



Imperial reminders: Arguing about statues and commemoration in Oxford

Pier-Luc Dupont and Bridget Anderson

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About ETHOS

ETHOS - Towards a European Theory Of justice and fairness is a European Commission Horizon 2020 research project that seeks to provide building blocks for the development of an empirically informed European theory of justice and fairness. The project seeks to do so by:

- a) refining and deepening knowledge on the European foundations of justice - both historically based and contemporarily envisaged;
- b) enhancing awareness of mechanisms that impede the realisation of justice ideals as they are lived in contemporary Europe;
- c) advancing the understanding of the process of drawing and re-drawing of the boundaries of justice (fault lines); and
- d) providing guidance to politicians, policy makers, activists and other stakeholders on how to design and implement policies to reverse inequalities and prevent injustice.

ETHOS does not only understand justice as an abstract moral ideal that is universal and worth striving for but also as a re-enacted and re-constructed 'lived' experience. This experience is embedded in legal, political, moral, social, economic and cultural institutions that claim to be geared toward giving members of society their due.

In the ETHOS project, justice is studied as an interdependent relationship between the ideal of justice and its manifestation – as set out in the complex institutions of contemporary European societies. The relationship between the normative and practical, the formal and informal, is acknowledged and critically assessed through a multi-disciplinary approach.

To enhance the formulation of an empirically based theory of justice and fairness, ETHOS will explore the normative (ideal) underpinnings of justice and its practical realisation in four heuristically defined domains of justice - social justice, economic justice, political justice, and civil and symbolic justice. These domains are revealed in several spheres:

- a) philosophical and political tradition;
- b) legal framework;
- c) daily (bureaucratic) practice;
- d) current public debates; and
- e) the accounts of vulnerable populations in six European countries (Austria, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Turkey and the UK).

The question of drawing boundaries and redrawing the fault-lines of justice permeates the entire investigation.

Utrecht University in the Netherlands coordinates the project, and works together with five other research institutions. These are based in Austria (European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy), Hungary (Central European University), Portugal (Centre for Social Studies), Turkey (Boğaziçi University), and the UK (University of Bristol). The research project lasts from January 2017 to December 2019.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report, produced as part of ETHOS WP4.3, examines UK opinion leaders' understandings of justice and fairness in the commemoration of British history. The specific context is the city of Oxford, whose history and heritage has recently come under criticism for its role in British imperialism and its contemporary complicity (at a minimum) in the promotion of an colonial view of Britain's place in the world. The study explores how tensions between different justice claims, especially those relating to racial, ethnic and class categories, emerge in the context of British imperial commemoration. As in previous ETHOS reports, recognition, redistribution and representation constitute the main analytical framework of the investigation, but attention is also given to other ideals of justice which play a central role in the debates analysed.

Opinion leaders' views were collected by means of a fictitious vignette describing the projected renovation of a central statue representing Lord Mountbatten, last Viceroy and first Governor-General of India, who oversaw the violent partition of India and Pakistan and was assassinated by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in 1979. Eight semi-structured interviews were conducted with Oxford residents between December 2018 and January 2019. All participants exerted influence as political activists, including on social media, or were engaged in the arts or held a position of esteem and respect. Interviews followed a semi-structured format, alternating readings of the vignette with general questions designed to elicit views on the events described. Each interview lasted approximately an hour and was audio recorded and transcribed.

The analysis of discourses reveals that commemoration is simultaneously perceived as a local, national, continental and global issue. However, these territorially defined scales of justice are linked and blurred by frequent allusions to non-territorial communities such as the Black, South Asian or Irish diasporas. In addition to redistribution, recognition and representation, ideals of restoration, reproduction and deliberation play a prominent role in philosophies of commemoration. Discourses evince a consensus on the framing of Mountbatten as a symbol of colonial violence feeding into contemporary racism. This understanding coexists with a much more controversial one that emphasises the preservation or reproduction of White British culture. Restorative, anti-racist and reproductive commemoration is generally discussed as a form of deliberation which should be underpinned by principles of normativity, relevance and publicity. Normatively, it should focus on events from which moral lessons can be drawn due to their positive or negative implications for the parties involved. Relevance should be measured based on an event's capacity to explain present social structures or its centrality to the collective identities of those involved in remembering it. Publicity refers to the correspondence between the intended effect of commemoration, its audience and its context-specific meaning. Participants offered detailed views on the interaction between substantive, formal, descriptive and symbolic representation in decision-making on commemoration. The formal procedure of public consultation was understood as a necessary but not sufficient condition for substantive representation to take place, especially among racialised, working-class or younger citizens. The notion that personal characteristics tended to generate specific experiences and perspectives was widely accepted, but nearly all participants acknowledged that considerable ideological diversity may exist within a given social category. They also considered that various forms of protest in the vicinity of controversial statues could enrich political debates but disagreed on how disruptive, provocative and respectful of public property they should be.

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1. INTRODUCTION

*'Polite people [...] are most distinguished as such by their buildings,
their statues and their inscriptions'*
Benjamin Ralph¹

The two hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in 2007 sparked a renewed interest in historical memory in the UK. The Heritage Lottery Fund, government support, BBC engagement, and connections to contemporary debates on 'modern slavery' combined to result in a huge range and scale of commemorative events. This enthusiasm was also met with some critique – a warning against too self-congratulatory a tone given Britain's role in establishing and 'perfecting' the slave trade, and a reminder that the abolition of the trade did not result in the abolition of slavery itself (Walvin, 2009). There was a change in public debate, which, while still attached to patriotic certainties of the special role of Britain in the world, was slightly unsettled by a reassessment of commemoration, in part emerging after the increase in public funding for Black History projects (Dresser 2007). Today, the resistance to this unsettlement has a somewhat familiar tone: 'Arguments are made that "we" cannot "read back into history", that "we" should not "dwell on the past", that "we" should eschew "political correctness" and focus instead on the present' (Dresser, 2007: 191).

This report, produced as part of ETHOS WP4 on political, advocacy and media discourses of justice and fairness, examines understandings of justice and fairness in the commemoration of British history. The specific context is the city of Oxford, whose history and heritage has recently come under criticism for its role in British imperialism and its contemporary complicity (at a minimum) in the promotion of an colonial view of Britain's place in the world. Previous ETHOS studies have also shown the relevance of history for certain claims to justice. In many cases, for instance, minority claims to recognition and/or representation can be understood only through the lens of a specific historical memory. Certain historical themes or episodes are selectively remembered and interpreted differently by different social and political actors. At the same time, justice may sometimes require a particular interpretation of historical events. Hence, history is not only a topic of contemporary debates but also a significant battlefield of justice (cf Lepianka, 2018 and Dupont, 2018). The current study explores how tensions between different justice claims and/or the claims of different racial, ethnic, class, age and other social categories emerge in the context of British imperial commemoration. We focus on the views of opinion leaders due to their ability to influence the opinions of others. As in previous ETHOS reports, recognition, redistribution and representation constitute the main analytical framework of the investigation, but attention is also given to other ideals of justice which play a central role in the debates analysed.

The next section describes how the commemorative views of opinion leaders in Oxford were collected and analysed. Section 3 puts these views in their socio-political context, paying special attention to memories of WWII and the British Empire, as well as to the prominence of statues as a means of historical commemoration in the UK. Section 4 analyses in turn the main reasons cited by

¹ A Critical Review of the Publick Buildings, statues and Ornaments in and about London and Westminster, 1734.

opinion leaders for paying attention to commemorative actions, the considerations of normativity, relevance and publicity that should structure these actions, and the representative mechanisms that should underpin their development. The conclusion wraps up with a synthesis of the results and the conceptual building blocks they provide for a theory of commemorative justice.

2. METHODOLOGY

Data gathering for this national report was guided by the case study protocol drafted by ETHOS WP4.5 co-ordinators. The co-ordinators drafted a vignette, or fictitious story, that we were invited to comment on and adjust to our national context. The draft was devised to open up discussion on ethnic/racial/religious histories and was framed by efforts

to reflect on the different types of claims related to: (1) Recognition of pain/past harm of the ethnic/racial/religious groups and claims touching on restorative justice; (2) Claims related to freedom of thought/speech/expression by different 'sides' of the controversy; (3) Claims related to present day discrimination/racism faced by the minority members and/or present day consequences of their past oppression; (4) Claims related to issues of re-distribution and social class; (4) Claims related to (ontological) security and/or fear of the Other; (5) Attempts to diminish the role of history.

The final vignette is in Appendix 1. It describes the projected renovation of a central statue representing Lord Mountbatten, last Viceroy and first Governor-General of India, who oversaw the violent partition of India and Pakistan and was assassinated by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in 1979. When adjusting the vignette we wanted to be attentive to the findings of the ETHOS minoritisation report (Anderson et al. 2018) and Deliverable 5.2 (Anderson and Dupont 2018). These emphasised the importance of minoritisation processes. Categories of difference are not simply out there: certain characteristics are given weight, held to be signifiers, while others are allowed to blend into the background. Which characteristics matter depends on place and on context but across Europe there is a deeply rooted association of minorities with ethnicity and race. Research can, via 'methodological nationalism', contribute to minoritisation and racialisation processes. Of course we do not hold that it is possible to see past 'race', nor that pretending to do so makes 'race' disappear. However, we did want to complicate the idea of whiteness, and hence chose to depict an example that would speak to both Irish and South Asian racialisations. Irishness is a group that is racialised as white but as a kind of degraded 'whiteness'. Mountbatten's assassination by the IRA also enables connections to be drawn between different geographical sites and times of British colonial history.

The meaning of statues is very much determined by their context. We therefore wanted to interview people in a single town in order to be able to depict a scenario that was in a similar social context where interviewees could imagine the particular site where the statue would be located. Oxford University has seen student activism around Rhodes Must Fall, and there has started to be a lively debate on racism in the city and the university. The city itself is highly divided between Town and Gown, and this reflects considerable economic inequality evident in the gulf between the wealthy

colleges in the heart of the town and the large housing estates beyond the ring road. We also chose Oxford in part for practical reasons. The time available was very limited, we needed to be able to access interviewees who came from different perspectives and background and the first author has strong personal networks in Oxford.

