpinning historical knowledge, presenting interpretation as fact, more ‘highbrow’ offerings do tend to showcase more of the process behind such interpretations, with others drawing instead on discursive techniques such as historical reconstruction. The most egregious reification of Eurocentric historiographies occur in dramatised productions. Here, cultures are often portrayed in the same features, and are thus often contrasted. Protagonists in these instances are almost without exception depicted as, essentially, modern Westerners transported back in time, speaking with English accents and embodying ‘contemporary’ values, such as rationality, a commitment to the rule of law and democracy, and secularism. The Other, by contrast, is often depicted as a concentration of damaging, reductive tropes. Western Asians and Muslims in particular are consistently portrayed as despotic, barbaric, decadent, even cannibalistic. It is interesting to note that, even in productions featuring exclusively ‘Western’ factions, lines are nonetheless drawn between characters depending on their religious fervour, with the protagonists always being those who demonstrate more humanistic ideals *versus* superstitious antagonists. This again reflects elements of the Western origin myth, whereby ‘our’ rise from religious ignorance to rational, secular enlightenment is emphasised.

The frequency and content of these depictions is highly reflective of themes discussed in the English history curriculum, outlined in the last chapter. In both cases, there is a consistent focus on more recent Western and British histories, in particular the events around the Second World War, alongside some engagement with the Medieval and Classical pasts. Occasions where the West/the British have acted in a manner which is out-of-step with our current ‘values’ are minimised, in favour of a simplified, genialistic narrative, which emphasises ‘our’ Classical roots, enlightenment, historical significance, and ultimate superiority, wholly reflecting the key tenets of Eurocentric historiographies. Discussions on Others in the Global South are, in both cases, minimised, with little or no engagement with colonised societies prior to imperial conquest, and the only real engagement with these cultures concerning their post-Colonial periods. These depictions are fundamentally negative, emphasising the oppositional alterity of the Global South, ‘our’ Classical pedigree and development against ‘their’ stagnation, ‘our’ enlightenment compared with ‘their’ ignorance and superstition, ‘our’ civilisation and ‘their’ barbarism: ‘our’ superiority, ‘their’ inferiority. This is again, wholly out of step with the archaeological research landscape identified in Chapter Four, signifying a fundamental disconnect in the cycle of knowledge. The extent to which this disconnect may effect historical worldviews in the British populace is thus of paramount concern.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GENERAL PUBLIC RESULTS

The final phase of the present research concerns the questionnaires and interviews conducted with members of the adult general public in the UK. Members of this sample are: over the age of 18; a resident of the UK; are not professionally engaged in archaeology and/or heritage; and do not hold a degree in Archaeology, Heritage, Ancient History, or Classics. Results from the questionnaires will be presented first, followed by qualitative interview data, before a brief discussion on the importance of this data for the present study.

Sample Population

Questionnaires

A total of 508 questionnaires were completed online by participants. Key demographics of age band; rural/urban residence; ethnicity; gender identity; education level; secondary school status; and occupation type were collected. These are displayed below, where possible in comparison with relevant data from the 2021 British Census. Participants were also asked to name the town or region in which they lived. Responses are recorded on the map below.

For the most part, the questionnaire sample are demographically representative of the UK population with regards to area of residence, gender identity, age band, and secondary school status. There are, however, issues with representation of minority ethnicities, alongside those with a lower highest level of education (N.B., education metrics were collected differently in the 2021 Census and in the present research, and as such the only valid comparison is those without an undergraduate or higher degree, or those with. I have therefore included two charts, the first showing the direct questionnaire results, and the second a comparison with Census data).

Interviews

A total of 41 participants were also asked to participate in a remote interview. Key demographics of age band; area of residence, ethnicity, gender identity, and educational level were collected, also displayed on the graphs and map below with relevant comparisons to the recent UK Census.

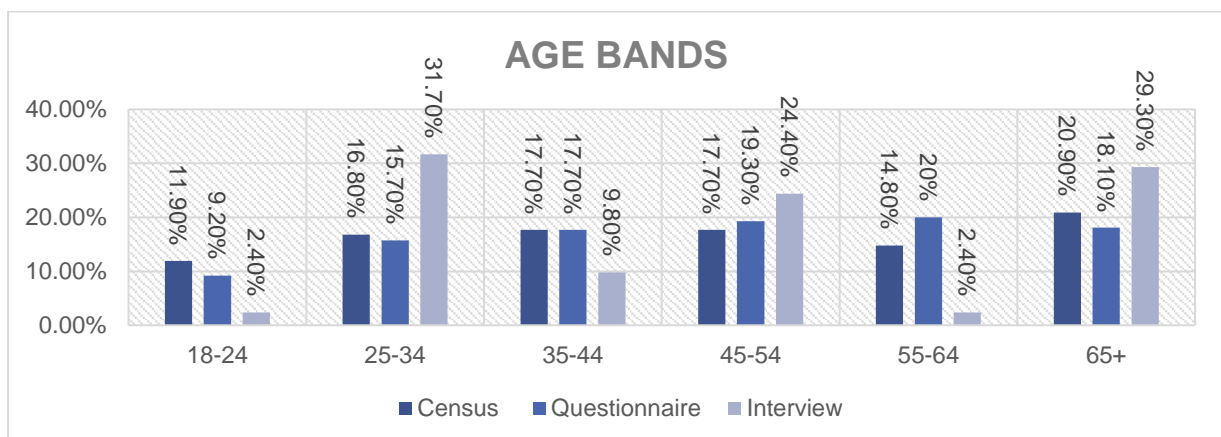


Figure 7.1: participants' age bands compared with 2021 census data

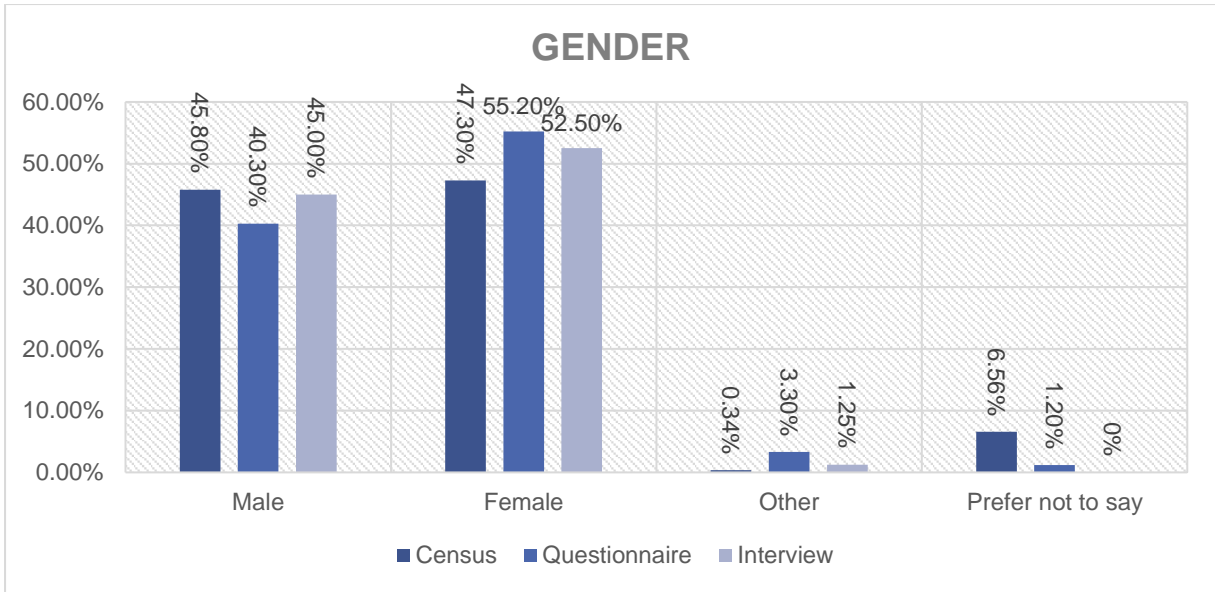


Figure 7.2: participants' gender compared with 2021 census data

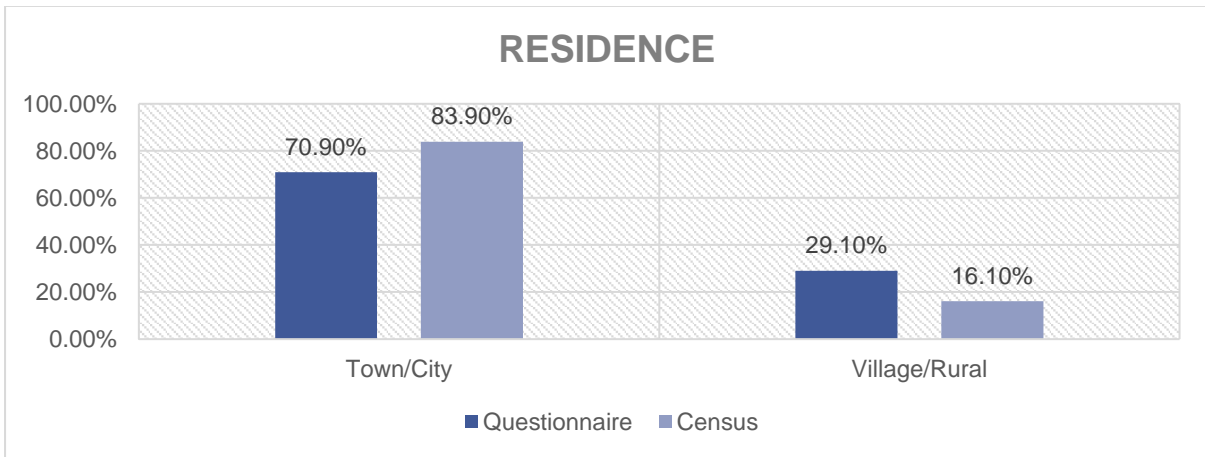


Figure 7.3: participants' area of residence, compared with 2021 census data

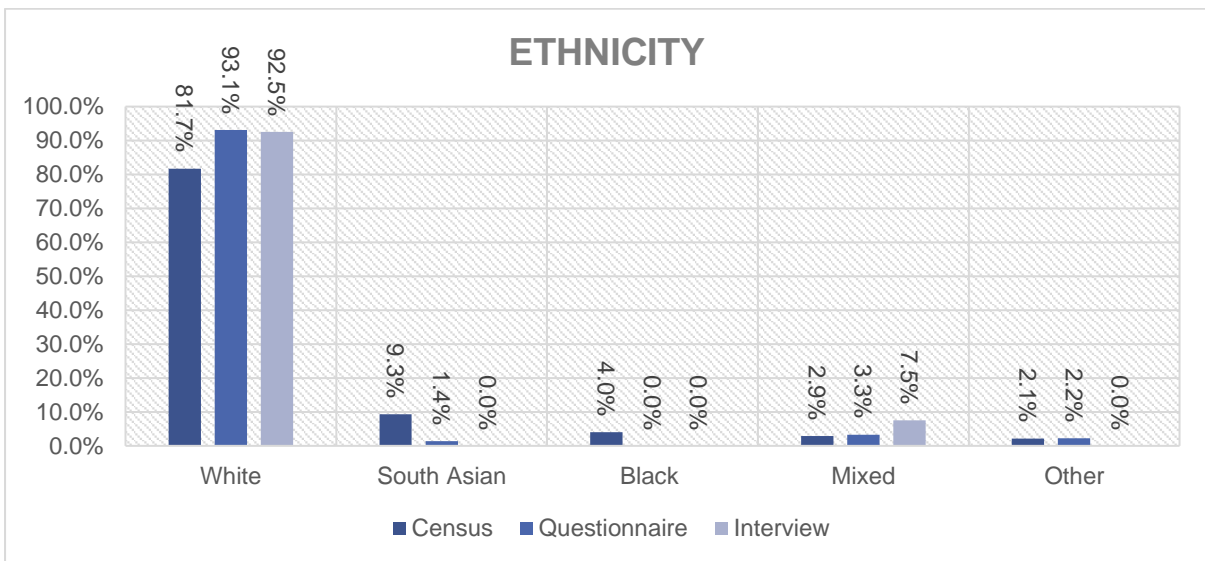


Figure 7.4: participants' ethnicities, compared with 2021 census data

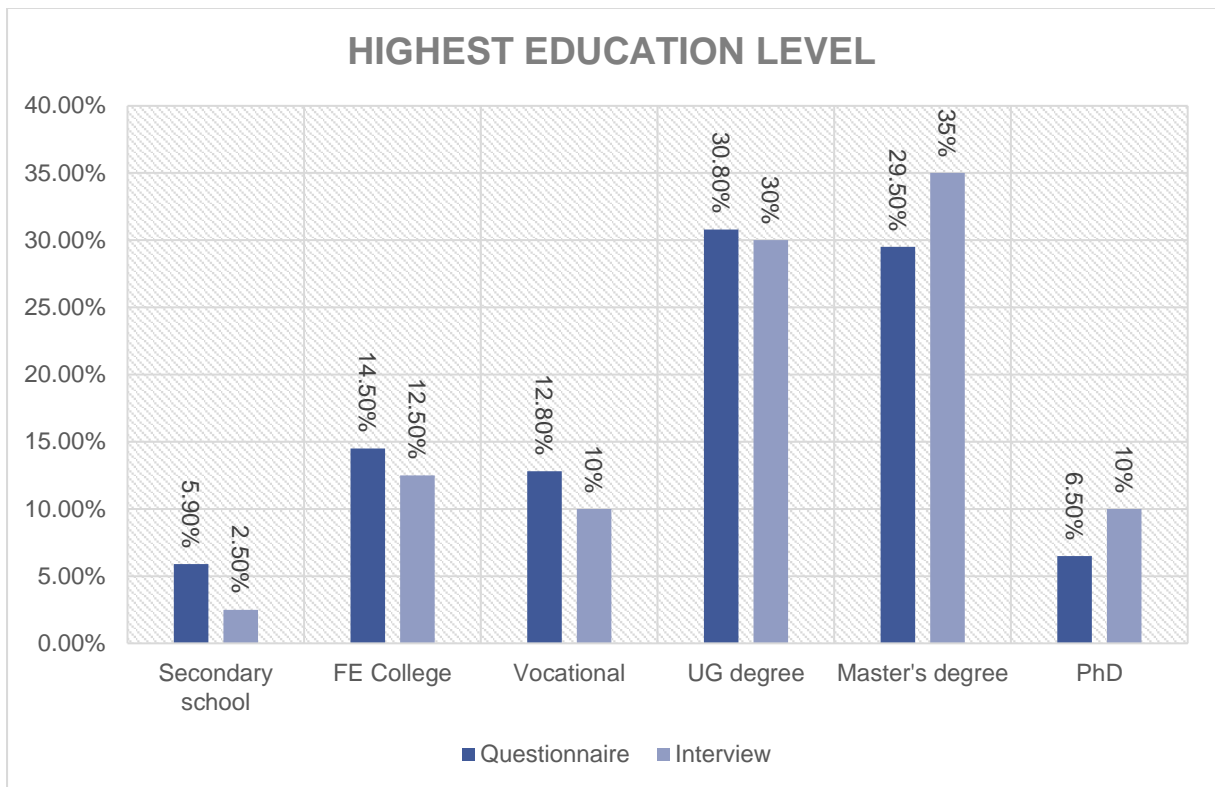


Figure 7.5: participants' highest education level

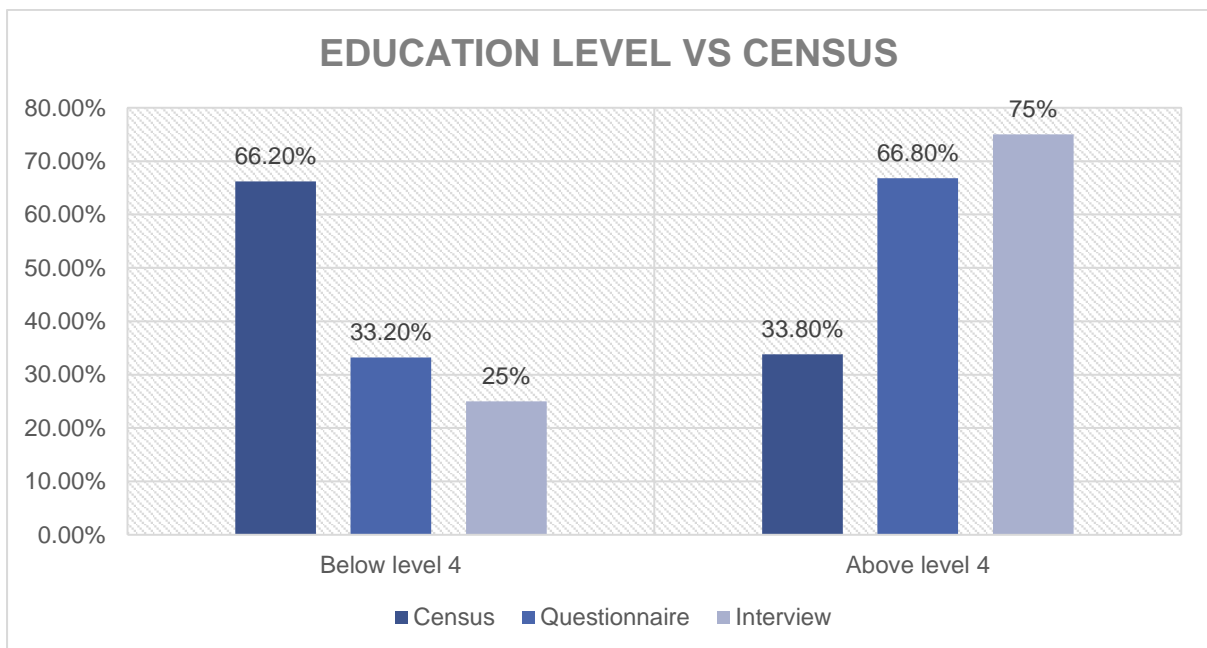


Figure 7.6: participants' highest education level, compared with 2021 census data

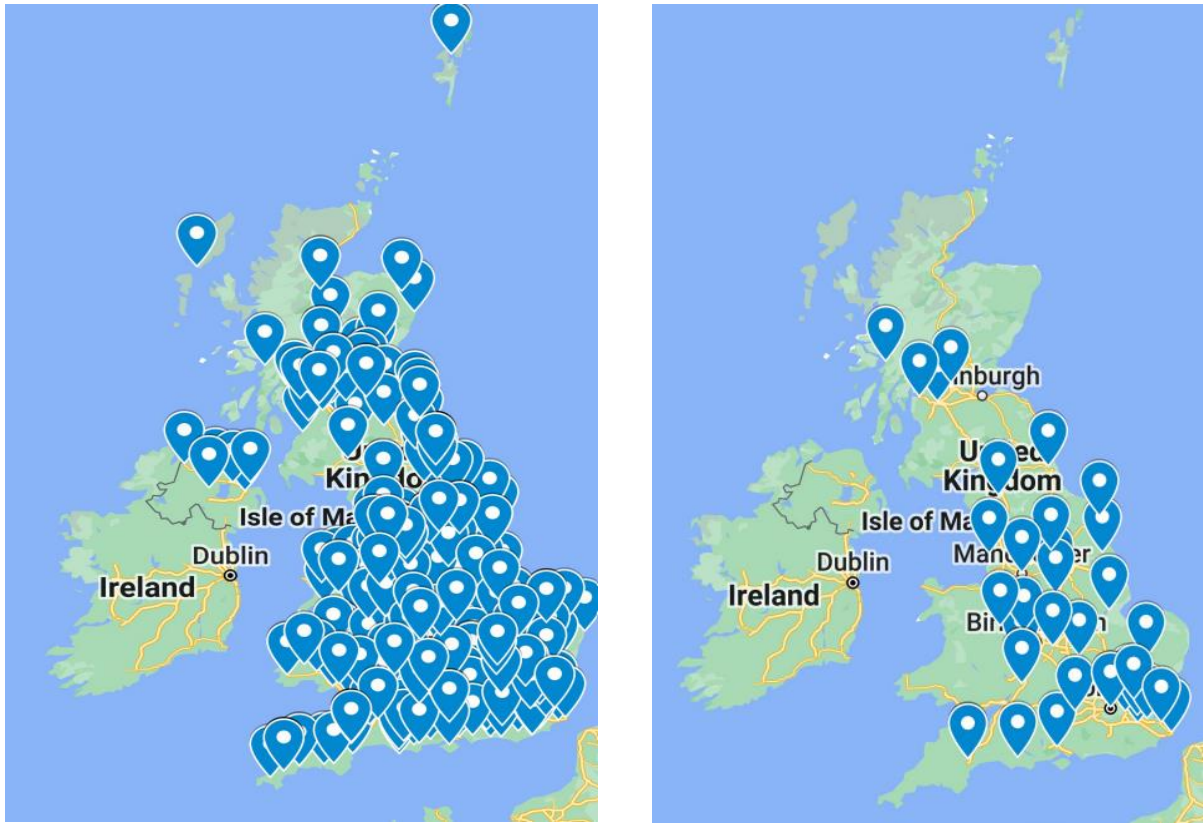


Figure 7.7: geolocations of questionnaire participants (L) and interview participants (R)

Questionnaire Results and Analysis

A total of six data collection instruments were utilised to gather data from participants: an ‘icebreaker’ exercise; questions on the sources of information utilised and trusted by participants; questions on participants’ experiences learning history in school; questions on participants’ perceptions of the importance of archaeology and heritage; questions on participants’ knowledge of historical societies; and statements designed to map out participants’ historical worldviews.

Icebreakers

Participants were initially asked to note down the first word or phrase that they thought of upon reading the term ‘ancient history’ (full results can be seen in Appendix VIII). These responses were coded inductively, with a number of clear themes emerging. As is demonstrated in fig. 7.8, the most common response from participants was to relate ‘ancient history’ explicitly to a facet of Classical Antiquity. This implies an entrenched synoptic link between the distant past and the Graeco-Roman tradition, mirroring the Classics-centric perspectives of the students above – responses concerning Ancient Egypt also made up a further 44 from the cohort. The next most common response was to position ‘ancient history’ within a specific temporal framework (e.g. “anything pre-dating 500 CE”; “BCE”), which represents a far less contentious representation of the concept. Positive value-judgements were the next most common response (“interesting”; “fascinating”), followed by definitions concerning disciplinary aspects of the study of ancient history (“archaeology”; “heritage”; “museums; “stones”). After responses concerning Ancient Egypt, and other responses ultimately irrelevant to the present discussion (such as “fossils”; “time team”; and,

unfortunately, two instances of “dinosaurs”), a smaller number of participants were keen to link the idea of ancient history with that of ‘civilisation’ (“the start of civilisation”; “early civilisations long since disappeared”). Interestingly, fewer still gave a response concerning aspects Northern or Western Europe (examples include “Stonehenge”; “Celts”; and “Britain”), suggesting that the sample population were on the whole of the opinion that ancient history is more rooted to the Mediterranean context than their present one, potentially echoing the teleological narrative of diffusive development. However, only 10 participants mentioned anything to do with the Ancient Near East (e.g. “Mesopotamia”; “Nineveh”), suggesting that participants’ focus is more concerned with the more strictly ‘Classical’ elements of this discourse. Beyond the limited number of participants who give a negative value judgement on Ancient History, the least common responses were given by the three participants who mentioned a society outside of the Mediterranean and European canon, respectively, “Egypt, China, Indus Valley”; “The Art of War Sun Tzu”; and “Aztecs”.

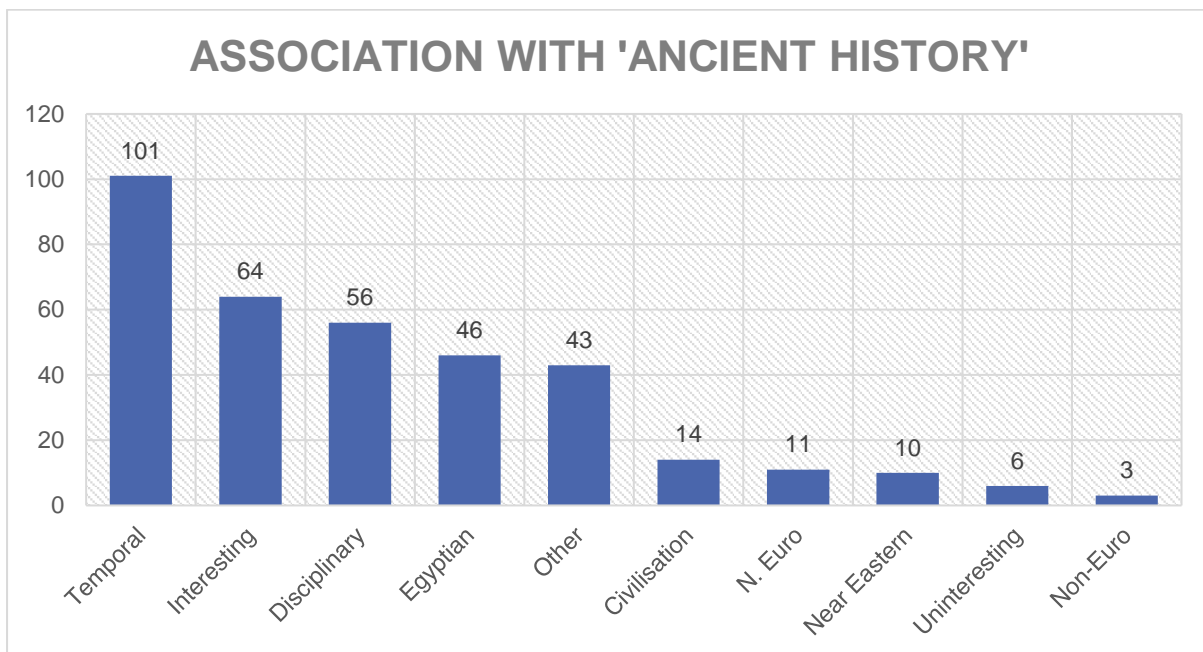


Figure 7.8: results from Icebreaker 1

Participants were then asked to provide a definition for the term ‘civilisation’. These were again coded inductively, with data displayed in fig. 7.9. The most common definitions for civilisation centred on inclusive notions of shared ideology (for example, “human co-operation towards shared goals”; “when humans started caring for each other”). The next most common type of definition is more slightly exclusive, centring on the existence of some form of ‘organisation’ or ‘social structure’ (“organised form of social life”; “structured living”), although this definition could ultimately be used in both exclusive and inclusive contexts. Following this, there is a tie between the ultra-inclusive conceptualisation of civilisation as synonymous with ‘society’ (“people living in an area”), and responses which echo the core tenets of Nineteenth Century stadial theory (“The development of a culture in material and societal terms, beyond the establishment of tribal or village society”). The next largest type of response concerned a society with established norms (“a community with rules”). Following this, a number of participants also gave responses reminiscent of the ‘trait listing’

approach to ‘civilisation’ taken by early archaeological theorists, with examples including “rule of law, organised society, writing, literature, urbanism, cultural awareness, fine art”; “A structured, stratified social arrangement”; and “coexistence in a settlement, use of tools, democracy”. A smaller number of participants related ‘civilisation’ exclusively to the past and past societies (e.g. “a [sic] era in history”; “ancient society and government”; “a culture that has left an indelible mark on the world”). Fewer still related ‘civilisation’ to its original but long-outdated exclusive association with urbanism (“a human society based around a city or cities”). 11 participants gave responses which were ultimately of no use to the present discussion (including “chilled lager”). Finally, seven participants rejected the idea of ‘civilisation’ on relativist grounds.

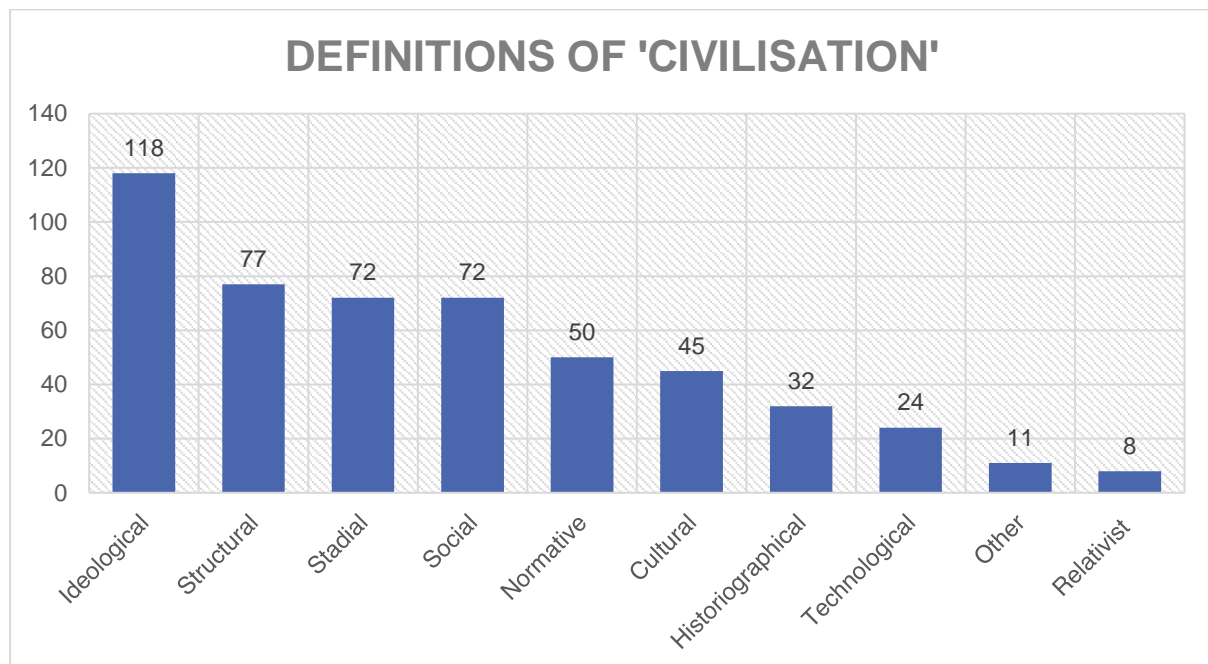


Figure 7.9: results from Icebreaker 2

The results from the icebreaker exercise present a varied picture of the opinions of the sample population for this discussion. Whilst the most common responses to the first question related ‘ancient history’ to the Graeco-Roman or Egyptian tradition, a significant number of participants drew on more inclusive ideas, such as time periods or disciplinary practice. That said, the lack of any real engagement with cultural traditions outside of the Western developmental narrative is striking, and is perhaps reflective of the high number of participants drawing on exclusive definitions of ‘civilisation’ directly informed by the same models. The fluency with which participants invoked and employed these theories could perhaps be partially explained with the final data-set from the icebreaker exercise, in which participants were asked to declare their interest in ‘the ancient past in general’ on a four-point Likert scale (see fig. 7.10). The overwhelming levels of interest in the subject could also indicate a skewed sample, although as such they serve to make the above and below results even more stark, given that the sample population likely have higher levels of interest and engagement with the ancient past than the average Briton.

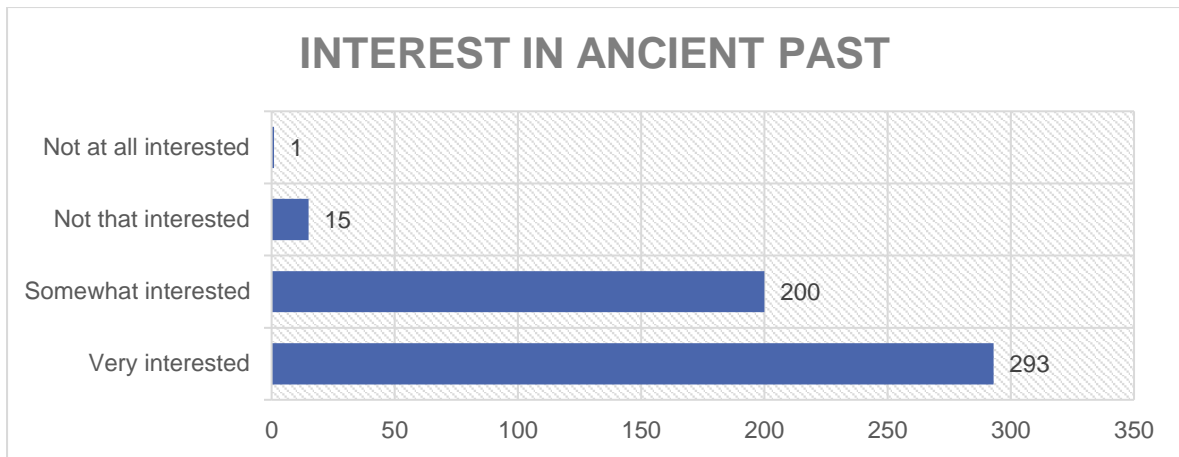


Figure 7.10: interest in the ancient past

Sources of Knowledge

The next section concerned the sources of knowledge that participants drew upon when engaging with the past. Initially, participants were given a list of different sources of information, and were asked to tick off those that they engaged with. The full results are displayed in fig. 7.11. It is of particular note that the most commonly selected option was documentary broadcasting, given the issues with the medium discussed in the last chapter, and the extent to which their content is often underpinned with both covert and overt Eurocentric notions of teleology and superiority. Beyond this, it is also interesting that museums were so frequently selected. However, the other form of ‘authorised’ knowledge dissemination from archaeological and heritage practitioners (attending lectures/seminars) was amongst the least most commonly engaged with, along with video games, and radio broadcasting. There was also a free answer box for participants to note down any other sources of knowledge that they engaged with. These results are displayed in fig. 7.12. It is notable that so many participants noted their engagement with podcasts, a medium which was not considered for use in this study, but which future work on could yield promising results.

