A Shared European History?
Perceptions of Imperialism and Islam in Matriculation Examination Essays and History Textbooks

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The European Union (EU) is faced with a continuous decrease in public support. There is a tension between the growing Euroscepticism and the concurrent academic discourse of a shared European identity. Informed and inspired by the current debates, this Master’s Thesis investigates the potential of a shared past to create shared identity. It also addresses the logic of cultural exclusion that is often connected to collective cultural identities.

The source material is a combination of exam essays, written as answers to the history tests in the Finnish matriculation examinations of 2005-2008, and upper secondary school history textbooks. From the sources, current perceptions of Islam (as Europe’s Other) and the age of imperialism (as a debated period from Europe’s past) among the youth are studied. Through the analysis the thesis aims to indicate the level of consensus within the pupils’ identification with the past and with Europe. This objective is pursued through examining the pupils’ perceptions of Europe’s past and its relationship to non-European cultures and countries as they are manifested in the essays, and reflecting upon the level of influence that history textbooks as representatives of national hegemonic historical narratives might have on the contents, framings and emphases with and through which the pupils approach, imagine, and reproduce Europe’s past.

The approach is based on previous research on the presence of history and the field of textbook research. The theoretical categories with which the sources are analyzed are derived primarily from literature on identity, European integration, history and memory, postcolonial criticism, and theorizations of European identity.

Results of the research project suggest that the rhetoric of European superiority, despite its apparent demise, still resonates in contemporary understandings of Europeanness. Dominant perceptions of imperialism comprise of European agency and colonial submission, dominant perceptions of the Islamic world of fundamental difference. Identification with European history among the Finnish youth is rather shallow when examined through perceptions of imperialism; the Islamic world is perceived as Other and its representations are dominated by recent and contemporary international relations.

**Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords**

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history culture
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1 INTRODUCTION

Imperialismi merkitsi kahdessa paikassa kahta eri asiaa. Siirtomaissa se merkitsi riistoa ja Euroopan siirtomaaisännille se tarkoitti vaurautta. Imperialism meant two different things in two places. For the colonies it meant exploitation and for the colonizers in Europe it meant prosperity.¹

Länsimaisten ihmisten on vaikea oppia kunnioittamaan uskontoa, joka kykenee uskonnon nimissä tappamaan. Westerners find it hard to learn to respect a religion that can kill by its name.²

What kind of a connection does a European young adult have to past events that tend to be regarded as essentially European? Do transnational phenomena that are often considered key to the historical development of Europe reach the continent’s every corner; how much gets lost or colored in translation? How relevant are Europe’s conventional Others to the identity construction of European Union citizens?

The above quotations represent typical answers of Finnish 18-year-olds to the questions “What was imperialism and how was it manifested in Asia and Africa” and “How has Islam become an important political player”: reduced, juxtaposed conceptions that

¹ Excerpt from an essay answer of a Finnish matriculation examination candidate (S2005/5/6)
² Excerpt from an essay answer of a Finnish matriculation examination candidate (F2008/7A/8)
demonstrate a discernible distance to the topics at hand. In this Master’s thesis I intend to analyze a total of 91 school essays that discuss imperialism and the Islamic world. Through my analysis I hope to find clues to the above questions that address the historical dimensions of a common European identity.

1.1 Background and Motivation of Research

While the apparent object of this research project is the past, its initial motivation lies in topical political developments. Europe’s recent decades have been branded by a growing centrality of the European integration process. After the mainly institutional steps of the 1990s, the 2000s witnessed the enlargement of the European Union (EU) from 15 to 27 member countries in just 4 years, as well as a substantial acceleration as regards the Union’s economic, social and political integration. Public support for these steps has traditionally varied between and inside member countries, but a decline in support has grown into an increasingly visible and wide phenomenon, concomitant with the economic crises in some member countries in 2008-2011. The single most important reason for the growing Euroscepticism and distrust seems to be the Union’s so-called “democracy deficit”. Research has shown that support for European integration has become an increasingly important factor also in domestic party politics. A rise in Eurosceptic and pronounced nationalist sentiments has become evident in Finland as well, where the populist party True Finns, with a somewhat reactionary and xenophobic agenda, have forcefully entered the political field: from a 1.6% vote share in the 2003 to a vote share of 19.1% (entitling position in a majority government) in the recent April 2011 parliamentary election. Similar developments in domestic politics have grown into a renaissance of nationalist protectionism that threatens to cover the entire continent.

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3 I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Johanna Rainio-Niemi, for the constant guidance and support without which this Master’s thesis would doubtless still be waiting to be written. For comments and advice along the way, I am also thankful to Juhana Aunesluoma, Pauli Kettunen, Attila Krizsan, Leena Malkki and Heikki Mikkeli.

4 In the Eurobarometer 73 survey (May 2010) the most popular argument for the opinion that the respondents’ nations have not benefited from being a member of the EU was "(NATIONALITY) people have very little influence in decisions made at EU level". All in all, membership was viewed as beneficial by 53% of the EU citizens (EU27 countries); in November 2010 the figure had dropped by 3 points to 50%; Eurobarometer 74, Annex, 38.

There are opposite efforts in sight as well. As the lack of recognized legitimacy for the “creeping competencies” of the Union has grown increasingly apparent in recent years, discussion over different means to reach this objective now abounds. A number of scholars have maintained, in fact for decades already, that for a supranational political project such as the European Union to acquire sufficient legitimacy for its actions, collective identification among its subjects is required. The suggested models of European identity have altered from political to cultural and from post-national to supranational – what is common to all of them is that they seem to have remained unrealized abstractions. In times of a continent-wide political turn in favor of the Eurosceptic populist right and growing confusion on the future and composition of the Union, the feasibility of the emergence of a shared European identity indeed seems feeble. There is thus clear tension, if not an outright contradiction, between the two concurrent trends that dominate the Europe discussion. What better time to study the prospect of a European identity than a period of accentuated identity politics and a heated public discussion on what it means to be ‘European’?

The present study approaches the potential European collective identity from the vantage of historical identification. The project is premised on the maxim that collective identities are, to a large extent, constructed through reflecting and interpreting a shared past and thereby creating an opportunity for strangers to feel a shared sense of belonging. Addressing the 2005 French and Dutch rejection of the European Constitution, Małgorzata Pakier and Bo Stråth have emphasized the role of historical motivation of integration. They maintain that the rejected proposal “displayed a lack of understanding of the historical complexity of [the] past upon which visions of the future might be built”. Their argument, which became one of the premises of the theoretical framework of the present thesis, is that “in the twenty-first century the long-term legitimacy of European unification requires a more critical historical understanding;” a European collective memory would strengthen a popular identification with Europe, but only if it is

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constructed through a critical and multifaceted examination of the continent’s past and its relation to the rest of the world.

Shared history as a solution to the question of European identity has also been proposed by Anthony D. Smith, who on the other hand has simultaneously predicted that the realization of any European collective identity is bound to rely on the logic of cultural exclusion – an identity constructed by emphasizing the Other, i.e. the non-European. It is the objective of this thesis to investigate how Europe’s past is represented in an institutional context, and consequently received and reproduced by young European citizens. I approach the two intertwined themes of collective memory and Otherness through mapping European contemporary perceptions of Islam and imperialism.

1.2 Research Material and Methods

This thesis is built around a set of essays written by Finnish upper secondary school pupils in the national matriculation examinations’ history tests in 2005-2008. The data is limited to texts that discuss the topics of Islam or imperialism. What do these topics have in common and how do they relate to my research objective? Both imperialism and its consequences and the Islamic world are phenomena central to how Europe, as an idea, has been constructed. They both represent potential external Others, and, like Benoît Challand has noted, “it is the existence and/or the representation of external Others”, more than any actual borders, “that have played a catalytic role in providing significance for an embryonic European identity.”

Echoing Smith’s hypothesis of cultural exclusion, Challand maintains that it cannot be stressed enough that propositions concerning the existence of a European identity should be expressed with care and assessed against the backdrop of a broader context in which external Others might play an important role that is often unaccounted for when studies perceive the subject matter through a Eurocentric framework.

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10 Challand, "External Others in History Textbooks", 87-88.
Despite the centuries-old tight connections around the Mediterranean, the proximity of and interaction with the Ottoman Empire, and the established Moor community on the Iberian Peninsula from the 8th until the 15th century, not to mention the size of Europe’s Muslim population today, Islam has never truly been conceived as a European religion. On the contrary, it has been depicted as antagonistic and Other to Europeanness, rendering it an important negation used as a tool in European identity construction. In historical discussion what some conceive as centuries of diverse Euro-Islam interaction, others frame as Islamic expansion, emphasizing the salience of Islam as Europe’s constitutive Other. The fact that Europe gradually became synonymous with Christianity, for instance, has been presented as “[t]he long-term implication of the Islamic expansion”, and so-called xenostereotypes of the Muslim abound.

The age of imperialism, on the contrary, is an experience and an established historical period that is conceived as fundamentally European. It is safe to say that the practices of colonialism and imperialism formed a phenomenon or a process that affected the entire continent, more accurately the entire world, albeit in different ways in different locations. Despite its enormous impact, until recently the period’s legacy had not been discussed in very versatile tones, at least not in European public debate. In recent years, however, a trend of re-evaluating the past has emerged, posing the publics with the dilemma of historical reconciliation: should individuals or nations resign from their ancestors’ wrong-doings – such as the oppression of former colonies – or claim responsibility over them and engage in some form of reconciliatory action? Thinking along the lines of the Past-as-Other discourse, we can argue that Europe’s Other could today lurk in its own past.

The Other past is one that most present-day Europeans renounce as something they no longer desire to be; something they have grown out of and learned from. European 21st century representations of both Islam and imperialism thus bear signs of their authors’ relation to the contemporary European cultural collectivity and to the

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13 Understood here as approximately the years 1850 to 1950 in Europe and its colonies, and as having been preceded by and gradually developed from an era of colonialism that begun from the first European journeys of expedition in the turn of the 16th century, and as having consequences in the form of very different decolonization processes up until the present day.
continent’s past, and may give us insight into the strength, feasibility and emphases of a shared European identity envisaged by some as a requirement for the survival and sustainability of the European Union.

I have gained access to my primary data through the Finnish Matriculation Examination Board, an institution that administers the examination, its arrangements and execution, and archives a national sample of each examination. Through analyzing the essays’ language and contents I will look for traces of the pupils’ identification to and individual understanding of these dimensions that have been essential to the construction of Europe. Taking into consideration the different factors involved in young citizens’ socialization process, I will enrich the analysis by reflecting the findings to history textbooks that are read in upper secondary school in preparation for the matriculation examination and as part of completing the national curriculum.

### 1.3 Previous Research

There are essentially three types of research projects that can be identified as role models for the present study. What is common to all of them and also to my approach is a social constructivist approach to all social phenomena – texts being one subcategory. The first scholarly direction includes several international and Finnish research projects on historical consciousness. In Finland, the theme did not gain much attention before the 1990s, but since then the prospect of saying something meaningful about the past through studying history culture and people’s historical consciousness has grown increasingly popular among historians and scholars of behavioral sciences in particular. Although the present research does not directly fall under the category of research in historical consciousness, I have benefited much from Pilvi Torsti’s work *Divergent Stories, Convergent Attitudes*, as well as several of her texts that have appeared in different journals and monographs. Most recently Torsti has lead the research project *Historiatietoisuus Suomessa* (Historical Consciousness in Finland), a pair project to

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similar ones conducted in the USA and Canada. A similar, international project spanning 27 European countries is the project *Youth and History*, initiated by Magne Angvik and Bodo von Borries in early 1990s. The aims of the pioneering project were three-fold: to investigate the logic of historical consciousness, to evaluate the political aspects of the impact of historical knowledge on the development of an integrating Europe, and finally the pedagogical aim of being able to compare and improve history instruction in schools around the continent. Parts of the project address similar themes as the present one – among other things the informants were asked about their associations with different historical periods, one of them being the colonization period, which the researchers identify as a “key subject for European history, since it touches the core process of modern global history: the Europeanisation of the world.” The results echo a hypothesis of the present project: that while it might at first seem that all European nations see the period in the same light, “a closer look shows that this is by no means self-evident, since the European nations have to very different degrees been participants in this process and therefore have very different commemorations of and attitudes of it.”

The *Youth and History* project has produced two publications that have been of particular help: the reporting of the entire project from 1997 has been a good source for international comparisons, whereas Sirkka Ahonen’s monograph *Historiaton sukupolvi?* that reports the Finnish case study and deepens it through interviews has offered me both valuable background information on the historical consciousness of the Finnish youth and plenty of inspiration for the analysis of my own data. The same can be said about much of Ahonen’s pioneering work, as well as of the work of her colleague Jan Löfström, who was also very helpful in the early stages of this project when I was not yet aware of the accessibility of the source material that I had in mind.

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16 Results of the project had not been published during the writing of this thesis. For the project’s website, see: [http://blogs.helsinki.fi/historiatietoisuus/](http://blogs.helsinki.fi/historiatietoisuus/)


19 Angvik & von Borries, *Youth and History*.


Apart from the ongoing project *Historiatietoisuus Suomessa*, all of the above studies into historical consciousness have focused on young citizens and – on different levels – also addressed the topic of history education and socialization. Their methods have tended to fall under the categories of either surveys or interviews. The linguistic streaks in my own analysis are partly an organic result of my previous degree in English philology; in addition the approach is indebted to learning about systemic functional linguistic analysis (SFL), an interesting approach to social sciences that was not, however applied as such in the present project, the tools of analysis for which I have generated myself.

Another field of research that deserves proper introduction here is textbook research. The political significance of school textbooks has been acknowledged as early as after the First World War, when the League of Nations first directed attention to the negative potential of xenophobia and stereotypes of old opponents whose representations appeared after the war in different national educational media. The realization that subjects falling under the label of social sciences “cannot be taught without introducing value judgments”, has since then gradually lead to the establishment of national and international textbook revision committees and an academic field of textbook research, as well as to the publication of numerous case-specific recommendations, and finally the *UNESCO Guidebook on Textbook Research and Textbook Revision*, which has been an important source of guidelines for the thesis at hand. While my research is focused not on textbooks but on the essays, the impact of textbooks on them is of a caliber that requires comparisons and reflections between the two types of “history texts”. Eventually I also realized that many common methods of textbook analysis can be fairly well applied, with adjustments, to analyzing the essays.