We do not claim that the eight people we interviewed were in any way representative of the views of the people of Oxford. We sought to interview people who had influence, because they were political activists including on social media, or were engaged in the arts or held a position of esteem and respect. We were particularly concerned to select people of different political persuasions, across different generations, and to ensure a good representation of people who would be considered ‘minorities’.

Interview number	Gender	Age	Person of colour/non-UK national	Role
1	F	26-45	Y	Theatre activist
2	M	18-25	Y	Art activist
3	F	26-45	N	Film activist
4	M	65+	N	Vicar
5	M	46-64	N	University professor
6	F	18-25	Y	Political campaigner
7	F	18-25	Y	Student vlogger
8	M	46-64	N	Councillor

Contact with participants took place by email or during public events attended by the researchers. Interviews were conducted between December 2018 and January 2019 at interviewees’ workplace, in their home, in other convenient places or through Skype. They followed a semi-structured format, alternating readings of the vignette with general questions designed to elicit views on the events described. Each interview lasted approximately an hour and was audio recorded, transcribed and stored on space specifically created for the ETHOS project on the University of Bristol secure server. Transcripts were then imported into an NVivo file also stored on the secure server.

Qualitative analysis proceeded in three steps. In the initial step, a list of discursive themes and sub-themes was elaborated based on the authors’ recollection of interviews. All transcripts were then read in depth on NVivo. Relevant passages were coded according to the pre-set list of themes and sub-themes as well as new ones which shed light on ideals of commemorative justice. In the process, several themes and sub-themes were renamed, moved or removed with a view to reflecting as accurately as possible the form and substance of the discourses under study. Some passages were coded under more than one theme or sub-theme when their semantic associations were multiple or

ambiguous. In step two, all coded passages were copied individually into separate Word files broadly named after the parts of Section 4. The parts were reshuffled one last time to ensure logical progression between the aims, the means and the development of commemorative actions. In step three, all relevant passages were brought into a single Word file and reorganised according to the order in which they would be discussed. At the writing stage, they were re-read in order to identify the similarities, complementarities and contradictions between the discourses of different actors, as well as to select the most expressive words or sentences that would illustrate the report's arguments.

3. HISTORICAL COMMEMORATION IN THE UK

In his review of Pierre Nora's mammoth work *Les Lieux de Memoire*, Tony Judt (2008) describes Europe as living in an 'age of commemoration'. He regards this as deeply problematic, not because 'forms of public memory... are fake or kitsch or selective or even parodic' for, he argues, such is the nature of public commemoration. Rather it is problematic because the 'neglect of history' that means there is no shared knowledge of how history is learned from which critique of commemoration can emerge. Hobsbawm had flagged this concern even earlier: 'The destruction of the past, or rather of the social mechanisms that link one's contemporary experience to that of earlier generations, is one of the most characteristic and eerie phenomena of the late twentieth century' (Hobsbawm, 1995). One might argue that commemoration, which seeks to install particular memories, is thereby given an enhanced capacity to be shaped by the present and its needs (Bill Schwarz cited in Geppert and Muller, 2015: 6). National monuments and rituals meld emotion and historical 'fact' and seek to establish conformity and a national narrative. National narratives are always contested (D5.2) and conformity that is too easily achieved risks exclusion and silencing.

In the UK, debates around commemoration have two principal foci, the Second World War – relations with Europe – and the British Empire. These are important to shaping popular understandings of Britain's place in the world and are indicative of two counter movements – nostalgia for 'Global Britain', a highly sanitised imperial past where Britain 'ruled the waves', and a 'Powellite narrative of retreating from a globalizing world' (Virdee and McGeever, 2018), of being 'besieged' by invading others (the fact that the UK worked as part of an alliance in World War II and that it drew on the resources of Empire is rarely taken into consideration). Both draw on extremely racialised structures of feeling. Commemoration in these respects is highly active and is not only manifest in museums and monuments but also in the kind of language and imaginative tropes that featured heavily in the Brexit debate and that have come to dominate the contemporary national conversation. The idea of a United Kingdom liberated from the chains of Europe and returning to its former imperial greatness was explicitly invoked in the language of 'Empire 2.0' – the phrase used by Whitehall officials to describe the aim to rebuild trade links between Britain and Commonwealth countries.

At the same time as this history is invoked there is also evidence of considerable ignorance about its consequences: 'The United Kingdom is one of the few countries in the European Union that does not need to bury its 20th century history', claimed Secretary of State for International Trade Liam Fox; while Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson asserted, 'We used to run the biggest empire the world

has ever seen, with a much smaller domestic population and a relatively tiny civil service.’ A 2014 YouGov poll found that 59% of British people were proud of Empire, and 19% were ashamed.

In a highly prescient book Paul Gilroy described the British phenomenon of ‘post-colonial melancholia’ the peculiar mixture of guilt and pride that prevents a proper understanding of colonial history and its contemporary relevance. Historical memory in the UK is he argues highly selective, concentrating on ‘heroic moments’ ending the slave trade (not starting it in the first place) and the Second World War. There is a mourning for lost greatness, a reluctance to look at the perspective of others, and a determination to ignore the bloody domination of Empire. Modest and Koning (2017) link this to European ‘anxious politics’: ‘a struggle with how to deal with the consequences of earlier colonial histories in contemporary politics’. Anxieties about the future of nation-states are projected on to fears about negatively racialised others which both draw on and reinforce national exclusions (Koning and Modest, 2017).

Melancholia and anxious politics all resonate with the politics of Brexit, and it is in this context that we need to set the findings of the UK case study. How Britain relates to its imperial past and to its European neighbours is very much in the news. When Prime Minister May was set back to negotiate the ‘backstop’ with Brussels it was rumoured that she would travel in a Spitfire, a fighter aircraft famously used in World War II. The ‘backstop’ itself, that has caused such trouble for the UK’s consent to the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement, is an attempt to deal with one of England’s earliest imperial legacies, its domination of the island of Ireland, the response of the island’s inhabitants and the consequent border between the North of Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Indeed, it is important to remember that the UK is not a nation state, but a state comprising four ‘nations’ or countries, where the dominant power is England, and where the wealthy South of England is regarded suspiciously by the much poorer North of the country.

In this context commemoration can risk becoming cartoonish, and this came to the fore in the build up to the annual Remembrance Sunday in 2018. This is the day where Britain commemorates the servicemen and women of the two world wars and subsequent conflicts. Many people wear a red poppy to remember the British and Commonwealth dead – i.e. ‘our’ side. Public figures who chose not to wear one were publicly criticised – Jeremy Corbyn was criticised for wearing one that was ‘too small’. Huge poppies festooned lampposts and fences, and enthusiasts bedecked themselves with poppies. Remembrance Day ceremonies, some reported, were the only public events where attendance was actually rising.² Empire was accommodated by actively including Commonwealth service personnel.



FIGURE 1: POPPIES

² Adam Ramsay (2018), ‘Debates about poppies are nothing new, but the tone has changed in Brexit Britain’, *openDemocracy* [accessed via <https://www.opendemocracy.net/uk/adam-ramsay/debates-about-poppies-are-nothing-new-but-tone-has-changed-in-brexit-britain>].

The nationalistic tone of these commemorations has become particularly troubling in the context of Brexit, which has both solidified and given a filip to anti-migrant, racist and xenophobic sentiment. Rather than recognising migration as imbricated with British colonial and post-colonial presents, the precarity of its labour market and the underfunding and understaffing of its welfare state, migration has become the problem. People are not only burdens but threat to identity and security, and must demonstrate that they conform in order to be accepted in a 'culturalization of citizenship' (Koning and Modest, 2017), that is in practice highly racialised.

Disputed histories resonate in particular ways in the case of statues. The saints and angels that flew from the facades of medieval cathedrals landed in churchyard memorials. Statues of individuals freeze not just people but the attitudes and values that they commemorate. Public statues of individuals were rare until the early 1700s and were largely of royalty and nobles. Statues and monuments in private parks were more typical and outdoor funerary memorials grew. It was the Victorian era that saw the rise in public statuary with the growth in public parks, and cultivation of national history and Empire. Furthermore, statues require scarce public space and investment in public art and consequently the national statuary is very slow to reflect changes in public attitudes. However, social and political context and attitude does shift and the place of these monuments in a national narrative does indeed change, even as the monument itself does not.

The interest in monuments and memorialisation has been maintained through debates on the Fourth Plinth. This is a plinth in Trafalgar Square that was originally intended for a statue of



FIGURE 3: ROCKING HORSE

King William IV that was never erected because of lack of funds. In 2005 the

Fourth Plinth Commissioning Group was established to enable a rolling programme of temporary commissions to fill the space. These commissions reflect a very different public aesthetic from that more usually associated with statuary. For example, Elmgreen and Dragset's *Powerless Structures Fig. 101* (2012) was a bronze sculpture of a small boy on a rocking horse, a celebration of the heroism, not of generals, but of growing up. For Antony Gormley's *One & Other* (2009) 2,400 members of the public occupied the plinth for an hour on 100 consecutive days, doing whatever they wished:

Through putting a person onto the plinth, the body becomes a metaphor, a symbol. In the context of Trafalgar Square with its military, valedictory and male historical statues, this elevation of everyday life to the position formerly occupied by monumental art, allows us to reflect on the diversity, vulnerability and particularity of the individual in contemporary society.³

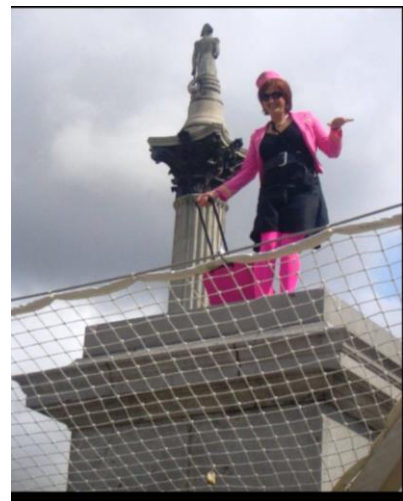


FIGURE 2: OCCUPATION OF THE PLINTH

³ Personal website of Antony Gormley [accessed via <http://www.antonygormley.com/show/item-view/id/2277>].