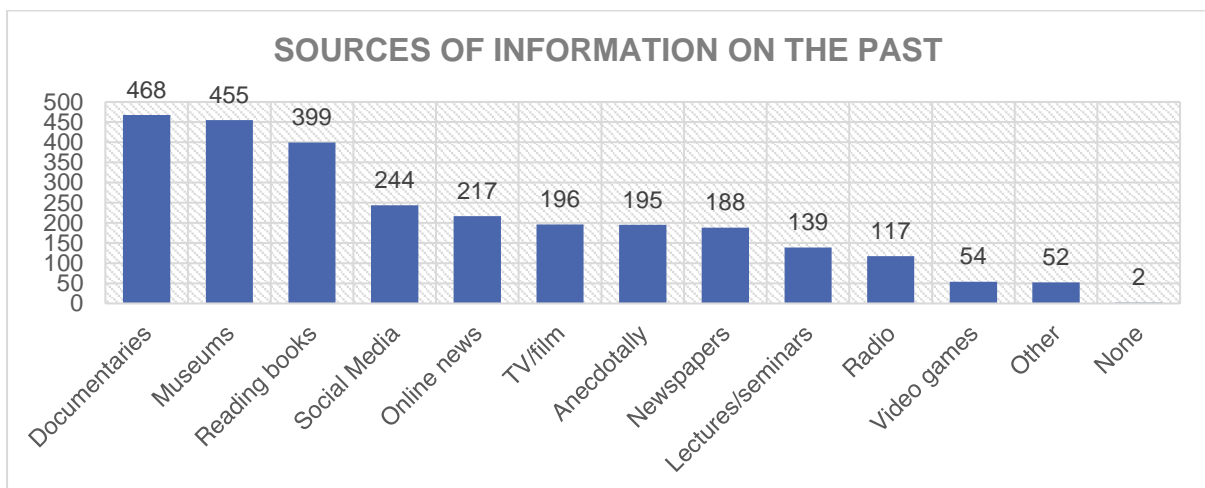


Figure 7.11: sources of information on the past



Figure 7.12: alternative sources of information on the past

Participants were then presented with a list of different forms of media concerning the past, and asked to note down how frequently they engaged with them. Averaged by mean and mode (see table 7.1), documentaries and news media (both ‘traditional’ and online) are utilised most, whilst period film and TV media is engaged with less, and ‘alternative archaeology’ and video games the least. Lower engagement with alternative archaeology programming is something of a relief, given the tendency of these programmes to repackage diffusionist, Eurocentric tropes (as highlighted in Chapter Two) – however, as I highlight below, concern remains with those members of the sample who *do* engage with this content in their perceptions of its accuracy. The comparatively high frequency of engagement with documentary content is, once again, significant, given the qualitative issues raised with UK programming the last chapter.

	Documentary	TV Drama	Film Drama	Alt. arch	Trad. Media	New Media	Video Game
Mean	3.23	2.48	2.1	1.66	3.53	3.57	1.69
Median	3	2	2	1	4	4	1
KEY	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	2-3 times per week	Daily/almost daily	

Table 7.2: average engagement with different media

Participants who did not identify themselves as ‘never’ engaging with a particular form of media were then asked to list any examples that they remembered engaging with, alongside the cultural or temporal contexts covered in content that they tended to engage with. Much of this data formed the basis for the media sample discussed in the previous chapter, and as such has already been discussed above. However, it is important to note the startling lack of global and temporal diversity reported by participants when discussing the sort of content they tended to engage with. When discussing

documentaries, for example, only one participant noted having watched a documentary concerning African history outside of an Ancient Egyptian context, whilst none said that they tended to watch documentaries concerning African history. 13 reported that they tended to watch documentaries concerning different contexts across the continent of Asia. By comparison, 220 said that they tended to watch documentaries concerning some facet of the Classical tradition, and 110 reported that they watched documentaries concerning Ancient Egypt. Taken in conjunction, these figures far eclipse even documentaries concerning the Medieval or earlier history of Britain, once again raising questions over the extent to which the Graeco-Roman tradition is favoured as a theme of discussion amongst both the producers and consumers of documentary media. These responses are broadly mirrored across the different forms of media under discussion. It is, however, worth noting that on the whole more recent history is more engaged with amongst those who watch period TV and film content.

Participants were also finally asked to rank the accuracy of each form of media that they reported engaging with on a four-part Likert scale, from ‘very inaccurate’ to ‘very accurate’. Modally, these results demonstrate a very narrow range, with all media types deemed to either be ‘somewhat accurate’ or ‘somewhat inaccurate’. In order to establish a workable mean, these metrics were converted to numerals, with ‘very inaccurate’ scoring -2, ‘somewhat inaccurate’ -1, somewhat accurate 1, and very accurate 2. When averaged out, these results once again show a very narrow range of perceived accuracy, between video games at -0.77, and traditional media, with 0.46 (see table 7.2). There are a number of interesting points raised by this analysis. For one, documentaries, whilst by no means universally seen as accurate, are perceived to be the second most reliable form of media after traditional sources. They thus represent the most commonly engaged with across the sample, and amongst the most trusted and frequently utilised. Another issue to draw out is the fact that ‘alternative archaeologies’ are actually seen as more accurate and trustworthy than both video games and period films. Whilst, it should be noted, the number of participants who engage with this type of content is the second-lowest in the sample, the sub-population size is still not insignificant, at 207. This is therefore concerning, given the aforementioned issues with ‘alternative archaeologies’, and demonstrates the need to engage actively in destabilising the narratives espoused by producers of this medium.

	TV					Video	
	Documentary	Drama	Films	Alt. arch	Trad. Media	New Media	Game
SCORE	0.34	-0.47	-0.57	-0.5	0.46	0.03	-0.77

Table 7.3: perceived accuracy of different media

History in School

The next section concerned participants’ experiences learning history in school. Initially, they were given a list of topics which have appeared on national curricula, and asked to tick off those that they remembered studying. Full results are shown in fig. 7.13, and broken down by age band in fig. 7.14. Across the sample population, the three most frequently selected options remained unchanged, although younger groups were more likely to remember studying Twentieth Century history than that from the Early Modern or Medieval Periods. The most common Ancient Historical topic across

the sample was Ancient Rome, followed closely by Ancient Egypt, whilst Ancient Egypt was selected by significantly fewer participants. A significant number of participants also remember studying the British Empire and the French Revolution. Towards the lower end of the scale are topics concerning societies in the Global South, with the fewest participants remembering having studied anything concerning pre-Colonial African histories, followed by Islamic history, and the pre-Colonial Americas. What is striking about these examples is the broad homogeneity across the sample population. As I discussed in the previous chapter, recent iterations of the curriculum have consistently included facets of Global South histories as part of the specification, and these are featured, however problematically, in textbooks and resources for schools to design their syllabi. Therefore, it must be concluded that either: (i) schools are neglecting their obligation to follow the national curriculum specification or, more likely; (ii) that the quality of content and delivery, alongside the broad lack of engagement with these themes outside of the school curriculum, means that these topics are simply ‘forgettable’.

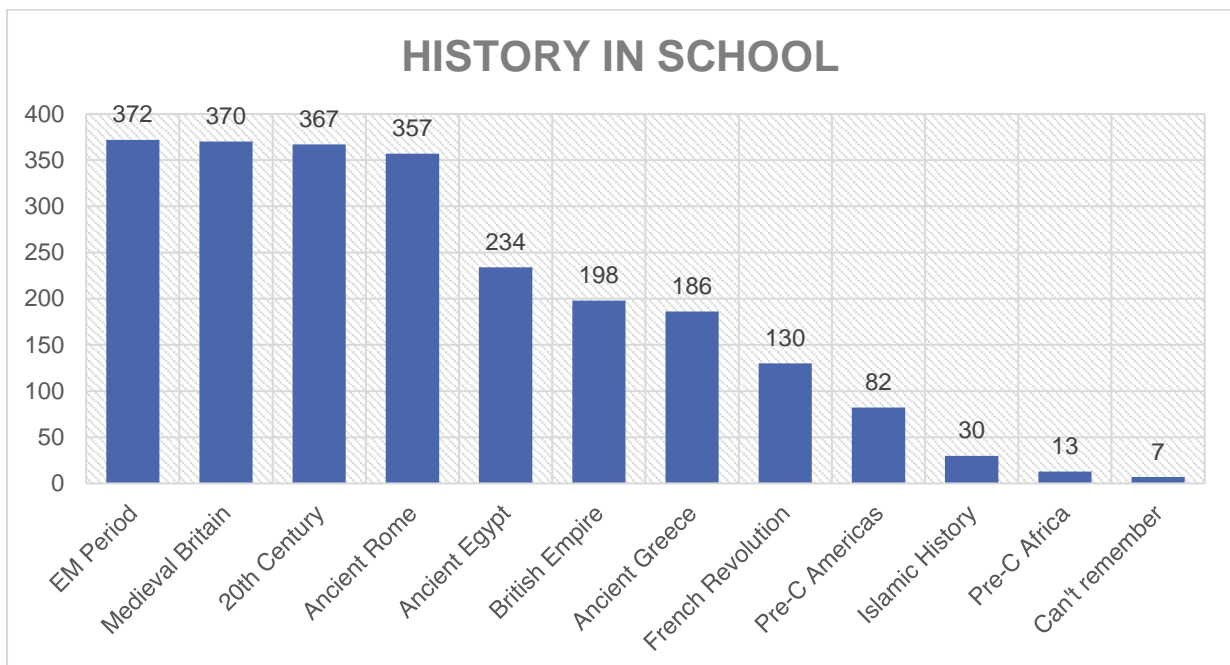


Figure 7.13: subjects participants remember studying in school

Variation between age groups can broadly be explained through the imposition of the national curriculum between 1991-1995. Those in the 18-34 bracket would have studied the curriculum for their entire school career, whilst those in the 35-44 bracket would have studied the curriculum for at least their entire secondary school career. This could thus explain the significant variability between these groups and those older than 45 in terms of the study of the pre-Colonial Americas, frequently cited as a possible ‘non-Western’ society to engage with, alongside the comparatively higher numbers who remember studying Twentieth Century history more broadly. However, as I discuss below, the quality of engagement with these themes appears to have been such that their discussion may have actually entrenched problematic perspectives, rather than equipped students to challenge them.

MEMORY OF SCHOOL SUBJECTS BY AGE BAND

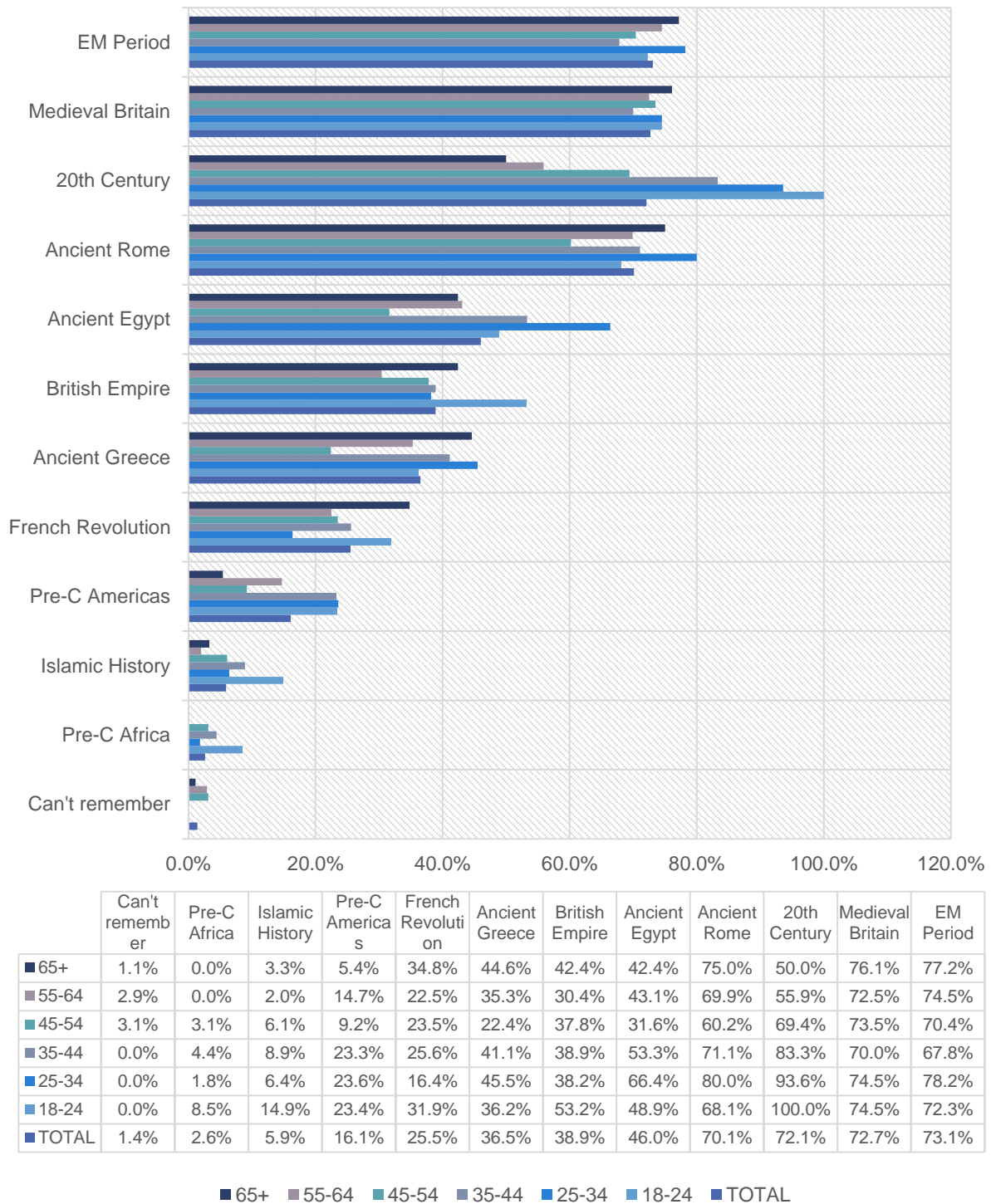


Figure 7.14: memory of school subjects by age band

knowledge on the past can play any sort of liberationist role, which could in turn suggest that they conceive of the present as being inherently more ‘advanced’ than the past.

	Exploring personal heritage	Challenging problematic assumption	Drawing communities together	Shaping societies' values	Understanding the modern world	Enrich personal knowledge
MODE	1	2	3	4	6	6
MEAN	2.72	3.53	3.45	3.35	3.84	4.08
RANK	1	2	3	4	5	6

Table 7.4: perspectives on the importance of archaeology and heritage

Participants were finally provided with a free-answer box to note down any other reasons they felt as though engaging with archaeology and heritage was important. Here a number of participants sought to clarify that they in fact disagreed with the above instrument’s methodology, since they felt that some or all of the above options were of equal importance. The majority of other responses then tended to give a slight variation on either ‘drawing together communities around shared histories’ (e.g. “it can bring diverse communities together on a local level”), ‘equipping us to challenge problematic assumptions’ (“to understand learned biases...”) or ‘to enrich our personal knowledge’ (“it’s much more interesting than current life”; “to grow in wealth of knowledge”).

Knowledge of Historical Cultures

The penultimate set of tasks given to participants comprised of a matrix of global historical cultures, with participants asked to score their familiarity on an annotated scale: ‘1’ being ‘I have never heard of them; ‘2’ ‘I have heard of them; ‘3’ ‘I know roughly when and where they existed’ ‘4’ ‘I know roughly when and where they existed, alongside some of their key achievements’; and ‘5’ for ‘I know roughly when and where they existed, their key achievements, alongside details about their social, political, or religious systems’. These results were then averaged by mean and mode (see fig. 7.18).

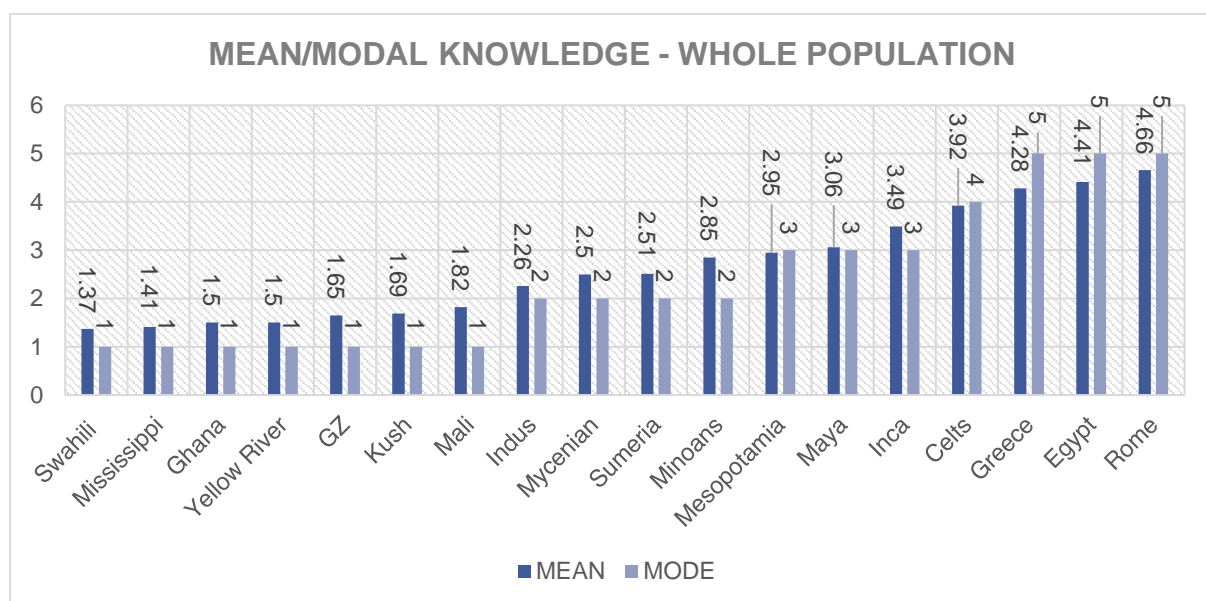


Figure 7.18: average knowledge of historical cultures

There are a number of items of note in this chart. At the upper end of the scale, the only historical societies with a modal score of 5, indicating that most participants felt that they had a very high level of knowledge on them, were Ancient Rome, Ancient Egypt, and Ancient Greece. The triad of societies generally positioned in popular culture to form the significant points on the Western developmental tradition are thus exclusively represented here, with participants ranking their knowledge higher even than our 'native' Celtic historical society. This could be seen as reflective both of the emphasis placed on these societies in our educational system, and within popular media and discourse. The latter is likely a significant factor behind participants' knowledge on Ancient Greece, given the comparatively low score provided by the sample on the education questionnaire.

This stands in stark contrast with the societies populating the bottom end of the scale. Those with a modal score of 1 – indicating that most participants have not heard of the society - include every African society presented to participants (with the obvious exception of Ancient Egypt), including the Mali Empire, the Kingdom of Kush; Great Zimbabwe; the Ghana Empire, and the Swahili Coast Civilisation. Whilst this is not necessarily surprising, given both the general paucity of pre-Colonial African history in school curricula and media presentations, and participants' self-declared lack of engagement with information on African history, the fact that these societies, many of which have been of significant recent archaeological interest, have never been heard of by most participants is concerning. Also with a modal score of 1 are the Yellow River Civilisation and the Mississippi Moundbuilders. Whilst the latter, despite its archaeological significance, is not as broadly discussed in British scholarly or popular discourse as in the USA, the Yellow River Civilisation has significant pedigree as a theme in British archaeology, representing one of V.G. Childe's 'primary civilisations'. The sample population's general lack of knowledge on it is therefore surprising, given their self-declared interest in the topic.

Societies scoring a mode of 2 and 3 go further to suggest that participants' engagement with the ancient past, and archaeological narratives, does not extend much further than the established developmental narrative. Those scoring 2 include societies of the Indus Valley; the Mycenaeans; Sumerians; and Minoans, and are thus comprised of three of the purported 'links' in the 'chain' of European civilisation, in the societies of the Eastern Mediterranean. The fact that Classical Greece in particular scored so high, and the Minoans and Mycenaeans so low, raises questions about the validity of the former score, or the quality of information participants are accessing, where two significant and direct precursors to Ancient Greece are not discussed. Societies with a modal score of 3 include the two other indigenous American societies (the Inca and the Maya), alongside the Mesopotamians.

In order to ascertain how much levels of knowledge across the sample may have been impacted by differing school curricula, median scores across the sample were broken down by age (see figs. 8.19 and 8.20). It is notable that across all societies, the 65+ age group had the highest levels of self-declared knowledge. Comparatively lower scores for pre-Colonial American societies amongst those groups who remembered studying these themes in schools calls into question the efficacy of delivery and quality of content delivered. This theme is echoed across all societies for the 18-24 age group in particular – those who had most recently attended school have the least knowledge on global

historical societies, with a clear negative trend between recent school attendance and overall knowledge scores. Accordingly it could be suggested that school education is not as widely utilised as media and other forms of ‘informal’ knowledge dissemination amongst the sample population when it comes to constructing historical worldviews and understandings, which may in turn be reflective of the inherent Anglocentrism of history curricula and syllabi.

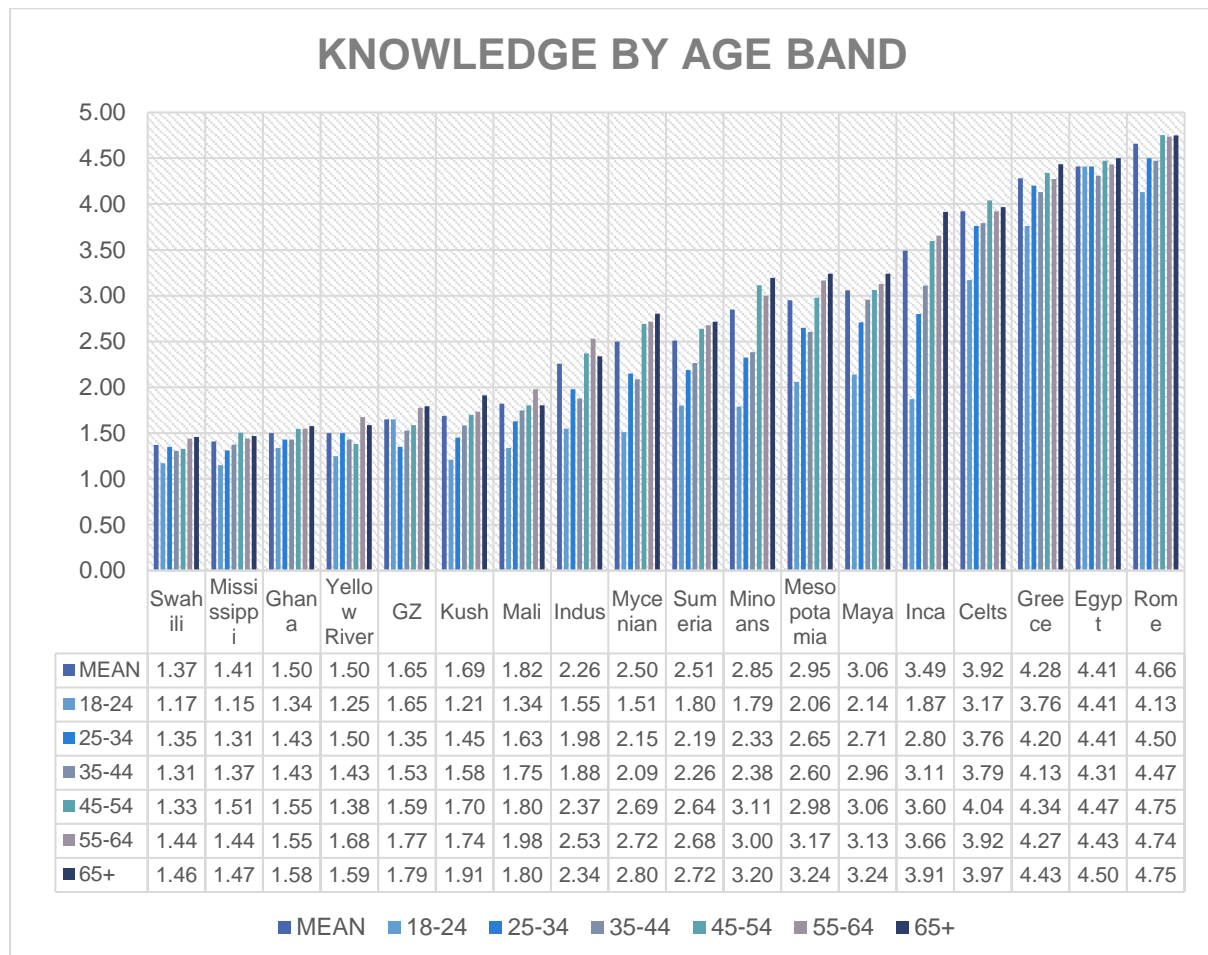


Figure 7.19: knowledge of historical cultures by age band

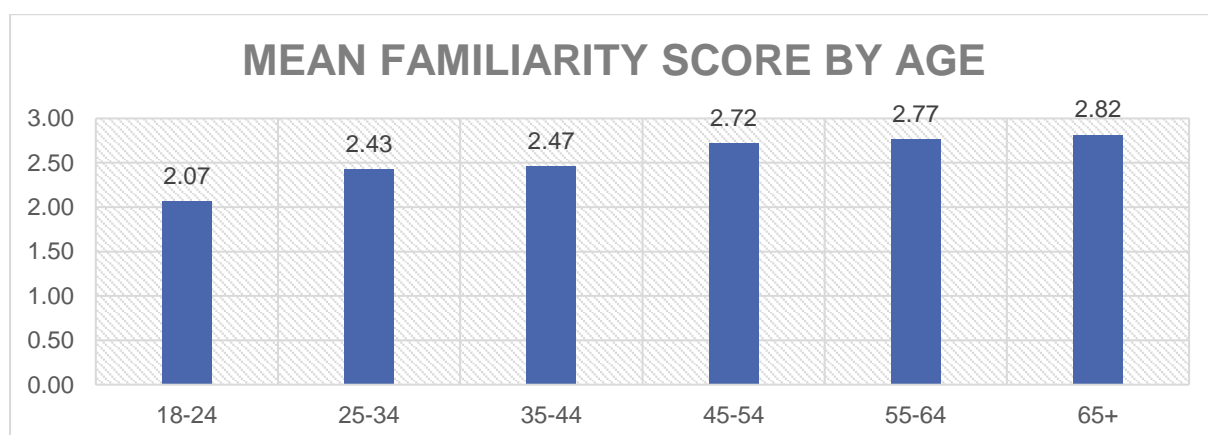


Figure 7.20: average familiarity by age band

This data was also broken down by education level, in order to assess whether there is a positive relationship between self-declared knowledge on past societies and higher levels of education (see figs. 8.21 and 8.22). It is notable that, in the case of the sub-population average scores, there is no clear correlation between education level and depth of knowledge. Whilst the PhD sub-group have the highest average score, this is followed by those with vocational qualifications and secondary school qualifications, respectively. Individual participants within these sub-populations tended to be older than those who listed their highest education level as either college qualifications, or undergraduate or master's degrees. As such, the variation between these sub-populations is likely reflective of age.

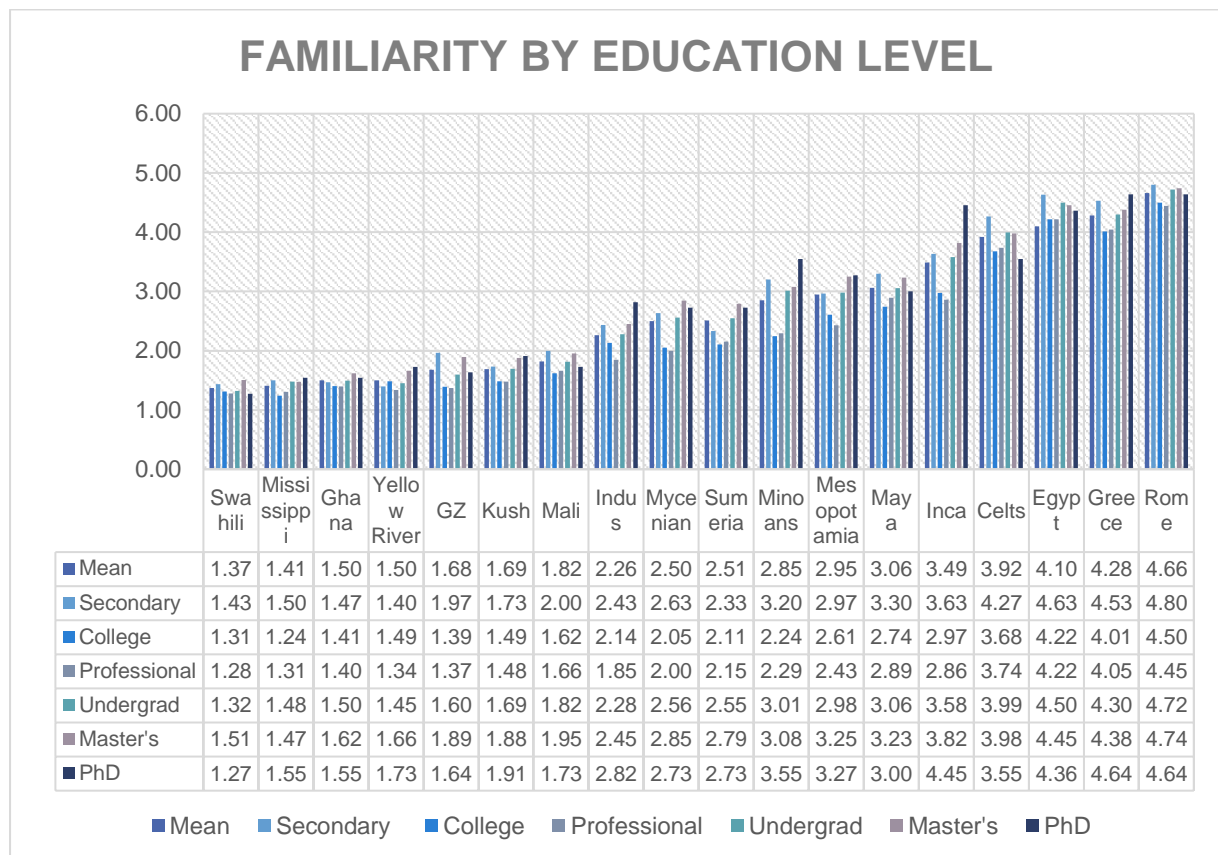


Figure 7.21: knowledge by education level

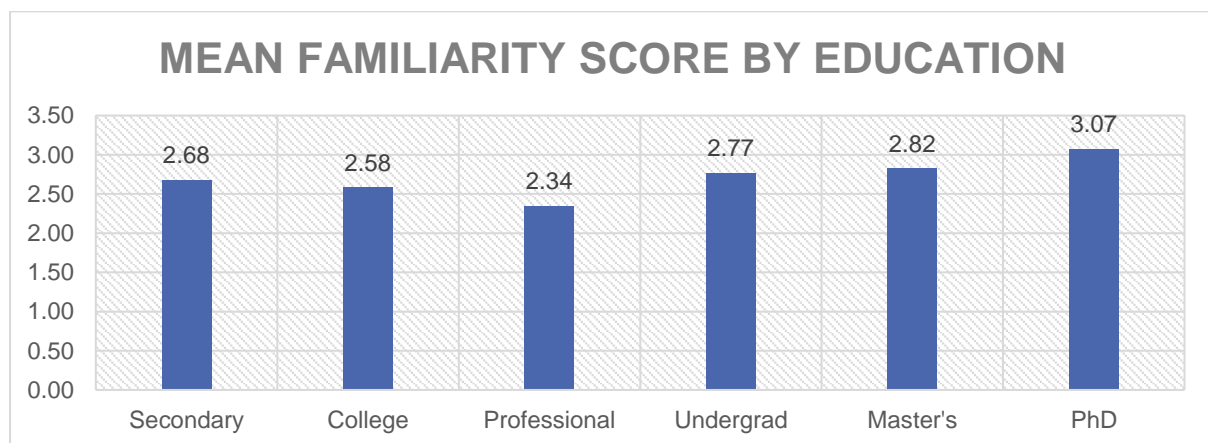


Figure 7.22: average familiarity score by education level

Opinions on Historical Civilisation

The final questionnaire instrument given to participants concerned their opinions on a series of highly contentious statements about the past, statements which are, to a greater or lesser extent, reflective of strands of archaeological thought at one time or another. Participants' responses to these statements, and the explanations of their position provided in the free-answer box, thus allow me to map out elements of their historical worldviews, and ascertain the extent to which they are reflective of current or 'outdated' archaeological thought.

- **'Historically, European societies have always been the most developed'**.

This statement fundamentally addresses the Eurocentric narratives of totality and opposition. The results, shown in fig. 7.23, demonstrate that the majority of participants disagree with the sentiment (86.5% in total), with by far the smallest proportion of participants completely agreeing with it. The free answers given by participants in support of their position are also telling.

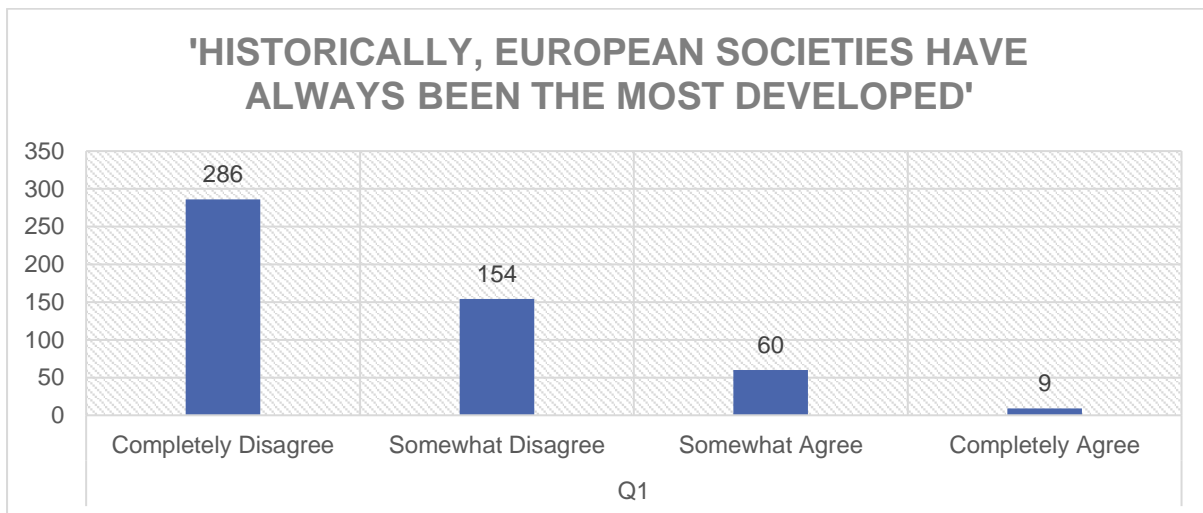


Figure 7.23: results from question 1

The majority of those who disagreed with the statement provided examples of historical societies outside of Europe who had at one time or another been more 'developed': "China, Japan, the near East, South America... and many more"; "I believe early Far Eastern cultures were at least if not more developed". A number also employed historiographical concepts such as Eurocentrism in support of their position: "That is a very Eurocentric view, African, southern American and Asian cultures have often been more advanced socially than Europe and even scientifically". Others called into question the metrics by which 'development' is quantified: "Depends on how you view what is civilised. China/India/Native America/South America all were developed. Just with different understandings of what that was". A number of participants also rejected the statement, whilst purporting that European societies *are currently* the most developed, for example:

"Western European society has been the dominant society from a global perspective for approximately the last 300 years, it doesn't denigrate or diminish the achievements or developments of earlier society that were located elsewhere around the world. What European society has been able to do is use the technological and societal advances to it's

maximum. If other cultures elsewhere in the world had been able to communicate and project power on a global basis earlier, then they would have been the preeminent baseline society as we understand it.”