Most of the previous textbook research in European history – and a great amount of research in the European dimension pertaining to other subjects, too – has had its home in the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research (GEI). The institute, established in 1975, is one of the leading research clusters for academic, international

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23 Pingel, *UNESCO Guidebook*, 8. As ‘social science subjects’ the *UNESCO Guidebook* lists history, geography, social studies and moral education, but does add that growing attention has recently been given to language textbooks and readers as well.

textbook research. Among its ongoing research projects GEI hosts an entire research area called “The European (School) House”, under which over a dozen projects are currently being executed. The institute’s informative website and their publication *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* have been key sources of both background information and inspiration. Other noteworthy centers of textbook research include the Institute of Education in the University of London and Institut für historische und systematische Schulbuchforschung in Augsburg, Germany, to only name a few. Out of all textbooks, history textbooks seem to provide the clearest evidence of disaccords that prevail over differing national (or sometimes political) interpretations of some international developments, such as the representations of the German Nazi regime, Stalin’s reign in the Soviet Union, and the Second World War in general.

A recent Finnish textbook research project— a doctoral dissertation from the field of social psychology by Inari Sakki – studied the representations of European integration in the textbooks of five EU countries (Finland, France, Germany, the UK, and Sweden) as well as the new Franco-German textbook. Against my initial expectations, it has been rather difficult to come across textbook research that would focus on representations of European history alone. Given the ongoing trends of world history and of re-evaluating past historiography due to inherent Eurocentrism, this gap in historical research seems somewhat strange.

I identified the third group of previous research as relevant on the basis of data selection. As already mentioned, pupils’ essays do not appear to have been common research material, and I have not been able to locate any previous research with similar data and objectives. The research project that comes closest to mine is the doctoral work of Arja Virta, published by the University of Turku in 1995. Her research looks at the very

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25 See [http://www.gei.de/en/research/the-european-schoolhouse.html](http://www.gei.de/en/research/the-european-schoolhouse.html) (Accessed 7 Feb 2011); the area covers projects such as "Images of Europe in German and French Textbooks", "Curriculum and Textbook Development in the Baltic States", "German-Russian Textbook Project", etc.


27 For more references, see Pingel, UNESCO Guidebook, 80-81.

28 Inari Sakki, *A Success Story or a Failure? Representing the European Integration in the Curricula and Textbooks of Five Countries*. (Helsinki: Social Psychology, Department of Social Research, University of Helsinki, 2010). Sakki’s results regarding the Franco-German textbook, published in 2006, are particularly interesting and seem to call for additional research from different perspectives.

same source material as the present project, the essay answers to matriculation examination in history (and social studies), but with a more educational than social scientific orientation. Virta’s interests lie mainly in the candidates’ knowledge structure and quality of knowledge – both of which have intentionally been ignored in the present project in order to circumvent the question of “accurate” historical knowledge and solely concentrate on the candidates’ experience and interpretations – as well as in analyzing the essay question as an instrument of assessment. Nonetheless, her discussion on analyzing essay answers, for instance, has been valuable already in its uniqueness on the field. In addition to Virta’s work, there seems to be only one discipline that has made use of school essays as research data: linguistic research studying the way young adults use language.30

In addition to stressing the connection of my research to the more quotidian dimension of the postcolonial (and general) European identity discussion, I want to ensure that it bears a similar relationship to the history discipline. In discussing identity through conceptions of history that are produced by “amateurs” for pragmatic and personal purposes I hope to demonstrate that the everyday-character of history31 is indeed both a fruitful and an important object of historical research. The way I have conducted this research is very hands-on and source-inspired. Building the project on solid theoretical premises guarantees that the project’s closeness to a) its sources and b) people’s everyday experience can both be considered as measures of its value. Combining the much-researched textbooks to an analysis of the pupils’ essays is this thesis’ contribution to the study of history culture and historiography.

1.4 Research Questions

Discussing the historical consciousness of upper secondary school pupils Jan Löfström has made the observation that even though the political dimensions of history politics, such as the moral obligations for historical reconciliations, are nowadays discussed and analyzed in abundance, there has not been much research carried out among the citizens

who are the subjects of such – and all – politics.\textsuperscript{32} Marco Antonsich mentions a similar motivation for his research on European identity in different European regions,\textsuperscript{33} and the same observation forms the first and foremost argument for the relevance of the present project. Much has been written and philosophized about the feasibility of a European identity and of the existence of a common European history, but how often are the citizens approached to test the ideas?

Built on the current topics in public debate as well as in the fields of historical scholarship and European studies, this research will focus on young Europeans’ perceptions and interpretations of the relationship of Europe and/or the Islamic sphere, and on the old “world domination” of Europe in the form of imperialism. Mapping contemporary interpretations of these concepts hopefully

a) indicates the level of consensus and points of emphasis among upper secondary school pupils’ identification with the past and with Europe, by:

b) mapping the pupils’ perceptions of Europe’s past and its relationship to non-European cultures and countries, and

c) reflecting upon the level of influence that the textbooks have on the contents, framings and emphases with and through which the pupils approach, imagine, and reproduce Europe’s past.

Turn these three objectives into interrogative, and you have my research questions.

\textsuperscript{32} Löfström, "Vääryyksien varjot", 467.

2 HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The purpose of this research is to examine young Europeans’ perceptions of European history and its potential Others, hoping to result in findings that would contribute to the ongoing discussion about the need for and construction of a European identity. The idea is to do this while taking into account the existence of different historical narratives: the hegemonic, historical ‘Euronarrative’ as well as alternative narratives with which it has been challenged, the official historical narratives produced in educational material, and the individual historical narratives reproduced by young citizens who have been exposed to the above narratives but also to an undetermined amount of other historical information through the artifacts of the surrounding history culture.

The original impetus for European integration is often explained with historical arguments. Typical EU historiography for instance, as characterized by Cris Shore, “represents the last three thousand years of European history as a kind of moral success story: a gradual ‘coming together’ in the shape of the European Community and its institutions.” Another popular historical framing of the process is symbolized by the original EC motto ‘Never again!’ – in this narrative, integration was a means for saving Europe from what seemed to be a permanent state of war with only passing intermissions of peace. Delanty and Rumford’s more recent historical argumentation maintains that from early 20th century on, Europe had to define itself with respect to the West,

represented by the ever-growing United States, and/or the communist ‘Asiatic’ East. Out of the two it chose to lean westward and consequently lost its identity. Having lost political leadership as well as the grounds for representing ‘a civilization’ in the dirty aftermath of fascism, what Europe had left was its culture. The consequent assumption, which became an influence for many of the important writings on Europe of the time was that “Europe is based on a cultural idea and that this idea can be embodied in a political form, albeit one that had yet to be realized.” In retrospect, the process of European integration that started in the 1950s was the embryonic political form created to the cultural idea. The growing canyon between EU competences and EU citizens’ loyalties suggests that at some point – perhaps even from the beginning – the cultural idea got displaced by the hard realities of economic, social and political integration, which alienated the people from the project. Delanty and Rumford’s argument develops into maintaining that

“with the enlargement of the EU, the ‘return to Europe’ – or the making of a ‘new Europe’ – has lost its utopian promise. --- With the widespread recognition among western populations that Europeanization is leading to a growing democracy deficit and a deeper crisis in loyalties, the question of the possibility of the European identity is once again on the agenda. But the mood is different: xenophobia has replaced euphoria.”

Optimistically, Delanty and Rumford however end up suggesting that Europe is becoming increasingly post-Western, and that it should therefore be viewed as a “constellation of civilizations”, consisting of “multiple modernities”. Theories of cosmopolitan and multiple identities challenging the hegemony of outdated national identities have consequently gained the support of many theorists of Europe, but the present atmosphere would suggest that such identities have not yet been manifested.

A cosmopolitan future is a pleasant image to foster. As described by theorists Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande, such cosmopolitanism relies on “the principle of tolerance”.

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35 Delanty & Rumford, Rethinking Europe, 28-29. Delanty and Rumford’s work, published in 2005, comments the 2004 enlargement. While the approach of this paper is more influenced by the debate around the Union’s current concerns, the mood appears to have stayed very much the same.

36 Delanty & Rumford, Rethinking Europe, 30. “Multiple modernities” is not Delanty and Rumford’s coining but has been discussed before them. Shmuel N. Eisenstadt has been salient in theorizing the concept; see S. N. Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities”, Daedalus 129:1 (2000).

37 Quoted in Antonsich, “The Narration of Europe”, 508.
The present European context begs the question: how feasible is such a future? Anthony D. Smith has painted a grimmer picture of the emergence of a European identity: he declares the cosmopolitan prediction impossible, due to the logic of cultural exclusion that is built in the European identity formation. In his interpretation, increased cultural antagonism is a prerequisite for the emergence of a collective cultural identity. In the light of both historic and more recent global developments, it is only too easy to think of potential cultural groups to be excluded from ‘Europeanness’. Smith has been an influential thinker in the past decades, but is his grim prediction really the way in which Europe is going? Increased xenophobia would suggest yes, whereas the simultaneous increased cultural diversity and peaceful coexistence and assimilation of cultures on “the old continent” and around the globe would suggest: no.

Smith presents another possible building block for European unity: history. “Here, if anywhere”, he writes, “we may hope to find collective memories that differentiate the communities of Europe from other communities, and which, in some degree at least, provide common reference points for the peoples of Europe.”

Questions arise. Is there such a past with which all Europeans could identify? Does a shared historical identification require the cultural exclusion of others? Might this not only apply to collective national identities, which are the collective identities most thoroughly studied and most familiar to us at present, or could the prerequisite indeed be universal and permanent? Other open questions are the degree of reflexivity and the number of possible different interpretations that a feasible shared history might entail.

In order to derive clues to these questions from a pile of Upper Secondary School Essays, the theoretical framework of the research must first be solidly built and presented, which is the purpose of this chapter. Below, we will be familiarized with the components that engage in interplay in the formation of ideas of Europe and Europeanness, concentrating on the role of history and historiography. The first section of the chapter, 2.1, will introduce discourse on identity in general and European identity in particular. Chapter 2.2 discusses Europe’s history and historiography, and from that vantage elaborates on the topics of imperialism and Islam.

38 Smith, “National identity”, 76.
2.1 A European Identity?

Identity is a concept that has been given countless definitions. In the framework of the present paper identity is conceived first and foremost as active self-identification.\(^{40}\) Another point of emphasis is that no identity is fixed or exclusive. If one insists in allocating each individual human being one individual identity, we must understand that each of those “individual” identities is a unique self-understanding that to a large extent consists of multiple collective identities: an individual identifies with his or her family, home country or nation, gender, profession, religion, and countless other “imagined communities”\(^{41}\).

Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper have approached the problematic catch-all nature of the concept of identity, and suggested a number of “alternative analytical idioms”\(^{42}\). Their suggestion to replace ‘identity’ with ‘identification’ seems particularly useful in clarifying one’s argument and avoiding misunderstanding and confusion. Granted, ‘identification’ can only replace ‘identity’ in a limited number of occasions, but for the purposes of the present research the former fits ideally. As Brubaker and Cooper have observed, ‘identification’ is “a processual, active term, derived from a verb”, whereby it “lacks the reifying connotations of ‘identity’.”\(^{43}\) The authors continue to make several further distinctions, out of which the division into self-identification and the identification and categorization of oneself by others could be useful here. Out of these the former, self-identification that “takes place in dialectical interplay with external identification” is the focus of this work, while external identification – used to refer to both the constant, everyday identification of others and to institutionalized forms of categorization – is also present but does not prevail.

A definition of identity is closely connected to the concept of *Otherness*. In social scientific research, Otherness is used to describe and organize the relationship between


\(^{43}\) Brubaker & Cooper, "Beyond Identity", 14.
familiar and foreign or norm and exception;\textsuperscript{44} of representing difference. It is “in the intersection between self-images and images of the Other” that identities are constructed.\textsuperscript{45} The concept has been central in studying for instance the construction of ethnic, racial or gender differences, and quite naturally it also occupies a central place in the tradition of postcolonial criticism.

Researchers of Europe as an idea and identity have determined several Others against which Europe has reflected itself in different times. While some Otherness has been of the internal kind – most popularly Communism, which on the other hand was more an Other to the United States than to Europe – most often the continent’s Others have been located outside the conceived borders of Europe. The symbolism of borders has been fortified by European integration: with the EU passport, borders inside Europe lost much of their symbolism in this sense.\textsuperscript{46} For centuries Europe has mirrored its existence against that of an unknown, incomprehensible and barbaric East. Turkey and Russia are classic examples; Iver B. Neumann has studied the Otherness of both, and concluded that while Russia has been represented as Other in a variety of ways in European history, Turkey has historically been seen as Europe’s Other in a very clear-cut way. On the other hand, the modernization of Turkey by the Young Turks in the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century was framed as a process of normalization, which has made Turkey less central as a constitutive Other. Present-day European conceptions of Turkey do however carry with them the memory of Turkey’s historical Otherness.\textsuperscript{47} This collective memory of Turkey’s Otherness is detectable from the debate on Turkey’s EU membership and has been used frequently in (European) addresses opposing it. In the debate, the emphasis is often put on the Otherness of Islam, a more general and increasingly popular Other to Europeans.

The most fixed representations of Otherness tend to harden into stereotypes. Such representations are usually based on a set of binary oppositions which have been reproduced together to an extent in which they have, in their users’ understanding, merged together into ‘general knowledge’.

\textsuperscript{45} Stråth, "Historical Limits of a Concept", 391.
\textsuperscript{46} Smith, "National Identity", 69.
Stereotypes get hold of the few ‘simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognized’ characteristics [of the object], reduce everything about [the object] to those traits, exaggerate and simplify them, and fix them without change or development into eternity.48

Stereotypical representation usually follows the logic of “All X are Y”; in the present framework, typical stereotypes could include “All Muslims are terrorists,” “All Turks are Muslim fundamentalists,” and “In colonial times, all Africans were uncivilized and mentally inferior to Europeans”. While political correctness has reduced apparent utterances of stereotypes, they are easily detectable from between the lines in many contemporary situations. Their occurrence is perhaps most frequent when things or people non-European are discussed.