However, the ‘great (wo)man’ view of history is still manifest in British public statuary. Following the death in 2013 of former Conservative Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, several Conservative politicians, and then UKIP leader, Nigel Farage, proposed that the fourth plinth be permanently used for her statue. Then London Mayor, Boris Johnson suggested Parliament Square as a more appropriate site. Thatcher is, however, a divisive figure, and a marble statue of her was decapitated in 2002 in the Guildhall Art Gallery. Fears of vandalism resulted in a special plinth designed to be hard to climb with in-built sockets to enable the erection of protective hoardings during demonstrations.

Westminster City Council eventually turned down the planning application because of ‘monument saturation’ and ‘lack of family support’. The one and a half life sized bronze statue, by Douglas Jennings, will now be situated in Thatcher’s home town of Grantham. The plan is to place it on a ten-foot high plinth with cctv surveillance to deter protesters (or vandalism – the term used is not innocent). The case for the statue was strongly promoted by Grantham museum’s curator who:



FIGURE 4: THATCHER MONUMENT

urged people to consider the potential of the statue to generate investment, adding that the museum was in contact with coach trip organisers from all over the world and that visitors frequently ask why there was no statue.⁴

So far we have discussed the situation in the United Kingdom, but it might better be described as strongly English focussed. Englishness, long submerged in the British imperial project, is emerging again, confronted with a profound sense of loss of privilege (Virdee and McGeever, 2018). It is necessary to acknowledge the situatedness of memory, that *site* matters. We therefore chose to situate our fieldwork in the city of Oxford. Oxford is peculiar in that it is both quintessentially English but also highly cosmopolitan. A small city it has nevertheless provided the formative education for generations of British political and industrial leaders and thinkers. As Professor Hilary Beckles put it: ‘Oxford existed before England’s imperial enterprise. But it was critical in shaping the nature of it [...]’. Equally Oxford had a hand in [...] defining the post-colonial nationalist worlds that have erupted from the belly of the wounded but still surviving hydra. Empire without Oxford is oxymoronic’ (Beckles, 2016). It was one of the bastions of Remain in the Brexit referendum, but there were also significant pockets of Leave voting areas.

⁴ Ben Quinn (2019), ‘Thatcher statue rejected by London to be erected in Grantham’, *The Guardian* [accessed via <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/05/margaret-thatcher-bronze-statue-to-be-erected-in-grantham>].

Importantly for our purposes, Oxford was also the site of a national campaign calling for decolonisation of education and in particular ‘Rhodes Must Fall’ (RMF). This followed the campaigning and events initiated at the University of Cape Town in March 2015. Cecil Rhodes was a British imperialist and businessman who believed in the Anglo-Saxon ‘master race’ and Black Africans as a ‘subject race’. The University of Oxford benefited from the legacy of his huge profits in the diamond business, and student solidarity with Cape Town protesters grew into an Oxford oriented RMF campaign. On 6th November 2015 students occupied the square in front of Oriel College which has a large statue of Rhodes above its entrance, having gathered more than 3,000 signatures demanding the removal of this statue. There was limited support from within the University, with the Vice-Chancellor suggesting that students could choose to be educated elsewhere and refusing to ‘excise’ history. Professor Patricia Daley, Oxford University’s first Black female professor, was shocked at the hostility of the response to students: ‘Was it not justified to question Rhodes’ legacy in Oxford? After all the source of his ill-gotten wealth was the exploitation and dehumanisation of African peoples’. She also pointed out that Brexit Secretary Liam Fox had chosen a portrait of Rhodes to grace his office (Daley, 2018). Indeed, MP David Hannan, another prominent ‘Brexiteer’ said that the protests were ‘too ridiculous for words’, and branded the students ‘cretinous’, and too stupid to be studying at Oxford. In January 2016 Oriel College announced that the statue would stay because of the ‘overwhelming’ support that it should – though a leaked memo also reported that should they remove the statue they would lose an estimated £100 million in donations.

4. RESULTS

Having set out the European and colonial context of historical commemoration in the UK and Oxford, this section explores how the opinion leaders interviewed justified the form it should or should not take by expressing their views on the hypothetical renovation of Lord Mountbatten’s statue.

4.1. REASONS FOR COMMEMORATION

Two main reasons for commemoration seemed to shape participants’ views on the best way to deal with the controversial statue. The first consisted in acknowledging the harm inflicted by the British Empire, in part to address the intellectual roots of contemporary racism, intellectual roots that are associated with the University of Oxford. This can be understood as a form of restorative justice intertwined with the aim of racial recognition. The second one, often condemned but sometimes implicitly accepted as widely endorsed, was the transmission of a White British identity. These justifications, and particularly the first, were sometimes seen as having sufficient weight to trump the satisfaction of material needs.

4.1.1. POST-COLONIAL RESTORATION AND RACIAL RECOGNITION

When asked in the abstract about the purpose of commemoration, most respondents accepted the importance of historical memory for overcoming past injustices. The university professor pointed out that statues do not only evoke individuals but also historical injustices involving large populations over many years: 'I don't think that the primary reason for the protests or the objections to memorializing Cecil Rhodes really has to do with him and his personal characteristics. It has to do with oppression of Africans by white invaders in the history of South Africa.' Recognising the continuities between past and present injustices helped society move toward a less unjust society:

I suppose if there were complete racial equality and equality of life chances and so on in the southern states in the US, then I bet that people wouldn't be so interested in those confederate memorials because they would seem to be historical peculiarities. Right? But the reason they don't feel like they're historical peculiarities is that the actual history of them is like an assertion of white rule in the 20th century, and the reason why the people who want them there want them there is their continued dedication to that cause.

For the theatre activist, accepting a collective identity (including the British one) also meant accepting a collective responsibility for past crimes. Like the university professor, she insisted that this did not mean considering oneself personally responsible for these actions but rather connecting them to current injustices. The councillor concurred that he would be willing to apologise for some aspects of Britain's past.

The impact of colonialism and slavery figured prominently in respondents' accounts of Britain's violent past. The vicar highlighted the central role they played in British wealth accumulation, characterising the Empire as a way of 'digging ground for gold' and reminding 'the number of ordinary people who were tied up and getting money out of slavery and actually owned slaves through companies. They never went to Jamaica or wherever but made a lot of money out of all of that.' The university professor made a close connection between recognising historical injustice and respecting political rights or self-determination. Despite this, the political campaigner deplored the scarcity of anti-colonial discussions in many British circles and stressed that there was a need to 'platform people who are anti-colonial heroes rather than colonial masters of the Empire. Statues are symbols. And they do tell a story but the story that's being told is not the one which we want to be told'. Statues thus mattered because they tend to trigger necessary questions and critical engagement with colonialism.

According to this respondent, an important continuity between colonial history and present injustice was the everyday racism which the celebration of the Empire reinforced by feeding into a broader white supremacist narrative. Explicitly linking colonialism and WWII, the art activist criticised how false ideas about the past (including indifference to the fact that Britain was still a colonial power at the height of the War) meant that racial inequalities in the UK and globally could not be put in their proper context and that 'dodgy individuals' such as Mountbatten and Churchill could be held as moral examples.

4.1.2. THE DISPUTED LEGITIMACY OF WHITE BRITISH REPRODUCTION

In the context of the vignette, respondents' endorsement of an anti-colonial/anti-racist frame was such that all voiced strong criticism toward the idea that White British or English identities should be reproduced. Both the political campaigner and the art activist pointed out how they were often mobilised with a view to scapegoat migrants for economic and other problems, and the latter characterised calls for the preservation of British culture as a 'dog whistle' (or a covert way of expressing racial hostility). More generally, there seemed to be an agreement about the morally problematic nature of British identity. The political campaigner pointed out that it tended to manifest itself in reactionary and violent ways; the film activist rhetorically asked how much there was to be proud of in British identity; the theatre activist suggested that if Britishness was about Empire and not recognising past mistakes then it would need reconsidering; and the vicar and the councillor agreed that some parts of British history, including slavery and Empire, should be apologised for rather than respected.

The notion that threatened British identities needed support to be passed on was also disputed on the grounds that they were constantly changing (vicar) and internally diverse:

I think because Britain is so multicultural. Especially Oxford, we're a very liberal city, that the culture that I have is so mixed with different things, that maybe I don't really think at the moment there is a true British culture because we've got so many different aspects of different countries merged into our culture (student vlogger).

The councillor expressed a similar idea by underlining that some parts of British culture are 'not indigenous'.

At the same time, there was an ambivalent acceptance of the possibility that those who identified as White British may be genuinely anxious of cultural change. The student vlogger identified with this feeling: 'The social norms that we have, I wouldn't really want them to change.' However she struggled to pin down exactly what these norms were:

I don't know, actually, thinking about it. I just said that, and I don't really know. I guess the very stereotypical stuff, like coming over to someone's house and having tea and biscuits, that's a very British thing. There's little things like that, stuff that's not that important, I guess. But I don't know.

The political campaigner also accepted that British identities were fine as long as they came with a recognition of power disparities between white and Black people. While the arts organisation worker expressed doubts about the ideal of patriotism itself, the university professor and the theatre activist cautiously submitted that removing a colonial statue would not necessarily hurt the feelings of those who were proud to be British, thus implicitly admitting that these feelings deserved to be taken into account.