Those agreeing with the statement tended to draw upon different pieces of evidence from across geopolitical (“The birth place of industrialisation and capitalism (Max Weber), also were the ones who started global colonialism”); technological (“We judge development based on the technologies they had at the time. Europeans had guns while other civilisations had sticks and stones. Europeans colonised most of the world and to do this surely they must have been more developed....”); fiscal (“Europe had the manpower and wealth to exploit other areas to their own gains, depriving those areas of wealth, people and safety, and often disrupting the progress those cultures were making themselves”); or historiographical (“Civilisation seems to have fanned out from Greece in all directions”) fields, often echoing problematic tropes and Eurocentric dogma in doing so.

- **‘Building cities and developing complex economies are not a valid measure for the ‘success’ of any particular society’.**

This statement concerned more archaeologically-specific qualifiers of ‘advanced’ societies . Here the responses were more mixed, with a far slimmer majority of 53.6% agreeing (see fig. 7.24).

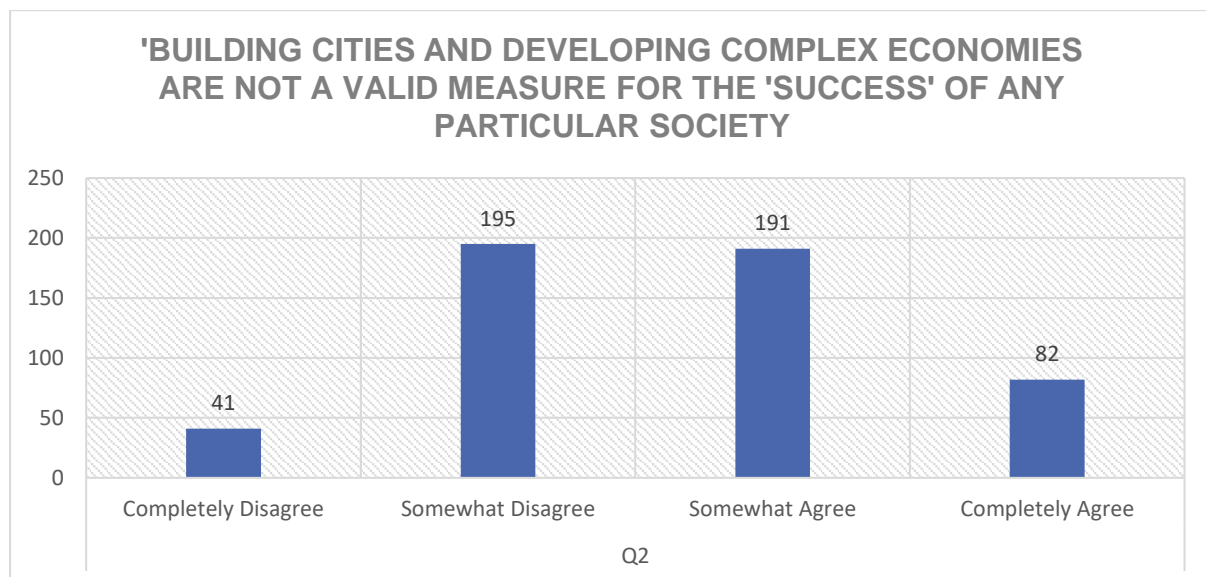


Figure 7.24: results from question 2

The majority of those agreeing supported their position by arguing that contemporary, modern society is not necessarily ‘successful’: “Development” today is largely associated with Western capitalism, which is catastrophic for human society and for the planet”; “We are seeing the corruption & unfairness of complex economies. Cities are no longer the way forward”. Others advanced examples of ‘successful’ societies lacking one or both of these characteristics: “Native American culture pre-colonisation appears successful without fixed cities and complex economy”; “Australia supported a successful and largely stable indigenous society for some 40,000 years, all without a complex economy”. A significant number of participants also advanced alternative factors

that they felt to be more important in gauging societal success: “Success of a society should be measured according to other measures including health , spirituality and wellbeing”.

These positions are in many ways mirrored by those who broadly disagreed with the statement, with the highest proportion of these responses suggesting that other factors should nevertheless also be considered: “The happiness and safety of the people is also important”; “The health and welfare of all members of society are better measures”, suggesting that across the sample, exclusive metrics are not entirely popular. A number of those disagreeing also did so on Childean grounds, whereby these structures are taken as evidence for broader socio-cultural infrastructure: “A complex economy is incredibly hard to start and to build massive cities takes knowledge and skills”; “Doing this shows discipline and commitment”. Others disagreed with the statement by discussing specific examples: “The Romans and Greeks must have been successful because we still learn about them today”; or through slightly problematic logic: “Mud hut tribal villages do no equate to huge brick states”. A final, smaller group directly employed stadial theory in their opposition to the statement: “I would characterise a people without cities as a culture not a civilisation”; “Humans in every civilisation have always had urban centres. So it is a valid measure”; “All the civilization I know of involved a city or cities”. It is interesting to note, particularly for this latter set of responses but also throughout the sample, how often the concept of ‘civilisation’ was directly equated to the content of the statement, despite the fact that it was not employed as part of the statement itself, which refers only to the ‘success’ of different *societies*.

- ***‘European empires succeeded in spreading the idea of ‘civilisation’ across the globe’.***

This statement addressed both participants’ perceptions of more recent historical narratives, and their conception of the concept of ‘civilisation’, and its validity. Given the results for the first statement, discussed above, participants’ positions here (see fig. 7.25) were surprisingly mixed, with 62.3% disagreeing, and 37.3% agreeing.

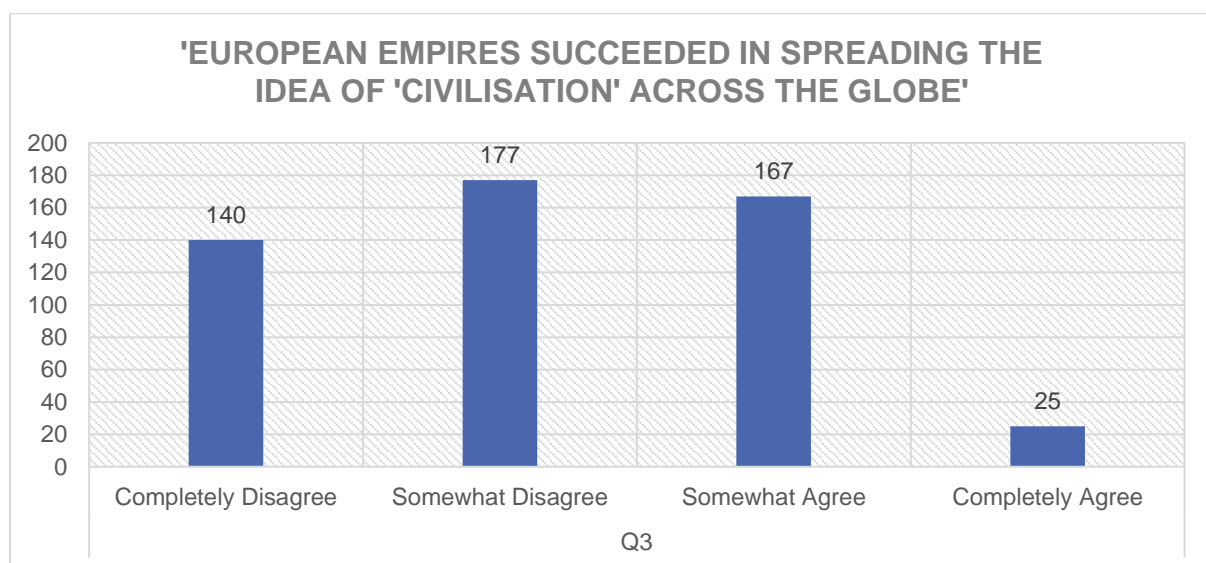


Figure 7.25: results from question 3

The majority of those disagreeing did so on moralistic grounds, highlighting their perceptions of empire as a fundamentally oppressive regime: “European invaders destroyed peaceful civilizations, committed brutality, made people slaves and burned books and texts...”. These arguments serve to actively destabilise Eurocentric historiographies, and as such seeing them reflected here is cause for cautious optimism. Others highlighted alternative groups who they felt had either also spread the concept of civilisation: “I think the Chinese would disagree. Europeans were certainly pretty aggressive in spreading their brand of ‘civilisation’ but other cultures and races has certainly got there already and needed no ‘help’ from the West”; or more often those that had developed ‘civilisation’ without European intervention: “there were valid civilizations across the world that were destroyed by European empire building.” A significant number of participants disagreeing with the statement highlighted a perceived plurality in the definition of ‘civilisation’: “They spread their idea of civilisation, but other places already had their own, which often resulted in a shared version”; “Civilization is relative depending on your opinion of our present society.”

This position is mirrored in those that agreed with the statement, but disagreed with the morality of the practice: “While advances were shared by the European empires, it is important to consider at what cost that was to indigenous culture and traditions.”; “European empires succeeded in spreading the European idea of civilisation across the globe (even though it’s not necessarily the true or right idea)”. Others affirming the statement proposed that Europeans had civilised some places, but not others: “I suspect the Incas (for example) already had some idea of civilization, but we probably spread it to many other places.”; “I think they helped but, again, the Egyptians seemed quite civilised.”; “To Africa mainly”. The privileging of more traditionally monumentalist societies is interesting, given the responses to the previous statement, and it is also notable that no African societies were positioned as ‘exceptions to the rule’ of imperial civilisation. A final group of participants who agreed with the statement echoed various facets of the traditional Eurocentric model, proposing metrics through which this was demonstrably the case: “Many societies at the time in these lands were tribal and somewhat primitive in comparison. Many lacked what could be considered to be advanced culture, limited due to a lack of resources, technology or primitive ideology and thus were swallowed up by more advanced cultures.”; “European ideas changed many civilisations for the better. India is a better place for British law being in place.”. Whilst these perspectives are in a minority, it is nonetheless concerning to see them here.

- ***‘There are no insurmountable differences dividing Europe and the Middle East’.***

The results from this statement, echoing centuries-old Eurocentric rhetoric, are further cause for concern. As is shown in fig. 7.26, here a slim majority of 54.3% disagree with the statement, indicating that the larger group of participants do believe there to be insurmountable differences between the Orient and Occident.

The majority of these participants object to the statement with indirect reference to the ‘clash of civilisations’ thesis, and most appear careful to not name the chief aggressor driving this animosity: “Religion will always be the big difference here”; “Religious intolerance is the dividing factor,

without that things would be much easier”. Others are less ambiguous, calling out the perceived entrenched patriarchy and/or despotism of the Middle East: “Islam is an evangelical faith, doesn’t accept other religions”; “The dead hand of religion keeps the ME essentially in the Middle Ages.”; “Unequal treatment of women, radical religions and modern-day slavery in the Middle East currently make for irreconcilable differences”; “Women have many more human rights in Europe... and women are dispensable and not even 3rd class citizens in many Middle Eastern countries.”; “Religion always has, and may always in the future, be a stumbling block. We are moving in Europe towards secularism, whilst the Middle East still clings to a religious societal basis”. As this latter quote highlights, the frequent invocation of religion as a key dividing factor could arguably be reflective of the modernist, weighted binary between secularism and faith, and thus of the Eurocentric narrative of opposition. A very limited number of participants have also alluded to the belief that Europe and its problematic geopolitics, both past and present, are the chief architect of insurmountable difference, for example: “Eh. That would require stupid white men to get their heads out of their own arses and those in the middle east to learn to co-exist with them.”.

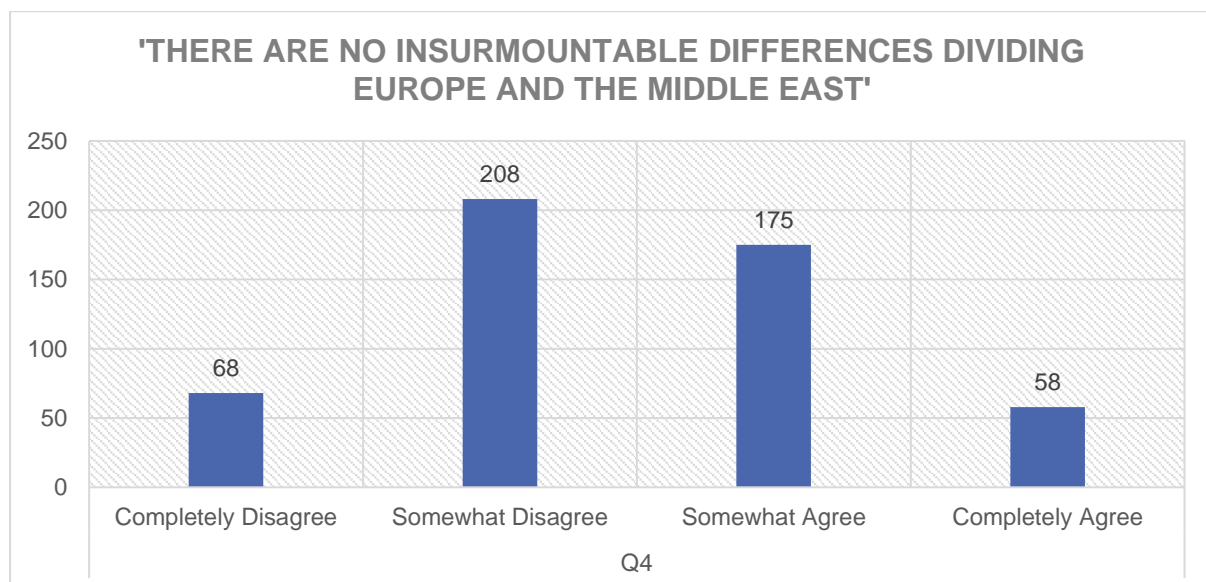


Figure 7.26: results from question 4

This latter belief is also employed by some who broadly agree with the statement. A number argue that it is only the actions of power-brokers that maintain the façade of insurmountable difference: “It is all political”; “cultural differences” have been emphasised in order to create division and make societies easier to conquer and colonise”; “The ruling party in the UK is extremely Islamophobic, as are many of the newspapers”. A number of participants also highlighted the history and culture shared by the two regions as a unifying factor: “There is always common ground, shared history; Christianity and Islam are very similar to each other especially the Bible and Quran tell the same stories just with different names (Jesus/Isa, Noah/Nuh)”; “Both major religions are basically Jewish sects and strive in history is more [about] power than actual differences.”. By far the most responses agreeing with the statement, however, emphasised notions of humanist universality: “humans are the same the world over”; “There are of course cultural differences between people in different parts

of the world, but I don't think any differences between humans should be considered 'insurmountable'".

- **'Ancient Greece and Rome can be considered Britain and the West's closest cultural ancestors'.**

This statement directly concerns the notion of Classical patrimony so prevalent throughout current and historical media and pedagogy. Given the ubiquity of the concept in these sources, it is perhaps surprising that results are not more definitive, with only 59.8% agreeing with the statement (see fig. 7.27)

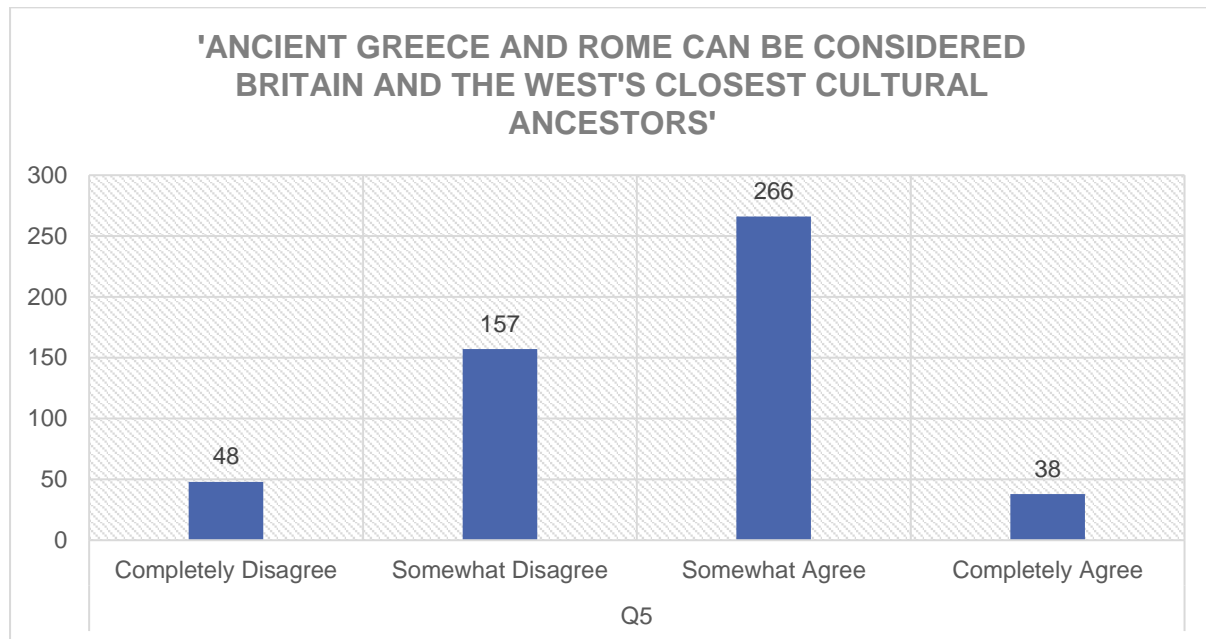


Figure 7.27: results from question 5

The majority of those who disagreed with the statement did so by indicating other cultures that either take precedence in our cultural history, or whose traditions were blended with those of Classical Antiquity: “Britain may have thought of itself as the successor to Rome, but their culture is firmly Germanic and Celtic in origin. The English language is Germanic, the royal family is of German descent, the state religion is ultimately Middle Eastern, and British cultures are the fusion of the original Celtic inhabitants of Britain, and the Anglo-Saxon/Germanic invaders, as well as the later French-Norse invaders.”. A small number of participants also argued that the West is not worthy of such ancestry: “Nah we’re not that cool or smart”; “Not too sure about the benefit of ancient Greeks ,but sadly we never followed up everything the Romans brought to us”. This is interesting, as in denying our patrimony over the Classical tradition, these participants also echo another strand of Eurocentric thought which served to position the Graeco-Roman tradition as an aspiration to be strived for. Finally, a small number also pointed to the roots of the concept in Western thought: “I think this position is based on renaissance values which are idealised and based on European ideas from hundreds of years ago. Britain and the West are much more diverse”; “Only if you take European imperialist propaganda as fact and ignore all the actual history in between”.

This echoes some sentiments from those who agreed with the statement, many of whom also indicated the rich pedigree of Classical fetishisation in the Western canon: “They have been culturally dominant and the west often looks up to the colonising activities of Rome in particular”; “I think through various historic periods (Tudor era, Victorian era), western culture has been heavily influenced by these period because of idealistic cultural propaganda of those periods.”; “Our modern (post medieval) society borrowed heavily from ancient Greek and roman culture but almost completely ignores the Celtic/Anglo Saxon culture, although cherry picking items (Boudicca, Alfred, Arthurian legend) which fit the required narrative”. Others spoke of specific features which we owe to our Classical forebears: “Many British customs and historical ideologies are based on these ancient cultures, from medicine , education to industry and agriculture. Much of our genetic make-up can be traced back to these cultures also”; “Much of western Europe based their ideas around these cultures”; “a lot of our culture and language has roots in these eras”. This set of responses more clearly echoes typically Eurocentric, patrimonial perspectives, without the criticality of other respondents’ who highlighted the historiographical contingency of these ideas.

- ***‘Most African societies did not develop ‘civilisation’ prior to colonialism’.***

This statement directly reflects Imperial oppositional and totalistic narratives, echoed throughout the pedagogical and media sources in the previous chapter. As such, the broad rejection of this statement (see fig. 7.28) comes as a somewhat pleasant surprise, especially considering the poor representation of material concerning Africa in the above-discussed sections on schooling and media, and the poor overall knowledge scores for African societies.

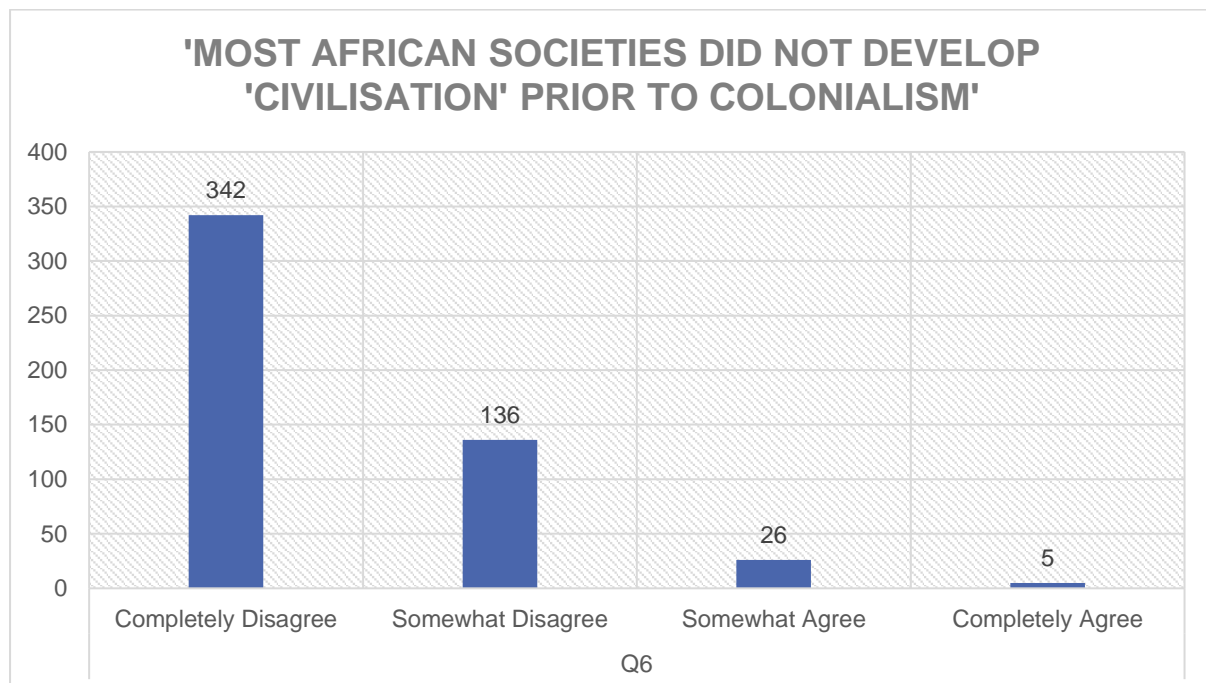


Figure 7.28: results from question 6

Amongst participants disagreeing with the statement, many discussed African cultures which directly counter the notion of African primitivity: “The organized artistic, cultural and military achievements of many pre-colonial African societies and empires (the Songhai, ancient Egypt, the

Mali empire) stand as evidence. Colonial powers largely destroyed and disrupted the socially complex tribal societies of the continent, rendering distinct human civilizations extinct.”; “It’s just not true - two of the classical world’s civilisations, Carthage and Egypt were African, Ethiopia has ancient roots, then there have always been kingdoms across sub Saharan Africa, such as Mali, Songhai, Zimbabwe etc etc.”. Others called into question the validity of ‘civilisation’ as an analytical category: “Colonist views of civilisation are very different to those African nations. I think it’s very outdated to believe this statement”; “Great Zimbabwe can be considered civilisation. Western centric civilisation stemmed from colonialism...”. Others highlighted the problematic roots of this statement as a facet of colonial thought: “It would be racist, in my opinion, to take this stance. To believe that before the white man, Africa did not have governance, social systems or ways to learn, communicate or write!”; or, concisely, “Ethnocentric bias”.

Respondents backing up agreement with this statement are fortunately very few in number. Of those, the main defence is a plea to ignorance: “I believe this statement to be accurate as I have very little knowledge about this specific area.”; “I don’t know enough to comment”; “I believe this statement to be accurate as I have very little knowledge about this specific area”, *et cetera*. There are, unfortunately, a very limited number of responses highlighting Africa’s position as a supposedly ‘primitive’ continent: “Even today the cultural standards between races stand out, and not only in the lower educated countries.”; “Black Africa was tribal and backward.”; “Again it’s a matter of philosophy, African civilizations were more tribal based and society was made up of a limited number of people. Tribal expansion facilitated by war and acquisition meant that advances were often stifled because the focus was more on provision and survival than invention.”. Whilst these responses are concerning, they are in a significant minority even amongst those agreeing with the statement.

- ***‘There is a universal ‘benchmark’ against which to judge the morality and success of all historical societies’.***

This statement reflects the Eurocentric narrative of totality, as Imperial Europe was typically cast as this benchmark. Participants were on the whole against the sentiment (71.7%), with the smallest group (2.4%) ‘completely agreeing’ with it (see fig. 7.29).

The vast majority of those disagreeing with the statement did so on essentially relativistic grounds: “One might look to Ancient Greece as the bastion of all advancement, but the Ancient Athenians were wildly different culturally to the Ancient Spartans. Both cultures were ancient Greeks, but one was vicious and unforgiving, and the other was pensive. Morality is complicated. What was seen as morally correct by the pagan Roman Empire in the persecution of another religion is now seen as abhorrent (see China, Uighur Muslims)”; “Morals are flexible. You name me a ‘immoral’ position and I’ll name you a society in which it was both acceptable and regarded as moral, at least for some of the population. The only ‘benchmark’ against which ‘success’ of a society can be judged is how large it was and how long it lasted”. A small number also highlighted the potentially problematic implications of applying such benchmarks: “There is a benchmark to judge success of historical societies but the benchmark for morality is very fluid and applied harshly to some societies (usually

euro-centric) and less harshly to others (predominantly European or modern American, not indigenous American)”.

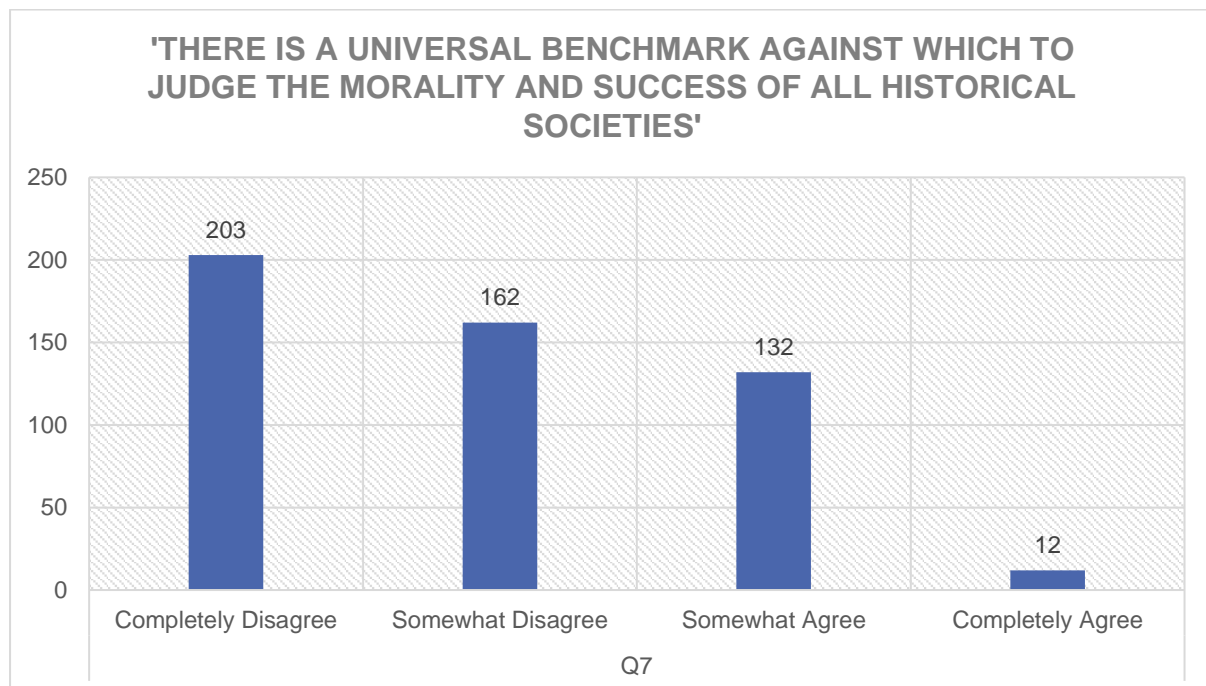


Figure 7.29: results from question 7

The majority of those agreeing with the statement presented factors which could serve as a benchmark for morality. A small number of these concerned the principle of Christian universalism: “A philosophical question and a difficult one. My Christian belief here tells me that there are universal moral values of good and evil for example that I might want to apply, but the success of historical societies might be judged by different benchmarks depending on different philosophical or religious standpoints”, but the majority of factors were liberal-humanist: “I think the morality of society can be judged on the human rights that were upheld by them. The success of those societies can probably be directly linked to how much better off the people in those societies were and how much opportunity they had to expand their knowledge and learning in order to gain better self-awareness.”. Finally, a few participants advanced objectivist perspectives in defence of their position: “Real historians are the subversives in the new era of electronic collectivism and anonymous denigration. In a contest between history and moralising, history wins.”; although these were once again in a significant minority”.

- ***‘It is fair to describe Roman Archaeology in North Africa and the Middle East as elements of Western heritage’.***

This statement once again tested participants on their perspectives towards patrimonial teleology, whilst also drawing in debates on cultural change and temporality. Unsurprisingly, given the results of the above question on Graeco-Roman ancestry, a slim majority of participants agreed with this statement (56.2%) (see fig. 7.30).

Of those who disagreed with the statement, there was a degree of homogeneity, with most participants pointing to the historically cosmopolitan nature of the Mediterranean, and the cultural syncretism thus embodied in the heritage of the region: “It is somewhat fair but only if one also agrees that Roman archaeology in North Africa and the Middle East is an element of North African and Middle-eastern heritage too”; “It can be both- it indicates a history of expansion and colonialism (in the pre imperialist sense) from the west as well as being an element of Middle Eastern or African heritage”; “Difficult one. In N Africa there are both Roman & native elements present particularly in Roman Egypt. The same applies to the Middle East, eg Palmyra.”. A further group rejected the statement on explicitly anti-patrimonial grounds: “These relics did not come from events in the west but in the Middle East and Africa. It is their history.”; “It is the nation’s heritage and history.”, whilst a final, far smaller group positioned such extant archaeology as fundamentally ‘world’ heritage: “It’s everyone’s”; “Isn’t it world heritage?”.

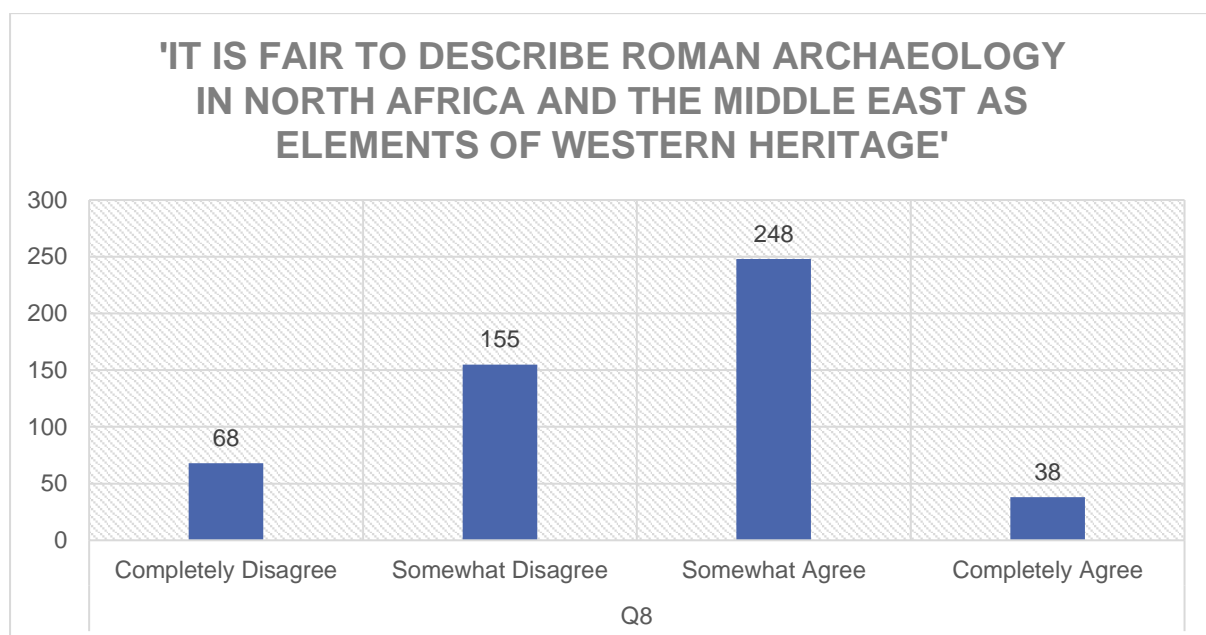


Figure 7.30: results from question 8

Amongst those agreeing with the statement, the majority of sentiments were straightforwardly patrimonial: “It’s hardly THEIR heritage...”; or the more concise: “Romans, Italy, innit?” whilst others also incorporated vaguely anti-Islamic sentiments alongside their responses: “When the Romans ruled it, it was the West. It only ceased to be do when Islamic armies conquered the Levant and North Africa. (Syria could have been like Spain today, if only the Crusaders had won it back and held it.)”. A further group, whilst agreeing with the sentiment, discussed the Roman empire through the vocabulary of present-day anti-imperialism: “It was there by force and probably has little reference to the area or local influence”. As can be seen in the above responses, however, it should be noted that this statement drew the most mixed response as far as coding went, since many of those agreeing with the statement were also keen to emphasise the cosmopolitan nature of the Ancient Mediterranean, a theme which is good to see reflected so widely.

- ***'Our understandings of world history are fundamentally affected by our own cultural context'***.

This statement again addresses the totalistic worldview espoused through Eurocentric theses on historical representation. Given the more mixed results above, it is perhaps surprising that this statement drew the greatest homogeneity across the sample, with only 3.8% of participants disagreeing with it (see fig. 7.31).