With regard to stereotypes, there is an established tradition of postcolonial critique that has concentrated on Western “fantasies” of the Other. The first influential works that helped create the paradigm were Edward Said’s 1978 monograph Orientalism, and Franz Fanon’s Black Skin, White Masks (orig. Peau noire, masques blancs, 1952) and The Wretched of the Earth (orig. Les damnés de la terre, 1961). These works directed the recently awakened postcolonial interest to take notice of the psychological patterns related to how the West perceived its Others, and also to the psychological consequences this created in the colonial subjects, the objects of the Occidental gaze. The title of Said’s book, Orientalism, has given its name to the cultural interpretations of exotizing discourse.

Before turning to examine the impact of postcolonial critique on European historiography, we must return briefly to the concept of historical identification, and examine a little further the dynamics with which history is intertwined and used in the construction of identity.

It is in the context of 19th and 20th century nationalist movements that the power of historical identification first became so evident. A shared history and myths of origin have been central tools in the construction and maintenance of all collective national

identities. Anthony D. Smith has defined, quite comprehensively, collective cultural identity as “a sense of shared continuity on the part of successive generations [and] shared memories of earlier periods, events and personages in the history of the unit [as well as] the collective belief in a common destiny of that unit and its culture.” I maintain that when discussing shared continuity, memories and destiny, it is justified to limit the perspective from ‘identity’ to ‘identification’.

Historical identification comes close to the concept of historical consciousness, generally understood as implying a presence of the past in current consciousness, and an orientation towards present concerns into which past experiences are incorporated. According to Pilvi Torsti, historical consciousness stands for “the way people and communities deal with the past in order to understand the present and future. [It] links the past and the future, and can construct a sense of continuity”. Jorma Kalela talks about ‘quotidian history’ as a means for organizing one’s environment. He suggests we could think of history as “answers to the questions that traces of human action raise”. Torsti notes that the analysis of historical consciousness can be called “cognitive history research”, referring to the analysis’ aim of understanding the mechanics and meanings that people – as collectives and individuals – attach to their experiences of the past. In this sense, the concept comes close to the present research. Yet I maintain that more than a study of historical consciousness, this thesis is a study of history culture.

History culture should be understood as preceding historical consciousness. As a concept, history culture (Geschichtskultur) dates back to 1980s German historical scholarship. Seppo Hentilä talks about “that area of culture, on which people face the past and endeavor to reconcile with it”. More concretely, history culture “covers all possible mechanisms and arenas with which knowledge about the past can be mediated, presented,

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49 See e.g. Anderson, Imagined Communities; Duncan Bell, "Mythscapes: memory, mythology, and national identity", British Journal of Sociology 54:1 (2003); Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger. The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983).
50 Smith, "National identity", 58.
52 Torsti, "Estonian Bronze Soldier", 23, emphasis added
53 Kalela, "Historian tutkimus ja jokapäiväinen historia", 11 (transl. AH).
54 Torsti, "Estonian Bronze Soldier", 22.
55 Torsti Divergent Stories, 49; Hentilä, 32.
experienced, and used in present society”. It is quite clear that education, and history instruction in particular, is both a central mechanism and arena. Pilvi Torsti, too, has elaborated the topic, concluding that “historical culture exists within society in several forms as part of the culture, and that historical culture emerges through a group of channels, from state approved memorials and curricula to the sphere of cultural institutions, architecture and mass consumption.”

In terms of the present research, the essays are approached as evidence of the way in which the pupils make sense of the past for present purposes and identify with the past, and could thus be analyzed as manifestations of historical consciousness – of which the textbooks, as relevant artifacts from the history culture that surrounds the pupils, have formed an important if not dominant part. However, the nature of the data – the multiple intentions, influences and agenda embedded in the essays – does not really encourage an investigation of historical consciousness. Instead, this research project is an investigation of the evolution and current status of certain historical narratives and of textbooks as artifacts of history culture. The obvious relationship of education systems to identity politics makes this work also a research of history politics – the intentional use of history.

When history is used consciously and for certain purposes, we are looking at history politics, which is no longer “a form of relating to the past but rather a societal phenomenon characterised by the interests and aims that direct the use of history in a society.” The name implies the enormous political potential of the past: what power has been and is exercised with the choice of events or interpretations that are ‘remembered’!

The apparently objective practice of historiography has been a central tool in past history politics: it is an established fact that in the 19th century the nascent ideology of nationalism was reinforced with professional historians’ “teleological master narratives [that] equated the ‘reason of history’ with the nation”. While “there [has been] a growing awareness of the rhetorical and linguistic limits of history writing” since the linguistic turn, the use of history for political purposes is still common – and apparently still effective. The populist nationalist rhetoric gaining foot around Europe with demands of returning to the ‘old, better values’ and way of life serve as just one example; the

57 See Torsti, Divergent Stories; Hentilä “Historiapoliitikka - Holocaust”
58 Torsti, Divergent Stories, 52.
commemoration or conscious ‘forgetting’ of the colonial past in some countries another; the decisions made while drafting a national curriculum of history or a history textbook informed by it may well be the most relevant example. The representations of global, European and national history that will be learned and memorized by entire generations are produced to match the choices made by a small number of historians and history teachers who write the history textbooks. Even if the authors’ intentions are not consciously political and their purpose not the use of history, writing history textbooks is a history political practice and its impact will always carry far and wide into the future.

2.2 A European History?

It has often been pointed out that the extent to which European history is still interpreted from differing national vantages makes arriving at any mutually agreed conclusions highly unlikely. In addition to competing interpretations, there is the question of mere relevance: Europe seems clearly to have split into what Maria Mälksoo has aptly described as ‘mnemonic communities’, all of which commemorate the past with different focuses depending on what have been the communities’ defining past experiences – which past do they identify with.60 It certainly makes perfect sense that for the Germans a key experience, or the hegemonic ‘mythscape’, is the total defeat in the Second World War and the collective trauma/guilt over the Holocaust, whereas ex-Soviet countries are increasingly united in their attempts to reconcile with a past spent under totalitarian rule and “forgotten by the West” to which they now formally belong. Does it make sense, then, to even discuss the possibility of a common European history or the hegemony of any one European ‘core narrative’? Are there experiences that would unite all of Europe and provide a sense of genuinely shared history? Some scholars remain very skeptical:

As the terrain of memory of the ‘united Europe’ remains as contested as ever, there does not seem to be much space for any great optimism about the early emergence of a common European self-conceptualization. It is questionable whether producing a single and

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61 Bell, “Mythscapes”.
definitive collective ‘version of the past’ that is commonly shared by the public within a given community is at all possible or even desirable.\(^{62}\)

Pakier and Stråth have illustrated the problem by pointing out that in Switzerland there is a law against the denial of the Armenian genocide in 1915,\(^ {63}\) while in Turkey it is the recognition of said genocide that has been criminalized.\(^ {64}\) Despite the juxtaposition of these legislative cases, they are both examples of the same, increasingly wide-spread phenomenon of societies executing – or trying to execute – some sort of “past-management”, often referred to by its German term, \textit{Vergangenheitsbewältigung}. These discussions tend to raise heated public debate due to the topics’ often contradictory nature that has often been the original impetus for previous public oblivion. Public reactions increase public awareness of historiography’s limits; perhaps there is hope for the more critical historical understanding, called after by Pakier and Stråth, to become more common in the 21\(^{\text{st}}\) century? What we know is that in the past, historians were faced with much less – if any – criticism and evaluation of their works.

The trend of \textit{Vergangenheitsbewältigung} has highlighted the fact that there exist multiple historical narratives and alternative versions of the past inside Europe. Something that was recognized already a little earlier is that multiple histories – specifically alternative one – also exist outside Europe. The hegemonic narrative about Europe’s past – about Europe – has been a represented as a “history of victory”, a gradual but unstoppable progress of a superior civilization.\(^ {65}\) This canonical “Euronarrative” has dominated not only European but global accounts of the past for centuries; Europe’s colonial and imperial control of almost 80\% of the world was a particularly fruitful and active period in terms of a global indoctrination of Europe’s success story. Traditionally, the narrative has been based on “achievements” such as democracy (from Ancient Greece), the Roman Law, the age of Enlightenment, and the creation of modern science.\(^ {66}\) Heikki Mikkeli has pointed out that while it is hard to deny the spreading of the European civilization, it is noteworthy that the traditional European story has not left much space for the less

\(^{62}\) Mälksoo, “Becoming European”, 672.
\(^{63}\) As it has been in several other countries, too.
\(^{64}\) Pakier & Stråth, “A European Memory?”, 10.
\(^{65}\) Mikkeli, “Identiteetti ja federalismi”, sec. Ongelmia
honorable episodes of its past, such as colonialism and imperialism or the different totalitarianisms of the 20th century. Several historians have come to the same conclusion and many works based on the same observation – Mark Mazower’s *Dark Continent* and Tony Judt’s *Reappraisals* come to mind – have recently reached wide international audiences. While the exclusiveness – one could even talk about the randomness – of historical accounts is, in retrospect and after the emergence of postcolonial critique, a relatively simple observation to make, its implications are all the more cogent.

The coexistence of other cultures such as the vast Islamic world, and their connections with Europe have been similarly excluded from the grand Euronarrative. While some pre-modern influences may have been reluctantly admitted in passing, the hegemonic conception has always been one of a Europe *sui generis*. This attitude is embodied in an excerpt from a Finnish upper secondary school textbook on the history of Europe, published in 2004: “Modern science was developed in Europe, and Europeans deciphered the secrets of the universe.” The ignorance of other cultures can only result in defective knowledge of them, and as intercultural encounters have become commonplace in the age of globalization, this lack of accurate information often leads to xenophobia and fortifies negative stereotypes.

In the following subchapters 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 I will discuss how the above premises of collective identification and European history have affected our understanding of imperialism and Islam, respectively. In addition to their salience, imperialism and Islam are both topics that have always been subject to multiple interpretations and biased representations inside Europe (not to mention globally), and elemental in several contexts in which Europeanness has been constructed through othering.

67 Mikkeli, ”Identiteetti ja federalism”, sec. Ongelmia
69 Antti Kohi et. al. *Forum II. Eurooppalainen ihminen* (Helsinki: Otava, 2004), 175.
2.2.1 The Imperial Past in the Present

In principle, the international trend during the last several decades to come to terms actively with negative aspects of national histories might be favourable for a common European and international remembrance of colonialism. Nevertheless, a common remembrance would have to start with the quest for a common denominator. The increasingly critical survey into deeply rooted colonial patterns of thinking, the concept of a European ‘civilising mission’ or the condemnation of slavery might serve as points of departure.\(^70\)

The age of European imperialism is a theme from history that has had an enormous impact on the way Europe views the rest of the world, and vice versa. Its effects on the colonies as well as the colonizers, both during the actual ages of colonialism and imperialism (roughly 17\(^{th}\) to 20\(^{th}\) centuries) and in the consequent period of decolonization, are now studied globally – indeed the research has grown into a discipline of its own. As Jan Jansen suggests above, the reach of imperialism has been wide enough for it to be a plausible candidate for a shared European memory.

Imperialism created most of the centers and peripheries between which the majority of present global movement – be it the movement of capital, products or people – shifts back and forth.\(^71\) Many recent publications on European memory address imperialism and colonialism as salient European (and/or global) experiences. The mere fact that different European countries took such different roles in the imperialist endeavors, however, begs the question of whether there can ever be any hegemonic European understanding of how, exactly, that age of imperialism is to be remembered. It is somewhat obvious that the power structure that still resonates in both national and international politics around the world must have had, and must still have, very different meanings to the many different parties involved.\(^72\) Jansen suggests that this discussion, if embarked upon, might be opened with the processing of the concept of ‘Europe’s


\(^{72}\) Even more so as the population in countries who once controlled one or several colonies today comprises substantially of large minorities from those ex-colonies, now integrated into the “motherland" society with several generations of motherland citizens but a cultural inheritance from the colonial roots combined as a hybrid identity.
civilizing mission’, a suggestion that I would second. What is likely to prove a challenge is grasping the ubiquity of the colonial structures in our present. Most remnants of colonialism in contemporary society have either gotten hidden between the lines or been naturalized to the point in which they are difficult to recognize as such.

It is neither advisable nor very beneficial to discuss imperialism among European discussants only. A European discussion about the effects and consequences of imperialism risks becoming a mere contemplation of Europe’s relationship to its Others and the effects that period of time had on the European continent. A global discussion comes closer to a dialogue, which is why the world had to wait for the “targets” of colonialism to get their voices heard before one could really talk about postcolonialism; only after its emergence has the discussion been meaningful and mutually empowering.

If Europe is to grasp imperialism as one of its shared past experiences, it should actively strive to adopt a truly global perspective. This will eventually require a European public admission of the existence of a doctrine of white superiority, and its prevalence in the modern world.

The idea of European (or Western) superiority was needed as the justification of European imperialism. This fabrication was continuously reproduced and emphasized in the discourse of the ‘white man’s burden’, for the purpose of perpetuating the “good”, “easy” and “cheap” structures economic exploitation. The power structure was naturalized with stereotyping. Stuart Hall’s discussion of Africans in the colonial context is a good example:

\[P\]opular representations of [black people’s] daily life under slavery, ownership and servitude [were] shown as so ‘natural’ that they require no comment. --- For blacks, ‘primitivism’ (Culture) and ‘blackness’ (Nature) became interchangeable. This was their true nature and they could not escape it.

Postcolonialism, as a new field of cultural criticism, emerged first and foremost as resistance to the persistence of this European claim of superiority, which had not been nullified with the formal acts of giving the colonies their sovereignty. The hegemonic understanding of decolonization serves as an apt example: in Europe, the word has come

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73 All common adjectives in the matriculation examination essays’ depiction of the motives of imperialism
74 Hall, “Spectacle of the Other”, 245.
to denote the former colonies’ gaining of independence from their colonizers, something that happened in the couple of decades after World War II, and is now a period in certain countries’ history. Edward Said’s *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, Homi K. Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture*, and the works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak are only some of the central studies of postcolonialism that prove the process of decolonization, of rearranging the power structures built during imperialism, is far from done. Decolonizing the collective mind from the illusion of Western and/or white superiority has merely begun.