4.1.3. REDISTRIBUTIVE TRADE-OFFS

While all respondents perceived commemoration practices as having significant implications in terms of post-colonial and race relations, several suggested that pressing economic needs should be prioritised in public spending decisions. The political campaigner and the councillor were unconvinced that pulling down a statue was a good use of money, and the latter explicitly came down on the side of alleviating hunger rather than commemorating in a situation of ‘appalling’ public funding: ‘If it’s a choice between setting up a food bank and restoring a statue of Mountbatten then I’m afraid setting up a food bank would be more important, I think, because it’s about the individual suffering of individual people currently.’ Likewise, the art activist opined that social housing should be prioritised over renovating a park: ‘There certainly is a reality in the fact that a lot of money which goes on pointless prestige projects, like the creation of Mountbatten Square, could be better spent on giving and helping the poorest in the community.’

The overwhelming impression however was that a balance should be struck between the resolution of socioeconomic and cultural problems. Indeed the political campaigner conceived racism as both economic and cultural in nature, insisting that public authorities should simultaneously invest in raising the living standards of the white working class and tackling symbols that invoke white supremacy:

The question is if we’re talking about eradicating white supremacy and attacking racism, how do you balance the spending in terms of raising the living standards of the worst off and thereby alleviating this tension and this stress that is able to be exploited by people who are spinning racist narratives, or is it better spent tackling symbols of colonialism and violent spaces that invoke white supremacy and how much do these spaces feed into a racist narrative. [...] I think that there should be a balance, but I think you can’t really have one without the other because ideally if you have a lot of money to shovel into services and basic needs you would see a decline in active fascist far-right mobilisation, and violent hate crimes, etc. That’s what we’ve seen over the last - since the Attlee government, I guess, and then, obviously, declined since the recent crash courses of the 80s, in many ways. So I think that that didn’t, in and of itself, eradicate racism. You need to actually tackle it on an educational point of view.

Without referring directly to the anti-racist dimension of commemoration, the university professor and the vicar highlighted that public art and cultural heritage fulfilled important needs which should not be completely sacrificed even for the sake of tackling homelessness. The professor connected this dilemma to the complexity of justice and its relation to other values:

Justice is important, but so are these other values, but it doesn’t mean that you do spend everything on this and then once that’s sort of settled, you then move on to the next one. Or you might think of it as justice encompassing all other values. So then you think what you want to do is maximise justice, but then you’d say ‘Well, one aspect of doing that is attending to homelessness, but another aspect of it is being prepared to do something about public art which speaks to other human needs in other ways.

Another way to make a similar point was to observe that as a matter of fact, public money does not 'switch pot' so easily (political campaigner) and that social housing should be allocated its own budget (vicar).

Balancing was also conceived as a utilitarian optimisation of resources by the vicar and the arts organisation worker, who pointed out that the money used to renovate a statue wouldn't go very far if it were spent on social housing. The latter respondent went further by pointing out that social housing came with problems of its own, such as the ghettoisation of the poor in less attractive areas far from city centres. The theatre activist and the councillor both introduced tourism revenue in their cost-benefit analysis but reached different results, as the first saw this revenue as a good reason not to remove the statue but the second was unconvinced that tourists would be disappointed by its disappearance.

A final way to deal with redistributive trade-offs, put forward by the vicar, was to solve the underfunding of local governments so there would be no need to choose between the arts and social housing. This respondent was particularly critical of what he perceived as a British tendency to neglect public spaces. The student vlogger and rap activist similarly rejected the idea of a rigid trade-off and proposed that more money should be raised by taxing the rich. As the rap activist put it: 'I think that the money that goes towards those who are poorest in society should come from taxing people who are wealthy. [...] This is one of the richest cities in one of the richest countries in the world. The money for social housing can come from elsewhere if properly dealt with.'

4.2. DELIBERATIVE IDEALS

As a discourse on the past, commemoration may be analysed as a form of public deliberation with indirect effects on other dimensions of justice such as restoration and recognition. For the opinion leaders interviewed, this deliberation best served its moral aims when fulfilling conditions of normativity, relevance and publicity.

4.2.1. NORMATIVITY

Various participants emphasised the moral lessons that can be drawn from history. These lessons should derive from a simultaneous examination of history's positive and negative aspects. According to the theatre activist, commemoration is a way of remembering that does not necessarily have to be a celebration 'but like a collective memory of things or people that have existed and contributed or not contributed. You can commemorate an event that is universally seen as awful or you can commemorate an event that is universally seen as positive.' For the councillor, 'You can commemorate the good things for celebration and the bad ones for not repeating them'. Pointing out the notion of glory that floats around the concept of commemoration, the vicar proposed to replace it with the idea of 'reminders' which would include 'things that have not been very nice and you ought to think about them'. Positive or negative, reminders should not be obliterated.

The vindication of normative deliberation also came under the guise of critical thinking, understood as a capacity to see both the positive and negative implications of specific individuals,

actions or events. All participants pointed out the difficulties of drawing normative conclusions about complex personal and historical trajectories, including those intertwined with colonialism. The vicar and the university professor made this point most forcefully by emphasising the ambiguity of Mountbatten's record on the independence of India. Characterising Mountbatten as 'an interesting figure' with 'pluses and minuses about him', the vicar explained this ambiguity by conveying the perspective of retired Indian army colonels he met in the 1960s:

[They] absolutely hated him. Because they said that he just came in and he did it too fast, far too fast.

Interviewer: What, you mean independence or partition, or...?

Respondent: The independence. And therefore, going for partition, because it became the only solution, and their view was that he should have put the brakes on and looked for something else [than partition], because what was going to happen was absolutely predictable. But on the other hand, he did bring about independence, didn't he? And it was long overdue. And he did it, anyway, on the orders of a Labour government, which was a paradoxical thing.'

This respondent also saw some merit in the fact that, while Mountbatten undoubtedly was 'an establishment man' and 'part of the Empire' which he 'no doubt liked', he also saw the need to 'go out and see his Empire'. The university professor made a similar point but zoomed in on the hazards of attributing personal responsibility for structurally embedded problems:

One possibility is that the disaster of partition was sort of largely caused by his conduct of the policy. And another is that he kind of did his level best to make it happen as well as he could. And some of it was done even much worse than him. But so even in the best case scenario – so he himself could have been a sort of faithful public servant and done as good a job as he could but still have contributed to a kind of disaster.

Comparing Mountbatten and Rhodes, he argued there was a stronger case for getting rid of the latter's statue as the former did not 'personally organise the killing of the people'. However Rhodes himself was not consensually deemed beyond historical rehabilitation. Recalling the prestigious scholarships bearing his name, the councillor observed: 'You can take the view that his money enabled a lot of education. Or you can take the view that he was very retrogressive in some of his practices within South Africa. My own view is that he is a very important historical person, and I have no worries about a statue for Rhodes.' More generally he noted that there would always be a huge range of perspectives from which to judge a particular individual. Adopting a similar perspective-switching strategy as the vicar above, he illustrated the point through Welsh miners' views of Winston Churchill:

You can go to Westminster and see a statue of Winston Churchill. And you would say, well, Winston Churchill was a great politician in many ways. But if that's all you see – if you see a statue and you think 'wartime leader, great man', it denies other parts. Part of my family is from South Wales and they have a history of mining. And Winston Churchill is not a very popular figure in South Wales.

Interviewer: How do they remember him?

Respondent: Well, badly actually. But they remember him intervening in the miners' strikes. And the kind of concept is that people died. I'm not actually sure many did die. I don't think any died. But the idea of bringing troops in to ensure that the mines were kept going... So there's a different perspective on individuals depending on how you are looking at it.

The importance of perspective was also highlighted in his comment that 'History is as good as the person who writes it' and that 'perspectives on people can change through time', so that reviewing commemoration would 'undoubtedly be a good idea'.

Participants proposed several ways of dealing with normative complexity and ambiguity. One suggestion was to give less prominence to politicians, who tend to be controversial due to their privileged backgrounds (student vlogger) and association with particular political programmes (university professor). The latter respondent offered to replace them with a greater number of 'notable scientists, musicians and writers'. At the same time, participants acknowledged that celebrating individuals in general could be tricky as they often have a negative side. Interestingly they coincided in representing this side as a matter of sexual morality, with the professor making the hypothesis that Victor Hugo could have been a child molester and the student vlogger reporting rumours Martin Luther King had been involved in sex scandals. She also pointed out that 'The vast majority of people who gave money to universities are going to have been racist or sexist or homophobic or something. They're all going to have bigoted views.' To overcome this, the university professor suggested that, like contemporary public figures, historical ones should be remembered for their important deeds rather than their personality:

It's a little bit like Lord Lester. The one who's just been kicked out. He's resigned from the House of Lords. There's all his defenders saying, 'Oh, but he's such a nice bloke.' And maybe he was to them, but that's irrelevant to the action being proposed to be taken against him which was as a result of a process in the House of Lords. He's not being judged on whether he's a good egg or had done meritorious things for human rights. He's being judged on whether he behaved appropriately in this case, and the process said he didn't. So similarly, a judgement to move the statue or not spend money doing it up, or accompany it with some other statue, or take the plaque away, isn't a judgement about whether he was nice. It's a judgement about what this memorial means in the context of Oxford.

Participants overall were critical of the names given to public spaces, which were seen as lacking in gender and racial diversity (university professor) and containing many references to those involved in colonialism (political campaigner) and slavery (theatre activist). At the same time they were sceptical about the option of depersonalising historical commemoration altogether. The art activist considered it may be a good option but it was less likely than 'moving towards a more representative form of what we have now, having more statues of people of colour, less statues of genocidal racists. That would be a good place to start.' The student vlogger considered that it may be preferable to give public spaces general rather than individual names but saw this course of action as a slippery slope: 'If we're going to take down one person's statue, I don't know where we would stop'. She also noted that acknowledging achievement does not have to mean the person is flawless:

If someone finds the cure for cancer, but they made like a racist tweet two years ago – it's a tricky debate, to be honest. Because if someone saved the life of someone that I cared about through researching into curing a disease, but they were also quite horrible in their private life, I would still have that gratitude anyway.