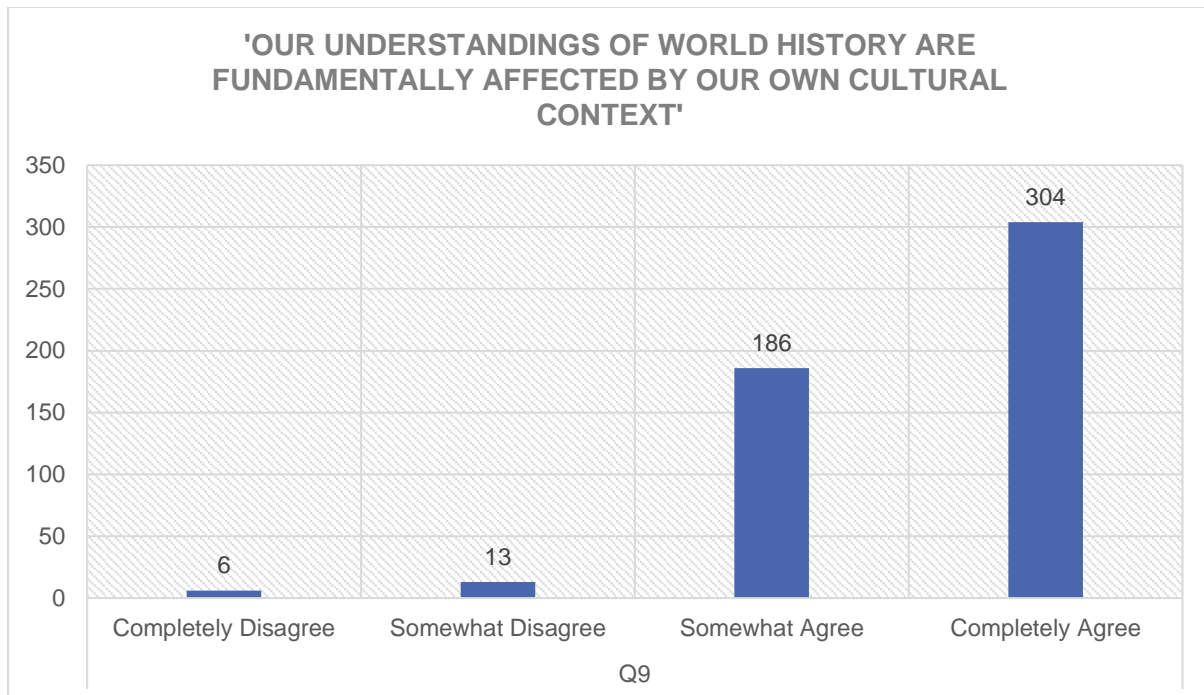


Figure 7.31: results from question 9

Amongst this very limited sub-group of only 19, there were surprisingly very few objectivist responses – those that were emphasised that ‘truth’ is above current ‘trends’ in interpretation, for example: “MY own understanding of world history is things in the past should not be effected by modern thinking.”. Instead, participants emphasised that it is not our cultural context which necessarily effects interpretation so much as the ‘ruling classes’ of our cultural context, reflecting some broadly populist responses to statements above: “It is the miss-information of the ruling elite that affects an nations people culturally”; “A lot of this is imposed and effected by education”. There was also one very interesting response, the author of which sought to emphasise that they were not conditioned by the historical narrative of their cultural context: “No. I disagree with so much of what has taken place over the years and I am often grouped into this category and almost held accountable for the dreadful way my ancestors treated other civilisations. These are not my actions...”. The relationship between the history of the UK as a colonial power and personal connection to history was frequently discussed by interviewees, as I discuss fully below.

The broad homogeneity of opinion towards this statement is mostly reflected in those who agreed with it, the vast majority of whom noted the effects of learning and socialisation on shaping historical understandings: “It’s hard to imagine ourselves in another time in another culture so we have to make the effort to put ourselves in the shoes of those who have gone before us and in their context...”;

“Without a cultural background we have no way to understand world history. The trick is to understand the shortcomings of our own viewers share and to expand our knowledge to understand and interpret other cultures, societies and events in a meaningful way.”.

- ***‘It is fair to rank societies according to their similarity and difference to our own’.***

Again addressing narratives of totality, this statement was more specific in the means through which Eurocentric narratives have typically been mechanised. It is thus surprising to see a more mixed response, with 16.7% of participants agreeing with the statement (see fig. 7.32).

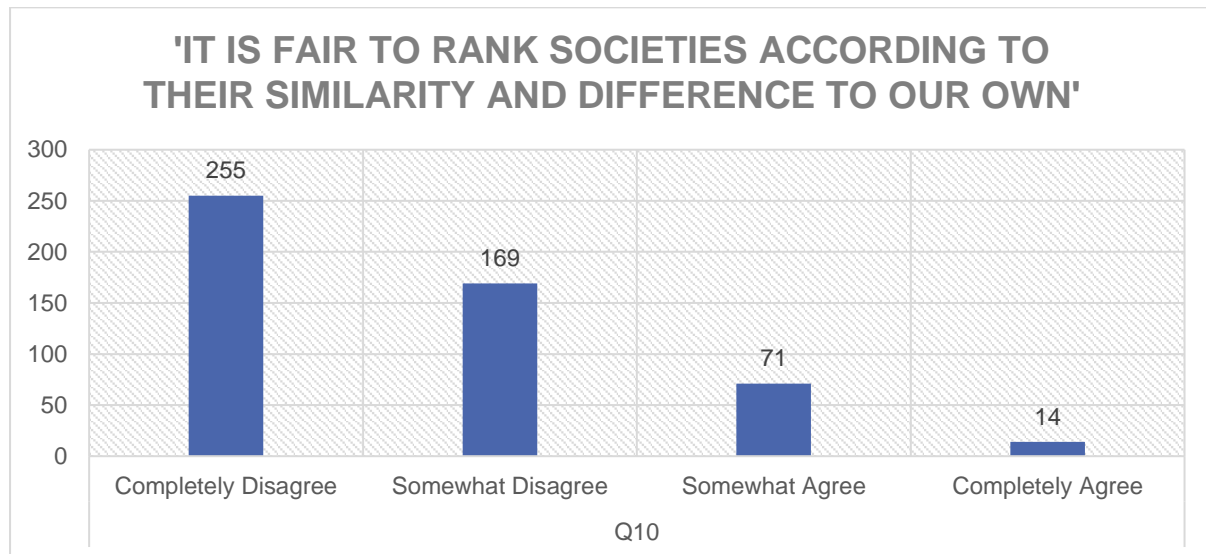


Figure 7.32: results from question 10

Amongst the majority responses, a common theme was to, rightly, point out the worrying political and ethical implications of enacting such a system: “The road to White Supremacy is paved with fair intentions.”; That’s a fascist position”; whilst others discussed the methodological pitfalls behind establishing a ‘ranking’ system: “Of course not. We might say that India is only recently civilised because we can say that Brits brought democracy to the region but Duleep Singh the last maharaja of India was civilised. Ancient Indian peoples introduced the zero as a place holder in maths. We can see that they were intelligent and civilised in ancient times.”. Interestingly, there is some divergence by those who ‘somewhat disagree’ with the statement, with some positing that there may be some utility in such a system: “We do this with GDP, murder rates, infant mortality etc. Some measurement encourages improvement (and it may be that other societies measure better than ours does).”; “To some extent”; “Sure, depending on what you are trying to achieve. Comparison can help us understand better or can be something that distanced us depending on how it is used.”.

The majority of those agreeing with the statement nonetheless questioned the use of such a system: “Fair in what context? If the ranking is to understand sameness, then it is useful and thus fair. For any other reason, no, I can't see that it can be.”; “Who’s ranking societies? And why?”; “You can rank civilisations in terms of similarity, doesn't make the less similar ones valid?”. Others took an objectivist perspective, arguing that ranking societies represents a valid means of comparison: “I feel

this is natural to compare societies to our own this way we can enjoy or avoid specific parts of that society.”; “It can help to compare education, and social and political freedoms when describing news events.”, whilst some, whilst broadly agreeing with these sentiments, cautioned against potential pitfalls of such a method: “You have to have a benchmark, and picking the one that you understand the most makes sense, but I think it could potentially lead to classism if not done carefully.”. Finally, a small number of participants also suggested factors which could be used to build a comparative framework, often from the Western liberal tradition: “Things like: ritual killing and/or sacrifice of animals; repression of women; discarding of the physically or mentally disabled.”.

- **‘No specific ‘race’ or ethnic group is inherently more intelligent, able, or industrious than any other’.**

This final statement is essentially asking participants the extent to which they disagree with the concept of scientific racism. As such, the results are somewhat mixed. On the one hand, a very clear majority of 90.3% of participants do agree with the statement, and thus disagree with the concept of biological racism. However, that does leave 9.7% of participants *disagreeing* with the statement, and thus *agreeing* to some extent with biological racism. Furthermore, a number of responses given by those who ‘somewhat agree’ with the statement demonstrate clear parallels with those disagreeing with the statement, and thus belie some degree of sympathy with various facets of racist discourse (see fig. 7.33).

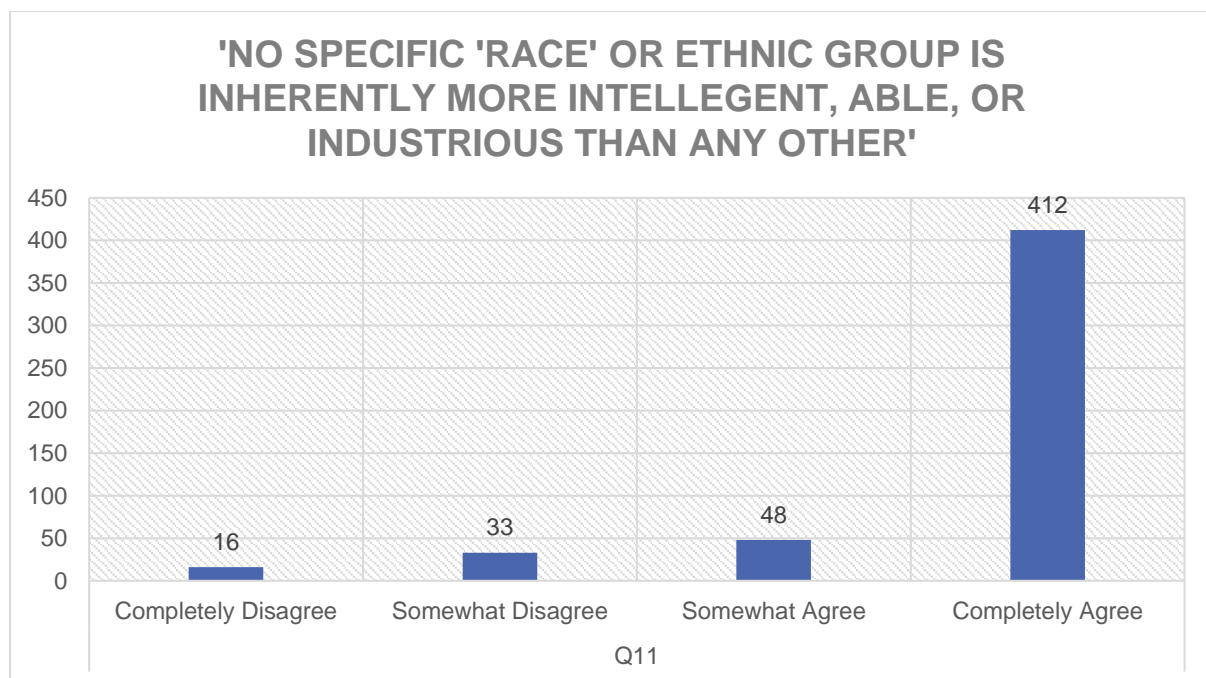


Figure 7.33: results from question 11

Chief amongst these responses are those who give ‘examples’ of inherent racial superiorities: “Some races do better than others in the Olympics. Some cultures place more value on studying and working than others, for example, Chinese and Japanese place a lot of value on it.”; “although there will always be outliers on either side of the bell curve it has been shown that people from East Asian countries (China Korea Japan etc) have higher IQ than the most of the world (other than Ashkenazi

Jews) they were very industrious with very little influence from any other countries”; “European historically over less developed countries.”; “Sorry I probably disagree with this in certain specifics. Look at running or singing. Certain countries do very well. There are clearly some natural groupings. Now the DNA on that would be interesting.”. Whilst most of these participants do not explicitly state a commitment to European supremacism, their sentiments could very easily be fed into this broader discourse of alterity. Others echoed long-outdated stadial frameworks for gauging cultural sophistication: “Some races or ethnic groups stagnated at some point in their development and failed to continually advance either with inventions or governance.”; “This is not a racist statement but isn’t it amazing how many inventions were invited in the British Isles.”, whilst others indicated that cultural ‘success’ could be seen in part as a function of biology: “Some cultures and ethnic groups have not prioritised industry over other activities. The Romans considered the Greeks to be the best at sculpture and medicine.”; “That’s a difficult question to answer shortly. We are not all equals, genetically, educationally. Some groups are better at some things than others and that’s completely okay to understand but impossible to use to judge someone. Sadly. One size fits all is fair but doesn’t fit anyone very well.”; “There may be inherent differences of some kind - I don’t think everything depends on nurture, so I can’t agree with that broad generalisation”. Finally, others who agreed with the statement sought to provide ‘empirical’ justification for their positions, for example:

“What do you mean here by “inherently”? How many generations are you allowing for culture and genes to evolve? Some years ago a Pakistani friend (professor of biology) remarked that we are all phospholipids: the chemicals which form our cell walls. The behaviour of these is clearly temperature dependent. So for biological, geographical, and cultural reasons you would NOT expect Eskimos and (say) South Asians to evolve identically. There are also the consequences of inbreeding. Historically the Swiss mountain village of Muotatal was cut off for much of the year: leading to significant inbreeding, resulting in a large proportion of congenital idiots. Some Islamic societies habitually marry first cousins: including my friend, who married a cousin; one son was born with a deformed foot; my friend then married his daughter to one of her cousins -- so her first child has impaired vision and hearing, and her second is unable to speak! Before his daughter married, I warned him about Muotatal: but, despite being a biologist, his cultural norm prevailed. -- Authorities in Birmingham have recognised this problem amongst Pakistani families: but there is little publicity as it is culturally sensitive.”

These broad sentiments were echoed by some who ‘somewhat agree’ with the statement. Some attributed fundamentally cultural attributes to intellectual or biological deficits: “Almost completely agree. Although on Easter Island the trees were cut down in order to move the large stone sculptures over logs. This deterrent sacrificed food sources and was not the best idea.”; “There is some research that suggests that some ‘races’ or ethnic groups have a predisposition towards certain characteristics, but these are difficult to measure due to the way in which we categorise intelligence and ability. For example, there is evidence that Europeans have evolved to process dairy products, whereas some Asian ethnic groups have not. By the same token there may be some inherent traits displayed around natural aptitude and possibly even some aspects of intelligence.”. Others sought to invalidate the statement using the *lingua franca* of ‘culture war’

rhetoric: “You become whatever you do due to your own efforts, the race card or so called white privilege are irrelevant”. Finally, other participants argued that social institutions have a tangible effect on biological development: “Highly religious groups can prohibit development.”; “Some races worked harder than other during the time of history”.

The sentiments of those agreeing with the statement can be fairly summarised with this brief, concise response: “because I’m not a racist?”.

Eurocentric Positions – Population and Sub-populations

In order to gauge the extent of Eurocentric sentiment demonstrated by participants during the final research task, and to compare between populations, responses were coded on a scale of -2 – 2. Responses which completely agreed with the Eurocentric position was scored -2; somewhat agreed scored -1; somewhat disagreed was scored 1; and completely disagree 2. The average score for Eurocentric sentiment (EC score) across the sample population is 0.77 (see fig. 7.34 for the full distribution). This indicates that participants are on the whole slightly more ‘against’ Eurocentric narratives than ‘for’, but there is still considerable sympathy with these sentiments. This is, however, significantly higher than the score across the school-age population discussed in Chapter Five, which was -0.16.

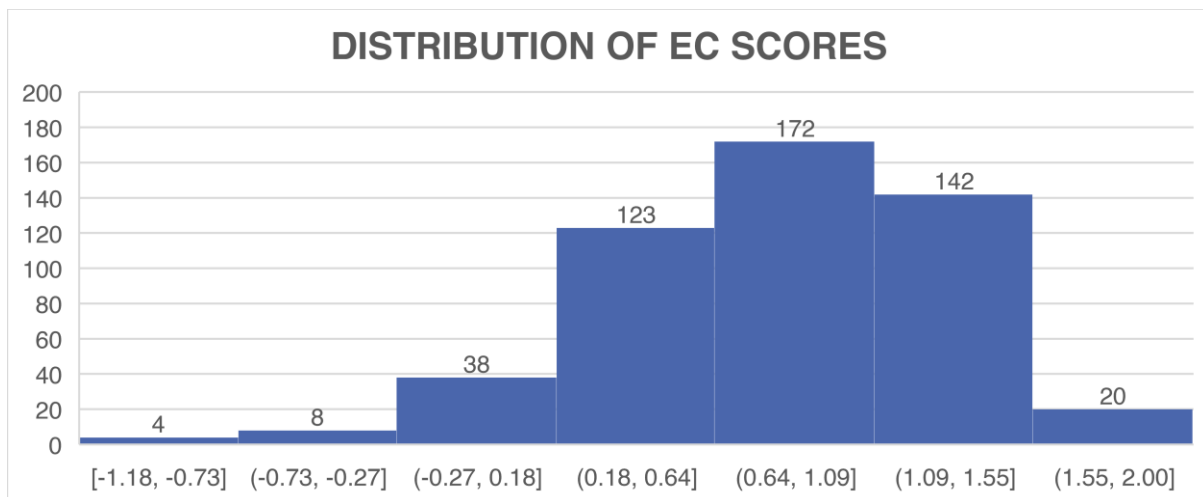


Figure 7.34: distribution of EC scores

These scores were compared with those from a number of demographical sub-populations, in order to ascertain any factors which may increase the likelihood of a participant subscribing to Eurocentric positions on issues. On the whole, the average score was broadly mirrored across all sub-populations tested, strengthening the likelihood of these results being generalisable, but frustratingly providing little insight into where successful interventions could be made in order to destabilise pervasive elements of Eurocentric discourse. Full results are broken down below:

- ***Demographical sub-populations***

When breaking scores down by *age* (see fig. 7.35) there is a significant discrepancy of 0.29 between those in the 18-24 and 25-34 age brackets respectively. This is especially interesting given the broad similarity in knowledge levels and other factors shared by these sub-populations

throughout the study. With the exception of these groups, all age brackets are within a range of ± 0.05 from the mean score of 0.77.

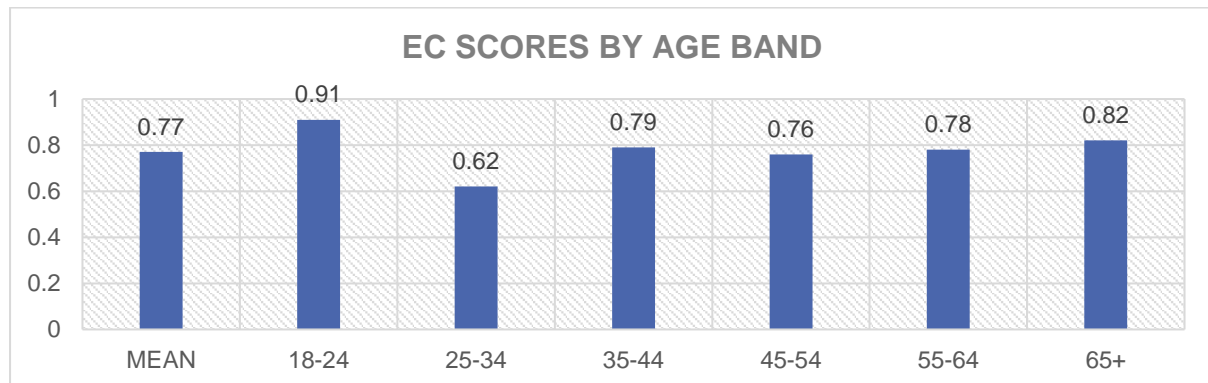


Figure 7.35: EC scores by age band

The small number of participants who did not identify as White meant that, in order to maintain the statistical validity of results, when testing for variance according to *ethnicity* it was only possible to compare 'White' with all other ethnic groups. There was virtually no variation between these groups, with those in the former category scoring 0.77, and the latter 0.78.

Testing for *gender* also revealed a slight disparity, with males scoring 0.69 and women 0.83. However, this disparity only equates to 3.5%, and is thus not considered significant. Individuals who chose not to disclose their gender, alongside those who identified as any other gender, were too few in number to draw any conclusions from their respective scores.

With the exception of those whose highest qualification was vocational (NVQ or equivalent), all sub-populations broken down by highest *educational level* were scored within the ± 0.05 range of 0.77 (see fig. 7.36). Those with a vocational qualification scored slightly lower, with 0.62.

Those who were educated outside of the UK scored 0.76, whilst those who were educated in the UK scored slightly higher, with 0.78. This latter group were also broken down according to whether or not they had studied the national curriculum, the results from which are fully discussed below.

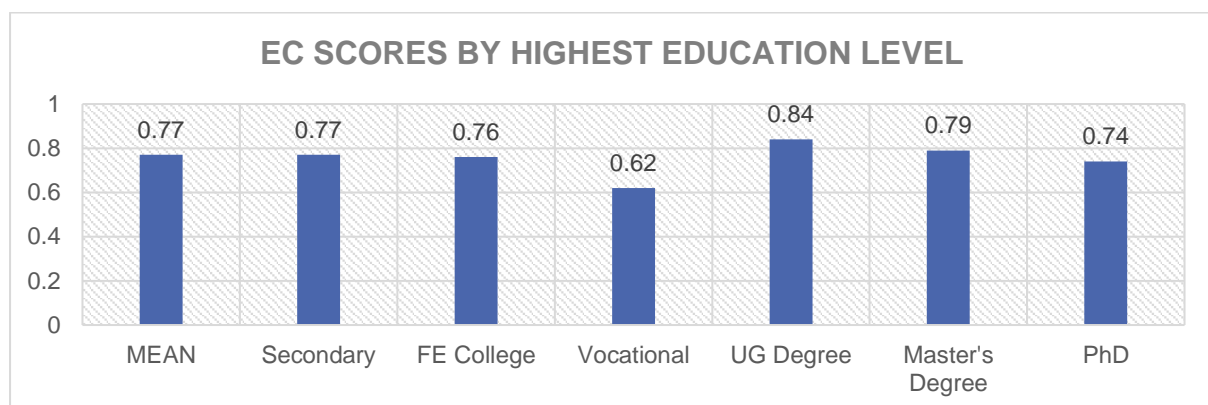


Figure 7.36: EC scores by education level

Finally, there was also no variation between groups who lived in urban or rural contexts, with both scoring the average of 0.77.

- **Sources of knowledge (media)**

There was, once again, broad homogeneity across those engaging with different types of media. When broken down by frequency of engagement (see fig. 37) there are no clear trends between consumption patterns and likelihood of participants prescribing more or less to elements of Eurocentric discourse, with the vast majority of all sub-divisions yielding results within 0.05 of the mean (0.77). Lower and higher scores, particularly for either ‘never’ or ‘daily’ responses are in all probability outliers, owing to typically small sample sizes at either end of the spectrum.

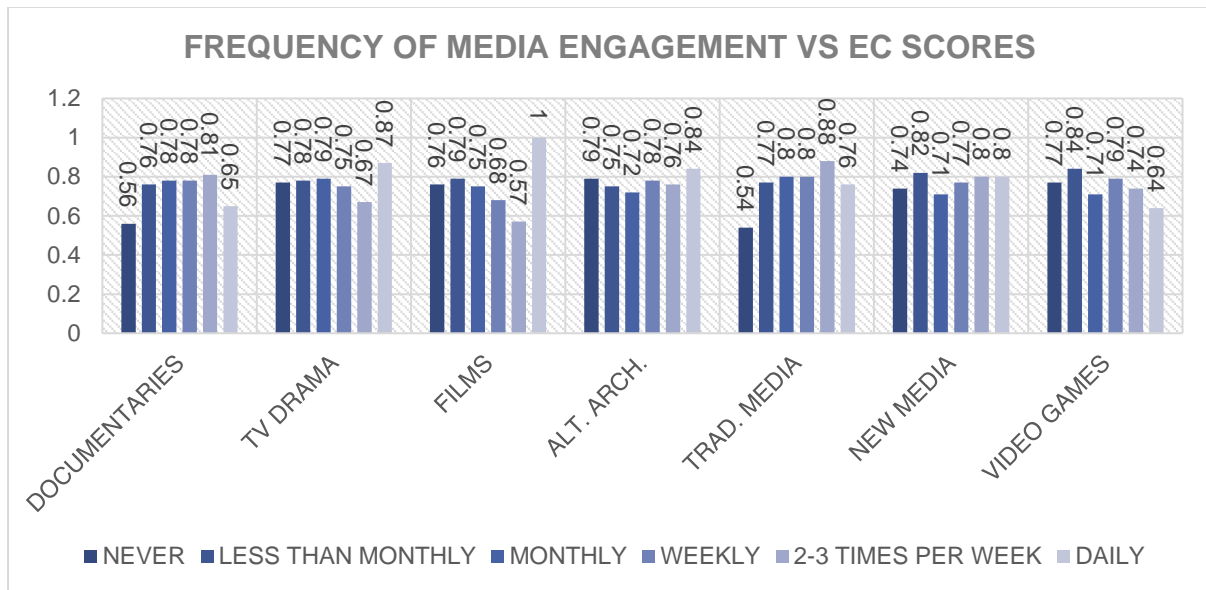


Figure 7.37: EC scores compared with frequency of media consumption

The same can broadly be said for those perceiving these media sources to be more or less accurate (fig. 7.38). Once again, all responses outside of the 0.05 range of the mean come from extremely small sample sizes, and as such cannot be said to conclusively demonstrate meaningful variance.

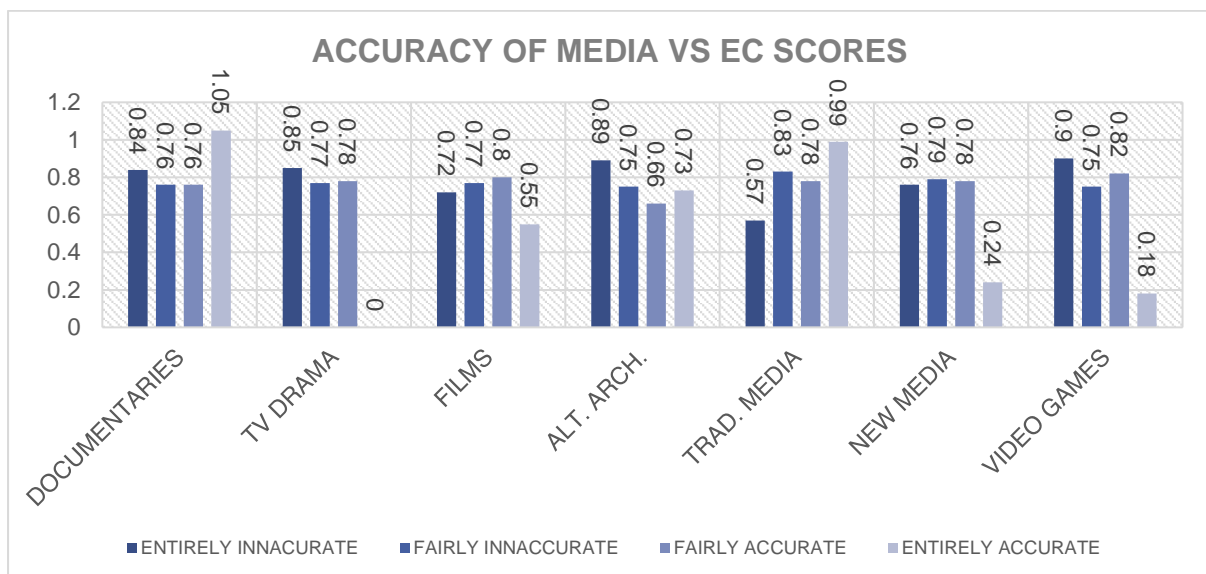


Figure 7.38: EC scores compared with perceived accuracy of media

- **Sources of knowledge (all)**

When comparing the results for the broader sources of knowledge participants reported in engaging with, scores were consistently higher amongst those who engaged with any particular form of media, compared with those who did not (see fig. 7.39). Furthermore, in several cases (those visiting museums, reading newspapers, and engaging with social media and online news sources), scores were more than 0.05 higher. These individuals are therefore less likely to prescribe to Eurocentric discourses than their peers who do not engage with these sources.

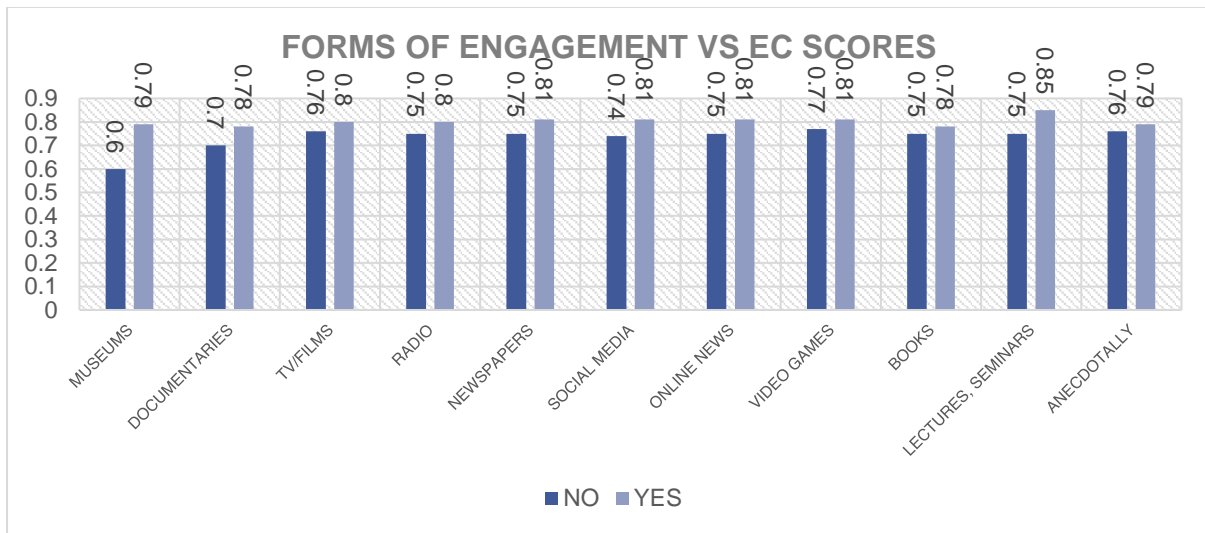


Figure 7.39: forms of engagement vs EC scores

These results are further reflected when considering the number of sources of knowledge of the past that individuals engage with. As is shown in fig. 7.40, there is a clear, if slight, upwards trend in likelihood to oppose Eurocentric discourses, the more different sources of information individuals engage with, with a significant jump in 0.05 between those who engage with five and six different sources of information. A t-test between the scores of those who engage with five sources or less (with a mean score of 0.72), and six sources or more (with a mean score of 0.85) returned a p-value of 0.004, indicating statistical significance between these groups. It can thus be posited that greater variability in individuals' consumption habits of information on the past is likely to result in lower subscription to Eurocentric discourses.

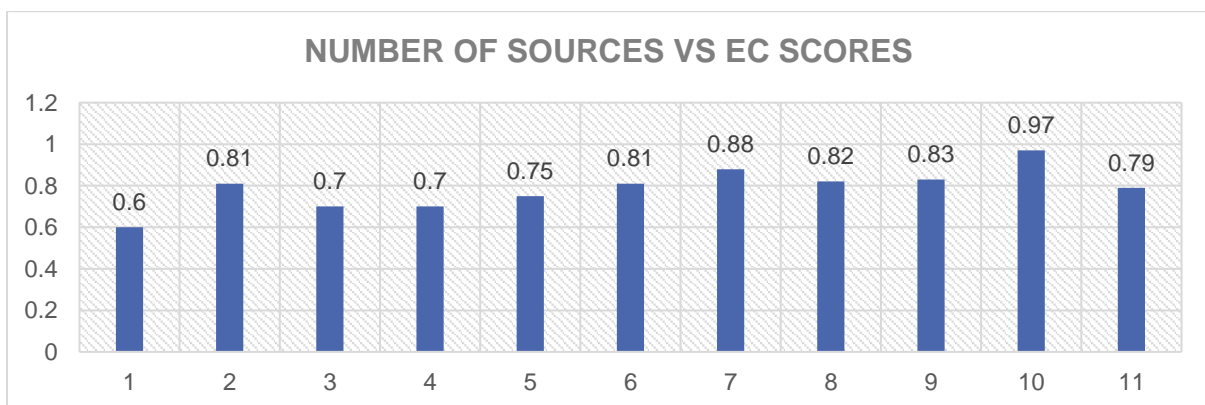


Figure 7.40: number of sources vs EC scores

- **Knowledge of historical societies**

Perhaps surprisingly, there was also very little variation amongst those self-reporting higher or lower knowledge on various historical societies. The only group whose average scores varied from the mean were those whose reports returned significantly low average figures. However, as this group are very small in number this variation cannot be said to be significant. Full results across the whole sample population are also shown in fig. 7.41, demonstrating no overall trend.

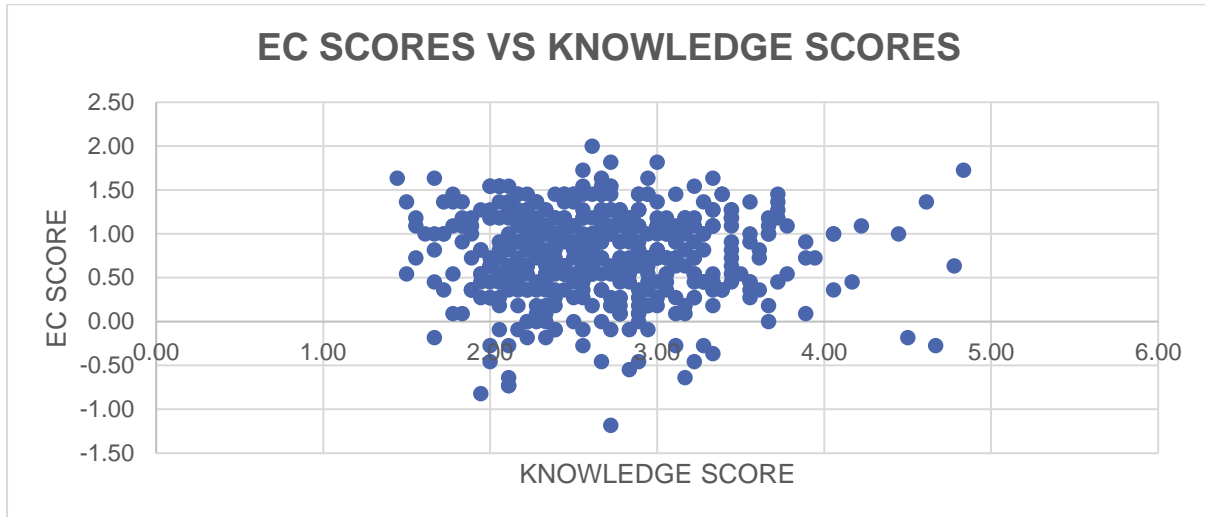


Figure 7.41: EC scores vs knowledge scores

Score Comparison

In order to further test for any specific factors indicating a likelihood of participants to have sympathy for elements of Eurocentric discourse, a comparison was run between those with the 50 lowest, and 50 highest scores (ranging between -1.18 and 0.09, and 1.36 and 2, respectively). A t-test was run if at any point these groups showed significant variation.