The influential work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has concentrated on the rhetoric of the European civilizing mission. She maintains that the colonial power structures were largely based on using culture as rhetoric: oppression was explained into something else with tropes, i.e. rhetorical figures of speech such as metaphors and metonymies. As mentioned above, traces of the colonial rhetoric dating back to the 18th and 19th centuries can still be observed in present-day European discourse. Mikko Lehtonen and Olli Löytty note how former colonies are still perceived as the objects of the acts of developed countries. They demonstrate their point by pointing out how Finns’ reaction to the devastating tsunami in Southeast Asia in December 2004 was to fret over the fact that this meant Thailand would not for a long time be the perfect holiday destination that it had been. Their example is provocative, since the tsunami also killed 170 Finns in Thailand and represents thus much more serious things than holiday planning for many. Perhaps this kind of provocation is in order for the message to really go through, especially in cultures whose relationship to colonialism and imperialism has been mostly indirect.

Current perceptions of colonialism and imperialism are a particularly interesting research object because postcolonial critique has grown increasingly popular in recent years, and its basic ideas could be expected to have entered public awareness. One objective of the

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76 Lehtonen & Löytty, "Suomiko toista maata?", 105.
77 Finland’s connections to colonialism and imperialism, as explained by Lehtonen and Löytty ("Suomiko toista maata?") mainly relate to the later consequences such as immigration from former colonies; other connections can be made but none of them directly pertains to the focus of the present research.
present research project is to discover the extent to which this has happened in the Finnish context.

2.2.2 Muslim as European or as Other?

Despite the fact that Europe – compared to most other parts of the world – is today a relatively secularized region, questions of religion have remained on – or should I say returned to – the agenda. Islam has been an important presence in Europe since the birth of the Islamic religion in the 7th century. Its role in the European civilization is incontestable. H. A. Hellyer discusses the engagement of Islam in the creation of Europe, reminding that parts of the Iberian peninsula “were predominantly Muslim countries for longer than they have been Catholic”, and that entire ethnic groups in Europe have embraced Islam.78 These historical roots, however, have not been able to circumvent the juxtaposition of Europeanness and Islam. For decades, and especially of recent, the inclusive nature of the European community has been manifested as the rejection of the Muslim community in increasingly strong statements – evidence for Smith’s prophecy of increased cultural exclusion. Irrespective of the vast Muslim minorities inhabiting most European countries, Muslims are continuously framed in juxtaposition with the Christian/democratic/rational Europe; the juxtaposition has been a pet frame in the Western news media since the turn of the millennium. Jocelyn Cesari, an expert on global Islam, maintains in her 2004 *When Islam and Democracy Meet* that despite 9/11 and the War on terrorism, the image of Islam is even more hostile in Europe than it is in the United States. She refers to European politics in which, unlike in the US, questions of immigration are central and the arguments of all Far Right parties are united in their rhetoric of “absolute incompatibility between different cultures”.79

The juxtaposition of Europe and Islam is a model example of the practice of stereotyping. The diversity of both entities is – or should be – general knowledge in both cultural spheres. It is all the more regrettable, that the popular representations of Islam in Europe

78 Hellyer, *Muslims of Europe*, 3.
are dominated by simplified stereotypes, endlessly reproducing the juxtaposition. One could say that there are two perceptions of the Europe-Islam-relationship competing for the hegemonic position in Europe: one in which the intertwining and shared history of the two cultures is acknowledged and a peaceful coexistence deemed feasible, and another that perceives the two as incompatible opposites and deems a clash between them inevitable. Most of the actual attitudes in Europe fall between these two. Other factors contributing to the representation Islam as Europe’s Other include the ongoing EU membership negotiations with Turkey, implying the entrance of a substantial Muslim-majority population into the Union. Anti-immigration sentiments have been on the rise throughout Europe, and in today’s xenophobic atmosphere the prospect of Turkey’s membership gets often read as equaling a new flood of immigrants and a cultural threat to European values posed by the country’s Islamic population.

Media plays an immensely important role in constructing contemporary Western perceptions of the Islamic world. The representation of Muslims is continuously slanted towards the negative, and hardly representative of the entire culture and religion.

To the extent that Islam is known about today, it is known principally in the form given it by the mass media. This corporate picture of Islam on the whole is a depressing and misleading one. What emerges is the best-known figures in the foreground, while the background is populated by shadowy (though extremely frightening) notions about jihad, slavery, subordination of women and irrational violence combined with extreme licentiousness. If you were to ask an average literate Westerner to name an Arab or Islamic writer, or a musician, or an intellectual, you might get a name like Kahlil Gibran in response, but nothing else. In other words, whole swatches of Islamic history, culture and society simply do not exist except in the truncated, tightly packaged forms made current by the media. TV’s images tend to present reality in too immediate and fragmentary a form for either historical or human continuity to appear. Islam therefore is equivalent to an undifferentiated mob of scimitar-waving oil suppliers, or

80 Adding to the antagonism, according to Edward Said, perceptions of the West in the Islamic world are similarly monolithic and utterly stereotypical, although Said (who lived and worked in the US) frames it not in terms of Europe but as “simplistic anti-Americanism”; Edward W. Said, “Mikään ei tapahdu eristyksissä – Espihe Orientalism-teoksen vuoden 2003 laitokseen”, in KOLONIALISMIN JÄLILLÄ. KESKUSTAT, PERIHERAT JA SUOMI, ed. Joel Kuortti, Mikko Lehtonen & Olli Löytty (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2007), 36.

81 I realize that discussing the attitudes of Europeans in principle implies including the views and perceptions of the 38,112,000 European Muslims, 5.2% of the European population (figures from 2009). I will, however, consciously exclude the Muslim population from my discussion because the idea is to study that European majority population who might regard Islam as Other, and because it is highly unlikely that any of the essays would have been written by a Muslim pupil.
it is reduced to the utterances of one or another Islamic leader who at the moment happens to be a convenient foreign scapegoat.\textsuperscript{82}

As topical as it seems, the above is a quote from a text by Edward Said that appeared in \textit{The Nation} already in 1980. In other words, 31 years have passed and very little seems to have changed. The fact that his interpretation dates to the “old world order”, the Cold War, not the “War-on-Terror” era, suggests that this information block and bilateral ignorance might be not just a consequence but as much a cause of the recent symptoms of religious polarization.

A discussion on Western conceptions of Islam and the polarization between the two cultures often refers to Samuel Huntington’s theory about a ‘Clash of Civilizations’ that has received a lot of attention since the mid 1990s. The American political scientist published his predictions about the imminent \textit{cultural} polarization of the relationship between the East and West, in practice Islam and the Western culture, as a \textit{Foreign Affairs} article in 1993, and extended it into a monograph that was published in 1996.\textsuperscript{83} As the most visible events in international relations in the turn of the millennium were attacks by Islamist terrorist groups, Huntington’s theory echoed far and wide – as can also be seen from the history textbooks that will be studied in chapter 4.6. Said and many others have been critical about the way in which Western media and public discussion adopted Huntington’s views without qualification; they have declared Huntington’s vantage irresponsible for neglecting cultural diversity and encouraging juxtapositions.\textsuperscript{84}

The article and consequent monograph do conjure a rather simplistic world view, basing the arguments on extreme dualisms, and emphasizing the fixity of cultural difference. This latter characteristic is rather well exemplified in the quote from the original 1993 article below:

\begin{quote}
In class and ideological conflicts, the key question was "Which side are you on?" and people could and did choose sides and change sides. In conflicts between civilizations, the question is "What are you?" That is a given that cannot be changed. And as we know, from Bosnia to the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{82} Edward W. Said, “Islam through Western eyes”, \textit{The Nation} 26 Apr 1980.


Caucasus to the Sudan, the wrong answer to that question can mean a bullet in the head.\textsuperscript{85}

As Huntington’s theses were – at least originally – welcomed and accepted in the Western public sphere, they are likely to resonate in contemporary European perceptions about Islam – probably more so than the contrary emphases of the historical connections between Europe and Islam, no matter how attested. In addition to looking into signs of a ‘clash of civilizations’, it will be interesting to see whether images of Islam produced by Finnish youth in the later 2000s are still colored by media representations like Said lamented in 1980, or whether media literacy has already improved to such a point that they might acknowledge the distorting and stereotyping power of media texts – from action films to newscasts and presidential speeches.

The youth of today are the voters and decision-makers of tomorrow. Studying their current perceptions of European imperialism and Europe’s Others should give us an insight into how feasible the creation of a shared European mnemonic community is in the foreseeable future. Predicting there will be diversity in the representations is a relatively safe hypothesis. What will emerge from the data as genuinely interesting are the different emphases the representations will bear, and the level of historical identification/differentiation the texts will illustrate towards the European forefathers on the one hand, and the ‘foreign’ Muslim community on the other.

\textsuperscript{85} Huntington, "Clash of Civilizations?", 27.
3 METHODS AND MATERIAL

The representations people produce, whether textual or in any other format, reflect their subjective awareness of the surrounding world and their identity. Studying such representations can therefore provide us with insight into their authors’ self-identification. Investigating texts that aim to represent history should tell us something about their authors’ historical identification. This project concentrates on texts about history, written by high school pupils in an important exam situation. The texts are far from spontaneous in the sense that the students have prepared for this examination for a long time, and have received information on what style and what type of contents their texts should include. They have been subjected to the institutionally accepted historical narratives that have been determined in the National Core Curriculum and represented in narrative form in the history textbooks that accompany every upper secondary school course in history. On the surface level, one could say that the students are primarily trying to copy the historical knowledge they have read from the textbooks and learned on the lessons into their answer sheets. Many factors interfere with this objective in the exam situation, however. My first methodological challenge has been to remain conscious about the multilayered context in which these texts are produced.
In this chapter I will shed more light on my sources – both the database of essays I have examined (3.1), and the textbooks that I reflect my findings on (3.2) – and introduce the methods I used in the research (3.3).

3.1 Sources: Upper Secondary School Essays

In this chapter, I will introduce the context in which the matriculation examination essays are produced, present a factual description of the essay data used, and elaborate on the challenges and strengths of conducting research with this type of source material.

After completing their compulsory education in (approximately) the year they turn 16, a vast majority of the Finnish youth continues their schooling in secondary education, choosing either the vocational upper secondary schooling, or the general upper secondary school, ‘lukio’. Some 52% of the Finnish young adults choose the latter.\(^{86}\) In general upper secondary school, education “continues the --- educational tasks of basic education” providing “extensive all-round learning [and] sufficient capabilities for further study”.\(^{87}\) The three-year education concludes with a nationally comparable matriculation examination, arranged biannually (every spring and every autumn) in all Finnish upper secondary schools at the same time.\(^{88}\) In its current form, the completion of the matriculation examination – and thereby of the entire upper secondary schooling – requires that the pupil take a minimum of four tests, organized according to subject of instruction.\(^{89}\) Since the years 2000, the annual level of pupils registering for one, several, or all tests has circled around 95,000.\(^{90}\)

The history test is part of an optional “general studies battery of tests”, in which the student has to answer to questions from at least one of the sciences and humanities

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\(^{87}\) The National Core Curriculum, 12.

\(^{88}\) The arranging of the matriculation examination is regulated by Section 18 (766/2004) of the Upper Secondary School Act, the Act on the Organisation of the Matriculation Examination (672/2005), and the Government Decree on the Matriculation Examination (915/2005)

\(^{89}\) The structure and requirements of the examination were slightly altered in 2006, but the changes are irrelevant from the perspective of the present research. For more information, see the Acts referred to in the footnote above.

\(^{90}\) Finnish Matriculation Examination 2007: Statistics from the Matriculation Examination Board (Helsinki: Ylioppilastutkintolautakunta, 2009), 10.
subject from each group: a) history, philosophy, psychology, physics, or biology, and b) social studies, religion, ethics, geography, chemistry, and health education. According to the 2007 statistics collected by the Finnish Matriculation Examination Board (hereafter MEB; the institution responsible for the coordination, assessment and archiving of the matriculation examinations), in recent years history has been the most popular subject among the sciences and humanities battery of tests, with psychology and geography holding second and third places. The total number of history tests taken (spring and autumn tests together) was 9,899 in 2006 and 9,837 in 2007.\(^1\) The traditional form of the general studies battery of tests includes 6 to 13 task assignments per subject, usually demanding to be answered in essay-type form. The exam questions are commissioned by MEB and drafted by professionals from each field to enable the best possible means of evaluating the candidate’s knowledge and skills in the subject tested. MEB also commissions and distributes to its censors specific criteria for evaluating the students’ performance in each test.

MEB stores in their archives a sample of ca. 1% of all the completed tests from every examination organized. The collected sample is always random, collected irrespective of the geographical location or ranking of the school, the final grades received from the tests, or the gender or language of the examination candidate, assuring their ideal usability for research purposes. The MEB’s sample of each examination is collected irrespective of which questions have been answered in the sciences and humanities tests, resulting in evident variation in the number of essays responding to individual test questions. The documents are subject to 50-year concealment, and the present author has thus agreed not to share any personal information on her informants, nor any information that would identify the school in which the informant has taken the test. This did not prove problematic at all: with an approach essentially interested in texts as representations of an entire generation’s perceptions, individual characteristics and all other background information were ruled out of the analysis as irrelevant irrespective of the requirements set by protocol. In order to ensure the traceability of my analysis and the conclusions, I have numbered the essays I used, and documented (in a table protected by a password) the essays (by school number & student number) to which my numbering refer to.