In the same way, the theatre activist pragmatically underlined the limits of personal morality by observing that the artists commissioned to make statues for contested figures have to put food on the table themselves:

Most artists, no matter what art you do, it's an expression of yourself and your beliefs and your feelings and what you enjoy, but at the same time the art is so undervalued that you have to still chuck out and put food on the table by doing what you do. So the person that created the statue of Lord Mountbatten may have thought Lord Mountbatten a hero and therefore agreed to do it. Or he may have hated Lord Mountbatten but then thought, 'This is a really highly paid commission. I need to do it to put food on the table.'

4.2.2. RELEVANCE

According to participants, commemoration should not only shed light on moral norms but also be relevant to its social context. In turn, relevance seemed to be understood as a complex concept comprising three interrelated dimensions: impact on social structures, centrality to social identities and relation to the present.

With regard to impact, the theatre activist proposed that commemoration should evoke 'large events that have shaped the course of history or shaped the development of society'. At the same time, it should not neglect the 'smaller stories' of the factory workers and other less powerful actors who have had a 'personal effect on the way society develops and how history is changed.' The vicar considered that Mountbatten's significance stemmed from the fact that he was responsible for a major development in world history. The student vlogger endorsed the principle but not its application to the case at hand:

I think if the main thing that he's known for is being the governor-general of India – and that's kind of it – other than being Prince Charles' uncle. I don't know if I – as a person, I don't tend to really care about much stuff like this unless the person is a really abhorrent person. But personally, I wouldn't care that much.

She contrasted this with what she perceived as the further-reaching implications of the rule of Queen Elizabeth I:

If this were a statue of Elizabeth I for example, she was also quite colonial obviously because she was living during that time period but she actually did rule well in England I guess. That would be a better person to having that position. If they wanted to get rid of an Elizabeth I statue, I'd be a bit like, that's a massive part of British history that we shouldn't really get rid of.

The latter comment hints at the symbolic dimension of 'relevance', that is to say, the meaning a historical person, action and event may take in the narrative that surrounds collective identities. The theatre activist reckoned that 'Identity is far more determined by specific historical events than others', and that people may feel a strong emotional connection to specific events. As a general rule, the commemoration of an event should involve the people who feel strongly about it. The university professor illustrated the symbolic relevance of specific historical events with the anecdote of a Welsh librarian:

The professional librarian used to be Welsh and the fellow librarian also Welsh at the same time. And the time had come to have a new entry code on the library and I think it was decided by the fellow and he said, 'Oh Joanna, I think that the new code is going to be 1400.' And she laughed and all the English people said, 'What?' and the code turned out to be the date when Owain Glyndwr was crowned or something which the English people had no reason to remember, but the Welsh do. So I think it's similarly that what means nothing to one group of people means a lot to another.

In this story the Welsh are cast as the 'others' of English imperialism and the crowning of Glyndwr exemplifies the part of history which the colonial power can afford to dismiss as irrelevant to its overall trajectory. In contrast, the vicar suggested that Mountbatten symbolised the on-going links between British and European aristocracy. Aristocratic symbolism also figured prominently among the reasons offered by the art activist for the on-going relevance of the English civil war:

England still has a heavily-entrenched and grotesque class system which is embodied by the monarchy, and which probably has a lot of its roots in the violence of the English Civil War. And I think that maybe making steps towards getting rid of the monarchy, and moving towards a fairer system would involve little symbolic changes like that.

The theatre activist expressed some doubt about the legitimacy of identity as a criterion for commemoration: 'That can create a lot of conflict too, depending on what events you're talking about. So I don't know, actually. When people have strong feelings about an event [...] how do you say you can only have so much identity connected to an event?' She felt this also raised a 'chicken and egg' question about whether we should commemorate things *because* people took interest or precisely *in order to* create interest.

There was widespread agreement on the view that the relevance of history should largely be assessed based on its relation to the present. As we have seen earlier, the university professor used this criterion to distinguish between historical elements that deserved to be remembered, such as slavery in the US, and those that boiled down to historical 'peculiarities'. More generally, the vicar insisted that 'We need to assess where we are in the light of where we've been through history'. A corollary of this is that commemorations of figures that have lost their contemporary resonance, including possibly Mountbatten, may also lose their relevance:

This man, who was a real establishment figure, the great and the good – he was this extraordinary, influential person. And he fitted with a worldview. I don't know when it stopped that particular worldview, being a held reality by lots of people. [...] You're up against the fact this is a historical figure who is actually passing out of our views now.

There's a sort of odd irrelevance about it actually as if we're trying to pin some relevance on this which we can't quite do in any resonant public way any longer.

While this participant still considered that 'Perhaps you need a statue to remind you that you actually had that history', the student vlogger had no qualms in dismissing Mountbatten as 'Not a big deal' since the reason why he became renowned, namely ruling over India, didn't 'match' what multicultural Oxford currently represented. The university professor noted that the loss of meaning that comes with temporal distance may actually make painful events easier to remember as the emotions they evoke become attenuated. Hence there was no agreement about the chronological time frame within which historical commemoration and its revision should be taken. The art activist illustrated this by contrasting the Armenian genocide and the violence of Genghis Khan, which may both need commemorating despite the seven centuries that separate them, and warned against the use of chronological time as a measure of relevance.

4.2.3. PUBLICITY

All participants subscribed to a philosophy of public space which made room for commemoration and generally agreed that, in the words of the arts organisation worker, 'the past shouldn't be swept under the rug'. The theatre activist provided the most fully fledged account of this, arguing that public spaces should give people the opportunity to 'step into each other's shoes, to really get an understanding of the emotions and the feelings' of all those involved in an event. Since 'everybody understands and receives information differently' they should stimulate all the senses, including smell and hearing, in addition to the 'drier pieces of information'. Instead of moving problematic statues away from public spaces, which would be a form of 'destruction' and 'historical disruption', it would be better to contextualise them and explain why they were put there in the first place, which would invite critical reflection. Alternatively or in addition, new statues could be commissioned to stand next to the first as a balance: 'You don't have this one statue in a park. You can have several.' The university professor similarly considered that adding new statues, including of women and people of colour, would make it unnecessary to remove earlier ones. He shared with the vicar a view that the latter should be left where they were despite the fact that they may not actually be noticed, an apparent paradox which may be clarified by drawing attention to the act of removal itself rather than the resulting absence.

All three interviewees put considerable emphasis on the possibility and desirability of altering the meaning of Mountbatten's statue by modifying or adding to the accompanying inscription. For the theatre activist, the original inscription should be maintained as it conveyed the reasons why it was originally designed, but additional information could be made available elsewhere (eg mobile apps). For instance, videos could feature a number of people discussing the meaning Mountbatten takes on for them. The idea of conveying competing views through the inscription was also put forward by the councillor and the university professor. The first proposed that a diversity of views, especially those very diametrically opposed, could be captured through a diversity of plaques, but the second remarked that this could trigger a proliferation of competing statements. Hence it would be better for local authorities to write the historical context itself rather than 'outsource' its deliberative function to other stakeholders.

The art activist rejected the notion that an inscription could fundamentally change the meaning of a statue in a large public square, which was necessarily celebratory:

I think it's very hard to have a big monument to someone in the middle of a square – like it's done with Churchill in Parliament Square, or various others around the world, without people seeing it as a monument of reverence. It's not something which is there for their crime, it's something which is there to respect them.

In his view, a plaque was ultimately a very small part of a big square: 'It's a matter of scale.' In the same vein, the arts organisation worker considered that changing Mountbatten's inscription could be 'a start' but would not alter the prominence given to his statue: 'And also, how many people actually read the inscription under a statue. They just go "Oh, there's that old guy from that thing", and still it's there.'

Rather than merely changing the plaque she advocated moving the statue and installing a new plaque saying where it could be found. Indeed most participants were prepared to consider moving to statue to a less conspicuous location, 'Like all those statues of Stalin which get banished to the park or out on the edge of Moscow', as the vicar put it.

There was a variety of views on the precise location that would befit Mountbatten, indirectly evoking different degrees and types of publicity. For the councillor parks were more appropriate than streets as people can choose to visit them or not. For the vicar some commemoration should be for local residents only to allow a more in-depth understanding of their meaning. The student vlogger proposed that statues of colonial figures who made donations to the university should be put inside colleges for students and visitors to see rather than in a 'massive public area'. The 'climate-controlled environment' of museums was another semi-public space that the film activist judged most suitable to statues that were 'of their time'. This would allow 'a team of conservatives to dote over it for decades and centuries to come', she added, tongue in cheek. On a more serious note, the art activist argued that museums would facilitate a proper explanation of

who this person was and why he ended up being given this prime statue of reverence and why that world view has now been revised [...]. When they're in museums it's more of a historical artefact and you can explain why it was taken down, why it was put up, and who the person was in much better detail.

4.3. MAKING DECISIONS ON COMMEMORATION

As the previous sections have shown, the ends and means of commemoration can be hotly debated in theory and in practice. This raises the question of how public authorities and residents should handle such disagreements, for instance through formal consultations, the formation of interest groups around collective identities, and public protests.