Among the only notable differences between these sub-populations is the fact that group 1 (lowest scoring) were more likely to watch ‘alternative archaeology’ programmes frequently, and to trust them to deliver more accurate knowledge. T-tests for these factors, however, returned p-values of 0.10 and 0.09, which does not indicate statistical significance. However, given the issues with alternative archaeology programming discussed in the last chapter, and given the paucity of other differential factors between these groups, the potential role of ‘alternative archaeologies’ in disseminating Eurocentric sentiments should not be dismissed outright.

Group 2 (highest scoring) were also more likely to engage with ‘traditional’ media sources of information, including newspapers (including online versions of print newspapers) and television news. A t-test on scores according to these factors returned a p-value of 0.02, indicating statistical significance. When considered in conjunction with the frequency with which group 1 engage with ‘alternative archaeologies’, and the extent to which they trust this content to be accurate, it is possible that one factor may be that broadly Eurocentric, diffusionist content is being consumed with no counterpoint from more ‘objective’, up-to-date sources. Whilst this

cannot be considered definitive, nor a decisive mono-factor, the combination of the above variation is not insignificant.

There was also variation between groups' consumption habits more broadly, with group 1 on the whole engaging with less different sources of knowledge than group two (modally, 4 and 6, respectively). A t-test on this variation returned a p-value of 0.1. Whilst, again, this does not indicate definitive statistical significance, when considered along with the variations discussed above, and the fact that variety of sources was already scored for statistical significance, it is possible that both variety and quality of sources of knowledge is a significant factor in the development of Eurocentric historical worldviews.

Sub-population of note: National Curriculum Students

Given the widely discussed deficits with the national curriculum, an analysis was run between the different generations of curriculum students within the sample population. Initially, this required me to isolate those who had not studied in the UK. The remaining participants were then broken down into four groups: Group 1 was comprised of individuals in the 35-44 age bracket (the oldest half of whom will have been halfway through their studies when the national curriculum was introduced) or older (who will have finished their studies by the time the national curriculum was introduced), along with those younger than 35 who had attended an independent school (and were thus less likely to have studied the national curriculum). It was initially hoped that the 35-44 age bracket could be analysed independently. However, since this sub-population numbered only 63 participants, along with the fact that the curriculum underwent a phased introduction through until the mid-1990s, it was decided to fold this group into Group 1, rather than Group 2. Group 2 was comprised of those who had attended a state-run or regulated school and were between the ages of 18 and 34 (and had thus studied the national curriculum for their entire academic career).

Comparing the Eurocentrism scores of the two groups reveals a slight variation, with Group 1 scoring 0.79, and Group 2 0.74. A t-test between scores returned a p-value of 0.17, indicating that this variation is not of statistical significance. However, there was also further variation throughout individual questions. As is shown in table 7.4, Group 2 scored lower on seven out of the eleven statements. T-tests were run on the variation between results from each statement, with statements 1, 10, and concerningly, 11 returning p-values indicative of statistical significance (0.04, 0.00, and 0.04, respectively). Interestingly, these three statements broadly correspond to explicit notions of European supremacism, in the ideas that: 'we' have always been the most developed; that it is fair to rank 'them' according to their similarity to 'us'; and that intelligence, ability, and drive are distributed along ethnic lines. It is thus concerning to see these narratives prescribed to more by younger groups, who had studied the national curriculum in school. It is also notable that *current* Year 9 pupils have EC scores which actually *favour* Eurocentric discourses, as discussed in Chapter Five.

Tests were also run against the media consumption patterns of these three groups, in order to ascertain whether other factors had served to influence participants' historical worldviews. As is

shown in table 7.4, these consumption patterns are remarkably flat across all three groups, with most variation being accounted for according to the age brackets of individuals comprising each group. The same can broadly be said for participants' perceptions of the accuracy of these media sources, averages of which are fairly flat across all three groups, with no significant deviation from the mean score for the whole sample population (see table 7.4).

SCORES	GROUP 1	GROUP 2	P VALUE
TOTAL	0.79	0.74	0.17
KNOWLEDGE	2.78	2.32	0.00
Q1	1.33	1.12	0.04
Q2	0.15	0.27	0.22
Q3	0.49	0.41	0.28
Q4	-0.08	-0.25	0.13
Q5	-0.18	-0.02	0.12
Q6	1.53	1.65	0.08
Q7	0.82	0.81	0.47
Q8	0.33	0.29	0.37
Q9	1.47	1.58	0.09
Q10	1.22	0.85	0.00
Q11	1.63	1.44	0.04
MEDIA			
DOCUMENTARIES	3.28	3.21	
TV	2.50	2.44	
FILMS	2.09	2.15	
ALT ARCH	1.66	1.74	
TRAD MEDIA	3.65	3.25	
NEW MEDIA	3.49	3.89	
VIDEO GAMES	1.54	2.22	

Table 7.4: comparison between curriculum groups

Questionnaire Data: Conclusions, and Questions for Interview Data

Participants' questionnaire data has been as enlightening as it has been mystifying. On the one hand, data around participants' consumption of historical media, their memories of studying history in school, alongside their self-reported knowledge on historical societies, has allowed for a reasonably detailed, largely generalisable picture of Briton's relationship with the past to be drawn up. Similarly, whilst far from an optimistic picture, results from the final section serve as a useful appraisal of the extent of historiographical Eurocentric sentiment throughout British society. The spike of Eurocentric sentiment amongst former students of the current national curriculum serves as a damning indictment, and cautionary tale against the dangers of increasingly Anglocentric school syllabi. However, that none of the above factors are manifested disproportionately amongst those with the most Eurocentric conceptions of the historical narrative (with a couple of potential exceptions) is both astounding, and frustrating. With no obvious overriding theme affecting participants' scores in this regard, it is necessary to eek out perhaps more tentative conclusions from the nonetheless far richer interview data gathered from a smaller sample of the questionnaire population. Key questions to be answered concern the

development of participants' historical interest, and the nature of their engagement with historical knowledge, in order to assess the potential role of different sources of knowledge in this area in shaping historical worldviews.

Interview Data and Analysis

There are, accordingly, several core themes which emerged from the data as a result of inductive coding: (i) how their interest in the past is driven; (ii) their continued engagement with the past (iii) their experiences learning history in school; along with perspectives on (iv) the role of the past in the present; (v) issues of memorialisation; and (vi) contested histories (see Appendix IX for the interview transcripts)

An important caveat to this data is the extent of participants' engagement with and interest in the past. Whilst this has already been highlighted in the questionnaire data, during the course of interviewing participants, it became increasingly clear that this sample population had extremely high levels of interest, engagement, and knowledge of the past often with hobbies (mudlarking, detecting, historical re-enactment), and livelihoods (population featured a tour guide for Historic England, for example) structured around participants' interest in the past.

Interest in the Past

The majority of interview participants noted that their interest in the past was sparked early on in their lives. Many spoke of early days out to local cultural institutions with parents as a key driver of historical interest, for example: "I am a person who has been brought up going to museums. My parents... were interested in the world around them, and so they were interested in history" (Participant #187). These sentiments are echoed by Participant #208, who noted that "the history channel was always on the TV and... [we] would spend a lot of time at the various museums around Derby", whilst Participant #239 noted that the wealth of historical books her parents kept served to pique her initial curiosity.

Aside from this more passive mode of historical exposure, participants also discussed the role of parents and early influencers as role models for pursuing historical interest. As one highlighted, "It was something my dad was quite into. And so, you know, trying to impress your parents, you always want to follow their interests" (Participant #208). Another discussed more deeply-entrenched family interests, and her role as a parent in fostering this interest: "My mum did her degree in history. My eldest [child] wants to be either a palaeontologist, Egyptologist, or something to do with history... My grandparents were antique dealers, you know, so history was always an heritage, was always part of our thing... I loved it!" (Participant #212).

Historical themes introduced to participants at a formative age appear to have remained important into adulthood. When asked how her significant interest in the Tudor period came about, Participant #312 commented "my mum began taking me to [Tudor] sites where I live... and I got really interested in it!". Another participant, who is now a hobbyist historical reenactor, noted that amongst his collection of equipment was a Roman cavalry sword passed down from his grandfather, who evidently also held a keen interest in the materiality of the past (Participant #340).

Whilst most of the historical contexts noted as interests of participants are firmly rooted in the European tradition, those from more diverse family backgrounds also spoke of discussions with older family members as a key conduit for less widely discussed themes. Participant #209, for example, whilst being White himself, noted that “My Dad’s family... we’re very diverse, so some of them married people from Jamaica. The other islands, West Africa, all over”, before discussing his interest in elements of Caribbean history. Participant #309, who is a parent of mixed ethnicity, added that they have “lots of books about accomplishments by Muslims, accomplishments by Arabs, accomplishments by Black people, accomplishments by other races” for their children to access.

Other participants spoke of the general effect of their childhood surroundings when asked about the development of their historical interests. Participant #314, who moved around during his childhood, noted that “I lived in Iran for a year, and we lived on a compound... right next to a ziggurat, which is quite a strange experience when you’re a little kid who’s fascinated by history”. Most discussion on this theme, however, concerned elements of British history. Participants from the North of England in particular (including #157, #202, #222) emphasised elements of the region’s industrial and feminist significance as drivers of early interest.

Local history was also a leading theme when it came to participants’ continued interest in the past. One participant, who grew up in Wales, spoke of the role that moving away from home played in piquing both his interests in his adoptive home, and conversely in that of his hometown: “So moved away and surrounded by the fabulous history in Winchester. You know it’s fabulous around there... but then... you know, looking towards home, I want to know more about my local area from a broader perspective” (Participant #70). Another added “we used to go on holidays with my parents, and it would be somewhere around [the Central Belt of Scotland]... the Antonine Wall wasn’t something that I was really aware of until I moved to the Falkirk area and so probably I’m a bit more interested in it because I live in the local area” (Participant #187).

Those who did not develop a historical interest until later in life spoke of a range of influences - #213 and #222 both note specific media sources, whilst #195 and #335 highlight different elements of their professional lives, and #348 discusses volunteering for the National Trust during his retirement. However, a common theme amongst participants discussing their later historical interests concerns the use of at-home DNA testing and other, deeply personal connections to historical narratives. #195 also added that his Ancestry test revealed that “we were linked to the Scandinavian regions. So that kind of led me off on a whole tangent... maybe my ancestors were Vikings or something. And so from a personal perspective, that’s sort of lead me on a path to looking into to what my personal ancestry or history would have been”. #70 added of their ancestry test: “one side of my family was 100% Welsh, then the other half was like Scottish and Norwegian and I know it’s not 100% accurate. But it’s interesting to see the links”. Whilst any source that serves to engage people in historical narratives cannot be said to be ‘Bad’; the investment bought about through DNA analysis could serve to belie a degree of biological essentialism amongst participants, discussed fully below.

Engagement with the Past

As conversations moved on to the ways in which participants tend to engage with the past now, a significant theme involved experiential modes of ‘informal’ engagement, such as museum or heritage site visits. The former was especially prevalent. However, relatively few participants discussed visiting large-scale national museums, instead preferring smaller local sites and National Heritage properties: “In Reading, there’s quite a lot of... National Trust [sites] and hillforts” (#271); “Wherever I’ve lived, I’ve been interacting with the environment and visiting places. Seeing what I can find” (#222). Few participants noted these sites as somewhere where they are necessarily exposed to new historical themes and ideas; indeed, several noted that they visited museums expressly to further explore pre-existing historical interests: “[you] go to a historical site... if it’s relevant to I’ve studied or to my personal interest then I might go” (#312).

Much the same can be said of the historical media that participants engage with. Whilst a great number of participants did discuss watching documentary programmes, few discussed having their interests *expanded* through this medium, rather, many noted that they tended to engage mostly with their existing historical interests. Both #216 and #124, for example, are chiefly interested in the procedural elements of archaeological research, and highlighted this as the key theme of documentaries that they watch. #79, who has a keen interest in Classical history, spoke at length on TV series and games that he enjoyed whose chief foci were the Roman Empire. #314 also discussed the various ways in which he engages with historical media, focussed almost exclusively around his chief interests of prehistoric Britain and the Graeco-Roman world. #239, a hobbyist detectorist and fan of London history, commented whilst leafing through her bookshelf during the interview: “So I’ve got loads of local history books... there’s a book on the River Thames... I read *Treasure Hunting* magazine, which is specifically about metal detecting”. Once again, the key emphasis amongst participants seems to be enhancing their pre-existing interests, informed through early exposure or current surroundings.

Many participants were asked a direct question concerning their engagement with non-Western histories, since these were so poorly reflected in questionnaire responses. A small number noted that internet technologies had made researching diverse topics easier: “the Internet is... a Pandora’s box ... You can pursue an idea or find out more information very easily, and very quickly” (#36). These sentiments are shared by #13, #284, and #339, and #78, who noted: “I’ve just read *Half of a Yellow Sun* about the Nigerian Civil War. It just completely helped me understand a whole bit of the world ...in a way that I hadn’t been exposed to before”.

However, more noted that they had difficulty accessing information on more diverse historical traditions. #309 said of non-fiction books: “It’s not always easy to find something. And you’ve got no idea what you’re getting”. Similarly, whilst #312, as a student had no trouble accessing historical information, she remarked that “thinking that people like my Mum, she’s only got access to like a basic library, and she wouldn’t really know where to start!”. #79 noted that “I know that there’s stuff out there, I’d like to learn about more about Indian history... but I just don’t know where to start”. Others did actively seek out alternative or underrepresented histories, but had trouble accessing

resources. #309, for example, remarked with frustration that “I can’t really find them... [the publishing industry] want white history, of white, straight people who are only one gender and are not disabled in any way”.

History in School

A point of broad consensus amongst participants concerned the ideal function of a history curriculum. As per Participant #13: “fact-based learning is both not engaging... and it’s also not giving people the skills they need for the future. What they should be teaching is... interpretation”. #339 agrees, adding that “Teaching people how to think like historians before you teach them history is quite important”. Older participants who had studied the ‘Great Tradition’ programme of rote learning advanced similar critiques: it’s dull... it’s dull and no one remembers it” (#13). #213 added that “rather than just being about learning the names and dates of battles, [history] should be more about why those battles were fought”. Others spoke of stopping their historical education early as a result of this programme: “I went to school back in the dark ages of Kings and Queens and battles... I think I turned off history in many respects because it didn’t actually look at the experience of people from my background” (#350); “I gave it up as one of my options. I didn’t do it because it was all names and dates and things that at that time, I thought not important”. There were a small number who endorsed the learning of facts, in part – Participant #48 spoke of the need to educate people to a “basic level” of historical understanding, whilst #156 notes that the World Wars were important to know about since they were the “dominant events of the recent past”. However, no participant argued in favour of fact-centric learning over historical skills, pitting much of the sample population against the logic of the current history curriculum.

There is a similar consensus on discussions around the *content* of history curricula. A number of participants highlighted what they perceived to be an inherently Anglocentric slant to their curriculum content: “even [at] a primary school level, you’d learn about the history of England and Britain. But... that the British can do no wrong” (#209); “in the curriculum... we didn’t really focus on any other countries and their histories or, I didn’t really know a lot about the British Empire even, the atrocities that came with [it]” (#195); “I only studied history at A-Level, but we didn’t touch on colonialism once. It was completely absent from the curriculum” (#214). Similar points were raised by parents, who discussed feeling the need to supplement their children’s historical education owing to the ethnocentrism of the curriculum, for example: “I have pointed out that in school they’re more likely to hear about what white people have done, specifically what white English people have done” (#309). Another remembered, during lockdown home-schooling, being asked to deliver content concerning Christopher Columbus, and agreeing with fellow parents to enhance the discussion beyond the scope of school specifications: “we basically thought, kids they can learn about colonialism, isn’t it? They definitely should. They definitely should learn at, like, a really young age. Both the girls know about it. And like, you know. You teach them about so many other things, but it’s such an important part that they need to understand in their histories”. A final parent noted, on visiting secondary school options for her child “[we] went to the history department. ‘OK, so what are you looking at there?’... ‘what do you do around the British Empire and colonialism?’ ‘Ohh, we

look at the British Empire and we look at *both sides* (emphasis orig.). We look at the good of it' and I was like, this is 2022 and we're still hitting our heads against the same brick wall!"

However, there were some who felt their school curriculum was adequately, or even excessively, diverse, although these were in a significant minority. Interestingly, one of the most vocal participants (#231) on this theme was himself still *in school*, being in the final year of his A-Level studies when the interviews took place, who noted his classmates becoming "bored" of studying subjects like the slave trade and Civil Rights Movement as "we have covered it for quite some time". Another participant, upon being asked if she felt as though any topics were over-represented in her school syllabus, responded: "I wouldn't say it was way overly taught because it's also really important to learn... but it is the history of the slavery trade and all that side of history... I just remember that being like huge, huge thing". It is however notable that these are the key themes that are drawn out by *both* participants, issues which actually resonate closely with educationalists' perspectives on the saturation of issues of slavery and servitude when discussing non-White populations in the history curriculum.

Participants were again in broad agreement as to the reasons for pedagogical deficits in their school curricula. There is a general feeling that, in the words of Participant #202, the curriculum is focussed on "whatever makes England look good", echoed by #156, who remembered that "in primary school we learned about people like Drake and Trafalgar and Nelson, things like that, and that it was all about Britain's victories". #78 placed blame with "particular governments and their idea of Britishness and British values", whilst #346 was more explicit: "obviously you had someone like Kemi Badenoch raising these issues. You've got issues to do with education. You had Gove in 2012 when he reformed GCSE history and making it far more, you know, British-centric". Participants were also broadly at pains to absolve schools or teachers of blame for the deficits in the curriculum; as per #335: "I'm not sure from schools perspective. I don't think it was a deliberate choice. I don't think they sat there thinking about it was just how we've been taught so it's very ethnocentric. And I think all histories work that way, to be honest and it's kind of... bullshit". #13 added that "I think generally speaking, the schools do pretty well with the resources they have", whilst #355 added "in the limited time that teachers get in the curriculum where they've got a very rigid thing of you must cover this, this, this and this. It doesn't really help".

Discussion here is also aided greatly by the inclusion of perspectives from those directly involved in education. One current teacher (Participant #191) spoke with frustration on current educational policy:

This whole kind of new government line of not teaching with bias, like I just feel you can't teach history without bias and to have to sort of sanitise history in a way to present... administrations in a certain light, just I find very, very difficult. I mean, it's easy at primary school, but I know it's something that my husband, [who] teaches A-Level history, really struggles with because, there is blame and there are, you know, reasons why things have happened and to have to sort of sanitise that to... to please the current administration, it's not a very nice thing to have to do. And so I think if they were teaching the British

Empire, it would have to be in a very honest way and I don't think that they would be willing to do that.

Another primary school teacher (#208) added, on teaching historical skills: “I don't think we teach that enough. The idea of being able to evaluate sources and think about the biases within them”, casting further indictment on current pedagogical priorities. Participant #212, who works to train primary school teachers, also railed at the National Curriculum, admitting that she sent her children to independent schools in order to circumnavigate the national curriculum which, in her words: “doesn't encourage free thinking, doesn't encourage depth of thinking”. One Teacher's Assistant (#223) did, however, add a note of optimism when comparing his education with the content he currently assists in delivering: “I think things have improved the particularly around the way that the British Empire has discussed... I have been the teaching assistant in the room in with a class of 13-year-olds who were learning about the transatlantic slave trade... you know, like one year on from when they were all making paper mache castles”.

The Role of the Past in the Present

Perspectives on the role that the past plays in the present were highly varied, and participants also often gave overlapping definitions of this role. A significant number mooted the past as an interest, something inessential that nonetheless adds, as #13 put it, “colour and texture” to the current world, with #222 adding that “the world would be extremely boring if we had no chance to reflect into the past” (#222). This conception casts the past as ultimately neutral, devoid of the politicality with which others approach historical issues. This is not to say, however, that respondents here view the past as necessarily passive. Indeed, when asked to define the concept of ‘heritage’, many of these participants invoked active and participatory facets to the past in the present, discussing village fetes (#216), pancake races (#342); historical re-enactments (#340 and #342), stonemasonry (#384), alongside museum and stately home visits. This is also reflected when participants were asked to differentiate ‘history’ from ‘heritage’, with responses often positing heritage as the tangible, experiential elements of history: “I was watching Bargain Hunt yesterday with my mother-in-law. And that's a piece of history. But if you tell me about who made it and where they came from and what their connections were in that community and the journey of the pot, then I would maybe see the more heritage side” (#78).

There are commonalities, and some differences, between this perspective, and those who conceive of the past as communal, or unifying. For the latter group, the past is still seen as essentially ‘objective’, often apolitical, but its active role is geared more towards drawing individuals and communities together, rather than satiating individual interest. #222, when asked whether she felt that heritage was more individual or communal, added to her earlier comment that “I think [heritage] belongs to the communities... because you can have the heritage of your own individual community or you can have heritage of different, you know, different types of peoples that you might be involved in or the heritage of different places in time”, and #312, differentiating ‘history’ from ‘heritage’, remarked that the latter “is history, but it's... got relevance to people's communities”. UK regionalism also played a part in these discussions: one Yorkshireman (#154) remarked that “there's

still a... sense of community around the uh the White Rose in Yorkshire". #339 also mentioned that "each region seems to have their own version of [the British identity] and different regions seem to celebrate their distinct roots and their differences without too much friction".

There were also discussions around the exclusivity of the past. There were a number of references to notions of 'our' heritage, 'our' history, 'our' past, which could imply a sense of ownership over these narratives, and the exclusion of Others from them. One participant, when asked to define 'heritage', responded: "the place you're in... the land you come from" (#340), whilst another (#216) responded: "something that's come sort of through your own culture", and #156 added "the history that we inherit. So... everything, really, that that pertains to the history of the United Kingdom". #70 also stated succinctly that "I think heritage is very individual to where you come from". When asked what the world would look like if we did not engage with our heritage, #156 also noted that "If we didn't talk about it, there's no frame of reference...to define who we are as a nation. Um, and I think that's the issue with that. I think that each nation has its own character". The potential issues with this conception of the past are expressed by another group of participants, who raise concerns over the extent to which heritage and history are treated with a sense of exclusivity. #202, for example, argued that exclusive insularity "within your [community]... the behaviours and stuff would probably perpetuate... it would become quite insular and it kind of separates those groups that have a shared heritage and those that don't".

These more critical perspectives on the role of the past are reflected in those perceiving past narratives to be inherently political and contested. Participant #13 noted that "[it's] a real... loss if you if you see heritage through right wing spectacles... so it's like heritage is used to score political points, but usually those political points rely on a misunderstanding of what our history is". Echoing these sentiments, #350 highlighted that "the most glaring contemporary issue is about Brexit... and the way in which people's historical rose-tinted spectacles shaped that decision", whilst #208 also added "I know it's not Britain, but the whole 'Make America Great Again' thing that Donald Trump ran on... it appeals to a lot of the nostalgia that people feel towards the past". Others, acknowledging the politicality of the past, also argued that it could serve as a means for resisting, rather than reifying, hegemonic power structures. #222, for example, noted that "if we couldn't learn about the history of women voting, then... we might take it for granted".

At the other end of the spectrum are responses from those who appear to hold absolutist perspectives on the role and patrimony of the past. Expanding on his above-mentioned discussion on the sense of community offered through engagement with the past, and asked whether 'heritage' should be seen as more personal or communal #154 noted that "I think probably much more individual, I think really, the technologies we've got these days – I'm talking about DNA – and stuff like that", later adding that "without that history, without that archaeology, without that, DNA, that sense of belonging and the sense of values, then we're lost, we're totally lost". The equation of heritage with biology and DNA was mentioned by a small number of other participants, including #342 ("I suspect, although I've never bothered with the DNA, I suspect that I'm probably more of Saxon origin than anything else"), and #339 ("[heritage is] your family line... your DNA"). Others spoke on the extent to which the past could or should serve to condition elements of individual or group

behaviour. #342, for example, also added defined heritage as “the bits of your past that make you what you are... the things that are specific to you as a people”. #344, who is White, mentioned of a recent holiday to West Africa, “it was interesting comparing the hairstyles of the women in the village with some of the Afro hairstyles that you see here. And I can’t help wondering whether how many women here who happily sport Afro hairstyles have got any idea at all of what the original is like *back home?* (emphasis mine)”, implying a belief that ones’ biology and ancestry is the ultimate arbitrator of social identities.

Memorialising the Past

Another core theme to emerge from the interviews was the ways in which certain historical themes are memorialised, and others are ignored or forgotten. Many of these discussions initially emerged from conversations around the prevalence of the Classical World in school syllabi and media presentation. When asked why these themes were so widely discussed, a number of participants sought to position the Graeco-Roman tradition as foundational to our own culture. For example, from #187: “Well, you know, in the Monty Python, ‘what have the Romans ever done for us?’ You know, we owe so much of our society, our processes, our, you know, our technology as it is now, all from what stemmed from what the Romans brought here”, #222: “in our modern world, our politics, our laws, they stem from those historical ancient civilizations”, or #339: “Rome because they are founding fathers, for the country, and living in London... they’re all over the place. Greece ‘cos so much culturally... and Rome too. But you know... so much comes through Rome that you know... so much of our British culture”. Others spoke of the degree of Classical ‘advancement’ versus their peers: “you had Egyptians and you had Romans and you had Greece and they were like, so advanced in so many ways” (#191); “I liked the Romans because... I just felt like it was the most civilized that we got before the modern era” (#79). #79 also added that he felt that the Classics were in fact *underemphasised* in his school syllabus. These are broadly reflective of the patrimonial perspectives given by questionnaire respondents discussed above, and thus further demonstrate the extent to which Classics-centric perspectives are entrenched in British historical worldviews. There were, however, some dissenters, with #216, #335, and #340 arguing that the Classics were of no real relevance to contemporary Britain. Others went further. #13 argued that these perspectives were tantamount to “disguised racism... it’s either it if you look at what we got in Britain from Greece and Rome, you actually miss out what we got from the Arab world and so on”, whilst #309 responded more succinctly: “White. They’re white. They are white”.

Many participants were also asked if they actively sought out or engaged with more diverse, non-European histories. Mirroring the questionnaire responses discussed above, African history was barely mentioned, with the exception of detailed responses from #350, and #314, who had lived on the continent. There was some passing discussion on the Americas, presented by #214, #309, and #342 as evidence of wrongdoing on the part of European empires. Discussion on the Near East was more plentiful, with #213 noting that “I mean, most people don’t understand the influence that the [Near East] for example, has had on European culture. And I know you have to go way back to find that, but once you find that and you think oh my gosh, didn’t realise that’s where this came from”. #216 added that “out in the Middle East... timelined against... and generally going round and how

the technology spread across and... That sort of thing, that's what I would like to have seen a lot more of general learning about us, our origins of... the origins of us, really". It is interesting that when pressed on the issue of diverse histories, a number of participants discussed historical themes which have arguably been subsumed into the Western development narrative, generally utilising unifying language, possibly to neutralise their perspectives; as per #216: "[how] we've come forwards as a as a race, that type of thing not as a race, as a, as a human being".

These conversations also led into wider discussions on the role of broad-brush historical narratives and worldviews, occasionally echoing the issues raised above. When asked to describe the 'main historical story', for example, #79 suggested: "Gradual civilization, Middle East, Egypt. Greece. Rome. Viking Period. Middle Ages, and then expansion. And that's what we're sort of taught, obviously there's then other parts of the world which have got a sort of, a concurrent history with that, but the only real overlap is when they clash, if that makes sense". Others were keen to point out the Eurocentric rooting of much historical 'general knowledge'. #213, for example, noted that "we all think that we're so damn clever and that we are society today at the moment invented everything that there is. But no. We need to, we need to realize that others that came before us have paved the way for our success or failure", whilst #309 added "But it's all just very European centric, which is... Considering we all evolved from one person in Africa, I'm not really sure why this is the case."

Recentring discussions onto the UK, participants were also asked to consider the construction and function of our 'national story' and identity. Some felt as though these were fundamentally inclusive: "apparently the favourite British dish now is Chicken Tikka Masala, which 100 years ago, wouldn't that be something that think of as being typically English, like fish and chips? Now of course, it's a Jewish tradition and so not originally British, so everything keeps changing" (#355); "I think it's important to understand that we are like a nation of mongrels, and I think people need to know about that stuff... so I think it's... important to understand that we're this weird bastard nation" (#284).

However, others were far more focussed on the extent to which our 'national story' is fundamentally political, and selective, or, as put by #202, "history written by the victors... I think that is very much the case in Britain". #364 noted that "quite often, the British define themselves against others, particularly Germans... And have little knowledge or understanding of their own countries past". The notion of the Second World War as totemic to the British identity was also echoed by #340, #335, and #214, whilst #257 notes the veneration of Churchill as a particular focus, and #314 highlights the (re)construction of the 'blitz spirit', particularly in recent years. #314 also discussed the presentation of Empire as an ultimately Good Thing: "you know it's this great world power. The past was *amazing* because we basically owned half the world and it was a wonderful, *wonderful* thing that we did and we saved other countries and, and yeah basically in a very positive light (emphasis orig.)", whilst #342 added that "so much of [the British historical narrative] is about taking over. Conquest and taking over". Common suggestions for narratives which are left *out* of Britain's 'national story' concern the *negative* facets to the colonial period and/or slave trade, with #348 remarking "Certainly some have been swept aside and you know the things which are inconvenient... which don't fit well with ones' understanding of past British history, I think".

Contested Histories

Perhaps unsurprisingly, these themes also featured heavily in discussions specifically on the role of Empire in contemporary historical discussions. There were a wide range of perspectives on the ‘negative’ facets to Britain’s imperial exploits, particularly as featured in national curricula. Participant #284, for example, argued that content generally centred around “whatever makes Britain look good and not like a horrible enslaving nation of colonialists”. Others highlighted the continuing issue of colonialist rhetoric structuring conversations on the past; as per #361: “Yes, it is difficult one, isn’t it? Trying to tell it as it was. That’s just we’re honest about it. In India, for example, we didn’t go out there to provide railways... that always comes up, doesn’t it? ‘But oh, we provided them with railways!’, no, the railways were there to transport the resources as quickly as possible out to supply our industries. I guess there has to be a balance, but I don’t know that there *is* a balance”. #340 also remarked that “there’s a lot of stuff up that’s still... hungover from the colonial era and it’s like... ‘we’re bringing civilisation to the savages’”. Others spoke specifically on atrocities on the Indian subcontinent, with #335 saying of the Bengal Famine: “You know, you think of famine as ... natural disasters and things like that. You don’t think about actually it being man-made and that one particularly... all the food was just diverted for the war and you think about million people died”, whilst #156 and #355 also highlight the Amritsar Massacre, and #198 noted “Another issue is what happened when the British left India and the Empire broke up. Everything is still screwed up because of the way they [were]”.

There is also, fortunately, wide condemnation on the practice and legacy of the British Slave Trade. #187, speaking of one of her area’s more celebrated figures, noted that “I don’t lie awake at night and think how lucky I am that Andrew Carnegie lived like 20 miles away from where I was born. But you know, I’m appreciative of the fact... Although I’m also slightly embarrassed by the fact because whilst he was the richest man in the world at one point, I’m aware of all the slave trade stuff and all of those kind of things”. #78 added that “We’re having a bit of a, wrestle with our own heritage and our history... I’m in Exeter, so not far from Bristol, which is built on slavery money”. #340 also remarked on the ways in which Britain’s role in *abolishing* the slave trade is readily deployed: “we’ll say ‘we abolished slavery!’ but i, you know what we don’t say is we did make a fat load of profit out of it while we were doing it!”. Condemnation of the Empire and Slave Trade were, however, not universal. Aside from the positions presented below on participant’s conceptions of the over-zealousness of contemporary decolonisation discussions, one participant also rallied against interpretations of the historical brutality and blame of the trade itself: “the thing that always strikes me, and it’s probably being a little bit simplistic is that yes, we went across to Africa and we got slaves. But if they wanted to fight against [us], one presumes they could have done, I suppose, more difficult once muskets and things came in, but it sounded almost as if the Africans were making money out of slavery as much as... well, probably not as much as because they were getting beads and things. But it does seem a bit simplistic to say it’s all the Western nations that did it” (#257).

Some respondents sought to counter the arguments discussed above by pointing to perceived ‘positives’ of the British Empire. #314, for example, noted that “I was trained as a lawyer... if you look at the legal systems in India, Pakistan, South Africa, wherever, they’re all influenced by British

legal system... I don't think it happens in the same way as the former Spanish Empire", later adding that "The transition to a local government that preserved the infrastructure that had been built, and I'm thinking particularly of the railways in India, that of the positive impact that they had, obviously there's many, many negative impacts that the British had in India, but there is some infrastructure that remained in that's positive that somehow didn't happen in the Spanish Empire". #156, whilst noting the terror of the Amritsar Massacre, also highlighted that those on the subcontinent "recognise the tremendous good that the British did".

However, more frequent comments against calls to decolonise or to acknowledge historical wrongdoing came in the form of those seeking to absolve *contemporary* Britain from atrocities of the past. #344 remarked: "on the other hand there must be an argument that if some people think it is still an issue of concern then it's better to discuss it and try to... is put it to bed an appropriate expression?". #355 added on the slave trade "Well, they can be tension, obviously you have people saying 'the British... brought my ancestors from West Africa over as slaves' and we now accept that was wrong, and in the culture of the time it wasn't considered wrong. I mean for example, in West Africa, the West African countries themselves practice slavery!". A common trend was to rally against the apparent demands for apology from those historically disadvantaged by the British Empire. #342 noted: "Yeah, it's frustrating isn't it, I mean... I wasn't there, I didn't do all of this and I can't apologise for my predecessors' behaviour.". #344 also posited that "the immigrant communities here, that's also in other countries which at one point would have been part of the British Empire, all raising the issue whilst sitting here in England, that we might have thought had already been consigned to history. So exactly what's going on there? I couldn't pretend to say". #124 also mentioned that "probably what I don't agree with is that, for the for the people who have been disadvantaged, it's big thing, but it it's hard to pin it on the individuals in the street, but pinning it back on the British government or something and asking for apologies is pretty much what they had to do in Australia when they had to apologise to the Aboriginals, and I'm always a bit unsure of why we apologise", echoing the sentiments of #314 ("I think is a really interesting one of they'll people apologising for the past and there are perfectly valid reasons for doing that... but... there is a point at which, do we all apologise for everything that we've ever done because it upsets someone? Or is it history because it happened a long time ago?"), and #339 ("but in another way, you've got to... accept it and move on to some degree... it happened. It's history").