\(^1\)Examination 2007: Statistics, 17, 22; these particular statistics were based on the examinations of 2006 and 2007.
The essays investigated in the present research were written in response to questions in the history tests of the examinations in 2005-2008. The selection of time period was largely determined by practical reasons: tests prior to 2005 were omitted because of the adaption of a new national curriculum in 2003/2005, but also due to a lack of suitable test questions. Data on tests after 2008, on the other hand, had not yet been made available during the time this research was conducted. It seems evident, and perhaps not very surprising, that questions pertaining to matters of a “clash of civilization” on the one hand, and to challenged interpretations of the past on the other, have become increasingly common test by test. Questions dealing directly with European integration and questions of identity could have been more easily found from the tests on social studies and/or religion and ethics, but it was one of my very initial definitions to only look at the essays that are written in response to questions about history, i.e. the past, so as to better ensure one was studying the candidates’ perceptions of history and their identification with the past. More precisely, in order to connect the analysis to questions of European identity, I will look at essays written as answers to five different assignments dealing with the topics imperialism, decolonization or Islam.

Originally, the data to which the MEB granted me access entailed a total of 461 essays, answering 13 different test assignments which I had used as a basis of pre-selection and applied access to. These were all Islam, imperialism, colonialism or decolonization-related questions from the history tests of the eight matriculation examinations arranged in 2005-2008, and the MEB kindly granted me access to their entire archives. The length of the answers varies from 0.5 to 5 pages of hand-written text, an average essay extending by a few lines to the third page. Reading through all these essays, cursorily, pointed out several things to consider before making the final selection. Many of the test questions were phrased in such a form as to raise thoughts about critical reading and encourage the candidate to apply some source criticism, many of them including one or several quotations from texts dating back to previous centuries. This proved problematic for my project’s objective of studying the texts as representations of the awareness and identification the test candidates, because many of them had clearly composed large parts of their essays as though speaking with the voice of the historical personality quoted in the test question. Carefully evaluating the suitability of each test question to the kind of analysis I intended to conduct, I finally made the selection of including the essays written
in response to the following five questions, none of which was phrased around a text excerpt – on the contrary, as assignments they are all very clear:

Spring 2005, question 5 (hereafter: S2005/5): “The latter half of the 19th century has been called the age of imperialism. What did imperialism mean, and how was the imperial competition between European powers manifested in Africa or Asia?”

Fall 2006, question 8A (hereafter: F2006/8): “Today, the Islamic world is often seen as culturally uniform/homogenous. Evaluate this view with examples.”


Fall 2008, question 7A (hereafter: F2008/7): “In what ways and for what reasons has Islam become an important political power in the world since the end of the 20th century?”

Fall 2008, question 8 (hereafter: F2008/8): “In the 16th to 19th century, why did Europeans succeed in oppressing under their domination on other continents such vast areas that usually had a population notably larger than the number of European conquerors?”

The total number of essays answering the two Islam-related questions that the MEB had archived from 2005-2008 only amounted to 41. In order to maintain some balance between the two subject fields, but at the same time to ensure I was investigating a data set that was extensive enough to draw justified arguments, I ended up including 50 (out of a total of 144) randomly selected essays from the questions answering the three selected questions on imperialism and decolonization. After these final selections, my data set of 91 essays was ready to be analyzed. Using grounded-theory terminology, the selection process could be described as “theoretical sampling”. A subtle distinction arises from the fact that in this case, the data set was not formed with the primary objective of

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92 All questions, in their original Finnish formulation, were retrieved from the Helsingin Sanomat online archive; see bibliography for individual addresses. See appendix B for the original questions and their translation into English.
helping the researcher to form any one, new theory, but rather with the objective of enabling the researcher to form a solid and unproblematic method for analysis.

The selection of test questions further informed the textbook selection of including in the comparative overview the history textbooks written mainly for the courses HI1 and HI3. I will return to the textbooks in chapter 3.2 below, where I will also briefly introduce the Finnish National Core Curriculum for history instruction. Before that discussion, I will elaborate on the strengths and challenges of the essay data as source material.

Most empirical studies examining people’s historical consciousness have been executed as surveys, contributing to the development of survey studies as a methodology. A survey study is nonetheless not the only conceivable method for researching people’s relationship to history. While it can be argued that a survey study tells us what the citizens are thinking, and that thematic interviews can reveal how they are thinking, this project shows that school essays are also a valid choice of sources, with great potential for telling us how the (young) citizens interpret (and reproduce) the history culture that surrounds them.

Conducting a survey or a set of interviews for the purposes of historical scholarship usually entails both the sources and the methods applied. Choosing essay answers was first and foremost a choice of sources; the methods used to investigate in this project have not come from any previous research whose method I could have be copied, but were constructed along generally acknowledged methods in qualitative (text) research, and inspired by a the grounded theory approach. These methods will be introduced in more detail in chapter 3.3.

Comparing matriculation examination essays to for instance survey data highlights the pros and cons of both: the time-saving potential of ready/given material such as the essays is obvious when considering the time spent in preparation, but it is likely to prove more time-consuming in the analysis period, for several reasons. The first one is rather banal: the Finnish matriculation examination is still arranged in a paper-and-pencil format, meaning that the essays examined vary substantially in their readability. Also, the

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95 Löfström, “Vääryyksien varjot”, 468; see also Torsti, "Survey-kysely".
documents’ concealment span is 50 years, meaning that (currently) all essays newer than those written in 1961 cannot be copied or taken out of the premises of the MEB (or the National Archive where I conducted my research, being permitted an archival loan of the data by the MEB). Note-taking is slow and a lot of transcribing is necessary. On the other hand, unlike with interviews or survey studies, with essay answers one can presume a certain degree of previous knowledge on the topic among the informants. Taken into consideration in the planning period, this might prove very beneficial.

It is safe to say that analyzing answers to questions other than the core questions one is interested in asking is a slippery road. Drafting and analyzing a survey research enables the researcher to a) ask all the questions she considers relevant to her research question, and b) usually leave open the option of further interviews. As regards the essay answers it should be noted, however, that the analysis of answers given to more or less irrelevant questions is eventually a practice that frees the researcher a) from “questioning her questions”, so to speak, and therefore b) to regard the essays as text *samples* in the purest sense of the word. In such a situation, it is easy and fruitful to concentrate on their content by means of some variety of linguistic content analysis. In recapitulation: the nature and “origin” of the matriculation examination essays liberates the researcher from the risk of manipulating the sources, making them a very fruitful – if not entirely unproblematic – pool of data that lends itself to many kinds of textual analyses.

To conclude this elaboration on my source selection, I would like to emphasize two features common to all matriculation examination essays: their high *comparability* – requiring, though, the necessary precautions of choosing ones categories so as to circumvent the level of specification included in the task assignment – and the *accessibility* of both the essays and a vast amount of statistical information about them.  

Were one to conduct a more extensive, comparative research with the intention of investigating a *change* in the young adults’ awareness of something – imperialism for instance – or their usage of certain words, phrases or arguments, the MEB’s archives provide a superb variety of very comparable sources, archived dutifully from every year without exceptions, and ready to be investigated, compared and contrasted.

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96 Here I am mainly referring to the MEB’s occasional statistical publications, e.g. *Examination 2007: Statistics*, but also to the guidance given by the civil servants working at the MEB.

97 Needless to say, I find this a very tempting research proposal, the execution of which, unfortunately, the temporal delimitations of the present project did not accommodate.
Perhaps the biggest challenge, on the other hand, has been to remain conscious and wary of the inevitable and potentially very substantial influence of the textbooks to the pupils’ texts. This relationship, for its salience to the research results, will be elaborated below.

3.2 The Role of Textbooks

The potential of history, in its widest sense, in constructing and confirming identities has been highlighted in chapter 2. Its power to legitimize and inspire lends the discipline a dangerous potential. Historical knowledge has a central role in the socialization processes of all modern societies, which makes its dangerous potential a global condition. In Finland, being exposed to history textbooks is something virtually every citizen experiences. 98

Those engaged in textbook research have concluded that textbooks can and should be considered “tools of identity politics”, referring to their importance and influence in constructing nations, identities, difference. 99 In this thesis, history textbooks are studied as participants in identity construction and as elite texts representing the hegemonic interpretation of past events. At the same time I maintain that what is most interesting (and therefore worth investigating) in them only emerges in their reception: it is not until the textbooks are interpreted by their target audiences, the pupils, that they become truly meaningful for contemporary society. Among the different artifacts of history culture to which we are exposed, history textbooks represent the official version of the past, whereas the other artifacts (personal memories, historical fiction, etc.) have been formulated with different emphases and for different purposes. Hanna Schissler has discussed the “projective character” and “normative nature” of textbooks. To their audience, they appear as authorities, and especially in instances where the contents touch upon issues of social cohesion or contested values – both at the focus of this study – their role as signifiers of social consensus and conflict lines should not be taken lightly. 100

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98 While only half of the pupils continue from compulsory education to general upper secondary school, virtually all Finnish citizens are given textbook-based instruction in history during the 9 years of compulsory education.
99 Sakki, A Success Story, 4.
100 Schissler, “Navigating a Globalizing World”, 205.
Having said that it should also be acknowledged that several studies in recent decades have shown textbooks are not the sole or even the primary sources of historical consciousness among the youth. In addition to official, state-controlled education, children and young adults (and indeed people of all ages) are increasingly exposed to other products and manifestations of the surrounding history culture. From news casts to advertisements, the media abounds with material that relates to or uses historical knowledge.\textsuperscript{101} The “most popular” history represented in works of fiction, comic books, movies and computer games seems to be an ever-growing market. Other noteworthy contributions to history culture outside historical scholarship and education are the oral histories transmitted as microhistorical narrative in families, often colored by the personal experiences of past generations.\textsuperscript{102} History is indeed an omnipresent, quotidian phenomenon.\textsuperscript{103} The above does by no means render textbook research unimportant, but the researcher must be informed of the size and scope of the phenomenon when she is drawing conclusions. In terms of history instruction at school, at least three different factors are at play: the textbooks, the teacher (choices for course content, personal presence and consequent influence on learning), and the educational material that is being used in addition to the textbooks.\textsuperscript{104}

In addition to understanding the above, in the framework of the present research it is also essential to understand that the contribution of textbooks to the pupils’ understanding of history is very different from the role of textbooks in the pupils’ essay answers in the history test of the matriculation examination. The test assignments are drafted on the basis of the history curriculum, and students train for the test primarily by studying the textbooks by heart. The choices made by those who draft the assignments are important history political acts in the same sense as the writing of history textbooks is.

The entire upper secondary school curriculum can be seen as preparation for the matriculation examination; usually most courses are passed by taking a test on that


\textsuperscript{102}The substantial role of oral history in history culture is highlighted by Sirkka Ahonen (\textit{Historiaton sukupolvi?}, "Historiallinen identiteetti"). More specifically, from the results of the European \textit{Youth and History} project, she found that the Finnish youth were more eager to listen to historical stories of the grown-ups, and also tended to trust them more than other young Europeans (Ahonen, \textit{Historiaton sukupolvi?}, 19).

\textsuperscript{103}Kalela, "Jokapäiväinen historia", 11.

\textsuperscript{104}The National Core Curriculum informs all these factors, but does not determine any of them.
particular course’s subject matter, in which the assignments are drafted and graded in imitation of the matriculation examination. Pupils are being prepared for the matriculation examination test by their own subject teachers; in addition there are several online resources, and the Association for Teachers of History and Social Studies in Finland publishes an instruction leaflet. This leaflet specifies what kind of skills are measured with the examination and how (‘It is laudable to present one’s own opinion on the topic, but it must be justified with facts’105), gives advice for drafting a good essay answer to different types of assignments, gives practical advice for the exam situation, and presents the evaluation criteria for all test assignments in history and social studies from several previous years’ tests, as well as some commented exemplary essay answers for them. I will include below an illustration of relationship on the different factors that need to be taken into account when analyzing the pupils’ essay answers in the history test, and their approximate weight in comparison to one another.

Figure 3.1 Influences in answers to matriculation examination history test

Another characteristic of the relationship between textbooks and exam performance is the intensity of the cognitive process of learning that precedes the exam situation. Typically the pupils internalize such vast amounts of information that majority of it can only be actively memorized for a relatively short period of time. Soon after the exam

105 HYOL ry, Historia ja yhteiskuntaoppi, 13; the authors of the 2005 leaflet include historians Sirkka Ahonen, Heikki Mikkeli, and Arja Virta, whose other works are also cited in the present thesis.
performance, much of the knowledge descends from active memory to the sphere of the subconscious (unless the pupil continues to educate oneself on the same topics). This does not mean, however, that the representations constructed in the learning period would bear no consequence on the pupils’ later world view, which is a medley of all the information ever received and internalized. Looking at the essays comprising the data of this project, we must therefore understand them as products of that particular exam context and the (presumed) period of preparation that has preceded the exam.

Having discussed the substantial role of textbooks to the essay answers, I want to also emphasize the limited scope of that influence. While the essays clearly attempt to repeat the contents of the textbooks, and are often similar to one another on content level, it is equally clear that in an exam situation only a few pupils have the time to consciously edit the style of their writing. There is immense variation in style and “political correctness”, and as chapter 4 will demonstrate, vocabularies range from clinical and accurate to wild and derogatory. In addition, even if the contents in 7 out of 8 essays more or less repeat what can be found from the textbooks, there is only a very small amount of those six-point essays that have included all or most relevant contents relating to the given assignment. With all the other essays, it is interesting to see which contents and events they have internalized and remember as relevant, and which ones tend to be omitted. There is much to be studied in all these dimensions, irrespective of the close connection to textbooks on the content level. It will be, however, interesting to contrast the eventual findings from the essays with the contents and emphases of the relevant textbooks, and contemplate the level and depth of correlation and connections. This is why I have added to my research material representatives of Finnish history textbooks.

The objectives of instruction in history are for students to---perceive the present as being the result of historical development and the starting point for the future and be capable of relating their own time and themselves to the continuum of history, thus formulating their awareness of history.106

The above quote is from the general objectives of Finnish history instruction, given in the National Core Curriculum (hereafter NCC). The contents of history textbooks in Finland

have not been too rigidly state-controlled after the Finnish National Board of Education decided to give up the practice of scrutinizing new textbook publications in 1991. The authors are, however, expected to comply with the NCC, which defines the contents and premises of history teaching from elementary till upper secondary school. History textbooks and curricula have been a relatively popular source for researchers on the field of didactics, but the focus of research and research questions posed have mostly served the purpose of producing recommendations for the field of history didactics, whereas the present project is directed more towards generating knowledge about identity in relation to pupils’ historical orientation, and consciously avoids conclusions of prescriptive nature.