4.3.1. CONSULTATION AS FORMAL AND SUBSTANTIVE REPRESENTATION

When asked about the process that should lead to any decision about Mountbatten's statue, all interviewees were able to formulate in a clear, personal and elaborate way the democratic principle according to which the views of the 'people' or the 'community' should be taken into account (cf 4.2 UK report). The rich, expressive terminology they mobilised to express this principle testifies to its widespread endorsement and deep internalisation. The theatre activist captured it in the axiom that 'If you're not ready for it, don't do it'. More concretely, she explained that authorities should not make controversial decisions about public spaces if they were 'not ready for the consequences' or did not 'know where they [were] going to go'. The idea of foreseeing and defusing any public opposition to the decision taken was a recurring one. The student vlogger expressed it thus: 'If the majority of people think it's a bad idea, then obviously it's not really something that you should be planning to do.' Recalling a controversial renovation on a shopping centre, she added that the council could not just say, 'You're going to enjoy it, so we're going to do it anyway'. The councillor considered that 'If a decision is made against the views of the population, then it's the wrong decision.' He illustrated this with the strong opposition of the student body to the statue of Rhodes, which should be taken into account when determining its fate. The vicar argued that 'If there is a hot issue like this, then there has to be some kind of mediation with the public. You can't actually, in an authoritarian way, decide you're going to go ahead without reaching down into your base. That's got to be a kind of new mindset for those who are in positions of authority now, hasn't it?' This statement thus rejects an old authoritarian mindset in favour of a new one that obliges decision-makers to keep in touch, and thus reduce the power difference, with their 'base'.

In practice, as the vicar readily acknowledged, the 'infrastructure' that surrounds decision-makers tends to rather isolate them. How, then, should the base be reached? The councillor noted that part of the answer would reside in the 'political process' where 'individual city councillors should have been doing their own consultation with their own ward members', but also that issue specific consultations would help:

I would want to be asking the people that I represent, and I would want the City Council to be doing a public consultation. [...] What happens in those situations is that some publicity would come out of it, and within that publicity, there would be a difference between mainstream media organisations and social media organisations. And you would get a view of the wider support or non-support. But you would have to make sure that, in terms of the media that you use, there is a wide cross-section because, undoubtedly, the media in this country is not particularly left-wing.

With regard to the scope of consultation, this participant submitted that it should mainly take place within the confines of the city but may also have a wider reach as 'Mountbatten is considered to be a very important national icon'. The theater activist agreed that those most directly affected by the decision would be city residents who made use of the public space and paid taxes, but that Mountbatten's national and international status should also be taken into account. As a general rule, she proposed that all those whom the statue represented in a particular way should have a say in its renovation or removal. This would include Irish and Indians and their descendants living in the UK, since the Mountbatten statue had the potential to confer strongly positive or negative meanings to their identities.

There was widespread agreement on the prevalence of structural inequalities that frequently hamper the realisation of democratic principles in consultation processes. The political campaigner described these processes as often ‘half-assed’ and not reflecting the reality of the citizens living in the area: ‘They’ll put something online, get three responses and say, well, we did consult. You didn’t, and you need to do better.’ According to her, consultations tend to be skewed toward the views of white upper-class defenders of freedom of speech, with little ‘push’ to persuade others to participate. The student vlogger attributed this to consultations not being sufficiently publicised:

Because a lot of things that happen in Oxford, not many people know about until after it’s happened. So I think it’s kind of worth maybe letting them know. Because if you don’t make a massive fuss about it so people actually know, and then you have the event and you say, ‘Well, you should have turned out’, I don’t really think that’s fair. I think they should make an effort, definitely.

The importance of ‘reaching out’ and ‘proper engagement’ with those who, by the councillor’s admission, ‘never reply to any consultation’ but ‘still have views’, was more consensual than the definition of this group. The arts organisation worker proposed that instead of ‘passively waiting for incoming responses’, authorities should actively seek out those who think their views will not be taken seriously, a category which may include young people, working class people, diasporas and marginalised groups in general. The university professor submitted that groups who are ‘currently underrepresented in public commemoration’ should be specifically invited so that they can ‘contribute’. The student vlogger supported a greater involvement of those who have in-depth knowledge about the historical context of colonialism and slavery.

Ideas about consultations diverged even more markedly on the treatment of the British Monarchist Society and other interest groups that did not easily fit under the banner of the marginalised, such as members of the Mountbatten family. While the student vlogger deemed it unfair not to reach out to them, even if their viewpoint would be ‘very obvious’, her art activist counterpart dismissed it as necessarily biased by vested interests and lacking objectivity. The political campaigner went further, identifying a ‘responsibility’ to protect the minority by setting the terms of deliberation. Having actively engaged with free speech versus hate speech debates, she was able to articulate her position in some length:

There is a tendency to legitimise voices for the sake of argument and for the sake of democracy, and I think that we have to do better. That’s not enough. If that view ends up in violence, then there’s a responsibility from the authorities to take that into account and not just rely on lazy arguments to do with democracy in consultations. I think that that really is how ideally these things should be engaged with. [...] The views that have been put forward in this consultation are three different views, right? And they’ve been presented equally. And there isn’t really an engagement with who they represent and whether or not that’s just three very differing views. And I think that often when these debates surface in the press, or I mean in consultation, it depends who obviously responds to them. But I do think that in platforming several different opinions [...] to make your reader think, to make your reader engage, you do end up platforming views for the sake of platforming them. You shouldn’t really be platforming racist or fascist views because that doesn’t really – that ends in violence. And there’s a responsibility to

take that into account when you're printing something or giving a platform. Why do you think that there is a tendency to platform differing views just for the sake of getting a well-rounded argument, but that doesn't necessarily reflect the reality of what's going on?

A less robust form of this argument surfaced in the response of the councillor, who considered that family members of colonial figures should be consulted out of 'good manners, not because they have a veto over how their grandfather or great-grandfather is represented in Oxford'. He would also seek to limit their participation in any public consultation:

If there's a public meeting, I can't stop them coming to it, but I'd be trying to manage the Council's interaction with them by meeting them and hearing what their view was. But not encouraging them to come to a sort of public debate, because they're not representing any kind of view in Oxford.

When all is said and done, the councillor did not regard authorities as entirely bound by public opinion but as having an autonomous role to play in 'bringing them together in some form'. He illustrated this process with the case of local councillors ultimately having to decide on whether to wear red, white or no poppies on Remembrance Day, with any stance being bound to raise criticism among constituents. Yet in his view this criticism could be 'appeased' by expressing respect toward dissident stances and emphasising the democratic process of consultation. The vicar observed that the exercise of authority necessarily involved taking unpopular actions and that decision-makers should not refrain from doing so as long as they remained open to the possibility of changing their mind in light of 'strong reasons'.

4.3.2. DESCRIPTIVE REPRESENTATION

As previous ETHOS research has shown (see Deliverable 5.2), collective identities are often regarded as intertwined with particular political positions, and most participants held detailed views on the interaction of commemoration preferences with racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and age differences. Assumptions on the identity politics of commemoration partly had to do with perceived divergences on its underlying purpose, such as the legitimacy and importance of post-colonial restoration and anti-racism vs White British reproduction, but their main drivers were linked to the normative value that groups were expected to attach to a given action/event and to the latter's relevance for their current identities and situations.

In the first camp, according to the film activist, would be the 'loud, shouty faction' of the 'right-wing, older white people who see themselves as very British and very kind of upstanding and wanting to respect and remember the terrible sacrifice that this man has made over his career and then to be so brutally murdered.' As the quote suggests, those who engaged with the hypothetical stance of this 'upstanding faction' generally adopted an ironic or critical tone, mainly since this stance was associated to the contested ideal of White British or English reproduction:

In terms of Thomas Davidson, I think it says basically there's many generations of his family that have seen themselves as British and probably see themselves as White British. Probably see themselves as English. And that gives a perspective in that we don't actually

know enough about Thomas to make too many assumptions, but his perspective is very much white in this kind of background here (councillor).

This respondent and others represented white identities and their problematic political ideologies as strongly shaped by class:

If you take a city like Oxford there might well be a different view in individual parts of the city. My own background is that I was brought up on a council estate in the city. So the views of people there might well be different to the views of people in North Oxford say, which is the University, the richest part of the city. There's 15 years difference in longevity between some of the council estates and that part of the city. So a very different group of people with different views of life, and they would probably have different views on this.

The white upper class, embodied in the students of Oxford University, the British Monarchist Society and the tourism-conscious urban planner, was described as aloof and riddled with persisting imperialist tendencies. The political campaigner illustrated this with students' insensitivity to the racist implications of their activities:

You've seen that here with the Oxford Union inviting two literal fascists into the city and we had Nazis saluting on the streets where I grew up and where I live and where I live every day and we had people come to my city and come and attack us. And the students—they're completely disconnected from that reality because they're white, because they're privileged, because they're rich, because they don't have to engage in any sort of reality that Black or working class people face or people of colour. And then they're able to go in and say 'Well, we have to have freedom of speech and we have to be able to debate these views.'

In this account the juxtaposition of whiteness, privilege and wealth powerfully conveys the overlap of symbolic and socioeconomic inequalities which blend into a toxic mix of ignorance, racism and reactionary political ideology. The campaigner suspected a similar pattern to be at play among members of the British Monarchist Society, who were likely to support colonialism and think that 'Britain is great'. The arts organisation worker captured the Society's racialised and classed ideology in the hypothesis that it would be a combination of (upper class) James and (white) Thomas: 'A winning combination of the two', she added in jest. The art activist observed that James sounded 'like a Tory', thus linking the white upper class to conservative ideologies.

The white working class was not spared accusations of racism, and the political campaigner deplored how the membership of trade unions and other 'nominally left-wing organisations' could be 'incredibly reactionary'. In her view however this racism was mainly the product of manipulation by political and media elites bent on preserving their own privileges. A corollary of this is that it could be overcome by bringing conversations away from racism and back onto standards of living: '[This strategy] is able to win over predominantly people who are struggling because it provides these people with a sense of hope and a sense of belonging and a sense of identity in communities that have been completely hollowed out and trashed.'

Personal experiences of everyday struggle against structures of domination also gave the campaigner hope that Black people or those with a migrant background would tend to have a more critical view of them. This would also extend to an Irish person who, while usually categorised as white, would normally be brought up 'from the context and perspective of anti-British sentiment, anti-

colonial sentiment', facilitating a critical engagement with imperial history. According to the councillor and the arts organisation worker, this engagement would entail a degree of scepticism toward the characterisation of the IRA, who orchestrated the killing of Lord Mountbatten, as a terrorist organisation. The latter noted that some 'wouldn't really see the big problem with the IRA' and the former, that they may want to characterise its members as 'freedom fighters'.