Critiques were also raised of attempts to 'decolonise' institutions and curricula. When asked if any particular theme or issue was over-represented in current historical discourse, #257 replied: "Slavery at the moment, isn't it? Right across the country, I mean everything gets mentioned, it's all slavery. Ohh this hill that they wanted to rename... Jamaica St. They wanted to rename it because of slavery implications and you think... we can't cover it with a big dose of bleach, can we?". The issue of erasure was raised by other participants, including #198, who added: "there's so many problems with how everybody reacts to things these days, and how the last five years or so everybody tries to put their modern sensibility filter on history, and it's just like you can't do this. It's one of the biggest problems I'm having with things, because you can't erase people who owned slaves because they owned slaves. Because if you erase that, and you don't talk about it in two hundred years everybody

will have forgotten It's going to happen again!", and #213: "To the past, the past is the past. You can't change it like these guys that go around toppling statues into rivers and things like that. That doesn't change the facts, what that guy did, and doesn't change the fact it still happened, and it's still written in the history book. So people were still find out about what he did". Others who did not necessarily agree with these perspectives spoke of other sectors of society who did, including relatives (from #348 and #248), vocational peers (#340), and generational peers (#214 and #350).

Conclusions: Knowledge of the Past in Contemporary Britain

It is clear that 'the past' continues to play an important role in contemporary British discourses. However, it is equally clear that these discourses are, at times, rooted in a far earlier generation of scholarly discussion. The questionnaire data reveals a significant vein of historically Eurocentric sentiment amongst participants, with a consistent proportion subscribing to these views throughout both the 'icebreaker' and 'opinions on historical civilisation' sections of the questionnaire. This is likely, to a certain degree, a function of the broad lack of knowledge on non-European historical societies reported amongst participants, with pre-Colonial Africa in particular scoring extremely low. This lack of knowledge is, in turn, likely reflective of participants' methods of engagement with the past, along with deficits in the content with which they are presented, particularly with regards to school curricula. An analysis of participants' EC scores demonstrated that diversity in media consumption is an important factor in determining participants' sympathy with Eurocentric sentiments, along with participants' knowledge of past societies more broadly. An equally important factor, however, is whether participants studied the national curriculum in school, with the cohort who had having generally higher scores than those who had not. The relationship between this factor and participants' age bands is, however, less clear, and would require further investigation.

Interview participants were, by and large, united in their belief in the fundamentally contested nature of the historical record, and interpretations on the past. The politicality, and nationalistic undertones, of notions around 'national history' was acknowledged by a significant number of participants, as were the highly loaded narratives surrounding discussions on the British Empire. Non-White participants also spoke of feelings of exclusion from both the 'mainstream' historical narrative, and British heritage spaces more broadly. There were, however, not infrequent references to more primordialist interpretations of the past, particularly felt in discussions on DNA, the 'nature' of some non-Western societies, and in the arguably exclusive deployment of ancestry as a social determinant. Participants also frequently reified elements of Eurocentric teleology, particularly in discussions on the Classical Tradition, with regular invocations of notions of 'our' Classical Past, and the ways in which 'we' were historically superior. However, across the questionnaire and interview samples, participants were highly vocal in both their critiques of the historical content delivered in schools, and their desire to have a more diverse range of historical media to engage with. Whilst participants across both samples likely have a higher level of interest in the past than average, it is still encouraging to see a clear demand for more diverse histories, particularly given the aforementioned effect of more knowledge on participants' subscription to Eurocentric sentiments.

The limitations to this data largely derive from participants' high levels of interest and engagement in the past, as this is unlikely to be representative of the UK as a whole. More investigation is also needed into the precise nature of the relationship between secondary school curriculum and Eurocentric sentiments, particularly concerning comparisons between those studying the post-2013 iteration, and older generations. However, it is significant that these results, especially concerning levels of Eurocentric sentiment, and low levels of knowledge concerning histories of the Global South, have been drawn from a group with such high levels of interest and engagement.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION

The results outlined in the prior four chapters provide a wealth of information which can be drawn upon in response to the initial aims of this research. Initially, these findings also require consideration alongside the existing literature across the diverse fields of research, outlined in Chapter Two. Commonalities across study phases will then be discussed with particular reference to the model of Eurocentric discourse identified in Chapter One – narratives of totality, opposition, and teleology. Finally, the dynamics through which these narratives traverse different stages in the ‘life cycle’ of knowledge on the past, its production, dissemination, and consumption, will be considered with reference to Pierre Bourdieu’s theses on *doxa*, field, and capital, outlined towards the end of Chapter Two.

Findings in Context: Existing Literature

Whilst the findings presented above provide useful insights into the dynamics between academic knowledge and broader social discourses, greater context may be drawn through a comparison with existing literature around the diverse subjects under investigation. Of particular interest are: (i) the ways in which knowledge production can be affected by external dialogue; (ii) the role of history curricula in England in fostering problematic narratives; and (iii) the extent to which archaeological knowledge production in media is driven by profit incentives, rather than a desire to present the most up-to-date theses to consumers.

Influences on Academic Knowledge Creation

Plentiful discussion on the ways in which externalities at different levels influence the *instigation* of research is highly complementary to the findings outlined in Chapter Four. Whilst there were, often superficial or semantical disagreements between philosophers on science concerning Thomas Kuhn’s concept of the research paradigm (1962), most notable perspectives, including those of Imre Lakatos (1970), Larry Laudan (1977), and even of Karl Popper (albeit with far more positivistic underpinnings than his contemporaries) (1963) hold that collegiate discourse holds significant sway over the direction of individual researchers. This idea is amply reflected across my own findings. Academic interview participants consistently spoke of the influence of their colleagues, of both formal and informal knowledge exchange, and the role of either departmental research clusters, inter-departmental discourse, or transdisciplinary dialogue, in shaping and reforming their own individual research interests and approaches. The diversity of interests and approaches gleaned through quantitative review does, however, provide some challenge to the ideas of disciplinary unity implied through Kuhn, Lakatos, and Laudan’s theses, with the research landscape appearing more as a diverse *bricolage* than as a strictly singular entity with a shared theoretical and methodological vocabulary. The extent to which research instigation may be affected at the institutional level is harder to make conclusive statements on. Whilst there was discussion from participants on the principle of academic independence enshrined in the Haldane Principle (Haldane *et al.*, 1917), much of this concerned the extent to which academic research *should* reflect public interest, and

therefore should not be undertaken from the pure perspective of ‘knowledge for its own sake’ – reflecting ideas from Kitcher (2001) and Yoshida (2012) on the inherent ‘ivory towerism’ of the Haldane Principle. It could thus be argued that ideas around the Triple Helix Model (Leydesdorff and Etzkowitz, 1998), or Mode 2 knowledge production (Gibbons *et al.*, 1994) have been internalised amongst contemporary researchers. Similarly, whilst the implications of Bourdieu’s concept of the *doxa* (1977) will be discussed fully below, data outlined in Chapter Four clearly supports the notion of entrenched structural influences on the definition of research interests expressed by Bourdieu, alongside contemporaries such as Foucault (1966) with his concept of the *epistémè*.

Discussions around the factors influencing the production of research are similarly mirrored across research findings. Particularly enlightening are contributions concerning the interpersonal dynamics which can interfere with ‘objective’ review of the work or applications of peers. Jerrim (2019), van Arensbergen *et al.* (2014), and Derrick and Samuel (2018) all note the extent to which rivalries, and conscious and unconscious biases can affect panel review for grant applications. Similar concerns were noted by interview participants, particularly the extent to which the review process can be subverted by ‘big personalities’, either as panel participants or chairs. Similarly, authors including Squazzoni and Gandelli (2012) Hicks (2012), and van Arensbergen and van den Bessellar (2012) highlight the potential for group dynamics at the review stage to undermine innovation, in favour of disciplinary conservatism, maintain the methodological or theoretical norms of different research areas. This was also highlighted by interview participants, with a number noting explicitly that UKRI review panels for archaeology and heritage were overly conservative in scope, preventing or suppressing the development of new research angles, particularly those which drew on inter- or transdisciplinary methodologies. Similar concerns were raised in considering the institutional impacts on research production. Findings from Chubb and Reid’s (2018) qualitative research in this area were not, however, wholly supported by my own results – academic research participants were not confused over the utility of themed research funding, so much as aggrieved that their research areas were so rarely represented in these themed funding calls. The reasons for this, however, may be reflected in discussion from Gutiérrez-Rodríguez (2015), who argued that under these programmes, more explicitly ‘scientific’ knowledge is privileged over discussion rooted in humanities traditions. A lack of archaeological representation here could thus be seen in tandem with the broader ‘neoliberalisation’ of academic research, as also discussed by Belfiore (2015).

The proxying of public, structural concern through the ‘impact agenda’, and its effects on knowledge production, are also of concern. MacGregor (2013) and Gutiérrez-Rodríguez (2015) highlight that the push for ‘impactful’ research is translated as a push for research with tangible utility, again privileging STEM topics, and leaving archaeology and heritage practitioners in intense competition for the ‘scraps’ left over. This impression was brought up frequently by colleagues, who noted that every level of the funding infrastructure for their disciplines was imbued with a sense of acute competition, and a need to ‘sell’ research applications in a way that would maximise potential utility of outputs, leading to the sort of self-censorship also highlighted by Chubb and Reid (2018). Particularly illuminating are the perspectives of Derrick and Samuel (2018), who argued that,

amongst institutional actors reviewing and defining the ‘impact’ of particular studies and applications, there is a broad misunderstanding that the purpose of these criteria are to ‘sell’ the utility of British research to the public. These can accordingly come to reflect established notions of ‘public interest’, accordingly reflecting nationalist narratives, or other structural concerns. This could explain the overwhelmingly unrepresentative foci of studies submitted for impact assessment during both the 2014 and 2021 REF exercises. The archaeological research landscape in the UK, as discussed in Chapter Four, is highly diverse, both thematically and geographically. REF impact case studies were, however, far narrower in scope, and far more focussed on the British, European, and/or Classical traditions. Given the prominence of these ideas in public discourse, it is possible that these case studies were thus submitted in part with the intention to ‘sell’ archaeological and heritage research, emphasising themes and foci with a ‘proven’ track record of interest and engagement.

The Past in School Curricula

With respect to the shaping of that public interest in schools, there are significant parallels between existing discussions on English history curricula and the results reported in Chapter Five. It is interesting that, although the model for British curricula proposed by Lidher, McIntosh, and Alexander (2020) was specifically concerned with those at the turn of the Twentieth Century, two of its three criteria are reflected in *current* history textbooks. There was a general acceptance of the idea that Britain was, and had historically been, multicultural, rather than the monocultural whiteness identified by the authors. However, textbooks did generally emphasise the superiority of British historical actors both against other Europeans and the Other communities they would come to colonise, alongside ‘our’ historical innocence, discussions around violence and injustice either minimised, or culpability placed with other historical actors. The focus on history according to the action of the White aristocracy, as described by Cole (2004) of the 1991 curriculum, is also still largely in play. Although more effort is noted in displaying some alternative narratives and social histories, it is also notable that the extent to which these centre on non-White agents beyond slavery, civil rights, and/or colonisation contexts is minimal. Indeed, the problematic extent to which non-White histories in the present curriculum centre on these negative aspects exclusively is also a point of commonality between the present research and perspectives in educationalist literature (see, for example, Haydn and Harris (2010), Joseph-Salisbury (2017), and Whitburn and Yemoh (2020)). The general absence of suitable resources which would equip teachers and students to explore diverse histories reported by Catherine Priggs (2020) is wholly reflected in textbooks which were analysed, with the exception of that from Rees *et al.* (2016b). Textbook findings also mirror the problematic content reported by colleagues analysing school resources overseas, with primitivist representations of African communities also highlighted by Marmer *et al.* (2010) of German textbooks, and Zagumny and Richey (2013) in the USA. The same can be said for essentialist depictions of a Balkanised India pre-Colonisation, also noted by Pousa and López Facal (2013) in Portuguese textbooks, and the whiggish narratives espoused in Dutch textbooks, discussed by Weiner (2016).

Educationalist perspectives could also provide some insight into the reasoning behind these curriculum choices, along with the ultimate ‘master narratives’ that they espouse and foster in students. Harris and Burn (2016) propose that the current curriculum represents an effort in

“nationalist mythmaking” (520), and suggest that the rationale behind it lay in a supposed ‘loss’ of the Western cultural identity as a result of multiculturalism. This could go some way to explaining the explicitly Anglocentric scope of school resources in qualitative terms. Mansfield (2019) also argued that the logic underpinning current history curricula serves to binarise historical societies, with a skew towards those in the Western, often specifically English, tradition – ‘our’ civility *versus* ‘their’ barbarism, ‘our’ development to ‘their’ stagnation, *et cetera*. These findings are largely supported by the data discussed above, with the textbooks analysed for this research consistently echoing binary narratives of development, particularly when discussing African societies during and following on from colonisation. These narratives also echo perspectives from Vincent (2019), who proposed that content concerning the under-development of the Global South, either prior to, or after, the European imperial project ultimately serve to justify colonialism as a ‘great civilising mission’, genial European actors cast as the benefactors of stagnant or ‘savage’ societies in less auspicious climes. As highlighted in Chapter Five, discussions on underdevelopment are particularly problematic amongst the textbook sample analysed, one of which (Wilkes, 2015c: 141) included a section detailing the ‘cost of freedom’ for African societies, implying that a breakdown of social order and rise in violence and corruption was not the fault of European empires, rather a consequence of the end of imperialism, and the ‘steady hand’ of civilised overseers from the Northern continent.

Discussions on the *effects* of this content on school pupils also serve to provide greater context to the results discussed above. As I note in Chapter Five, student participants in the research questionnaires demonstrated both significantly low levels of knowledge in diverse early histories, and significantly *higher* levels of subscription to Eurocentric narratives, when compared to the adult population discussed in Chapter Seven. This is arguably reflective of conclusions drawn by Trille (2007), who argued that the whitewashed history curricula tended to lead to wide disengagement across the pupil population, whereas, as noted by Priggs (2020), and Moncrieffe and Harris (2020), topics rooted in a wider geographical and temporal sweep tended to energise and engage classes far more effectively. Findings of both stages of curriculum analysis also raise concerns over the wellbeing of non-White students in history classrooms, considering ethnographic data gathered by educationalist researchers. Doharty (2019), and Salisbury (2017), for example, reported the trauma felt by Black students over the exclusive framing of Black histories according to the Slave Trade. Similar results are found by Harris and Reynolds (2014). However, Harris and Reynolds also note that, on the whole, more White students are likely to take pride in the ‘achievements’ of the British empire, indicating potentially the means through which these narratives may become entrenched in public discourse through loaded school curricula. They, along with Harris and Burn (2016), also indicate that the majority of students, and teachers, nonetheless feel curricula are too Eurocentric, and are keen for greater diversity of content and discussion – mirroring the findings outlined in Chapter Seven, and further calling into question the efficacy of Europe-centric content in historical discussions throughout society.

Historical Media Presentations

Finally, discussions on presentations of the past in on-screen media outlined in Chapter Two also serve to provide greater context to the data presented in Chapter Six. Quantitative issues in the focus of content was a significant theme in the discussion above, with a vast majority of media presentations concerning elements of the Western Tradition, and comparatively far fewer from diverse global settings. These findings reflect similar statements from Taylor (2007) and Hobden (2013), with the latter arguing for a significant rise in Classics-centric programming throughout the millennium. These authors do not, however, provide empirical backing to these positions, and as such data presented above could serve to further strengthen their conclusions. Considered on a broader axis, these findings also resonate with discussions beyond the scope of the present research, including those on news media. Maldonado, for example (2016) highlighted the extent to which discourse on the archaeological past throughout both broadcast and print news media was dominated by Classical and Northern European themes, echoing the findings of this research on the focus of on-screen media. These conclusions speak further to the saturation of these themes within public discourse, given their apparent ubiquity throughout public discourse. Whilst this will be unpacked fully below, it is nonetheless significant that these same historical themes mirror those on which Phase (iii) participants claimed the greatest degree of knowledge on, and it is arguable that this degree of familiarity could, to an extent, be underpinning the more teleological facets to Eurocentric discourses subscribed to by a significant number of participants. It is again notable that a large number of participants also reported a desire to have access to more diversified content, or noted their difficulty in accessing such content.

Qualitative issues uncovered during the analysis of a select media sample also echo the perspectives of those discussing media, both on-screen and elsewhere. The results discussed in the latter half of Chapter Six reveal that a majority of dramatic productions draw on outdated, problematic tropes when depicting Other communities, whilst venerating the Western, European protagonists. These mirror discussions from Hall (2004), Van Dyke (2006), and Pyburn (2008), who report similar findings from 'archaeo-cinema' productions around the turn of the present millennium. Hall and Pyburn also add that this content is also often underpinned by a master narrative which pits 'Western' rationality against 'Other' superstition. This is particularly interesting given the extent to which this same narrative can be said to underpin many of the titles reviewed above, with secularism *versus* religion often serving as to underscore the difference between protagonist and antagonist. Methods used to demonstrate the 'authenticity' of knowledge presented in documentaries, outlined according to my sample above, are also highlighted by Piccini (2007) and Hobden (2013), whilst Clack and Brittain (2007) and Taylor (2007) also note the over-simplification of complex debates in order to produce more accessible, sensationalised content. Beyond on-screen media, Malley (2012a) also notes the extent to which archaeological discussion during the Iraq war was centred on the extent of Western patrimony over the Western Asian tradition *prior* to the emergence of Islam, with the religion serving to effectively book-end 'our' history in the region, a theme which was also reflected in reviewed content on the area. Gardner (2007) also highlighted the extent to which Roman characters in video games were typically made more 'European', establishing a degree of

patrimony over the tradition, once again strongly echoed throughout the content under discussion in Chapter Six. Finally, although ‘alternative archaeologies’ were not reviewed during this research, the extent of their popularity, and the degree to which they are considered ‘trustworthy’ by Phase (iii) participants is highly concerning, considering the problems identified with the genre, and its often highly Eurocentric, racist underpinnings, in discussions from Moshenska (2017a).

The reasons behind such a narrow focus on content, along with the sensationalisation of narratives and the extent to which they reify problematic discourses, has also been discussed by other scholars. Kulik (2006), for example, has argued that the expansion of broadcast media production since the 1990s has ultimately resulted in the simplification of content, and a narrowing of scope to well-established themes which are likely to appeal to a wide range of viewers. Whilst these conclusions were drawn in 2006, the data presented in Chapter Six arguably serves to demonstrate their continued validity. For one, with the exception of a programme released this year (2023) concerning pre-Colonial Africa, there has been very little in the way of ‘new’ themes featured in on-screen productions over the last 20 years or so, which has, if anything, seen the range of subjects available to consumers narrow, despite the steady increase in overall titles produced. Furthermore, as demonstrated through an analysis of media outputs and their levels of impact, the profit incentive may still underpin decisions to create new historical content. However, these results are complicated by the steady number of releases, regardless of popularity, of titles concerning ‘established’ historical themes, such as Ancient Rome, of the Medieval Period, with only ‘unfamiliar’ or ‘new’ themes, such as post-Colonial Africa, or the British Empire, being subject to a higher degree of impact before further releases are commissioned.

Comparing Data: Eurocentric Narratives in Scholarly and Public Discourse

The data collection instruments utilised throughout this research have been fundamentally concerned with identifying and situating elements of Eurocentric narrative throughout different stages of scholarly and public discourse. As outlined in Chapter One, these narratives can broadly be defined as: (i) totalistic; inasmuch as Eurocentric doctrine tends to assert the extent to which European ontologies and epistemologies are ‘correct’, thus enabling and justifying European representations of world systems as ‘right’; (ii) oppositional, since these representations typically serve to define the ‘correct’, Western ontologies in contrast to the ‘incorrect’ ontologies of groups in the Global South; and (iii) teleological, owing to the fact that these narratives are eternalised throughout the sweep of human history, with the West positioned as the architect of all development and innovation, evidenced through ‘our’ patrimony over ‘advanced’ cultural traditions, particularly those of Classical Antiquity. The extent to which these narratives are present throughout the cycle of knowledge in the UK is thus below assessed, according to this rubric.

Totality and the Historical Narrative

The extent to which contemporary archaeological research can be said to reflect totalistic narratives is, if not undetectable, ultimately negligible. Indeed, throughout the interview stage of Phase (i) research, a number of participants sought to highlight the necessity of decentring the authority of

academic researchers, particularly in diverse and global contexts. However, as I highlight in Chapter One, and return to below, the model of Eurocentrism drawn upon in this study is ultimately a reflection of the concepts underpinning earlier generations of archaeological and historical research, particularly around the turn of the Twentieth Century. Early colonial expansion enabled the extensive study on the societies of the Global South, including those of Africa (see Shepherd, 2002) and the Near East (see Bahrani, 1998) underpinned by a sense of post-Enlightenment positivism and epistemological superiority. ‘Our’ means of recording, studying, and representing the Other were positioned as thus ‘accurate’, ‘authoritative’, and ‘authentic’. Although not discernible in conversations with colleagues, as outlined in Chapter Four, it is possible that these dynamics do continue to underpin elements of the research landscapes. Of particular significance is the fact that during the period of 2020-2021, British archaeological publications on the Global South dropped significantly, even as publications on contexts outside of Europe, but still within the Western Anglophonic sphere (the USA, Oceania) remained at a broadly consistent rate with 2019. As I highlight above, with no possibility for international travel throughout 2020 (owing to the COVID-19 pandemic), this strongly suggests that British archaeologists continued collaborative work with colleagues in non-European Western countries, enabling publication, but were not collaborating with colleagues in Global South regions, thus preventing collaborative data gathering, and subsequent publication.

The totalistic narratives evident throughout the textbook sample centre on the way in which diverse histories are arranged into a singular, Eurocentric typological trajectory of development. This is evident in discussions on pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial histories. On the former, most of the authors who discuss indigenous communities in particular emphasise how they were ‘behind’ Europe on some imaginary scale (“stone age civilisation”, repeated references to the ‘nakedness’ of Aboriginal and Taino populations, *etc.*). These interpretations are strengthened through the lack of evidence to the contrary (with the exception of Rees *et al.*), despite their wide availability in both scholarly and popular discourse. This in turn enables authors to then reify outdated interpretations of colonialism as a ‘great civilising mission’, emphasised through references to the infrastructure, legal frameworks, educational systems, and economic developments ‘given’ by colonisers to the communities under their subjugation. Although authors do point out some drawbacks of colonialism, these generally focus on economic exploitation, and occasionally (limited) corporeal violence. Nothing is said on the *structural* impacts of the Imperial project, which saw local, indigenous systems of social organisation *and development* swept aside in favour of a narrow replication of the colonisers’ system. A failure to emphasise that ‘development’ does not simply mean a duplicate of whatever was going on in Europe serves to underscore the fallacy that colonised populations had simply stood stagnant for centuries as Europe, and Europe alone, underwent ‘development’. This damaging belief is further entrenched in discussions on post-Colonial states, particularly that from Wilkes (2015c: 139). This author appears determined to show the perils of decolonisation, particularly for the institutions of civil society set up by the colonisers, overrun by primitive militarism and Big Man political corruption. Together, these discussions risk entrenching a synaptic link between Europe and ‘development’ in students’ historical worldviews, which is possibly reflected in students’ responses to the questionnaire. This is particularly evident in the large

proportion of participants who subscribed to the belief that Europeans ultimately brought ‘civilisation’ to Africa, and the justifications for this position, typically emphasising a belief in the inherent ‘advancement’ of European societies.

These discourses are also present in media presentations of the past, as reviewed in Chapter Six. Particularly pertinent are the numbers of productions concerning the Western tradition, *versus* the Global South, along with the ways in which producers of documentary content seek to emphasise and assert the authenticity of the information presented, and the authority of presenters to depict it as such. On the former, the extent of documentaries produced on Western histories far eclipses those of the Global South, suggesting that Western audiences have little to gain from learning about diverse world histories, whilst narratives from Europe hold paramount importance and relevance to consumers of knowledge on the past. Similarly, throughout the documentary content reviewed qualitatively, a number of techniques were drawn upon to assure the audience of the authenticity of the knowledge that they are being presented with, often brushing over complex debates in doing so. These narratives are also frequently espoused during fictional presentations of the past. This is particularly acute in representations of historical secularism *versus* religiosity. In *Troy*, for example, the Mycenaeans are shown to be victorious, and the Trojans vanquished, in no small part due to the reliance of the latter on ‘superstition’, and the former on cold logic, when devising military strategy. The titular *Vikings* are also shown to be broadly secular, in contrast with the fundamentalist Christianity of their English adversaries. Similarly, the protagonists of *300* are depicted as fundamentally suspicious of religion, and show a deep commitment to the rule of law, whilst the protagonists in both European and Middle Eastern factions in *Kingdom of Heaven* are defined by their humanistic approach to warfare and diplomacy, in contrast to fanatical crusaders and Muslims. These are all, ultimately, facets of the contemporary ‘Western’ self-identified ideal, projected throughout the historical narrative as a means to define ‘right’ from ‘wrong’ in dramatic productions, and thus reflect the totalistic narrative at the heart of Eurocentric discourses.

There is evidence that these narratives are subscribed to by members of the British public, as evidenced in the results to the final section of the Phase (iii) questionnaires. A significant number of participants (over 25%) agreed with the statement: ‘There is a universal ‘benchmark’ against which to judge the morality and success of all historical societies’. The free answer responses to this statement included numerous allusions to ideas around the sanctity of the rule of law, and other elements of Western totalistic ontological universality, reflecting the ubiquity of these themes throughout media and school curricula. A smaller, if not wholly insignificant proportion of participants (around 15 %) agreed with the statement: ‘It is fair to rank societies according to their similarity and difference to our own’, whilst a smaller cohort still agreed with the idea that ‘historically, European societies have always been the most developed’. However, whilst participants’ knowledge levels are perhaps reflective of the overriding *structural* commitment to totalistic Eurocentrism, the frequent desire, expressed in questionnaire and interview responses, to have access to more diverse historical content to engage with, complicates this picture. Whilst participants may have been exposed to broadly Eurocentric themes throughout their consumption of historical content, and may even express agreement with some Eurocentric positions, here is

evidence that these beliefs may not be wholly subscribed to, or that subscription may be contingent on the continued saturation of these ideas on the field of discourse. The introduction of more diverse, and less totalistic, themes in content available to consumers may well serve to destabilise these beliefs.

Opposition, Superiority, and Alterity

There is, again, little to suggest that either academic research participants to this study, or the sample of academic publications appraised in Chapter Four, demonstrate much in the way of oppositional Eurocentrism. However, as in the case of totalistic discourses, these narratives are fundamentally rooted in the Western academic tradition. Discussion on the Global South from early, imperial archaeologists and anthropologists was imbued with ideas around the inferiority of the Others that they encountered, the extent to which their societies had failed to ‘develop’, stagnated (see, for example, Trigger, 1984). This was set against ideas around the superiority of the West, ‘our’ limitless capacity for development, and ‘our’ superior intellectual capacity, and moralistic infrastructure, as expressed in the works of early ‘grand narrative’ authors, such as John Lubbock (1868), Ernst Haeckel (1868), and L.H. Morgan (1870). For these authors, the Global South was barely worthy as a field of study, its only function to demonstrate and ‘prove’ the subjective superiority of the West. Whilst these narratives have, fortunately, been broadly excised from scholarly work in the present, it is possible that traces of the belief in the inherent ‘use’ in Western data, and thus the extent to which that from the Global South is ‘useless’, is reflected in the REF impact case studies discussed in Chapter Four. Whilst there are a broad range of contexts receiving impacts noted under both REF assessments, impact driven in the UK is almost entirely underpinned by data from British or European contexts, whilst nations in the Global South are often the sole recipients of impacts driven by data from their respective regions, or else have impact driven by data exported from the UK or Europe. This ultimately implies that regions in the Global South have little archaeological data to add to the world history narrative, whilst contexts from Europe and the UK are seen to have universal applicability. This, however, stands in contrast with the highly diverse research landscape in the UK, suggesting that this may not so much be an issue of researchers, so much as the expectation of what the auditors of research may want, as discussed above.

The use of oppositional language and historical interpretations in educational settings, and particularly textbooks, however, does serve to further denigrate Global South peoples, whilst simultaneously underscoring the civility and superiority of the Westerner. I have already noted above the general derogation of ‘natives’ at large across the textbook sample. However, authors also served to reify some more specific denigratory tropes in their discussion on Other histories and colonial encounters. Discussions on the crusades, for example, tended to emphasise ‘Muslim’ aggression as the central factor behind the conflicts, rather than a model of European warmongering, or even of mutual antagonism. This trope is then furthered in discussions on terrorism, although authors do thankfully handle this theme with more sensitivity. Discussions on Indian history are mired by the conception of the subcontinent as inherently balkanised and anarchic. This once again serves to legitimate colonialism, minimise its negative affects, and diametrically position Europe as stable, civilised, when in reality European and Indian histories are comparable. The final trope employed

across the textbook sample is that of submissive, servile Africans, demonstrated partially in discussions on the slave trade, but particularly with reference to African *resistance* to both Imperialism and slavery. This latter point is demonstrative of a wider discourse of opposition that runs across the themes of the textbook sample: the idea that Others are broadly without historical agency. Very few textbooks provided any sources written *by* and *on* Others, and colonised societies. The same may broadly be said for visual sources, which are in stark paucity, and those which are used often go to underscore the above-discussed oppositional tropes. The lack of engagement with sufficient sources from members of communities that are being represented is symptomatic of the current history curriculum, which has taken the emphasis off skills-learning in favour of content. However, presentation of content in this manner serves to both brush over historical complexity in favour of a singular narrative, and posits the author and reader in the present century as authoritative voices *of* historical narratives. Once again, this is arguably reflected in students' questionnaire responses, with a significant number of participants agreeing with the statement: 'before they were taken over by Europeans, groups in Africa developed civilisations much like those in Europe'. Similarly, students' responses to the 'quiz' section of the questionnaire revealed a heavy skew in sentiments towards the inherent 'superiority' of Western populations, and the inability of the Global South to manifest any historical achievements of note.

Oppositional representations throughout media content are also highly notable. For one, it is troubling that, on the one hand, representations of Global South populations, and Africans in particular, are so infrequent on the population level, again suggesting that the continent has produced nothing of note or interest to the Western viewer. More worrying, however, is both the consistency, and popularity, of content concerning 'negative' aspects of diverse, and in particular Black, histories, evidenced in both the popularity and comparative ubiquity of content concerning post-Colonial African social collapse and the Slave Trade, but also in the number of titles concerning social chaos and political despotism in the recent history of Western Asia. These ideas were also features, albeit covertly in documentary productions. Of particular concern is the extent to which Muslim historical actors were typically portrayed as the 'Bad Guys' opposite 'our' pseudo-protagonists (the Iranian people, 'world' heritage in the ruins of Palmyra). That said, a number of other documentary productions did provide critical assessments of historical narratives of alterity levelled against the Global South, and thus some means through which to combat the prevalence of these narratives in other elements of social discourse. Fictional on-screen productions, however, leaned into the narratives of opposition, superiority, and alterity with worrying consistency. Titles reviewed reified a number of highly problematic tropes, including the despotism of 'Orientals' in *300*, murderous cannibalism of Berbers in *Vikings*, decadence of Egyptians in *Rome*, and the civilisational decay and brutal religiosity of the Maya in *Apocolypto*. In all cases but the latter, these traits were set against the diametrically opposed, 'civilised' protagonist, themselves often mirroring the cadence and appearance of contemporary Westerners, further enshrining, and given their historical nature arguably eternalising, the idea of the fundamental timelessness of these dynamics.

Data gathered from Phase (iii) participants serves as a crude litmus test for the extent to which these ideas have permeated into the general historical worldviews of the British public. Responses in the

final section to the questionnaire provide mixed results. On the one hand, the vast majority of participants (94%) disagreed with the statement: ‘most African societies did not develop ‘civilisation’ prior to colonialism’. Thus, despite poor knowledge scores across African history in general the sample population does not, by and large, consider Africa to be a continent with no signs for cultural ‘development’. However, a significant minority of participants (10%) did ultimately disagree with the statement ‘No specific ‘race’ or ethnic group is inherently more intelligent, able, or industrious than any other’, with a further 10% ‘somewhat agreeing’ with the belief that fundamentally represents the basis for scientific and biological racism. Furthermore, a *majority* of participants disagreed with the statement: ‘there are no insurmountable cultural differences dividing Europe and the Middle East’, with the free answer section to this statement populated with a variety of anti-Islamic tropes, including ‘their’ proclivity to religious fundamentalism, political despotism, and misogyny, often again set against ‘our’ secularism, political franchise, and gender equality. Finally, a number of interview participants expressed views which could be seen as reflective of problematic, oppositional narratives, suggesting that the ubiquity of these themes throughout educational and entertainment media may be serving to propagate Eurocentric beliefs amongst members of the sample population.

Teleology and Patrimony

Phase (i) data does reflect a degree of continued teleological belief within the academy, particularly as a feature of public-facing ‘impact’ assessment. Early archaeology was, of course, inherently teleological. Scholars such as Legge (1894) were keen to emphasise the Classical ‘roots’ of Western civilisation, noting the similar ‘spirit’ of the cultural hegemon, and arguing for a clear line of succession from the empires of antiquity to those of the Victorian world. Gobineau (1855) also sought to fold these ideas into those of nascent race science, proposing the ‘Aryan’ roots of the Graeco-Roman tradition, which then spread to the eventual empires of North-Western Europe. In practical terms, teleological narratives are often identifiable by an over representative focus on Classical Antiquity and allusions to their apparent status as ‘our’ cultural forbears, along with a broader belief in the Western tradition serving as the ultimate ‘main character’ throughout the history of human development and endeavour. Neither discourse can be said to be represented in the wide research landscape of the UK in the present century, with a comparatively small proportion of publications on the Classical Tradition, when seen in conjunction with those on diverse world archaeologies, or those on the Northern European cultural tradition. The space given to these themes in the REF impact case studies is thus notable. This is particularly felt in the 2014 exercise, where Classical themes comprise the largest temporal focus of submitted case studies. Whilst these had dropped for the 2021 assessment, they were still represented in a far higher proportion than the comparative field of published research. As I note above, and below, this is likely a function of internalised censorship on the part of ‘the academy’, and a desire to ‘sell’ archaeological research by appealing to already well-trodden themes in public discourse. Nevertheless, it is surprising to see such a significant reflection of these themes anywhere concerning contemporary archaeological scholarship, given the broad problematisation of ideas of teleology in archaeological literature over the last thirty years or so.