Referring to the present project’s theoretical framework, I want to emphasize once more that in this research the textbook material under scrutiny is understood as examples of each nation’s hegemonic elite discourse on historical matters and past events. Even though their contents are not state-controlled, the Finnish textbooks, too, tend to comply with the hegemonic interpretations of history, more or less irrespective of their publisher or authors.

The objectives for Finnish Upper Secondary School education are set in the National Core Curriculum, the most recent version of which dates to 2003/2005. The curriculum divides history teaching into 6 courses, the first 4 of which are obligatory and the remaining two are optional. The courses are: HI1 *Man, the Environment and Culture*, HI2 *European man*, HI3 *International relations*, HI4 *Turning-points in Finnish History*, HI5 *Finland from prehistoric times to autonomy*, and HI6 *Meeting of cultures.*

To demonstrate the possible influence and interrelations of all the courses I have translated into the below table from the NCC’s contents and objectives for all six history courses those parts that would appear relevant to my research. In most cases, the sections that I have presented in the below table only form a small part of the course’s entire objectives and contents.

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107 Finnish National Core Curriculum, 180-186.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HI1</td>
<td>Understand how people use natural resources as sources of livelihood and the effects of this on the environment and the social structure.</td>
<td>The Age of Discovery: conditions for and the consequences of exploration, the emergence of the world economy; the emergence of the Third World;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI2</td>
<td>Understand the building blocks of Europeanism by familiarising themselves with essential European cultural heritage.</td>
<td>The Middle Ages: the significance of religion to culture; The Age of Enlightenment: Enlightenment philosophy and its effects on society and art; central ideological tendencies, science as a challenge to religion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI3</td>
<td>Be familiar with the main features and theory of international politics; understand the grounds for international co-operation mechanisms and antagonisms; understand the influence of ideological and economic conflicts of interest in the history of international relations.</td>
<td>The Great Powers’ struggle for supremacy: the basic concepts of international politics; the theory and practices of imperialism; involvement of the Third World in international politics; the minefield that is the Middle East; new international structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI4</td>
<td>Be able to place the political development of Finland in relation to the political background of Europe and the world.</td>
<td>Finland’s new international status: integration into the international economy in cultural, economic and political terms; the future of Finns as part of a global system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI5 (optional)</td>
<td>Understand the connections between Finnish civilisation and Western culture; learn to appreciate Finnish cultural heritage.</td>
<td>Prehistoric times and interpretations of the origins of Finns and the Sami people; the effects of the Great Power Period in Finland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI6 (optional)</td>
<td>Understand the values and lifestyle of a culture different from their own; understand the interdependencies between abstract culture, the social structure, economic life and natural conditions; be familiar with the historical development of the culture being examined and with its interaction with other cultures; learn to analyse different manifestations of culture in areas such as the arts, religion and social structures; be able to take the diversity of cultural backgrounds into account in interactive situations.</td>
<td>The teacher chooses one or several of [a variety of] cultural spheres.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 The most directly relevant course objectives and contents from the Finnish National Curriculum for upper secondary school, history instruction.\(^{108}\)

Looking at the contents and objectives of each course as they are prescribed in the NCC, it could be argued that all six courses entail components that pertain to my research question. Acknowledging the strong tie between history textbooks and the assignments of the history test in the matriculation examination, however, the test assignments I have selected for analysis further determined my selection of the textbooks to examine. Based on this criterion of relevance, this project’s overview of the three textbook series will mostly concentrate on the obligatory history courses HI1 and HI3, during which the pupils are taught environmental and social history (HI1) and the basics of recent international relations (HI3). Out of these two, the relevant content is much lesser in HI1 and the emphasis is on HI3. Some parts of the second course, HI2 European man are also included in the analysis, but most of that course deals with the development of the European culture, whereas the assignments chosen deal with actual events and international relations. My purpose is certainly not to understate the effect that the pupils’ conception of their European “heritage” and cultural origins might have on their perception of Europe’s Others – on the contrary I would be very pleased to find evidence of such connections. But there exactly lies the problem: in a qualitative historical research project such as the present one, the risk to make teleological inferences while studying certain instruction materials and contrasting them to texts written in reply to assignments addressing very particular areas of their knowledge would be, I’m afraid, too big. As the contents of the essays repeat contents from the textbooks, having read through the 91 essays I can confidently state that most of their contents derive from the textbook/course HI3. Since my focus is not on the contents I will, however, also include in the textbook section excerpts of the HI2 books that most directly discuss relevant topics, such as Islamic or “Oriental” cultures. Course HI6 would probably also include ample material for making inferences on the students’ ideas about Otherness, but I have chosen to leave that course outside my analysis because it is not a compulsory course and there is therefore no way of knowing which informants would have taken that particular course and which would not.

There is no database showing which books are being used by particular Finnish schools. Similarly, like in most countries, no official statistics of the sale figures of different textbooks have been made available. In addition, the length of different editions’ usage

109 Pingel, UNESCO Guidebook, 30.
is also very much a school-specific policy. Inari Sakki has remarked that there does not seem to be much variation between Finnish history and civics textbooks by different publishers.\footnote{Sakki, A Success Story, 238.} This is, in my opinion, a question of focus and scale: my comparison of three different textbooks series establishes substantial differences in their representations of Islam and imperialism alone. A trend towards even further diversification has also been demonstrated on an international level.\footnote{Pingel, UNESCO Guidebook, 30.} I have not tried to connect the essay answers with the books that the essays’ authors have studied: this is not a pedagogy-oriented study. Rather, the objective is to study the texts in isolation as singular communicative acts, and keep the conclusions on a primarily hermeneutic level.

I chose to include in my analysis textbooks from three different history textbook series: \textit{Forum}, \textit{Aikakirja} and \textit{Muutosten maailma}. These popular series are published by three major Finnish publishers (Otava, Edita and WSOY respectively). In order to reach best possible correspondence with the essays, I have analyzed editions published in 2004 and 2005. Given the lack of any statistics on textbooks actually used, the final correlation between the essays and the textbooks that their authors have studied will have to remain a mystery. This has naturally been taken into consideration in my analysis, which approaches the essays as larger groups, representative of the entire national body of each examination’s candidates, not as individual texts. Below, I will provide a basic description of the books included in the analysis.

All the textbooks are some 180 pages in length, and have been published in either 2004 or 2005, following the new curriculum. All series use approximately half of their page space on illustrations; the \textit{Aikakirja} series perhaps a little less so than the two others, but then again the \textit{Aikakirja} series also fits less text on one page than \textit{Forum} and \textit{Muutosten maailma} do, which overrides the amount of illustrations. All textbooks proceed in a more or less chronological order. The biggest differences between the three series are in their contents and emphases, both of which will be discussed in chapters 4 and 5. The variation and differences of textbooks from different series is not a question I am primarily interested in. It is perhaps generally interesting, however, that two of the three HI3 books, \textit{Kansainvälisten suhteiden aikakirja} (hereafter \textit{Aikakirja 3}) and \textit{Forum III}, emphasize already in their prefaces the existence of multiple interpretations (“History is
not just one truth about the past; it consists of different interpretations.”

Whereas Muutosten maailma 3’s preface stresses that “What’s essential is to grasp the polarity of democracy and dictatorship.”

### 3.3 Methods in Practice

Having introduced my somewhat less traditional source material, the combination of school essays and textbooks, I will now shed some light on the methodological choices and the case-specific tools of analysis that it guided me to. After a few general remarks I will present my categories of interpretation and elaborate briefly on the literature and theoretical conceptualizations that support them. Given the ready-made nature of my source material, the methodological concerns only start from the stages of analysis.

Rather than choosing between qualitative and quantitative research, in historical research it is common – and advisable – that elements of both are included. Pertti Alasuutari, maintains that while we can talk about qualitative and quantitative analyses, the “human sciences cannot be divided into quantitative and qualitative methods”. The use of both approaches has been essential for the present project as well. Having determined that I needed to base my method of analysis on the sources, I could refer to grounded theory in building this analysis. In the grounded theory approach, often used in the social sciences – also in textbook research – categories emerge from the analysis conducted. The categories are then refined “through a more and more in-depth examination of the text”, a practice that seemed natural and profitable with the kind of texts I use as sources. My categories emerged from a reading of the primary sources in the light of my predetermined, theoretical secondary sources.

Due to the characteristics of the chosen data discussed above, my idea was to reduce the data to such units that would not be determined by the use of a certain textbook or by the phrasing of the task assignment. It was quite clear to me from the beginning that this would require going to the level of linguistic units and differentiation. Exam essays can

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112 Antti Kohi et. al., *Forum III. Kansainväliset suhteet* (Helsinki: Otava, 2005; hereafter *Forum III*), 6-7
113 Esko Heikkonen, Matti Ojakoski & Jaakko Väisänen *Muutosten maailma 3* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2004), 3
114 Torsti, *Divergent Stories*, 55-56; Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 75
115 Alasuutari, *Researching Culture*, 7
116 Pingel, UNESCO *Guidebook*, 70.
hardly be considered as rhetoric in the pure sense of the concept, but the choice of syntax and semantics (in simplified terms: word choice) do have the same potential for scientific deductions in exam essays, media texts and politicians’ speeches. While an essay answer’s presumed impact on society might be smaller than that of a BBC news broadcast’s, its examination, when conducted on a large enough sample, provides insight into the awareness of the masses that are the recipients of the media texts and political rhetoric. When a pupil is asked about the Islamic world, and she or he only refers to ‘arabs’, this tells something about her or his conception of Muslims. When a pupil describes imperialism as ‘raping’ and ‘executing’, and another as ‘teaching’ or ‘extending territories’, there is a world of difference at play.\footnote{I acknowledge the lacuna of conducting a linguistic analysis from texts written in one language, and presenting the results in another language. In order to ensure transparency and validity of my results; I have therefore included in the appendices a glossary in which I list the terms and concepts I have presented as quotations from the data in English, and their original Finnish form (see Appendix 2). In the instances where I have quoted entire sentences from the Finnish sources, I present them in both their original Finnish and as my English translation.}

The actual analysis stage of the research opened by reading through the majority of my initial database, some 300 essays, to get a sense of the overall usability of the data I had been granted access to. After that initial reading, I narrowed down the number of essays to be included in the analysis; these selections have been explained in the end of chapter 3.1 above. Once I had my final database of 91 essays selected, I was ready to move forward into the two main stages of research: the purification of observations and their consequent unriddling.\footnote{Alasuutari, \textit{Researching Culture}, 19-20.} As is common with qualitative research, the essays, some 2 hand-written pages in average length, included a lot of information that was irrelevant to my research; my first task was to reduce the data into units that were meaningful for my research topic. To ensure I really grasped what was meaningful, I first established categories of interpretation that emerged from my background readings in identity and the presence of history; these categories are introduced in the following sub-chapter. Guided by these categories, I started to reduce the data and produce observations by asking each essay a number of questions, e.g. “Which verbs has the author used to describe the acts of the imperialists; are these verbs used in the active or in the passive voice?” or “Is the representation of decolonization rich with metaphors or very matter-of-fact?”. Most of my observations required that I write down several lists of words as they were used in individual essays; in addition I took note of whether certain phenomena –
such as neocolonialism or the possibility of Turkey’s EU-membership – were mentioned. In the end, I had very extensive notes on the 91 essays, the observations in which I then set out to unriddle, i.e. interpret, reorganize and form into a research report that makes up the entire chapter 4. Before turning to the actual research report, I introduce the theoretical categories of interpretation with which I was able to conduct the research in question.

3.4 Categories of Interpretation

As mentioned above, the interpreting and analyzing of my data has followed, to some extent, the stages of grounded theory research: from open coding (forming initial categories by segmenting the data), to axial coding (assembling the data in new ways and looking for interconnections), and finally to selective coding (identifying a ‘storyline’ into which the previously determined categories can be integrated). Two different stages of analysis could be specified from the analysis: the first rounds of coding (‘open’ and ‘axial coding’) quite organically concentrated on the more apparent contents and contexts of the essays, and after those initial codings more commonalities started to emerge and form new categories (‘selective coding’). In other words, the first findings were perhaps characterized more by the texts’ subjects, either imperialism or Islam. After those separate codings, the shared ‘storylines’ and other common denominators and interconnections of the texts as a totality gradually took center stage. This initial selective coding confirmed certain precategories that I had presumed: representations of difference, as well as representations of historical continuity and the incorporation of multiple perspectives. The two final categories are attitudes and historical identification, with which I hope to be able to determine the informants’ individual relationship to the topics they discuss in their essays. Together the categories form parts of a whole, and enable a balanced understanding of the nature, varieties and degree of the informants’ identification with and perceptions of the past.

The first rounds of coding, as mentioned, were conducted separately with the two text sets of imperialism and Islam -related essays. Much of the coding was informed with the theoretical and historical background presented in chapter 2. While trying to steer clear

119 Creswell, Qualitative Inquiry, 57.
from teleological interpretation and the fallacy of branding every finding as evidence Eurocentric influences, I resorted to a great extent to quantitative analyses, counting rigorously the occurrences of different referents, adjectives, and verb clauses. Conducting this type of analysis provided me with overall insight into how the informants perceive the subject matter: what kind of contents and dynamics dominate their ideas of Europe’s imperialist past and the Islamic world’s present. The analysis of representations of imperialism also includes an analysis of agency; its purpose is to find out whether the informants were able to perceive the colonies as equals to their colonizers at the time of gaining independence from them. My hypothesis was that whereas it is probable that the imperialism narratives are dominated by the acts of the imperialists, the texts in which the topic was change and resistance empower the colonies.