Despite the shared experience of British imperialism, some interviewees called into question the notion that Irish, Indian and Pakistani voices were politically indistinguishable. The university professor doubted that Mountbatten's links to Ireland were strong enough to justify a special representation of the Irish community in commemoration debates, and the art activist deemed it preferable to have Indian persons intervening in the debate rather than Irish ones 'doing it on their behalf', regardless of their ideological leanings. The arts organisation worker, the councillor and the vicar also considered that a Pakistani person was likely to have a unique perspective on the partition of India. Evoking the multiple connections between descriptive and substantive representation, the theatre activist suggested that the views of the Indian or the Irish communities could be conveyed by anyone who saw themselves as a member of them, for instance in a focus group, but also by 'active local members of the community' or representatives of Indian or Irish embassies.

Age was regarded as another factor determining commemoration preferences as schoolchildren tend to have a different 'understanding of history' and 'sense of justice' (theatre activist) and 'young people have different people they look up to or different people they think are worthy (arts organisation worker).

Beyond all these identity-based assumptions, respondents qualified that personal characteristics and experiences were no foolproof predictors of personal opinions, and that a wide range of views may obtain within each of the social categories discussed. The political campaigner drew on the example of Pakistani participation in the British military to show the complexity of personal entanglements with Empire:

You do get Black and Brown people who are inherently very reactionary on a lot of things, and also very celebratory of Empire. The thing I brought up before about the Remembrance Day, it was really interesting to see so many outpourings from people I know, saying, 'My Dad did fight in this war, and he died in this war. He was in the RAF in this war, and we're so proud of him for doing so.' And that's great, that's fine, it's a very nice personal story. But it doesn't critically engage with the reality of what was going on and what that means today. And just because you're from Pakistan, or just because your Dad fought in that war doesn't mean you have necessarily a critical anti-colonial perspective.

The film activist observed that Pakistani views about partition were likely to depend on a person's political ideology and the vicar, that there may be a 'huge range of opinion' in India about Gandhi 'if they think about him at all really'. In the same vein, the university professor recalled that one of his Indian Marxist friends was highly critical of what he perceived as the excessive attention lavished on Gandhi compared to other protagonists of Indian history. He also speculated that South Asians residing in Oxford or the UK may disagree about Mountbatten's legacy with those in South Asia. The theatre activist rejected that a member of the British Monarchist Society would completely endorse a colonial icon and that 'everyone in the Pakistani community would say it is all about oppression'. For instance, self-identified Pakistanis may want to distance themselves from colonial victimhood and its associated responsibility to 'get people to make amends'.

4.3.3. PROTEST AND SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION

In addition to substantive, formal and descriptive forms representation, ETHOS Deliverable 5.2 underlined the crucial role played by symbolic actions designed to shape, rather than reflect, collective aspirations and identities. Participants' views on symbolic representation were elicited in the final part of the vignette which narrated the prohibition of a demonstration against the renovation of Mountbatten's statue and the surrounding square. While all endorsed the principle that people should be allowed to express their views, interviews reveal significant discrepancies about where to draw the line between its acceptable and unacceptable forms.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the political campaigner was the most explicit about the benefits of protests and organised debates around the commemoration of colonial figures:

Rhodes Must Fall has become a slogan. It is recognisable pretty much around the world actually, in student circles definitely, and it caused some debate as well in Bristol. There's a lot of people I know who wouldn't really engage with any real criticism about white supremacy and race as a structural phenomenon and a power structure, who were talking about these things and engaging with them. It's a good thing because it allows this conversation to spread and people to say racism is bad and all the rest of it and it does change. Colston Hall is now being renamed and Rhodes Must Fall – I don't think it's fallen yet but it might well do in the future. It's a campaign that's sustained and ongoing and it does create that activism and that sort of collectivism that strengthens the anti-racist movement if you can do that in an issues-based way.

This is not to say that debates on particular issues necessarily or rapidly translate into deep social and institutional change:

At the same time, it's a challenge to then broaden that out into a proper critique of what's going on and to not make it just about Mountbatten Square or Rhodes Must Fall and actually to make it about the fact that the Council doesn't critically engage with its Black communities and actually work to minimise structural racism and to deconstruct white supremacy in Britain.

The art activist likewise hoped that the renovation of Mountbatten's statue could be used to spark 'a wider conversation' on colonial history, and the vicar saw the opening of the renovated square as an occasion to 'see what [Mountbatten] means to people' and 'see if we can handle a debate around that'.

When prodded to offer ideas of the form that protests against Mountbatten could take, the university professor proved highly resourceful. Some proposals relied on well-tested tools such as passive obstruction and placards:

There would seem to be a certain appropriateness to doing some sort of nonviolent passive resistance, lying all over the square and stopping the dignitaries getting to the dais or something, because then it'd have the political point of saying 'This is what Mountbatten, himself, faced.' But I think if I'm trying to get a message across – okay, I don't understand social media, but I'm just thinking in terms of TV broadcasts and that. I

suppose I think that I'm not getting my message across just by having people lying there, and I want to be able to. So I'd want placards saying what I'm doing.

As a concession to the electronic era, he added that protesters could also write something on their smartphone and put it against their chest for him to take a pic and tweet out. Alternatively, they could make a false statue and plant it in the park near Mountbatten's, or 'Perhaps I could get a busker, one of those buskers who looks like a statue, to kind of come and be it.' To hammer home the point that money should not be spent on commemorating colonialism, one could invite 'Lots of very evidently homeless people to turn up and look very homeless'. If the statue were white, there was also the 'Kensington gore' option of throwing 'something red and blood-like' that would 'be easily washed off because my aim wouldn't be to sort of wreck the thing; it would be to make a visible protest.' The art activist concurred that, after 'petitioning the local council and going to council meetings and maybe trying to vote any motions down or put a motion forward to change this', public awareness could be raised by defacing the statue: '[This] is something that you've seen, for example, with statues of King Leopold of Belgium who killed up to 10 million people in the Congo, and people protest and they will pour paint on the statue, they'll try and attack it.' For the arts organisation worker, public impact could be maximised by putting together 'colourful and bright and unignorable' pieces of public art to counteract the inappropriate presence of Mountbatten:

We'll put on the show right here in this barn – music, noise-making, colour, light... But I think if I were to try to facilitate that, it would need to be very much about amplifying the voices of marginalised groups, and celebrating the anti-imperial work that's been done by those before us, and continues to be done.

Interviewer: So what do you think is the role of artists in doing that? Say you were given £50,000 to do that, perhaps you were – how would you start?

Respondent: How would I start? Okay. Right. Engage professional artists from backgrounds affected by imperialism, colonialism, and to develop probably an introductory talk and a series of workshops discussing the impact that this decision and the kind of wider context this decision has had. And yeah, workshops to make art. I suppose rather in a kind of carnival sort of way.

As these proposals suggest, participants conceived protests not only as an argumentative but also an aesthetic activity which could mobilise persuasive strategies such as provocation, humour, disruption and aesthetic (dis)pleasure. To varying degrees however they also accepted that the legitimate aims and means of protesting should be balanced with competing ones, such as the protection of persons and public property (see 4.4 UK report for a discussion on protection). Hence the theatre activist insisted that 'peaceful' protest should be allowed but it would be valid to 'protect against anything that causes harm either to people or things', including the statue itself. The councillor also accepted that 'You want to protect people from violent confrontations' and the vicar enounced the general principle that 'There is a responsibility to behave properly' in public space.

Behind this apparent consensus lurked various definitions of harmful, violent or improper behaviour. As we have seen the political campaigner characterised nazi salutes as a form of violence, and the theatre activist proposed that the legitimacy of a march depended on its size and whether it had been approved by the authorities. The student vlogger argued that it would be 'out of order' for protesters to block access to an area or hurt anybody, and that they should limit themselves to 'stand

outside the area with signs'. In contrast with the university professor, she described the smearing of public property with tomato ketchup as a personal taboo and wondered about its legality. The vicar was happy with placards and pamphlets but not with putting a 'fascist' label round the statue's neck or covering it with paint, which he regarded as 'degrading public space'. Neither was he keen on ketchup:

The problem with doing things like that is it satisfies your aggression. I don't know whether it conveys anything to anybody else except that you've made a mess of it. I would have thought that the point of a good protest is that you wake people up to a viewpoint they have never thought about, and there ought to be better ways of doing that really.

This comment reveals an implicit conception of the good protest as one that moves public debate forward by persuading participants to change their opinion on a controversial issue.

Regardless of the specific protest norms they supported, participants were sceptical of authorities' propensity to uphold them fairly, and all of them considered blanket prohibitions as an extreme measure. The political campaigner was particularly scathing about the stronger protection of right-wing than left-wing activists as 'power protects power' and 'privilege protects privilege', embodied in the 'interests of the state' and the 'colonial agenda'. To this formidable adversary should be opposed formidable numbers and organisation:

Our strength is in numbers. We have to make sure we're very tightly organised and well trained, because we have to be organised when we're coming into confrontation with companies. We're not confronting them. We're just coming into confrontation with them. We're there, and they come to us. Right? And we have to be aware of our rights, and we have to be aware of where the boundaries are, and we have to protect ourselves. And we have to be aware of when the police act out, and we have to make sure we're filming and recording what's going on and making sure that all the violences committed against us are being recorded.

Without going as far as deflecting the charge of violence toward the police, the art activist labelled public protection orders and the arrest of protest organisers as a 'misuse of law' and the councillor thought it would be a 'silly move' to use them without a clear reason, such as danger of individuals being injured. Part of the reason for this, echoed by the theatre activist, was that it would make further discussions and peaceful coexistence more difficult to achieve, thus defeating the stated purpose of the orders.