Textbooks, often not focussed on the Classical Tradition, nevertheless did feature a wealth of allusions to ideas around the historical primacy of Western Groups. The ‘grand narrative’ of history espoused throughout the textbook sample speaks to an inherently, egotistically teleological worldview. The geopolitical present is positioned as a comparative utopia, with the West as the agents responsible for bringing this about. On the one hand, this narrative serves to detract from the structural and corporeal violence of colonialism, as an extension to the totalistic and oppositional discourses discussed above. By minimising the extent of Amerindian, African, and Other indigenous development, the West is positioned as responsible for conquering ‘nature’ in these regions, dragging ‘natives’ into modernity, for ‘civilising’ the Balkanised peoples of the Indian subcontinent, providing Africans with running water, or Aborigines with clothing. On the other hand, and perhaps more concerning, the textbooks analysed appear fixated with presenting the West in general, and Britain in particular, as the ‘good guys’ throughout history. The minimisation of colonial violence of course feeds into this discourse, but it is also felt acutely in discussions on slavery, and on post-colonial and diasporic histories. On the former, discussions around Britain’s role in ‘policing’ the slave trade following abolition, and indeed on the geniality of Britain’s White population during abolition, reads as a *mea culpa* for Britain’s role in the trade. This is also echoed in the lack of engagement with racism into the present century, and the positioning of ‘scientific’ racism and eugenics as a purely ‘fascist’ problem, and not something inherently rooted within the Western and British traditions. Accordingly, the grand narrative purported is that ‘fascists practiced racism, which was bad, and then we defeated the fascists, along with their ideologies’. This is a gross oversimplification of societal dynamics within Britain both in the present and the recent past, and only serves to underscore ‘our’ own self-conception as a positive force of historical change. Whilst there is little discussion on the Classical Tradition in secondary school curricula, students nonetheless appear convinced by both its primacy, as evidenced in ‘quiz’ responses, and the extent to which ‘we’ exercise patrimony over it, as demonstrated in responses to the statement: ‘The modern ‘West’ (countries in Europe and North America) inherited most of our culture from Ancient Greece and Rome’.

Ideas around teleology and cultural patrimony are also highly evident throughout media presentations of the past, discussed in Chapter Four. For one, the extremely high frequency of content concerning the Classical Tradition, compared with other titles in a similar temporal frame, is extremely notable. This is particularly striking, given the limited extent to which these themes are explored in contemporary scholarship. As I discuss above, and below, this is likely a consequence of the extent to which these themes represent a fundamental facet to ‘our’ own cultural origin story, and heritage *doxa*. The issues brought about through these representations are also amply felt in the media sample that was analysed quantitatively. Discussions on the Classical Tradition in documentary media was often imbued with a strong sense of patrimony, with many covert and oblique references to ‘what the Romans did for us’, our ‘origins’ in the Hellenic world, ‘our’ continued use of Athenian democracy, *et cetera*. On a broader aspect, discussions around ‘our’ contributions to world history are similarly loaded, with documentary hosts often keen to emphasise the extent to which human development, from the birth of aestheticism to the emergence of civilisations, is a consequence of ‘our’ [read: Western] action. Fictionalised content is similarly loaded, especially when considering titles focussed on the Classical Tradition. Here, [Romano-

Hellenic] protagonists are often identifiable by their Western appearance, English accents, and commitment to Western ideals, as noted above. ‘We’ are thus proxied on-screen by heroes, ‘they’ by tyrannical fanatics, with the most common *raison d’être* of these antagonists being the ending of protagonists’ liberty, and the imposition of despotic regimes upon them, an issue which also mirrors contemporary geopolitical discourse (World War II, the Cold War, the Iraq War, the Russo-Ukraine Conflict).

Phase (iii) participants appear to reflect notions of teleology more clearly than those of totality and opposition. This is partially reflected in respondents’ self-identified knowledge scores, where societies in the Egypto-Classical tradition scored by far the highest across the population, more so even than ‘our’ homegrown early historical societies, such as the Celts. However, teleological sentiment is most clearly evident in both the final questionnaire section, and the qualitative interviews. On the former, a significant majority (around 61%) of participants agreed with the statement: ‘Ancient Greece and Rome can be considered Britain and the West’s closest cultural ancestors’. The free answer responses to this statement often echoed ideas around the cultural primacy of these traditions, and the extent to which the legal, technological, and ideological infrastructure of the Classical Tradition forms the basis for contemporary Western Society. Furthermore, a similar majority of participants (around 59%) agreed with the statement: ‘It is fair to describe Roman Archaeology in North Africa and the Middle East as elements of Western heritage’. This statement serves to essentially isolate contemporary populations in the Global South from the heritage of their regions, instead positioning it as ‘our’ cultural patrimony. Whilst a number of free-answer responses did note this complexity, others instead emphasised that this statement was self-evident, and without contention, indicating the extent to which patrimonial discourses may have become entrenched in public discourse on the Classical Tradition. These ideas were also reflected by interview participants, with frequent discussion around the ‘foundational’ role played by Graeco-Roman actors on contemporary Western society, with a number arguing that Classical topics were in fact *underexplored* in historical discussions.

Capital, *Habitus*, and *Doxa* in the British Cycle of Knowledge

As the above discussion, and evidence outlined in previous chapters, attest to, Eurocentric narratives of totality, opposition, and teleology are evident, to greater and lesser degrees, across the different stages of production, dissemination, and consumption within the British cycle of knowledge. The final questions to consider are the means through which these ideas became entrenched within British discourse, the dynamics that allow their continued propagation, and the means through which they might be challenged, and ultimately destabilised. I discuss these with reference to Bourdieu’s (1977) discussions on the subjectivity and ultimately discursive nature of ‘knowledge’ in (post)modernity, as outlined fully towards the end of Chapter Two. In brief, the key concepts to the present discussion concern capital, *habitus*, and *doxa*. The former is understood to denote the transactionality of knowledge, the production or dissemination of which can serve to boost institutional or individual standing across the different fields in which it is exercised. Ultimately, the continued transmission of certain narratives, knowledges, in these fields can serve to form a facet of the *doxa*, the unwritten, ‘common sense’ rules which govern discourse on a certain topic, of in a

specific field. The conscious and unconscious *consumption* of knowledge formed according to these ‘rules’ is accordingly seen to be situated as part of the *habitus* of individuals in society, as any form of discourse formed according to the *doxa*, the ‘rules’, ultimately serves to reify their validity, and to further entrench them within this discursive cycle.

Eurocentrism in the Western Tradition

The means through which Eurocentric narratives became embedded in scholarly discourse over the Imperial period is arguably a function of these dynamics. As a number of the works discussed in Chapter One, including those from Alfredo González-Ruibal (2010) and Shawn Malley (2008), highlight, early archaeological exploration throughout the Global South was often explicitly funded – thus awarded *economic capital* – by imperialist governments, in order to gather data and form interpretations which, in many cases, served to return both political and discursive capital to these imperial states. Ideas around the totality of Western perspectivism, and the alterity of Others and superiority of self served to underscore nationalist and supremacist rhetoric in the imperial capitals of Europe, naturalising and justifying further expansion. Similarly, as Richard Hingley (2000) discusses, the manufactured *telos* linking these empires to those of Classical Antiquity served to place imperial narratives within a broader rhetoric of power and exploitation. Early archaeologists who contributed work on these themes were awarded further capital to explore similar ideas, ultimately contributing to their discursive capital (becoming ‘authorities’ on a particular subject), and thus the discursive weight of their contributions, which in turn provided greater political capital to the bodies sponsoring their work. The extent to which these same dynamics characterise contemporary scholarship is, fortunately, less pronounced. However, discussions outlined above concerning the extent to which structural forces may ‘guide’ the hand of research could indicate a degree of continued influence. Of particular concern are the issues surrounding competition for funding, and the role of themed research. A number of colleagues highlighted the extent to which the availability of funding led to changes in research interests. More still highlighted how intense competition for grants, and a broad lack of representation of archaeological themes amongst ‘themed’ funding calls, led to a need to ‘tailor’ research applications and directions according to the sort of research that funding councils would ‘want’ to fund. So, whilst, as evidenced in the highly diverse research landscape outlined in Chapter Four, Eurocentric narratives appear to no longer *define* archaeological praxis, the dynamics through which they were enabled appear to have survived in part, albeit far more covertly.

Similar exchanges in capital also led to the characterisation of early school curricula according to Eurocentric principles. As discussed by Cole (2004), and highlighted in Chapter One, early schools ultimately served to socialise pupils into ideal nationalist, imperial subjects. Content on the key tenets of the Eurocentric narrative were thus imperative, including those of totality, opposition, and teleology. Knowledge of these subjects, and particularly of the Classical Tradition, was thus posited as a prerequisite for ‘social capital’, pupils fostered to deploy this knowledge in differing fields of discourse in order to assert the extent to which they ‘belonged’, or were superior to those *without* this knowledge, this capital. As I discuss in Chapter Two, this logic clearly underpins some of the decisions that led to the introduction of the current curriculum, as evidenced through the rhetoric

of government ministers and officials involved in the process, and who continue to defend it. Evidence from the textbook sample demonstrates the extent to which ideas around the superiority and geniality of Britain are used to underscore 'our' continued foundational myths, whilst discussions on Other societies are broadly ignored, thus positioned as *not* a requisite for social capital, not an important enough facet of social discourse to merit its dissemination in this area. The effects of these inclusions and omissions are noted amongst pupils' questionnaire responses, which demonstrate a commitment to the idea of Western superiority, and the established Eurocentric *telos*, whilst Other societies are assumed to be inherently inferior, even as most pupils will have not learned about them in this 'official' arena. Thus, the propagation of these ideas through the selective deployment of knowledge can be said to serve a dual purpose: both enshrining Eurocentric narratives as ultimately valid, and positioning them as a key facet to public historical discourse.

Similar processes could be seen to be underpinning the entrenchment of Eurocentric narratives within media presentations. The media cycle at the turn of the Twentieth Century was, along with schooling, concerned with reflecting the concerns of nation and empire, as a means to ensure continued economic and discursive capital, awarded by nationalist and imperialist actors, along with consumers. Economic capital is either gained from the funding to produce content, or directly from consumers. In the latter case, which of course is more characteristic of the contemporary media landscape, a certain degree of discursive capital is necessary, so that consumers may trust the content that is produced to represent good 'value for money'. Issues of authority and authenticity (which I discuss below) aside, one way of ensuring that this discursive capital may be generated into economic is to continue to produce content which reflects what the consumer is seen to 'want' – i.e. content for which there is an established market and interest. This could thus be seen to underpin the highly uneven thematic distribution of media titles surveyed and analysed in Chapter Six, with a notably tight focus on well-trodden themes, which could ultimately represent a 'sound investment' from producers, given the established 'interest' in these topics, evidenced through the successes of other content in the past. Content which could challenge this schema, introduce alternative themes, could thus be regarded as 'untested', 'risky'. This same dynamic could also help elucidate the propagation of problematic tropes and depictions throughout the media analysed qualitatively, since tropes, by definition, represent elements of 'common knowledge' perceptions of phenomena. This thus allows producers to claim a greater degree of discursive capital – the consumer already 'knows' that Orientals are despotic, Africans underdeveloped and uncivilised. These ideas are thus 'correct', and seeking to challenge them within media is 'risky', where reifying them could lead consumers to trust your content further, since you are echoing their established knowledge, what they already 'know'.

Reifying Hegemonic Narratives

The continued propagation, and re-cycling of Eurocentric discourses is thus arguably a result of the extent to which they have become embedded within our collective cultural conscience, the *doxa*, partially as a consequence of the processes discussed above. When considered alongside the results outlined in Chapter Four, it is possible that a conscious or unconscious commitment to the reification of this *doxa* may be underpinning elements of public-facing academic outreach. I again return to the staggering disjuncture between themes, and geographical and temporal contexts,

explored in *scholarly* publications, and in the studies presented for assessment under the REF exercises. The focus, particularly on 2014, on the Classical Tradition, and on British and European contexts in both exercises, at the expense of any ‘new’ knowledge, suggests an entrenched belief on the part of those selecting case studies for assessment, in the need to conform to ‘the rules’ – present knowledge on areas in which there is an ‘established’ level of interest and engagement. Disseminating this knowledge, reflecting established structural concerns, may be thought a prerequisite to ensure that the research produced at institutions is judged to be ‘valid’, which is in turn a factor in ensuring the continued access of these institutions to economic capital, both through research funding, and indirectly, through a boost in institutional prestige (institutional *capital*), leading to greater student enrolment. They also serve to further reify the legitimacy of these narratives, these ‘rules’, on the field of discourse, owing to the status enjoyed by universities and researchers as ‘authoritative’ disseminators of ‘official’ knowledge. Furthermore, strong performances at REF assessments, where these outputs are being discussed, could go on to demonstrate to other institutions, and other researchers, the utility of conforming to the ‘rules’ of public historical discourse, further entrenching them within the cycle of knowledge.

The extent to which schools, and national curricula, serve to reify and entrench elements of the Eurocentric, historiographical *doxa* are arguably more tangible. As I highlight in the previous section, the knowledge presented in schools is typically representative of a certain degree of structural concern, since a function of the school is to socialise individuals, demonstrate ‘correct’ discourse and social norms, and thus establish (or re-establish) the currency of social capital. As in the case of universities, the discursive nature of knowledge in these arenas is further entrenched and complicated owing to the status of schools as ‘neutral’ providers of value-free knowledge, for purely genial purposes. Unlike universities, however, the vast majority of the population of the UK attend them, and moreover, study history for all or most of the period that they are at school. Accordingly, the discourses propagated in national curricula have a far greater reach than the narratives produced and disseminated in universities, even in public-facing outreach and engagement. It is significant that studying the national curriculum could be a function behind the extent to which individual participants for Phase (iii) of the above research subscribe to Eurocentric discourses. As is noted in Chapter Two, the governmental administration of history content since the 1990s has seen significantly more nationalistic, arguably Eurocentric material than in the liberalised, decentralised curricula of the 1970s and 1980s. Accordingly, it is possible that the discursive capital of schools has enabled and facilitated the effective dissemination of Eurocentric narratives amongst this sub-population. Also notable is the high number of Phase (iii) participants who discuss the importance of historical study in school on their continued interest in certain subjects, suggesting that engagement with these themes at a formative age does continue to shape perceptions of the relative merits of different themes. Finally, it is also significant that, as a number of the academic researchers interviewed during Phase (i) noted the extent to which *their* interests were a function of either their school education, or undergraduate education, once again indicate the extent to which perceptions and interests may be ‘fixed’ at developmental stages.

Issues with media presentation are compounded by issues with the ‘authority’ of media outlets to present ‘authentic’ knowledge. Symbolic capital is drawn through the deployment of authority signifiers in context - for example, the archaeological ‘expert’ who authorises a narrative on behalf of the documentary production. Discursive capital is formed through a dynamic relationship between the producers and consumers of media. By adhering to ‘the rules’ of the *doxa*, producers are able to capitalise on ‘common knowledge’, and present the public with something that they ‘already know’. The practices of media simplification and sensationalisation can also be understood through the lens of capital. Symbolic and discursive capital may be called upon to authorise and authenticate narratives, but it is chiefly economic capital which allows media to be produced, and disseminated. Simplification is utilised to draw in consumers, and maximise profits. This can again be linked back to Bourdieu’s thoughts on the *doxa*. By creating content which is in-keeping with ‘the rules’, producers can confidently tap into an existing base of consumers, one which is used to the ‘heritage narrative’ as presented to them in a simplified, authoritative format. Much of this simplified content, pertaining to ‘western’ developmental trajectories and global patrimony, is also reflective of Said’s thoughts on colonial representations - a simplified heritage narrative asserting ‘western’ primacy proves popular by feeding into pre-established nationalist expectations and assumptions held by consumers. Sensationalisation can also be seen as a product of market forces, with producers keen to advertise attention-grabbing content to potential consumers.

Challenging Eurocentrism

Quantifying ‘effective’ challenges to Eurocentric historiography is both a normative and idealistic exercise. Whilst many of the above authors have advanced successful critiques of elements of Eurocentric discourse, and others actually overthrown colonial regimes, they may also have discursively reified elements of the doctrine. Bourdieu argues convincingly that challenges to hegemonic discourses must be effective at destabilising both their key assertions (the *doxa*), and the systems of thought on which they are structured (the field) in order to be effective. Critiques that only challenge the former risk drawing resistance onto the same ‘playing field’ as the initial hegemonic assertions (‘heterodoxy’) – the ‘rules’ of the game have been altered, but the same game is being played on the same field. It is thus imperative to consider the roots, actioning, and legacy of these discourses. Below, I consider these with relation to challenges to Eurocentric (i) exclusivity; (ii) universality; and (iii) teleology.

Some challenges to the exclusivity of European advancement were doomed to heterodoxy. The Afrocentric Egyptomania of Diop (1984) and Bernal (1987), whilst important constituents to the critique of Eurocentric teleology, effectively served to simply replace the current hegemon with African populations on a typology of human achievement, thus reifying the existence of such a typology, underwritten by monumentality, the fetishisation of antiquity, and historical prestige-hunting – which are also prevalent in many anti- and post-colonial nationalist discourses (e.g. Nehru, 1946). Whilst I have much sympathy with their position, it cannot be said to represent an effective challenge on the root and stem of Eurocentric exclusivity. Far more prudent are critiques on the racialisation of the concept of ‘civilisation’, such as those advanced by civic counter-nationalists, and reflexive archaeologists, since these perspectives challenge the very basis for

European supremacy, and Eurocentric exclusivity. Also reasonably effective are anticolonial perspectives on the ideology of colonialism. By outrightly rejecting notions of superiority and inferiority as a smokescreen to allow for material exploitation, authors like Lenin (1917) and Luxemburg (1913) expose one of the central fictions to both colonialism and Eurocentrism, even as the former does also arguably conform to some Eurocentric positions. More notable still are discursive anti-colonialists, such as Fanon (1961), and postcolonialists, whose positions on the role of representation in manufacturing discursive and material inequalities serve to effectively reject notions of European supremacy and exclusivity.

Critiques of the purported universality of European ontologies have on the whole been more effective – although this is also largely by design, as challenges in this nature are specifically critical of both the doxa and field of hegemonic narratives. Amerindian challenges to Western structural and ontological violence, for example, are powerful in their theoretical and evidential syntheses, used to demonstrate the ultimate subjectivity of ‘correct’ modes of thought and interpretive frameworks. Similarly, the neocolonial critique, both in terms of Nkrumah’s (1965) materialism and Nyerere (1968) and Shariati’s (1980) discursive approach, is notable as a force to destabilise the concept of universality. Materialistic approaches function as more holistic extensions of Marxist anti-colonialism, signifying both the fictions at the heart of Eurocentric discourses, and tangible evidence that challenge these fictions. Furthermore, discussions on dependency theory demonstrate the use of universalising discourses in actively maintaining geopolitical inequalities. Discursive approaches go broader still, demonstrating and destabilising the linguistic and cultural structures which reify the narrative of universality. Finally, the postcolonialism of Said (1978) Spivak (1988) and Bhabha (1994), building on anti-neocolonialist theories, have demonstrated the violence and misrepresentation brought about through the deployment of universalising discourses, which have served to undermine and silence subjugated populations throughout the Global South, whilst consolidating the discursive capital held by Imperial agents.

Eurocentric teleology has been effectively challenged and rejected through a number of different approaches. Counter-nationalists of all guises, for example, have demonstrated the essential fiction of the notions of cultural succession, and the transhistorical primacy of the West. This is evident in Walker’s (1829) rejection of the historical precedent for White supremacy; the above-mentioned Afrocentric rejection of Mediterranean Egypt, and the Neo-Ba’athist reclamation of the heritage of the Ancient Near East (although the latter two examples do ultimately fail as challenges to Eurocentric exclusivity). From a postcolonial perspective, Samir Amin (1988) explicitly rejected the notion of cultural succession as a myth utilised to both justify, and reify European cultural and political hegemony. Reflexive archaeologists have also levelled successful critiques against their disciplinary antecedents, demonstrating the early archaeological fixation on Classical Antiquity to be fundamentally driven by dynamics of colonialism, and to have resulted in the disregarding and denigration of ‘other’ cultural traditions outside of the classical sphere. Currently, the #RhodesMustFall and #DecoloniseTheCurriculum movements are advancing valid challenges to both teleological interpretations of the past, and the representations of these positions as ‘natural’, ‘good’, or ‘objective’.

The implications of these previous works, considered in conjunction with the present research, are clear. As far as the process of knowledge creation is concerned, those of us within the academic community, although possibly more importantly, those enabling and appraising research outputs and their impacts, should seek to disseminate knowledge with a greater emphasis on diverse historical contexts. The ubiquity of narratives on the Western tradition, and its inherent superiority, means that any knowledge on the Global South *will* in part serve to decentre some element of Eurocentric discourse. Although the present ‘rules’ are set to privilege knowledge reflecting Eurocentric concerns, it is only transgression from these norms that can allow new ‘rules’ to become established. Similarly, the need to diversify school curricula, although already a chief focus of a number of activist groups, should be assisted and empowered through the addition of academic, archaeological knowledge, drawing on our discursive capital in doing so. This research suggests that the school still represents a highly important discursive field, where elements of the *doxa* are disseminated and reified, and are thus a key arena for intervention. Finally, more focussed research on the extent of the desire for more, better, historical media content, which does not merely reflect Eurocentric tropes at the core of the contemporary *doxa*, but seeks to actively challenge and decentre them, should be drawn upon. This present research suggests a present gap in the ‘market’, with demand from knowledge consumers for more diverse content. Deployed appropriately, any findings similar to these may serve to drive the ‘profit incentive’ in favour of more up-to-date ‘knowledge’ being mobilised within the British cycle of knowledge.

CONCLUSIONS

This research was designed to assess the relationship between archaeological research, and Eurocentric narratives, through an analysis of the processes through which knowledge on the past is produced, disseminated, and consumed in the UK. Below, I summarise the findings according to the three secondary questions, and primary question, which I set out in the introductory chapter:

- **How isolated is the creation of archaeological knowledge from broader social discourses?**

Data gathered for Phase (i) of this research paints a complex picture of the ways in which the broad structure interacts with the production of knowledge. On the one hand, it is clear that many academic colleagues do seek to exercise their independence when defining and pursuing their programmes of research. This is reflected in the highly diverse research landscape in the UK, with publications covering an expansive geographical and temporal sweep. However, the extent to which academic independence is enabled or constrained through funding practices is less clear. It is possible that UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) do exercise some influence over the direction of research, as evidenced in the consistent number of archaeological and heritage research projects funded from 2011, even with the inclusion of a large number of new subdisciplines and one major council into the funding pool. Similarly, discussions with colleagues revealed that ‘following the money’ is a considerable factor behind changes in research interest, particularly in early career stages, with researchers often moving from a humanities- or theories-led approach to utilise more ‘scientific’, positivist methodologies when doing so. Discussions around the impact landscape also raise further questions as to the role of archaeological research in contemporary society. Whilst the research landscape is characterised by increasing diversity, the impact case studies submitted for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) are considerably narrower in scope, the overwhelming number of case studies being drawn from British datasets, and very few examples of data from the Global South being used to drive impact within the UK.

Both of these themes could be reflective of a self-censorial dynamic within academic impact and outreach practices. Colleagues interviewed were keen to emphasise the effects of competition, both with regards to specific funding bids, and between institutions, funding councils, and academic disciplines. Problematic dynamics on funding panels were also discussed, with participants highlighting the influence that can be held by more established researchers, as either members or chairs of the panel, when discussing the merits of particular applications. If this is the case, then it is possible that these same dynamics are underpinning decisions around the research to showcase as particularly ‘high impact’ for assessment during the REF. Accordingly, research which is deemed or thought to be in the ‘public interest’, reflecting established elements of the heritage *doxa* and possessing a certain degree of established discursive capital, may be being drawn upon as a ‘low risk, high reward’ strategy for demonstrating the ‘value’ of archaeological research in the UK. This both fundamentally misrepresents the highly diverse research undertaken by British academics, and serves to actively reify elements of established heritage narratives, rather than destabilise the pervasive, Eurocentric heritage narrative outside of ‘the academy’.

- **How up-to-date is the archaeological knowledge disseminated by non-academic agents?**

Data gathered for Phase (ii) of the research points to a fundamental disjuncture between the diverse research landscape and the narratives disseminated by agents outside of the academic community. Information presented in on-screen media shows a hefty thematic skew towards ‘Western’ themes, with barely any examples drawn from the Global South. Of those that are, content synopses point to a reification of highly problematic tropes associated with Islamic militarism and Oriental despotism, and African savagery, submissiveness, and lack of development. It is also concerning to note the comparatively high levels of engagement noted for content on these problematic themes, suggesting their popularity with consumers versus even established, Europe-centric content. Qualitative analysis demonstrated that these themes continued to be present even in titles which were nominally centred on the actions of European agents. Also notable is the extent to which titles analysed qualitatively emphasised other elements of the Eurocentric developmental narrative, with secularism often being presented as a key precursor to the victory of protagonists in the historical world, set against the fanatical religion of their, often non-White, antagonists. Content presented in school textbooks is similarly problematic. The scope of knowledge presented is tightly focussed on the European tradition, with most references to groups from the Global South being made according to the Slave Trade, social disorder and lack of development *prior* to colonisation, or a breakdown of social order and developmental infrastructure *after* colonisation. The effects of these narratives are also clear amongst pupils who participated in the questionnaires, with significantly lower levels of ‘basic’ knowledge concerning the Global South compared with European early history. Pupils also subscribed to far higher degrees of Eurocentric discourses than their adult counterparts, raising questions around the efficacy of the current curriculum, if pupils are having to ‘unlearn’ problematic knowledge gleaned through their schooling.

These results do thus speak to the discursive power held by earlier generations of archaeological and historical scholars, and of Eurocentric, imperialist knowledge on the field of discourse. As above, those seeking to disseminate knowledge on the past appear to be choosing what content to present based on the established narrative which, in its discursive capital, is ‘proven’ to have established levels of interest. This could thus be seen to provide ‘value for money’, for media producers, or the requisite ‘cultural capital’ for those designing content for school curricula. However, when considered in conjunction with the REF returns discussed above, the question becomes more complex. Whilst the research landscape is highly diverse, impact case studies for the REF are not, and are in fact far more reflective of the distribution of knowledge found amongst ‘informal’ disseminators of past narratives. Whilst further investigation is needed into the extent to which outreach and engagement efforts submitted to the REF are representative of these efforts at large, it is interesting to note the compatibility between these sets of data, which could indicate a disjuncture based on a fundamental *perception*, in both cases, of what consumers want, will engage with, rather than any real conception of the appetite for diverse historical narratives outside of the academy.

- **How has academic outreach, alongside schooling and media representations, affected the consumption of research amongst non-specialists?**

Data gathered during Phase (iii) of this research serves to elucidate both the effects of these discourses, and the extent to which they may be subverted by future work. Questionnaire data revealed that, even amongst a population reporting such high levels of interest and engagement with the ancient past, knowledge levels surrounding world prehistory are skewed heavily towards those which are featured within the Eurocentric historical narrative (the Egypto-Classical Tradition). Knowledge levels on histories of the Global South, and Africa in particular, are extremely low, reflecting the broad lack of sources of information on these themes available to consumers. Participants also expressed moderate levels of Eurocentric sentiments throughout qualitative and quantitative questionnaire instruments, although the weighted average of sentiment does fall moderately away from wholesale subscription to these narratives. Interviews with participants served to illustrate the ways in which these individuals came to be invested in the past, speaking to conceptions of the ways in which ideas around shared histories continue to underpin feelings of locality, nationality, and identity construction. A number of participants also expressed a degree of enmity towards critical perspectives on the past, particularly concerning ideas around contemporary British culpability for the actions of the Empire in centuries gone by. On this issue, however, there was a split across the sample, with a significant number also decrying what they saw as overly favourable presentations of British history in nationalist public discourse.

These findings thus serve to present a highly complex picture of the ways in which the British public engage with knowledge on the past. On the one hand, levels of knowledge, and subscription to Eurocentric historiographies, mirror the instances of these presentations throughout media and school curricula, and to a certain extent the public-facing research impact case studies from REF assessments, rather than the highly diverse British research landscape. However, discussions from participants on the nature of the 'British story', and its often-nationalistic underpinnings, indicate a degree of criticality not evident in media presentations and school curricula, far more reflective of contemporary, critical scholarship. Furthermore, significant numbers of participants throughout both the questionnaire and interview research stages expressed a desire to have more access to diverse historical narratives, both in school curricula and in informal media presentations. Whilst, again, this particular point may not be entirely generalisable (owing to the high levels of self-declared interest and engagement with the past expressed by participants), it could still indicate a potential failure on the part of disseminating agents to adequately gauge the interest levels held amongst Britons in diverse historical narratives. Accordingly, it is possible that this lack of diversity, imbued with problematic tropes, in both media and school presentations of the past, is serving to foster or maintain skewed impressions of global historical narratives, even as those *consuming* these narratives declare their desire for more diverse materials to engage with. The differing subscription to Eurocentric perspectives amongst those who had and had not studied history under the national curriculum is highly notable in this instance, as it could speak to the fundamentally regressive rooting of curricula mandated by successive British governments.

- **What is the nature of the relationship between Eurocentric narratives and archaeological research?**

Returning to my primary research question, this project has demonstrated the extant relationship between Eurocentric narratives and archaeological research to be fundamentally complex, multifaceted, and pervasive. Whilst any structurally mediated influence on the process of creating new knowledge is highly covert, and cannot be said from these results to be guided explicitly in one particular direction, it is arguable that the selection of showcases of archaeological research *is* still underpinned to a certain extent by Eurocentric principles of totality, opposition, and teleology. This raises important questions around the decisions that underpin the selection of impact case studies, their comparative discursive weight, and the ways in which public interest is considered during the process. However, in this instance, it is possible that a proxy for this interest is being drawn from the ‘established’ heritage *doxa*, in which case Eurocentric, imperialist knowledge continues to guide the ways in which knowledge is circulated amongst the public.

The Eurocentric principles of totality, opposition, and teleology are wholly represented throughout both ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ agents disseminating knowledge on the past in contemporary Britain. Much content in both of these areas is functionally reflective of a far earlier generation of archaeological and historical scholarship, emphasising ideas around Western cultural primacy, the heritability of cultural development from ‘our’ antecedents in Classical Antiquity, and the historical inferiority and/or insignificance of Other populations in the Global South. The damaging effects of these discourses on the historical worldviews of school-age pupils is also notable, especially considering the disjuncture between them and adult populations. Whilst the issues with *content*, and in particular the reification of Eurocentric tropes, are highly unlikely to be reflected in scholarly work, it is still notable that the thematic foci of REF impact case studies is far more in-step with content which is presented outside of ‘the academy’ than the diverse research landscape.

Finally, whilst a significant number of questionnaire and interview participants do subscribe to Eurocentric discourses to some degree, the levels of interest and desire to engage with more diverse histories is notable. This could speak to a missed opportunity from both disseminators of content, outside of but potentially *within* the academy structure (defined broadly), to adequately gauge public interest to engage with these narratives. Instead, it is possible that the discursive weight of Eurocentric narratives, the extent to which they have become embedded and are consistently reified on the field of historical discourse is taken as proxy *for* public interest – it is ‘common sense’ that the public wish to engage with more content concerning the Classical Tradition, or prehistoric Europe, since there is already so much content concerning these themes. This could, accordingly, speak to the extent to which those who controlled historical discourse in the past, continue to shape discussion in the present.

Limitations to Findings

In addition to the difficulties with data-collection and sampling outlined in the introduction, there are a number of limitations, however, to these findings, which should be considered when hoping to generalise results more broadly.

The chief limitation concerns the scale of data-gathering which was undertaken. Owing to the limited time and resources available to me to complete this research, omissions were made in order

to ensure the feasibility of completing research to a suitably rigorous standard. Accordingly, attempts were not made to gather wider data concerning the use of outreach and engagement in archaeological research beyond those submitted for assessment during both REF periods. Similarly, the sample of media for analysis was limited to on-screen media for both qualitative and quantitative stages of discussion. Whilst these results do provide invaluable insight into the content available to consumers of knowledge on the past, this scope could be increased through the inclusion of more diverse forms of engagement.

Lack of access to certain datasets also presents limitations, particularly with reference to UKRI data pertaining to successful and unsuccessful funding applications over the study period. The data eventually disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act does provide useful insights into the dynamic funding decisions made during the study period, and a glimpse into the extent to which these may be structurally defined, a more comprehensive dataset would enable more concrete conclusions to be drawn concerning these processes.

Recommendations for Future Research

Nevertheless, the present research does present a number of avenues for further research, which could increase the generalisability of these findings within both the UK, and broader cultural contexts.

For one, expanded discussion on the role of large funding agencies, including the UKRI, with access to more comprehensive datasets would allow for a more discrete, considered mapping of the extent of structural influence on the process of producing new knowledge. For British contexts, this would ideally be conducted with a greater degree of cooperation from UKRI, whose aims for transparency would be significantly improved by such an audit (see below section).

Further work could also discuss informal dissemination of knowledge in media with a more comprehensive scope. A notable number of participants discussed podcasts as a source of knowledge on the past which they engaged with often. Similarly, whilst research into the uses and discussion of the past in online and digital spaces has expanded in recent years, further research considering the implications of the data presented here for these contexts would prove highly informative. There is also scope to include the perspectives disseminated in wholly 'offline' modes of engagement, such as museums, which were noted by participants as a significant source of knowledge on the past.

Another avenue of significant interest is the means through which the apparent disjuncture between scholarly research and wider public discourse on the past is perpetuated and maintained. Although a number of mechanisms have been suggested, focussed, empirically-driven research focussing on the key decision-makers behind the dissemination of archaeological knowledge in the public sphere (producers of media, authors of school textbooks, curriculum designers) alongside efforts made in public engagement from colleagues, could serve to provide more concrete conclusions in this area, and thus how the disjuncture may be circumnavigated.

Finally, there is scope to expand the methodologies and findings of this research into other cultural contexts. Of particular interest are other former imperial powers in Western Europe, the theoretical

landscapes and archaeological praxis of which were similarly underpinned by Eurocentric concepts over the last few centuries. Comparative work in this area could address the extent to which these processes are endemic of Imperialist agendas, or else demonstrate how alternative modes of contemporary engagement may curtail these narratives.

Recommendations for Stakeholders

Beyond these possible avenues for future research, the findings detailed above also present immediate implications for agencies, institutions, and individuals across the cycle of historical knowledge in the UK. If we are to address the fundamental disjuncture between scholarly knowledge and wider understandings of ‘the past’ and, the prescription to Eurocentric discourses amongst the British population and, most pressingly, amongst pupils in British schools, steps must be taken by (i) institutional actors within the universities sector; (ii) those working within the schools sector; (iii) producers of historical media; and (iv) colleagues within academic archaeology and heritage. Here, I offer 10 recommendations, drawn from the empirically grounded research presented above, of how actors within these structures may begin to address these issues.