The first thematic category applied to the entire data pool was difference. It has often been pointed out that the idea of Europe or Europeanness relies traditionally on dualisms: same-different, present-past, West-East, Culture-Nature, Civilization-Barbarism, etc. In my opinion, this tendency to perceive the world in opposites is more a human than an European characteristic. Identity and identification, as was elaborated in chapter 2, is certainly a construct created at least partially through the dynamics of opposites – some would even say antagonism. I expect to find difference reproduced in the essays through the practice of stereotyping. In my analysis, I will be looking for stereotypical representation, and expecting to find at least occurrences of the “stigma” of Islam.120

Analyzing difference in the framework of Europe and its Others one is likely to encounter occurrences of Orientalism. Already during the first readings in which I familiarized myself with the database I was struck by the number of essays that used very dramatic language to describe both European imperialism and the Islamic world. At first reaction, one could perhaps be mistaken to ignore such observations as “mere” questions of style and therefore of less relevance to the research at hand. We must, however, understand that the power of words derives not from their truth-value or factual substance, but precisely from their power to evoke impressions and visualizations. The more colorful a word, the stronger and more sustainable is its effect.

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120 Cesari, Islam and Democracy, 21-42.
The next category of interpretation is *historical continuity*. The recognition of history’s ambiguous nature and its multiple interpretations have to an extent replaced the older trend of framing history as uncontested causal emplotments. However, the idea of continuity and causal effects are still elemental to our understanding of the past – the present is a product of the past, the future a product of the present. The NCC also states that the “key concepts of history include time, change, continuity and causality. As a subject that emphasises analysis of change, history will create opportunities to process the future and to assess opportunities relating to the future.”

My analysis examines the informants’ understanding of historical continuity primarily by assessing the level and quality of causal relationships included in the essays. This is another feature of a good essay answer that has been emphasized in the instructions; nevertheless there is great variation among the texts in its incorporation.

A related aspect to continuity is the category of *perspectives* – an elemental one in light of my theoretical framework that emphasizes the multiplicity of identities and interpretations of the past. As mentioned in chapter 2, postcolonial criticism has argued for a deconstruction of Europe’s history-based claims to universalism, and a rewriting of world history to include the hitherto ignored or silenced accounts of all the experiences Europe’s dominance has marginalized. “Understanding Europe in times of the postcolonial”, Gurminder K. Bhambra writes, “requires us to bring forward the perspective of the world – that is, to think of Europe from a global perspective – as well as bring forward other (non-European) perspectives on the world.” In the Finnish context, Sirkka Ahonen has called for a stronger emphasis to be placed in history instruction on teaching a critical, multiperspectival approach to past events. In my analysis, I will examine the extent to which Bhambra’s wishes are met by the representations produced by Finnish young adults: do the texts provide a multiperspectival account of Islam-Europe relationship and the imperial times, or are their representations still constructed through European lenses only? This category is

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121 Finnish National Core Curriculum, 180.
122 E.g. page 15 of the HYOL leaflet on what makes a good essay answer: “presentation of processes of change, developments and chains of events, --- examining causes and effects”.
124 Bhambra, “Postcolonial Europe”, 70.
related, but not at all identical to the analysis of agency, which will be conducted under the investigation of the representation of imperialism.\textsuperscript{126}

Related to the pupils’ tendency to apply multiple perspective is the determination of their general attitudes towards both the past and the conjectural Other. I was right to suspect that a data like this might not very easily lend itself to a classification of attitudes. The multiple layers of intentions embedded in the essays render an investigation of attitude very suggestive; given the relevance of personal attitudes to my research questions I will nonetheless present some very suggestive results which I base on the texts level of apparent judgment towards the deeds of the imperialists in their colonies, and the possible xenostereotyping of Muslims in the Islam essays.

My final category of analysis is identification. I have already spelled out my understanding of collective identity, in the framework of this research, as relying to an important extent in individuals’ identification with the past. Identifying with Europe does not equal identifying with the 19\textsuperscript{th} century imperialists. It can mean personal identification with a past people or personage, but equally, historical identification stands for identifying the past as relevant to oneself, as one’s own. If the identification is to be or become collective, the past needs to be “owned” in similar terms with the other individuals in the imagined community. This definition does not exclude multiple and competing narratives or cultural Others, as long as their existence is generally acknowledged among the other “members” as well. With this dual definition in mind, I set out to find traces of personal identification on the one hand, and a sense of acceptance and ownership on the other. For locating personal historical identification, I asked my data which groups the informants seemed to implicitly place themselves in when discussing these past or geographically distant events and cultures. To understand the informants’ sense of ownership of the past, I gathered up all the results that I had derived from the essays. The summary of the results in relation to ownership is included in the last chapter’s discussion as part of my conclusions.

\textsuperscript{126} For the relevance of agency in the colonial context, refer to Homi Bhabha, \textit{The Location of Culture} (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).
4 ANALYSIS

In this chapter I will present the findings made from the essay data. The chapter will proceed along themes introduced above in chapter 3. I will begin with a discussion on the texts’ representations of imperialism, and then move on to discuss how they reflected the Islamic world. I open these two subject-based sections (4.1 and 4.2) by very brief overviews of the content coverage and emphases of the corresponding topics in the three textbook series that I have studied alongside the essays. The interdependence and correlation of the essays and the textbooks will be further analyzed in the discussion that makes up chapter 5.

After presenting my findings on the topics of imperialism and Islam separately, I will turn to discuss themes that were common to both sets of essays and essential for finding answers to my research questions. First, in section 4.3 I will illustrate how the texts produce difference. In 4.4 the focus is on questions of historical continuity. The chapter closes with section 4.5 in which results reached with the remaining interpretative categories of perspectives, attitude, and identification are reported.
4.1 Imperialism

TEXTBOOK BACKGROUND: A comparison of the textbooks shows that while all three series dedicate approximately the same amount of page space for the journeys of exploration and the beginnings of colonialism, the coverage of imperialism and particularly its consequences vary from one series to another. There is even more variance within the emphases the textbooks place on their depiction of each topic.

Certain narratives, such as the imperial competition of France and Great Britain in Africa or the decolonization of India were covered broadly in all textbooks, whereas other contents, such as the Algerian War or the colonization of Latin America, received more attention in other books while they were largely ignored in others. Table 4.1 presents the breakdown of content coverage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEXTBOOK</th>
<th>exploration, colonialism</th>
<th>imperialism</th>
<th>decolonization / imperialism's consequences</th>
<th>coverage total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aikakirja 1</td>
<td>15 pages</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6 pages</td>
<td>21 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muutosten maailma 1</td>
<td>16 pages</td>
<td>5 pages</td>
<td>7 pages</td>
<td>28 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forum I</td>
<td>18 pages</td>
<td>2 pages</td>
<td>8 pages</td>
<td>28 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aikakirja 3</td>
<td>3 pages</td>
<td>10 pages</td>
<td>10 pages</td>
<td>23 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muutosten maailma 3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16 pages</td>
<td>15 pages</td>
<td>31 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forum III</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10 pages</td>
<td>10 pages</td>
<td>20 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coverage total</td>
<td>52 pages</td>
<td>43 pages</td>
<td>56 pages</td>
<td>151 pages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 Coverage of colonialism, imperialism and decolonization in the textbooks

127 Counting content coverage in the HI3 textbooks, I have left out the sections that discuss the Vietnam war, as well as depiction of China’s 20th century developments as only indirectly relevant – they were presented as part of the Cold War chapters (Vietnam) or as chapters of their own (China) in all three books. The pages in which the Middle East conflict between Israel and Palestine – a topic that resonates with both imperialism and Islam – is discussed have been counted above as content about Islam.
Findings from the three sets of essays that discussed topics related to European imperialism and its effects provided versatile information and insight about the contents, dynamics, and ethical views that the informants attached to that period of the past.

Approaching the texts first from a primarily linguistic vantage, I detected a certain repeating pattern in their syntax. One clause structure rises clearly above all others in frequency, dominating almost all of the imperialism essays:

[A European agent] [did something] to/in/from [the colonial object].

This pattern evokes the following questions: Who are named as the European subjects? What are their actions? Who are named as colonial objects, and is the composition ever turned around so that the colonies would claim agency? As mentioned in chapter 2, it is more or less accurate to maintain that all parts of the world were involved in the process of imperialism, either as perpetrators, as direct objects, or as (generally) more detached bystanders whose societies were nonetheless greatly influenced by the logic, outcomes, and ideology. Asking the above questions from the texts revealed the Finnish youth’s typical role casting in their story of imperialism.

As you will remember, the total number of imperialism-related essays in the database is 50. From these essays, I studied the occurrences, variation and frequency of the different “players” of imperialism, differentiating between perpetrators (colonizers), objects (colonies), and also acknowledging the occasional ambiguous referents that are not clearly indicated as belonging to either of the groups mentioned above. Repetition of the same referents is common to most texts, but to give each text and informant equal weight I only counted the first occurrence of all referents per essay. Also, whenever the assignment includes referents of the category being counted, those referents were left out of the count.

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We will first look at referents used in the texts to represent the Europeans/imperialists and then at the different verbs that are used most often to describe the actions of the imperialists, and finally see how the colonies tend to be represented.

The list of colonizers comes to include certain general referents, the most common one being ‘Europeans’, and the most common non-geographical referent ‘mother country’ (in Finnish, *emämaa*). Of the most commonly used referents, several are European states. Some of them are mentioned almost regularly, others only once or twice; some are named accurately and some despite never having taken part in the imperialist competition in reality.  

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**the most common referents for European imperialists**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referent</th>
<th>Occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>industrialized countries</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>colonial masters</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conquistadors</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whites / white Europeans / white population</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruling / conquering / imperial countries</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western powers / states / westerners</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Netherlands</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European powerful states</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>great / imperial / colonial / oppressing powers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal / the Portuguese</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European colonizers / imperialists / etc...</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the (European) conquerors</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother country</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain / the Spanish</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European countries / states; Europe (neutral)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Europeans</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France / the French</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain / England</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chart 4.1** Referents for Europeans from the 50 essays that discussed imperialism

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130 I have not controlled for inaccuracy, as I do not see it as being a relevant factor in mapping conceptions.
There is little disagreement in the texts about the salience of France and Great Britain in the imperial competition (and indeed competition was a very popular way to represent the chain of events). Majority of the S2005/5 essays (about imperialism in the end of the 19th century) mention the two countries, many as the two protagonists who were imperialist in their own league. The below quotes are just a few examples of how the countries’ leading position is emphasized:

Euroopassa enimmäkseen Englanti ja Ranska. / In Europe, mainly England and France.\textsuperscript{131}

Suurvallat olivat kiistatta Ranska ja Englanti. / The great powers were unquestionably France and England.\textsuperscript{132}

The bilateral relationship of France and Great Britain in the imperial times is “a good story”: the British Cape Town – Cairo plans and their running into France’s East-West plans in Sudan is mentioned in the majority of the S2005/5 texts, many of them even remembering the place name, Fashoda, correctly. Belgium’s Congo was another popular reference; King Leopold II was often mentioned by name. Japan and Russia’s roles had clearly been more complicated for the pupils to grasp: they are only mentioned in 2 essays and their myriad imperial enterprises – which tend to be included in the textbooks, however – are mostly ignored and the focus put solely on the European states.

Here we can perhaps speculate a little: should one be inclined to making presumptuous conclusions based on scant evidence, one could maintain that the overwhelming lead of France and Britain before any reference to “Europe” or “Europeans” in the findings above could be evidence of the European image of imperialism being not one of a shared experience, but one in which France and Britain acted and the rest followed. Having said that, I cannot think of a reason why, in theory, such an image could not become the historical image shared by all Europeans. France and Britain have not – at least this far – shown any noteworthy signs of planning to apologize for their imperial past or to atone for their oppressive past practices.

Moving on from perpetrators to the actual actions: the below chart presents the most commonly used verb vocabulary that the 50 texts entailed. ‘To conquer’ and ‘to oppress’

\textsuperscript{131} S2005/5/2
\textsuperscript{132} S2005/5/7
are clearly the acts most often connected to the presence of the Europeans in the colonies. The verb statistics correlate with the referents that the texts included for the colonizers. ‘conquerors’ was the most common group referent after nationalities and the term ‘Europeans’, and both verbs appear as attributes in several common colonizer referents.

**Chart 4.2** Referents for the actions of the imperialists from the 50 essays that discussed imperialism
Most of the verbs that were most frequently used refer to the “practicalities”, for want of a better word, of imperialism. In a typical essay the Europeans conquered territories, oppressed the people, divided and exploited the lands, imported their own culture, exported resources, and thus strengthened their position in the international community. Most of the more colorful verbs, such as ‘to harness’, ‘to force’, even ‘to execute’ and ‘to rape’ only occurred once or twice. This can be read as a sign of either the pupils’ (consciously?) clinical approach to their topic, informed by the exam instructions, or as a consequence of the extensiveness of the Finnish vocabulary, or as both.

It is fascinating that the third most frequently used verb is ‘to want something’. It can be agreed that ‘to obtain’ and ‘to take over’ are synonyms, and together they do appear more often than ‘to want something’. Conquering, obtaining and taking over are all strategic acts; there is solid evidence that such acts have indeed taken place in one colony after another. And yet almost one third of the texts describe Europeans’ imperialism as a desire, which is a far more interpretative verb, almost a conclusion.

Who were the objects of these acts, then? Inserting a similar total count of all colony referents is not reasonable, as these referents were more influenced by the assignment and also much more variant. To give an impression of the kinds of terms applied, I list the most commonly used referents in S2008/8 and F2008/8. The task assignment of S2008/8 addressed decolonization in Africa and Asia. The most common referents in the 11 essays in that set included ‘colony/colonies’ (used in 8 essays), ‘India’ (6 essays), ‘Indo-China’ and ‘Vietnam’ (both in 4 essays), ‘Japan’ and ‘Korea’ (both in 3 essays). The only African referents to be mentioned more than once were ‘Congo’ and ‘Algeria’, both mentioned in 2 essays. The F2008/8 task assignment asked why Europeans had succeeded in extending their territories in the 16th to 19th century. The wide temporal scope produced essays with quite vague references to individual events or locations: the most popular referent was ‘natives’/ ‘native population’ (used in 8 of 9 essays). The other common referents are ‘Indians’ (meaning native Americans; used in 5 essays), ‘Africa’ (4 essays) and one or both of the ‘Americas’ (also in 4 essays). As for the S2005/5 essays, most of the essays refer to ‘territories’/ ‘countries’/ ‘natives’ of Africa and Asia. India appears in 12 essays, even though in a third of the essays the discussion is limited to Africa alone (the assignment asks how imperialism was manifested in Africa or Asia, but

133 Included in the task assignment
only half of the essays follow the instructions). The most common non-geographic referent is ‘colony’, which is used in a majority of the essays.