5. CONCLUSION

In this study, the fictitious story about the renovation of Mountbatten's statue aimed to bring together the two foci of UK public debate on commemoration: World War II, which mainly deals with Europe, and the British Empire, which foregrounds relations with the rest of the world. However all participants shared a sense that the particular city where the statue is placed, in this case, Oxford, also makes a difference, and that historical memory is about the local as much as it is about the national, the continental and the global. In their responses to the vignette, these territorially defined scales of justice were themselves linked and blurred by frequent allusions to non-territorial

communities such as the Black, South Asian or Irish diasporas, which go beyond, diversify and sometimes divide the body politics. In addition to redistribution, recognition and representation, ideals of restoration, reproduction and deliberation played a prominent role in philosophies of commemoration.

The discourses analysed evince a consensus on the framing of Mountbatten as a symbol of colonial violence feeding into contemporary racism, which should therefore be revised. This understanding coexists with a much more controversial one that emphasises the preservation or reproduction of White British culture and mainly surfaces indirectly through criticisms of the fictitious character who expresses it. Participants' evident familiarity with this position suggests the prevalence of a strong social norm encouraging its concealment, at least in the context of a research interview. On the relative importance of post-colonial restoration and racial recognition vs alleviation of extreme poverty, views were split between giving the latter a clear priority and conceiving it as a separate moral imperative that should not necessarily trump the former.

Restorative, anti-racist and reproductive commemoration was generally discussed as a form of deliberation which should be underpinned by principles of normativity, relevance and publicity. Normatively, it should focus on events from which moral lessons can be drawn due to their clearly positive or negative implications for the parties involved. Normative ambiguity should be dealt with by continuously revising modes of commemoration, adopting multiple perspectives, disregarding private life, commemorating non-political figures or doing away with individuals altogether. Relevance should be measured based on an event's capacity to explain present social structures or its centrality to the collective identities of those involved in remembering it. Publicity referred to the correspondence between the intended effect of commemoration, its audience and its context-specific meaning. The location of a statue was seen as a key factor shaping its audience and meaning, whereas the inscription on it was given lesser importance.

Participants offered detailed views on the interaction between substantive, formal, descriptive and symbolic representation in decision-making on commemoration. The formal procedure of public consultation was understood as a necessary but not sufficient condition for substantive representation to take place. To strengthen the connection between the two, local authorities were urged to stimulate the participation of marginalised groups with a stake in commemoration. This included racialised, working-class and younger Oxford residents but also all those whose racial, ethnic and, much more controversially, family identities were given meaning by Mountbatten's statue. The notion that personal characteristics tended to generate specific experiences and perspectives was widely accepted, but nearly all participants acknowledged that considerable ideological diversity may exist within a given social category. They also considered that various forms of protest in the vicinity of controversial statues could enrich political debates but disagreed on how disruptive, provocative and respectful of public property (including the statue itself) they should be. Heavy-handed police intervention against protesters was regarded with suspicion as frequently biased and inimical to constructive debate.

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FIGURES

Figure 1 – Poppies: @giantpoppywatch [accessed via <https://twitter.com/giantpoppywatch?lang=en>].

Figure 2 – Occupation of the plinth: Ingos England-Blog [accessed via <https://maricopa1.wordpress.com/2011/12/27/der-vierte-sockel-am-trafalgar-square-begehrt-bei-zeitgenossischen-kunstlern/>].

Figure 3 – Rocking horse: Wikimedia Commons [accessed via https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cmglee_Powerless_Structures_Fig_101.jpg].

Figure 4 – Thatcher monument: FINE architecture [accessed via <https://www.finearchitecture.co.uk/240parliamentsquare>].

APPENDIX 1

Introduction

The commemoration of specific historical events is often contentious. Individuals and groups attach different meanings to various historical events. Those interpretations are, in turn, often seen as a form of injustice done to contemporaries or their ancestors, or both. We have witnessed it during recent debates related to Rhodes must fall in Oxford, or Colston in Bristol.

During this interview we would like to present to you a scenario of a social debate on the practice of commemoration. The scenario will frame our conversation about the sentiments and interests of various groups; their grievances; the issues of responsibility; the dilemmas as to who and how should secure justice; and how debates about history and commemoration and its relation to the present could be best managed.

This scenario is hypothetical – we did not intend to relate it to any specific controversy – although it evokes various debates about history and commemoration that have taken place in recent years. The vignette is therefore likely to remind you or make you think of specific debates that actually took place. We would appreciate if you could explain these associations. We have chosen a hypothetical scenario rather than a real-life debate to be able to explore the various perspectives on justice that tend to come to the fore in the different debates on the practice of commemoration, not only in the UK but also in other European societies. We would like to know your evaluation of different claims and opinions about how they could be managed for the common good.

Preliminary questions

- *What does commemoration mean to you? What does it mean to society? What, why and how should a society commemorate? [probes: event/people who are not commemorated and should be?]*
- *What is the most ‘just’ way to commemorate the past?*
- *How should a public space be used in service of commemoration?*
- *What is historical responsibility? What are/should be consequences of taking historical responsibility? What are limits of historical responsibility (in terms of scope: e.g. post-colonial inhabitants own country vs. those living in former colonial-territory; in term of temporality: “expired” claims; in terms of redress: when is it complete?)*
- *How such debates – related to historical memory, commemoration, responsibility – are relevant for contemporary society?*

STEP 1

TEXT presented to interviewee:

In a central location of our city, there is a statue of Lord Mountbatten. The plaque reads: “Admiral of the Fleet Lord Mountbatten of Burma: Last Viceroy and First Governor-General of India. Brutally

murdered by the IRA 1979. He served his country and the world.” The statue has not undergone any renovation for years and looks run down. The monument is designed by an artist who is even more highly respected today than he was when the piece was commissioned. The City Council is planning to reserve substantial funds to renovate the monument and create ‘Mountbatten Square’ as a space for public recreation. The plans have been announced in the local media, which inspired a dynamic social debate.

Questions to the interviewee:

- ⇒ *who do you think has a stake in participating at the debate? Why?*
- ⇒ *what should be done before a decision is made? [probing: research, consultations]*
- ⇒ *who should be involved in the decision making? Who should be consulted, if at all? how? [probe for: artists, intellectuals, minority individuals, businesses, civil society organizations, etc.]*
- ⇒ *what do you think should happen to the monument?*
- ⇒ *[extra probe => would moving the monument to another site be a solution? would re-labeling the monument be a solution?]*

STEP 2

TEXT presented to interviewee:

Having done some preliminary research, the City Council organized a public meeting to consult its plans involving Maggie O’Leary, James Philipps and Thomas Davidson. Maggie O’Leary is a member of the Irish community, who was born in Oxford; James Philipps is an urban planner who lives in Bourton-on-the-Water; Thomas Davidson is a local community member whose family has lived in the area for generations.

O’Leary, Philipps and Davison expressed the following views on the issue during the meeting:

Maggie O’Leary— says that the monument commemorates crimes committed by a brutal imperial power; it pays respect to perpetrators of violent crimes and is also a visible sign of the continued oppression and discrimination, indeed racism, suffered by migrants and ethnic minorities in the UK; the monument should be replaced by another one that would commemorate anti-colonial struggles and be seen as an inspiration to future generations; at the very least the inscription on the monument should be changed to acknowledge the pain inflicted by Britain during the partition of India and that the killing of Mountbatten was a political act.

James Philipps — the demolition of the monument is out of question. It has grown into the ‘tissue’ of the city — it is recognized as a piece of art that engages the inhabitants of the city but also attracts a huge number of tourists. There is a need for green spaces in the city. The monument should be renovated and the park will be of benefit to residents as well as tourists. A new inscription could be considered, but he is concerned about censoring and changing the character of a piece of art which should be seen as of its time.

Thomas Davidson – the money can be better spent on providing much-needed social housing. Altering the monument is likely to hurt the feelings of most people who are proud to be British and who feel their culture, tradition and identity is being threatened. People need to be proud of their community and culture. We should respect Britain's past instead of always apologizing for it.

Questions to the interviewee:

- ⇒ *What do you think of these different opinions? Which is the closest to your outlook – elaborate? What could be the consequences of taking this decision by the City Council?*
- ⇒ *Which of the arguments used do you believe to be most relevant to the issue of justice? Which least?*
- ⇒ *Which conflicts of interests between those groups do you recognize as legitimate, if any?*
- ⇒ *Whose perspective might be missing, if any?*
- ⇒ *If a member of the British Monarchist Society was invited to present their views, how do you think it would change the debate?*
- ⇒ *If a member of the Pakistani community were invited to present their views how do you think it would change the debate.*
- ⇒ *How do you think the issues of identity are relevant to the debate and/or issue of 'historical justice'? In relation to opinion 'C', what is it about 'identity', culture and/or tradition that is being allegedly threatened?*
- ⇒ *What would be the just decision for the City Council to take? [probe: whose perspective should be prioritized?]*

STEP 3

TEXT presented to interviewee:

The City Council made the decision to renovate the statue and develop the surrounding area as a green space. It left the issue of the inscription and the name of the Square to be decided upon later – following another round of consultation. Due to the controversial character of the project and the decision itself, protests were expected when the Square opened. Fearing a confrontation between the different sides, the Council used a Public Spaces Protection Order to prevent protest activities at the site. Still, the protests took place, and the police arrested several organisers.

Questions to the interviewee:

- ⇒ *How do you evaluate the decision of the Mayor? Under what conditions it was/would be justified/unjustified? [NOTE TO THE INTERVIEWER: you can probe for different types of protests – such as artistic happenings; information campaigning – giving out leaflets, wearing controversial T-shirt; protest marches]*
- ⇒ *[If the respondent agrees with the Mayor's decision] What form of protest do you think would be acceptable?*
- ⇒ *How should the different sides of the conflict [A, B, C + City council] continue in order to secure justice?*