Research administration

1. A key issue identified above is the fundamental disproportionality of Impact Case Studies submitted for REF assessment, when compared with the broader research landscape within the UK. The current system, in which institutions are required to submit a number of case studies set according to a percentage of full-time staff, but sets few prescriptions beyond this, enables universities and/or departments to effectively ‘cherry pick’ the research, and impact case studies, which are most likely to ‘succeed’, and to receive a high score from REF assessors, thus boosting the prestige, and therefore future capital, of that university and department. However, beyond an assessment of the ‘best’ instances of driving research engagement and impact beyond the academy, the results presented in Chapter Four suggest that there is a degree of conscious or unconscious selection bias at play, resulting in those selecting studies for REF assessment over-emphasising research conducted within the UK and Europe, or concerning themes which fit within ‘our’ Western *telos*. One possible solution be to effectively randomise impact case study submissions within each submitting institution. Those currently engaged in publicly-funded research which is projected to conclude prior to the REF submission would self-identify prior to assessment and, with appropriate notice, projects required to submit an impact case study would be drawn at random. Doing so would nullify the extent to which selection biases could serve to narrow the diversity of archaeology and heritage research for assessment purposes, and would also enable case studies to more accurately reflect the research conducted at each institution, thus within the country as a whole. Furthermore, the possibility of randomised selection for assessment could serve to improve colleagues’ impact and engagement efforts across the board, and, crucially, *institutional support for impact and engagement across the board*. As was made clear from the interview data presented in Chapter Four, the majority of researchers within the sample fundamentally agree with the principles of the ‘impact agenda’, provided that work is being used to promote broader social well-being. The

opportunity to expand upon, and receive appropriate support with, driving engagement for impact assessment beyond the narrow themes which are typically returned could thus serve to effectively disperse the means to achieve effective engagement.

2. For those within the public funding infrastructure for research, and in particular UKRI, greater transparency is needed in order to ensure that the funding process is purely meritocratic. Whilst I was unable to make concrete conclusions on the role of selection biases in the designation of funds owing to deficits in the data disclosed by UKRI, it is clear that there are budgetary decisions that are being made beyond public purview. This is evidenced both in the consistent levels of funding for archaeology and heritage research despite the incorporation of the AHRC in 2012, and the fundamentally opaque processes which lie behind ‘fundable, but not funded’ decisions at panel level. Given the concerns raised by the majority of interviewees, outlined in Chapter Four, concerning the extent to which personal dynamics, rivalries, and ‘big personalities’ can serve to subvert the rigour and integrity of the panel and peer review processes, the ability of academics and other stakeholders to review funding decisions more closely is of crucial importance. At the bare minimum, councils should seek to publish figures at a disciplinary level annually, concerning the themes, and ideally geographical and temporal context, around which successful and unsuccessful funding applications are based. This would allow for the identification of trends within the research landscape, and could also serve as an early diagnostic for both selection biases underpinning funding decisions at a systemic level, and ‘gaps’ within the British research landscape, for researchers to exploit. As a disseminator of public monies, ostensibly serving the public interest, UKRI should not only disclose data of this kind when required to do so under the FOI Act, but should seek the periodical, proactive dissemination of pertinent information.

The schools sector

3. Without reiterating previous calls for archaeology as specific school subject, the recent repeal of the Archaeology A-Level does present an opportunity for the closer inclusion of diverse ancient historical, archaeological, and heritage narratives *within* the History specification. The extent to which secondary school pupils surveyed in Chapter Five were prepared to ‘fill in’ historical unknowns through a default to Classics- and Western-veneration belies the fundamentally Eurocentric rooting of the historical content presented to pupils through both the core curriculum, and the textbook sample reviewed above. Similarly, the high levels of prescription to Eurocentric narratives amongst the surveyed pupils could, if similar findings are reflected across the country, represent significant national challenge. With the textual bias of academic history serving to hinder the inclusion pre-colonial histories of the Global South within formalised curricula, archaeology and heritage studies, with our deeper time perspective, and diverse narratives gleaned through non-literate research methods, could serve as a conduit for the inclusion of more positive non-European narratives within the curriculum. As some of the authors reviewed in Chapter Two highlighted, the use of archaeology in a classroom setting would also foster a wider variety of skills in students, and

enable enquiry of a higher level of complexity than a strictly discursive syllabus – How does one discern the provenance and purpose of a fragment of *Nok* terracotta? What does the ubiquity of Roman *terra sigilata* tell us about the nature of imperialism? Why do the moundbuilding cultures of the American Bottom challenge our established view of the pre-colonial Americas? Non-White persons now comprise over 18% of British society, according to the 2021 census. The need to reformulate curricula so that all members of our society can feel reflected in the knowledge that is received in school, thus positioned as fundamental to ‘our national story’, is urgent, and the inclusion of archaeological narratives could serve to facilitate this reformulation.

4. Failing, or ideally in conjunction with, the above, the huge deficits uncovered through the textbook analysis in Chapter Five demonstrate the need for historical education resources to be reviewed by a diverse panel of experts, within and beyond the realms of ‘pure’ disciplinary history. Whilst the Eurocentric skew on discussions of the *historical* (i.e. often colonial and post-colonial) Global South would suggest that no historians of Africa or Asia were consulted prior to the printing of these textbooks, it is also true that historians of all specialisms do not hold a monopoly on the interpretation of the past. Particularly with regards to the minimal, generally highly pejorative, depictions of the *pre-colonial* Global South, the consultation of Africanist or Americanist archaeologists could have significantly improved the validity, and minimised the highly Eurocentric nature, of these discussions, whilst offering opportunities for their expanded educational scope, in line with my above suggestion. Plurality in this area can only result in a more accurate, *rigorous*, end result, represented in a crucial resource used by teachers to support the delivery of fundamental historical education across the country.

British media producers

5. The results outlined in Chapter Six demonstrate the drastic need for more diverse historical content, which could serve to explore truly *global* histories from a fundamentally positive perspective, throughout British media. The reliance on tired, fundamentally outdated tropes in order to represent both ‘self’ (i.e. the West) and ‘other’ (those from the Global South) in historical media has resulted in the ultimate stagnation of media productions. The main variance evident through both quantitative and qualitative exercises detailed above appears to be the examination of the Classics in further, granular detail, or a marginally different angle on the events of WWII. However, as data presented in Chapter Seven suggests, a large proportion of the, admittedly already historically-interested, population in the UK *are* interested in exploring more diverse themes through media productions. The influence of the profit incentive discussed in Chapter Six means that there is very little, from a capitalist perspective, to ‘justify’ the production of content exploring the histories of pre-Colonial Africa, or Western Asia, the Americas, South Asia, or Oceania. However, British, and Western, consumption patterns are changing, alongside our demographical makeup. Whilst it is, ultimately, a Marvel production, the nonetheless Afrofuturist *Black Panther* was one

of the biggest films of the 2010s, both by Box Office figures and cultural impact. That such a significant proportion of survey and interview participants sought to emphasise their desire to engage with more diverse historical content could be seen as reflective of this cultural shift. This demonstrated demand should be met by the producers of media – ideally with the assistance of archaeological and heritage practitioners (see point 9).

Archaeology and heritage researchers

6. Although partially an issue to be addressed by those in research administration, the composition of UK research infrastructure nonetheless means that it is archaeological and heritage researchers who need to seek funding for a regular audit on the historical themes which are likely to drive impact and engagement amongst the general public. At present, the data outlined in Chapter Four suggests that there are no real, empirically grounded, methodologically rigorous means through which we may *actually* gauge the ‘public interest’ which we are obliged to serve in the delivery of publicly-funded research. Instead, as the REF data discussed above alludes to, it appears as though established, fundamentally Eurocentric, ‘common knowledge’ models of global prehistory are being consciously or unconsciously reified in the identification of the research to draw public engagement and impact from. Whilst the participants surveyed during Phase (iii) of the above research *did* have high levels of knowledge and interest on these established themes, many did nonetheless express a desire to engage with histories *beyond* the European developmental narrative, thus far unmet, as outlined above, in the schooling system, in media and, if REF impact case studies can serve as a proxy for notable public outreach, in schemes for *academic* knowledge dissemination. Annual surveying of a representative sample of consumers of historical knowledge in the UK could serve as a means to tailor research impact and outreach to verifiable, demonstratable, public interest, rather than relying on received wisdom, or guesswork.
7. In addition to points 3 and 4, academic archaeologist and heritage practitioners, particularly those with a specialism in the Global South, need to focus their engagement and impact efforts within the UK, ideally within schools. As is highlighted throughout this research, the deeply-entrenched nature of the ‘common sense’ Eurocentric historical narrative means that *any* up-to-date, rigorous discussion on Global South heritage *will* serve to destabilise this established knowledge. The urgency of such interventions within schools in particular is demonstrated in both the fundamentally Eurocentric nature of reviewed textbook content, and in the concerningly high EC scores returned from student participants, outlined in Chapter Five. Focussing impact efforts on schools would also fulfil a two-part benefit: on the one hand, we would have the opportunity to disseminate diverse historical data to a demographic whose key formal engagement with the past is fundamentally regressive; on the other, presentations in schools would also lead to the engagement of *teachers*, i.e. those responsible for the *delivery* of historical knowledge *to* this demographic, in diversified narratives. Such efforts could thus potentially lead to long-term impacts within the schools sector.

8. Scholars on Global South archaeology and history should seek to establish guidelines for the discussion of themes around the Slave Trade, colonialism, and pre-colonial society within the Global South in the public sphere. Similar measures have been taken by the Centre for Holocaust Education (see by Foster and Kariyianni, 2017) within the UK, potentially contributing to the far more nuanced and academically rigorous exploration of themes surrounding Jewish history and the Holocaust reported within the textbook sample. A formalised document, detailing the genealogy and fundamental invalidity of pejorative narratives such as Africanism, primitivism, and Orientalism could serve as a hugely useful resource for those authoring textbooks, or those producing historical media. The scholars authoring such a document could also serve as a visible, high-profile source of information on the histories of the Global South, further enabling point 7 above, and point 9, below.
9. Similarly to point 7, those within academic archaeology and heritage should seek further collaboration with the producers of historical media, and seek to exert a degree of pressure around the thematic, geographical, and temporal foci of media productions. Whilst, again, the crux of the issue ultimately lies with these producers, and not with those in academia, it is nonetheless evident that recent dramatic and documentary productions remain wildly out-of-step with contemporary scholarship. This is seen in both quantitative (large number of productions focussing on themes not as widely explored within the academy) and qualitative (representations of self and other imbued with highly problematic, outdated tropes) terms. More present, forceful influence from those within the academy could serve to enable the diversification of media productions, particular when considered alongside point 5, above, and point 10, below.
10. Finally, archaeologists and heritage experts, again particularly those specialising in the histories of the Global South, need to develop the means to coordinate responses to the uses, misuses, and ‘bad’ uses of heritage narratives in public discourse. At present, scholars’ responses to poor or performative depictions of the past in media productions and political discourse is typically robust and timely, through scholarly or popular publication, or through social media. However, these responses are generally lacking the discursive weight, societal spread, and collective authority that might be afforded through a grassroots, collective, centralised body of scholars, with a high profile social media presence, and a rigorous, publicised fact-checking apparatus. Working with guidelines such as those outlined above, such a body of scholars could serve as a highly effective means to both counter problematic heritage misinformation, and subsequently disseminate up-to-date, scholarly knowledge to the wider public.

Research Contributions

Data presented above has addressed a number of gaps in existing literature, allowing for insights to be gleaned, and interpretations to be made, on a number of under-explored areas.

For one, this research has served to build up a broad picture of the wide range of research which is currently conducted by archaeological and heritage researchers. Despite much discussion since the ‘reflexive turn’ of the 1990s, there has been little recent review of the oft-mentioned diversity and

fragmentation of archaeological approaches, methodologies, and areas of enquiry that goes beyond anecdotal. Empirical research has demonstrated this to be substantially true, with a wide range of temporal and geographical contexts under investigation by current archaeological researchers in the UK. This thus provides a benchmark against which to gauge how representative differing scholarly and popular outputs are of the contemporary research landscape. In particular, this research has also demonstrated the extent to which institutionally-mediated research impact and engagement outputs are fundamentally misrepresentative of this highly diverse landscape, particularly those submitted to the REF. This raises further questions as to the role of different institutional agents in mediating this process. However, these results ultimately suggest a degree of culpability for poor representation of contemporary research in the ‘public sphere’ lies with these institutional agents, potentially through poor identification of public interest in diverse themes, instead relying on ‘common sense’ perspectives on the ‘demand’ for historical narratives. This research has also provided some insight into the means through which research in the UK is funded, and the extent to which these processes are vulnerable to direct and indirect structural influence, in circumvention of the Haldane Principle, although further investigation into these themes would significantly strengthen any conclusions drawn. Qualitative data gathered through interviews has been especially illuminating in this area, particularly the extent to which there may be a degree of internalised self-censorship amongst academic researchers, when seeking to define and pursue research in a particular field or region. Interviews with colleagues have also revealed the diverse, complex, means through which research is instigated, produced, and received throughout the academy, and society more broadly. Collegiate dialogue remains an important source of inspiration for researchers, who also report a growing trend in inter- and trans-disciplinary research directions, which participants do not feel is sufficiently supported and enabled by institutional-level actors, in particular funding agencies.

The benchmark provided by a review of archaeological research outputs over the previous decade has also allowed for meaningful interpretations to be drawn around the thematic, temporal, and geographical foci of popular screen media outputs over the same period. Population-level, quantitative analysis of British productions reveals a heavy skew towards narratives which ultimately underpin the Eurocentric historiographical narrative, with the ideas, places, and times under discussion wholly out-of-step with comparative archaeological research outputs. This raises questions around the extent to which contemporary research is being drawn into media discourses, compared to the discursive weight of ‘common sense’ assumptions surrounding levels of interest in diverse historical topics behind media productions. A qualitative analysis of a sample of these outputs revealed a reliance on damaging, outdated tropes when representing members of Other communities throughout the Global South, and the frequent invocation of Eurocentric teleology, opposition, and totality underpinning representations of global (pre)history in general. Of particular note is the frequency of content concerning the Classical Tradition, much of which lays a clear claim for contemporary Western Patrimony over this tradition. This research also provided insight into the content of English history textbooks, a subject which has been hugely underexplored in the literature, particularly when discussing the problematic effects of Eurocentrism in school curricula. This review demonstrates the continued propagation of these narratives throughout curricula, challenging the notion that teachers are adequately equipped to deliver content on diverse topics

under the current curriculum, since depictions on communities in the Global South almost invariably foster problematic and ultimately Eurocentric representations of these communities. The discussion of historical and archaeological material within school curricula resources is thus shown to be wholly out-of-step with contemporary scholarship. This study has also provided useful insights into the *effects* of these discourses on the pupils who are currently studying history in school. For one, a basic knowledge audit revealed that pupils have a decent baseline of knowledge of topics pertaining to the ancient past, provided that these focus on narratives underpinning the Eurocentric historiographical narrative. By contrast, knowledge levels on diverse histories in the Global South are poor amongst students. Since these topics do not appear in curricula, it is possible that pupils are ‘filling in’ knowledge on these topics using conclusions drawn from problematic discussions on the Global South during more recent historical periods. Pupils also displayed concerning high levels of subscription to Eurocentric discourses, particularly those concerning ideas around the developmental superiority of the Western world compared with the Global South.

This research has also provided invaluable insights into the knowledge levels on diverse historical narratives amongst the adult British population, the sources of this knowledge, along with their perspectives on Eurocentric histories. The self-declared knowledge levels reported by participants was especially notable, with high levels of knowledge concerning topics reflective of the established historical narrative, and comparatively far lower levels of knowledge on histories of the Global South, Africa in particular. Again, this is out-of-step with contemporary archaeological research, suggesting a disconnect in effective outreach, engagement, and dissemination of diverse histories from ‘the academy’. An analysis of knowledge consumption patterns reveals the typical means through which historically ‘literate’ individuals access knowledge on the past, with documentary content, alongside ‘offline’ engagement through museum and exhibition attendance as the most utilised and trusted sources of information. Notable findings were also made concerning participants perspectives on historical narratives, particularly their subscription to elements of Eurocentric discourses. Responses in this area demonstrated a not-infrequent direct invocation of theories and approaches common in far earlier phases of archaeological research, again suggesting the extent to which our disciplinary forebears may still exercise a high degree of influence on perceptions on the past, owing to the entrenchment of their positions within ‘common sense’, or ‘common knowledge’ approaches to the past within public discourse. Conversations with interview participants revealed the extent to which the past is drawn upon in identity construction. They also revealed the extent to which attempts to diversify historical discourse could be welcomed by this especially historically engaged population. However, they also suggest the difficulties which may be faced when attempting to discuss more ‘contentious’ elements of the past, particularly with regards to Britain’s culpability in historical wrongdoing, since discourse in this area continues to be defined in part according to the rhetoric of the recent ‘culture wars’ over national perception and self-identity. A number of participants suggested that they felt in some way under attack by attempts to diversify discussion in this area, further complicating attempts to do so in an equitable and amenable way.

In its diverse methodological and theoretical synthesis, the present research could also prove transferrable to a number of thematic, disciplinary, and cultural contexts. Within archaeology and heritage studies in the UK and more broadly, these approaches could be drawn upon in order to identify the prevalence of other problematic discourses within academic research, and especially amongst public perceptions of historical narratives. This may be of particular use to other scholars in the post-colonial or critical theories traditions. This approach may also be of use to scholars in other disciplines, particularly where there has been significant historical interface between disciplinary practitioners and colonial authorities. An adaptation of these methods could, for example, provide useful insights into contemporary receptions of culturally anthropological work conducted in the Global South, particularly as compared with similar narratives on Other epistemologies over the last few centuries. Finally, as discussed above, adaptations of these approaches could yield highly pertinent discussion on the prevalence of Eurocentric archaeologies and historiographies in cultural contexts outside of the UK, particularly amongst other former and contemporary empires across Western Europe, and North America.

End Note

This research has sought to fit into, and to expand upon, existing critical perspectives on the uses of ‘the past’ in public discourse, particularly as a facet of nationalistic, neocolonial, and xenophobic rhetoric. Discussions on the historical construction and mobilisation of these narratives as a means for consolidating and underpinning representations of power have been utilised in synthesising a critical, empirically grounded means to assess the prevalence of Eurocentric narratives in a variety of discursive fields. Reflective scholarly work on the means through which our own research is affected by the structures in which we inhabit has also been drawn upon in order to situate and analyse the extent to which these processes are manifested in contemporary archaeological research. Discussions on the political history and underpinnings of contemporary school curricula have facilitated and informed a critical discussion on the narratives drawn on and perpetuated in resources used to support the education of English students. Similar discussions concerning the role of archaeological and historical narratives in various media have also been engaged with, allowing for investigation into the extent to which ‘informal’ means of education are representative of contemporary or earlier generations of scholarly work, and to propose explanations for content available in the present media landscape. Post-structuralist interpretive models have finally been drawn upon in exploring the relationship between knowledge and the broader ideological structure throughout and across differing stages of production, dissemination, and consumption in Twenty-First Century Britain.

Discussion around these themes has enabled for a number of gaps in existing knowledge to be addressed. Data gathered has allowed for the effective mapping and comparison of the respective methods through which the processes of research instigation, production, and reception are affected by structural discourses, whilst also allowing for empirical statements to be made concerning the diversity of the UK’s research and funding landscapes, and the extent to which these are represented by public-facing knowledge dissemination. The extent to which archaeological scholarship serves to influence the presentation of knowledge by non-academic agents has also been addressed, and shown to be particularly lacking amongst both producers of screen media, and the designers of national

curricula, whose theses appear to be informed exclusively by earlier generations of scholarship, and are thus often imbued with problematic tropes and teleological interpretations. This research has also served to address the ways in which differing sources of knowledge on the field of discourse affect the historical worldviews of the consumers of this knowledge, namely, the adult British public. A significant audit of knowledge of diverse histories, and perceptions of past narratives, suggests that again, earlier generations of scholarship hold far greater discursive weight in this area than contemporary archaeological and historical researchers. Taken together, this research could thus suggest a fundamental disconnect in the cycle of knowledge in the contemporary UK, with critical and diverse positions on global historical narratives subverted in favour of established, Eurocentric narratives of totality, opposition, and teleology.

This research accordingly identifies core issues with the academic-public interface in the UK. The data and analysis presented above does, however, also provide some means through which this may begin to be addressed. Empirical results demonstrate an existing 'market' for more diverse historical content. We furthermore know the means through which historical knowledge is typically engaged with amongst more historically engaged groups, and as such the ideal avenues through which to present new or unfamiliar knowledge. This research also reflects the concerns of educationalists concerning the current curriculum, providing further data through which to advance alternative models, and different content for students to engage with, whilst also serving to demonstrate the possible continued ill-effects of unrepresentative curricula into adulthood. This research finally adds to existing debate around the methods through which archaeology and heritage practitioners engage in public outreach, and seek to establish the public 'impact' of scholarly work, demonstrating the extent to which these efforts may serve to reify and reflect, rather than challenge and redirect, established, hegemonic, heritage narratives in public discourse. These findings thus provide fruitful avenues for continued discussion and investigation into the complex, multifaceted relationships between academic praxis and social structures, whilst establishing a baseline of understanding into the ways in which knowledge of the past is filtered through the lens of established knowledge, and structural concern.

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APPENDIX I – YEAR 9 PUPILS’ QUESTIONNAIRE

Archaeology in Society, Society in Archaeology Questionnaire

Participant Number:

About you:

Please fill out the following information about you. This is being collected in order to ensure that the people taking part in this study are representative of the country as a whole.

What gender do you identify as? Circle as appropriate

- Male
- Female
- Other:

How would you define your ethnic heritage? Circle as appropriate

- White (including British, Irish, and other European ancestries)
- Black (including Black African, Caribbean, and African-American ancestries)
- South Asian (including Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi, etc.)
- Western Asian (including Turkish, Kurdish, Iranian/Persian, and Arab ethnicities)
- North African
- Latin American
- East Asian
- South-East Asian
- Other (please define):
- Mixed (please define):

If you wish to be more specific about your ethnic identity, please feel free to do so below:

.....

How interested would you say you are in archaeology and the ancient past?

Circle as appropriate

Not at all interested	Not very interested	Neither disinterested or interested	Quite interested	Very interested
-----------------------	---------------------	-------------------------------------	------------------	-----------------

Ancient Civilisations

Please circle which you think is the correct answer. Feel free to ask your teacher if there is *something that you don't understand*.

- 1) **Which society are thought to have 'invented' writing?**
 - a. The Sumerians
 - b. The Roman Empire
 - c. The Mali Empire
 - d. The Ancient Greeks

- 2) **Which empire conquered England in the first century CE?**
 - a. The Persian Empire
 - b. The Mongol Empire
 - c. The Greek Empire
 - d. The Roman Empire

- 3) **Which city is said to be the 'birthplace' of democracy?**
 - a. London
 - b. Uruk
 - c. Athens
 - d. Mombasa

- 4) **Which ancient society built the 'Valley of the Kings'?**
 - a. The Scythians
 - b. The Byzantine Empire
 - c. The Minoans
 - d. The Ancient Egyptians

- 5) **In which region have the earliest stone tools been found?**
 - a. Central Asia
 - b. Northern Europe
 - c. East Africa
 - d. South America

- 6) **Which of the following countries have never been colonised?**
 - a. Iraq
 - b. China
 - c. England
 - d. Ethiopia

- 7) **Which of the following regions is referred to as the 'cradle of civilisation'?**
 - a. Western Asia
 - b. Southern Africa
 - c. Western Europe
 - d. Oceania

8) Which of the following historical empires was the longest-lasting?

- a. The British Empire
- b. The Roman Empire
- c. The Kingdom of Kush (modern-day Sudan)
- d. The Holy Roman Empire

9) Where in the world were the earliest cities built?

- a. Modern-day Iraq
- b. Modern-day Italy
- c. Modern-day Greece
- d. Modern-day USA

Odd One Out

Please circle which you think is the correct answer. Feel free to ask your teacher if there is *something you don't understand*.

1) Which of the following societies did not build pyramids?

- a. Ancient Egyptians
- b. The Aztec (modern-day Mexico)
- c. The Ancient Nubians (modern-day Sudan)
- d. The Roman Empire

2) Which of the following is not one of the 'first civilisations'?

- a. The Sumerians (modern-day Iraq)
- b. The Aztec (modern-day Mexico)
- c. The Indus Valley Civilisation (modern-day India)
- d. The Ancient Greeks

3) Which of the following cities was not the capital city of an empire?

- a. Zanzibar (modern-day Tanzania)
- b. London
- c. Boston (modern-day USA)
- d. Rome

4) Which of the following ancient cities did not contain a famous library?

- a. Alexandria (modern-day Egypt)
- b. Timbuktu (modern-day Mali)
- c. Ephesus (modern-day Turkey)
- d. Ostia (modern-day Italy)

Agree to Disagree

Please read the following statements, and circle an option to indicate how much you agree with each statement.

1) “Historically, Europeans have always been far more developed than any other group on earth”

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
---------------------	-------------------	----------------	------------------

Please explain why you answered as you did:

.....

.....

.....

2) “It is not fair to compare different societies from different time periods and areas, or to rank them according to how ‘advanced’ they are”

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
---------------------	-------------------	----------------	------------------

Please explain why you answered as you did:

.....

.....

.....

3) “The modern West inherited most of our cultural characteristics from Ancient Greece and Rome”

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
---------------------	-------------------	----------------	------------------

Please explain why you answered as you did:

.....

.....

4) “Prior to colonisation, groups in Africa had developed ‘civilisations’ to rival those of Europe”

Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
---------------------	-------------------	----------------	------------------

Please explain why you answered as you did:

.....

.....

.....

APPENDIX II – ADULTS’ QUESTIONNAIRE

Age band

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65+

What region, town, or city do you live in?

Do you live...

In a Town or City

In a Village or Rurally

What is your ethnic background?

White (incl. British, Irish, and other European Ancestry)

Black (incl. Black African, Carribean, African-American)

South Asian (incl. Bangladesh, Pakistani, Indian, Sri Lankan)

Western Asian (incl. Arabic, Persian/Iranian)

North African

Latinx

East Asian

South-East Asian

Mixed (please define below)

Other (please define below)

Mixed ethnicity

Ethnicity

What gender do you identify as?

Male

Female

-
- Prefer not to say

Other (please define below)

Gender

Highest education level

-
- Secondary School (GCSEs, O-Level, or equivalent)
- Further Education College/Sixth Form (A-Level or equivalent)
- Vocational Qualification (NVQ or equivalent)
- Undergraduate Degree
- Master's Degree (or equivalent post-graduate qualification, e.g. PGCE)
- PhD or equivalent

Did you attend secondary school in the UK?

Yes

No

Was your secondary school...

Fee-Paying

A Comprehensive, Academy, or Free School

A Grammar School

Not Sure

In which country did you attend secondary school (or equivalent)?

What is your occupation status?

- Middle/upper management
- Manual labourer (incl. skilled and semi-skilled labour)
- Office worker
- Public sector employee (incl. schoolteachers, paramedics, etc.)
- University lecturer/researcher
- Retail or hospitality worker
- Unemployed/seeking first job
- Self-employed
- Retired
- Student
- Homemaker
- Other
- (tick all that apply)
-

You can optionally provide your job title here

First Thoughts

These questions concern your immediate thoughts on archaeology, heritage, and ancient history

17% Progress

What is the first word or phrase you think of when

19) you

hear the term 'ancient history'?

Not at all Interested

Not that Interested

Somewhat Interested

Very Interested

20) How interested would you say

you are in the ancient past in

general?



21) How would you define the term 'civilisation'?

Sources of Knowledge

These questions concern the sources of information you utilise to access knowledge about the ancient past

22% Progress

How do you usually access information about the ancient past?

- By visiting museums/archaeological sites
 - Watching documentary TV programmes/films
 - Watching dramatised TV programmes/films
 - Listening to the radio
 - Reading newspapers/magazines
 - Through social media
 - Through online news sources
 - Playing video games
 - Reading books
 - Attending lectures/seminars
 - Anecdotally, through conversations with friends
 - Other
 - None of the above
- (tick as many as apply)

Are there any other sources of information you engage with concerning the ancient past?

How often do you engage with the following historically-centred media?

	Never	Less than Monthly	Monthly	Weekly	2-3 times a week	Daily or almost daily
TV or film documentaries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Period TV (e.g. 'Vikings', 'Rome', 'The Tudors' or similar)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Period films (e.g. '300', 'Troy' or similar)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
'Alternative' archaeology TV (e.g. 'Ancient Aliens')	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
'Traditional' news media (i.e. newspapers, broadcast news, or their online equivalents)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
'New' media (social media, e.g. Reddit, Twitter, alongside online-only publications such as VICE and BuzzFeed)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Historically-themed video games (e.g. the 'Assassin's Creed' or 'Total War' series or similar)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<hr/> Entirely inaccurate Fairly inaccurate Fairly accurate Completely accurate						

How would you rank the accuracy of TV and film documentaries in general?

If you can, please name one or more documentaries that you have watched recently, or that you can remember having watched previously

What time periods or themes are covered in the documentaries you tend to watch?

(e.g. Ancient Egypt, Medieval Britain)

Entirely inaccurate Fairly inaccurate Fairly accurate Completely accurate

How would you rank the accuracy of period TV drama in general?

If you can, please name one or more historically-themed TV dramas that you have watched recently, or that you can remember having watched previously

What time periods or themes are covered in the TV dramas you tend to watch?

Entirely inaccurate Fairly inaccurate Fairly accurate Completely accurate

How would you rank the accuracy of period films in general?

If you can, please name one or more historically-themed films that you have watched recently, or that you can remember having watched

previously

What time periods or themes are covered in the films you tend to watch?

Entirely inaccurate Fairly inaccurate Fairly accurate Completely accurate

How would you rank the accuracy of 'alternative archaeology' programmes in general?

If you can, please name one or more 'alternative archaeology' programmes that you have watched recently, or that you can remember having watched previously

What time periods or themes are covered in the 'alternative archaeology' programmes that you tend to watch?

Entirely inaccurate Fairly inaccurate Fairly accurate Completely accurate

How would you rank the accuracy of historical discussions in 'traditional' media in general?

What 'traditional' media outlets do you most engage with?

Do you feel as though any time periods or themes are covered more than others in historical discussions in 'traditional' news media?

Entirely inaccurate Fairly inaccurate Fairly accurate Completely accurate

How would you rank the accuracy of historical discussions in 'new' media in general?

Which 'new' media outlets do you most engage with?

Do you feel as though any time periods or themes are covered more than others in historical discussions in 'new' news media?

Entirely inaccurate Fairly inaccurate Fairly accurate Completely accurate

How would you rank the accuracy of historical depictions in video games?

If you can, please name one or more historically-themed video games that you have played recently, or that you can remember having played previously

What time periods or themes are covered in the historical video games that you tend to play?

History in School

These questions are about the history that you learnt in school

51% Progress

Do you remember studying any of the following in

school?

Ancient Rome

20th Century history (WWI, WWII, the Cold War, the

Great Depression, etc.)

Medieval Britain (the Battle of Hastings, the Black Death, etc.)

Ancient Greece

The pre-colonial Americas (Aztec, Native American

histories, etc.)

The Tudors and the Early Modern Period

Middle Eastern/Islamic history

The British Empire

Ancient Egypt

Pre-colonial Africa

The French Revolution

Other (please specify below)

Can't remember anything

(Tick as many as apply)

Please note down any other topics you remember

covering

Do you feel as though any topics were particularly

over-represented in your school curriculum?

Yes

No

What topics do you feel were over-represented?

Do you feel as though any topics were

Yes

under-represented in your school curriculum, or were there topics absent from your curriculum that you wish you knew more about?

No

Which topics were either under-represented, or you wish had been included in your curriculum?

Importance of Archaeology and Heritage

These questions concern your opinions on the importance of archaeology, heritage, and ancient history for today's world

60% Progress

58) How would you rank the importance of archaeology and heritage to today's society, in general?

Not at all

Important

Very Important

(Place a mark on the scale above)

59) Why did you rank the importance of archaeology and heritage as you did?

Please rate the following reasons for learning about archaeology and heritage out of 10, according to their importance

	1 least importa nt	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 most importa nt
60) Understanding the modern world	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
61) Shaping society's values	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
62) Drawing together communities around shared histories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
63) Allowing us to enrich our own knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

64) Enabling us to challenge problematic assumptions

65) Equipping us to explore our own personal heritage

66) Are there any other reasons that you think learning about heritage is important?

Knowledge of Ancient Cultures

The questions below concern your personal knowledge of different cultures in the distant past

70% Progress

How familiar are you with the following historical cultures?

	I have never heard of them	I have heard of them	I know roughly when and where they existed	I know when and where they existed, and some of their key achievements	I know when and where they existed, alongside some of their key achievements, and some details about their social, religious, or economic systems
67) The Inca	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
68) The Roman Empire	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
69) Mesopotamians	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
70) Ancient Egypt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
71) The Mali Empire	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
72) Ancient/Classical Greece	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
73) The Indus Valley Civilisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 74) The Celts | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 75) The Maya | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 76) Minoans | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 77) Great Zimbabwe | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 78) Myceneans | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 79) The Swahili Coast Civilisation | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 80) Sumerians | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 81) The Yellow River Civilisation | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 82) The Mississippi Moundbuilders | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 83) The Ghana Empire | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 84) The Kingdom of Kush | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Opinions on Historical Civilisation

These questions concern your opinions on the role of civilisations in human history

85% Progress

Please declare your position on the following statements, and outline the reasoning for your response

Completely disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree
Completely agree

85) Historically, European societies have always been the most developed

86) Please explain your position

Completely disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree
Completely agree

87) Building cities and developing complex economies are not a valid measure for the 'success' of any particular society

88) Please explain your position

Completely disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree
Completely agree

89) European empires succeeded in spreading the

idea of 'civilisation' across the globe



90) Please explain your position

Completely disagree

Somewhat disagree

Somewhat agree

Completely agree

91) There are no insurmountable cultural differences dividing Europe and the Middle East



92) Please explain your position

Completely disagree

Somewhat disagree

Somewhat agree

Completely agree

93)

Ancient Greece and Rome
can be considered Britain and
the West's closest cultural
ancestors

94) Please explain your position

_____ Completely disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Completely agree _____

95) Most African societies did
not develop 'civilisation'
prior to colonialism

96) Please explain your position

_____ Completely disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Completely agree _____

97) There is a universal
'benchmark' against which to
judge the morality and
success of all historical
societies

98) Please explain your position

_____ Completely disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Completely agree _____

99) It is fair to describe Roman
archaeology in North Africa
and the Middle East as
elements of Western
heritage

100) Please explain your position

Completely disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Completely agree

101) Our understandings of world history are fundamentally affected by our own cultural context

102) Please explain your position

Completely disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Completely agree

103)

It is fair to rank societies according to their similarity and difference to our own

104) Please explain your position

Completely disagree

Somewhat disagree
Completely agree

Somewhat agree

105) No specific 'race' or ethnic group is inherently more intelligent, able, or industrious than any other

ADDITIONAL APPENDICES - ONLINE

Appendix III – [Raw Web of Science \(WoS\) data:](#)

Appendix IV – [Completed data collection sheets for textbook research:](#)

Appendix V – [Raw data from schools' questionnaires](#)

Appendix VI – [Raw IMDb data](#)

Appendix VII – [Completed data collection sheets from media analysis](#)

Appendix VIII – [Raw data from adults' questionnaires](#)

Appendix IX – [Adults' interview transcripts](#)