What do these findings tell us? The colonization of Asia is mostly perceived in relation to decolonization – I am quite confident this is due to the narratives of the “peaceful revolution” in India and the notorious Vietnam War. The informants’ general perceptions of colonialism and imperialism are related to Latin America and Africa, and exactly so that colonialism is seen to mostly having taken place in Latin America, and imperialism in Africa. While the texts typically describe colonialism and imperialism in Latin America and Africa as severe oppression, the colonization of India is sometimes perceived as a happier story:

*Intiassa Iso-Britannialaisten tulo paransi maan oloja. Se yhdisti kansaa antaen yhteisen puhekielen, sillä Intiassa puhutaan monia eri kieliä.* / In India, the arrival of the Great-British improved the country’s conditions. It united the people by giving them a shared language, because many languages are spoken in India.  

The same applies to India’s decolonization process, which is often described emphasizing the unviolent opposition of the Indians following Gandhi. Several pupils stated that imperialism was, from the Europeans’ point of view, somehow easier to practice in Asia than in Africa, for in Asia,

*väestö oli kehittyneempää ja näin ollen tilanne oli erilainen kuin sivistymättömässä Afrikassa.* / the population was more developed, which rendered the situation different from the one in uncivilized Africa.

A tool for measuring Eurocentrism that was better applicable on the imperialism essays than on the Islam essays was the concept of *agency*. It became an imperialism-specific aspect because while the Islam essays are mostly concentrated on describing the Muslim community only, the imperialism essays always address the dynamics between the opposing parties between whom agency may shift. But does it?

For the purpose of locating agency, the obvious means was to concentrate on verb clauses. I thus looked at all the verb clauses concentrating on the use of active and passive verbs, and the subjects of the active verbs whenever they refer to states, people or

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134 S2005/5/26
135 S2005/5/16
groups of people. My hypothesis was that while assignments S2005/5 (“What was imperialism?”) and F2008/8 (“How did they succeed in it?”) were likely to produce mainly essays describing the acts of the imperialists, at least the essays for S2008/8 (“Compare decolonization in Africa and Asia”) could be expected to concentrate on describing what the colonies did to achieve independence, i.e. allocate more agency to the representatives of the colonized countries or people.

My hypothesis proved wrong: while almost all essays to S2005/5 and F2008/8 indeed include almost exclusively verb clauses with the Europeans as their subjects, the subjects of active verb clauses are divided roughly half and half between the colonizers and the colonized also in S2008/8. In just one essay is the domination of colonies’ agency bigger than 85% of the verb clauses, while the colonizers are attributed agency of over 85% of verb clauses in two essays. The remaining 8 texts were spread equally from 70% colony domination to 70 % colonizer domination, leaving the balance slanted slightly in favor of the colonizers’ activity. It might be necessary to confirm that despite the attribution of agency leaning towards the colonizers, all of the essays do really discuss decolonization. There is thus no way around the fact that majority of the informants perceived also the period of decolonization as consisting of the acts of the colonizers/Europeans. In much the same way as the Europeans in the other texts had ‘wanted’ to extend their territories outside Europe, they now first ‘did not want’ to give colonies independence, for they ‘were not ready to give away’ control; eventually, the colonizers chose to ‘give’ their colonies independence.

When the subject of the verb clause in the S2008/8 essays is a representative of the colonized group instead of the colonizers, the most common referents are ‘colony’ or ‘colonies’– or a country in which the decolonization process has come to represent something “noteworthy” on an international scale, i.e. India or Vietnam. Strikingly often, the verb in which the subject is a colony is ‘to succeed’, as if against all odds:

\[
\text{India puolestaan itsenäistyi Iso-Britannian vallan alta, ja on onnistunut kehittymään menestyväksi valtiosi.} / \text{India gained independence from under Great Britain’s power, and has succeeded in developing into a successful state.}^{136}
\]

\[^{136} S2008/8A/2 \]
In addition to active verb clauses, the passive voice is also used extensively in this set of essays, especially in reference to things happening in or by the colonies. The following excerpts represent the most common usage of the passive voice:

Siirtomaavallan purkautuessa sekä Afrikassa että Aasiassa oltiin toiveikkaita tulevaisuudesta. / During decolonization, there was hopefulness about the future in both Asia and Africa.  

Sekä Belgian omistamassa Kongossa että Ranskan Algeriassa käytiin taisteluja siirtomaavallasta vapautumiseksi. / There were battles fought over freedom from imperialism in both Belgium-owned Congo and France’s Algeria.

I argue that on most instances, the “choice” to depict imperialism and decolonization as processes mobilized and activated by the colonial masters is very much an unconscious one; it is a result of the pupils’ socialization into the imperialist rhetoric, the narrative of European superiority. While the majority of people today widely acknowledge that the structures of power imperialism functioned upon were unjust, and identify the imperialist practice as one of oppression, and while curriculums and textbook contents have been revised accordingly, decolonizing the collective mind from the harmful dichotomy normal/majority vs. abnormal/Other/minority and the indoctrination of the European grand narrative, is a far more complicated process. The same applies to emancipation from the illusions many Europeans foster regarding Islam.

Also the informants’ use of the passive voice can be interpreted as an unconscious instinct, instilled in the socialization process, not to portray the colonies as active ‘doers’ taking their matters into their own hands. In chapter 5 I return to the topic and see whether the habits of framing decolonization as acts of the colonies and/or the use of the passive voice might have rubbed off from the textbooks, or whether we should look elsewhere to determine who is at fault.

137 S2008/8A/3
138 S2008/8A/7
4.2 Islam

TEXTBOOK BACKGROUND: There is substantial variance in the textbooks' coverage of the Islamic world. The otherwise extensive and versatile *Forum* textbooks, for instance, ignore the history of Islam entirely.

*Aikakirja 1* and *Aikakirja 2* devote a total of 7 pages to the birth and spreading of the religion, and the culture that evolved around it, *Muutosten maailma 1* presents the same in 3 pages. In HI3 contents Islam is more thoroughly present, but presented mainly in terms of different conflicts – the Middle East in particular – and the War on Terrorism. These topics are covered in 12 pages in *Aikakirja 3*, in 11 pages in *Muutosten maailma 3*, and in as many as 21 pages in *Forum III*.

The Otherness of Islam seems to be quite deeply embedded among even the younger generations of Europeans today. Consider the following quotation:

*Nykylän ihmisten kuva islamista on lähes poikkeuksetta negatiivinen. / Nowadays people have, almost without exception, a negative image of Islam.*

By using the word ‘people’ to indicate a prevalent, omnipresent opinion the text implicitly locates the believers of Islam outside ‘people’. The use of the word does suggest that the author does not necessarily admit to personally having this image. However, irrespective of the author’s agreement, she or he has chosen to open the essay with the juxtaposition of people as ‘normal’ and Islam as the Other. In this subchapter, I will discuss those findings that were derived from the Islam texts and are not directly comparable with the findings from the imperialism essays.

It seems that the Islam texts rely much less on textbook content than the imperialism essays. I would attribute this difference to three factors: first, imperialism is regularly given substantial page space in the HI3 textbooks while Islam only occurs here and there

139 F2008/7A/17
and is a topic that escapes periodization;\(^{140}\) second, Islam is admittedly a topical subject that one encounters in different contexts almost daily, while imperialism is more clearly, in the eyes of Finnish adolescents, a historical theme.\(^ {141}\) A third factor are the assignments: neither one of the two Islam questions is phrased in a way that would direct the pupil to express one’s knowledge in the history of Islam. On the contrary: the fall 2006 question starts with word ‘today’, and asks the pupil to assess the uniformity of the Islamic world.\(^ {142}\) The fall 2008 Islam question also specifically addresses developments that have taken place “since the late 20\(^{th}\) century”.\(^ {143}\) Since students are advised to answer with essays of sufficient length, it is not surprising that essays written in response to questions such as the above have less in common with textbook contents than the imperialism essays, and that consequently the contents are more disparate in the former than in the latter. In addition, compared with a topic such as imperialism, there is relatively little to learn about the Islamic world from the Finnish textbooks, and the little that they include is heavily balanced towards present international relations as you have seen above.

With less contents memorized from the textbooks, the Islam essays include a lot of content that reflects contemporary public issues. The worldwide Muslim protests that were ignited by the publication of a Mohammed cartoon in a Danish newspaper in 2005 were mentioned in 6 of the 41 essays (in 3 essays from each assignment). Despite Denmark’s geographical proximity, and the fact that the protests lead to numerous deaths and the incident was a serious crisis of international relations in Denmark, Finnish pupils described the consequences as being relatively minor-scale:

\[\text{Mellakat Tanskan suurlähetystöjen edessä alkoivat, ja piirtäjä sai kymmeniä tappouhkauksia. Tilanne kuitenkin rauhoittui julkisen anteeksipyyynnön myötä. / The protests in front of Danish embassies begun, and the cartoonist received dozens of death threats. The situation calmed, however, after a public apology.}\]

\(^{140}\) More accurately, Islam is a topic that escapes periodization on the level in which European, non-Muslim school children are familiarized with it.
\(^{141}\) Here, again, it would be extremely interesting to compare my results to a similar study with results reached with for instance British or Senegalese pupils.
\(^{142}\) “Today, the Islamic world is often seen as culturally uniform/homogenous. Evaluate this view with examples.”
\(^{143}\) “In what ways and for what reasons has Islam become an important political power in the world since the late 20\(^{th}\) century?”
\(^{144}\) F2008/7A/17
The increased visibility of Islamic fundamentalism in Western media is reflected by the essays both overtly and covertly. Edward Said’s lament, introduced in chapter 2, has thus not been entirely in vain. Some of the essays (on both assignments) include discussion about the role of media in Western perceptions of Islam. Also the rest of the essays – it can be argued – are partially influenced by the Islam-related news to which their authors have had to be exposed in the years, months and days leading up to the examination. The topicality of the War on Terrorism in both 2006 and 2008 is reflected in the essays. The 9/11 attacks and the US-lead Iraq war are mentioned in the majority of them; some essays concentrate on this aspect alone. Interestingly, neither the Chechnya nor the Bosnian war are mentioned in any of the 41 texts, despite the fact that they are discussed in at least some of the history textbooks, and have received media attention throughout the past few decades in Finnish media, too.

The texts can be roughly divided into two according to their approach to the issue of fundamentalism. In one part of the texts it is emphasized that the Western world’s view of Islam as a malevolent religion is an illusion created by the Western media and that in reality it is only a very small minority of Muslims who take the Qu’ran literally and/or engage in terrorist activities. The other – albeit smaller – part of the texts adopts the aforementioned illusion, illustrated in the below citations:

Isamilainen maailma on jo pitkään uhannut länsimaita terrori-iskuilla. / The Islamic world has, for long already, threatened Western countries with terrorist attacks.  

Myöskin heidän uskonto ja sen aikaan saamat terrori teot pitävät länsimaisia kansoja varpaillaan. Kyseessä on ilmeisesti jonkin sortin viha länsimaisaisia ja heidän kulttuuriaan kohtaan. / Also their religion and the terrorist acts it has caused keep Westerners on their toes. Apparently it is a question of some sort of hatred for Westerners and their culture.

At initial reading, my impression was indeed that all of the essays were strongly colored with terrorism-related content. I decided to conduct calculations to test this impression. The results serve as a good example of the researcher’s subjectivity and the need to double-check one’s conclusions: a simple calculation of lines discussing terrorism.
divided by essay lines total proved that only roughly 17% of the contents in the F2006/8A essays and 37% of the contents in F2008/7A directly discuss terrorism or fundamentalism-related matters. In both assignments there are several texts that do not mention terrorism or Islamist fundamentalism at all, but clearly a majority of both sets do. There are as many ways of representing Islamic fundamentalism as there are essays; I was still quite surprised that some 18-year-olds described it in so severe terms:

Siitä lähtien terrorismia ollaan pidetty yhtenä maailman suurimmista uhkista ihmiskunnalle. / Since then, terrorism has been considered one of world’s greatest threats to humanity.\(^\text{147}\)

Näistä syistä on aina oltava varovainen lausunnoissaan Islamiin liittyen. / For these reasons, one must always take caution in one’s statements about Islam.\(^\text{148}\)

The analysis of the texts’ attitude towards Islam and terrorism will continue in subchapter 4.5, in which perspectives, attitudes, and identification are discussed.

In addition to the recent war and the rise of fundamentalism, other themes and observations found from the typical Islam essay are first of all the Arab countries’ economic advantage of oil producing (which was an important thing to mention in F2008/7A, in which the pupils were asked to contemplate why the Islamic world has become an important global political player), the obedience with which Muslims follow the Qu’ran, on which their legislation is also based, and the oppression of women.

The referents with which the texts refer to the Islamic world are perhaps not very surprising (see chart 4.3 below). What becomes apparent is that many pupils do not draw a distinction between Muslims and Arabs. There was, however, also one essay (a very analytical one, graded 5 points) in which such stereotyping was specifically condemned, stating that

\(\text{lisäksi on vielä otettava huomioon, että esimerkiksi kaikki arabit eivät ole muslimeja, vaan heistä löytyy yhtä lailla kristittyjä, eli pelkkä “rätti päissä” ei vielä todista mitään henkilön uskonnosta ja ajatuksista. / in addition one must realize that for instance not all Arabs are Muslims: you can find Christians from among them just the same, in other words a mere}\)

\(^{147}\) F2008/7A/29

\(^{148}\) F2008/7A/30
shemagh scarf does not prove anything about the person’s religion and beliefs. 149

**Chart 4.3** Most common referents for the Islamic world in the 41 Islam essays

149 F2006/8A/9
Many essays, especially in the F2006/8A set in which the pupils were asked to elaborate on the claimed uniformity of the Islamic world, mentioned the differences between Shi’ite and Sunni Muslims. Their internal quarrels were also referred to in some of the F2008/7A essays. One of them specifically observed, quite accurately in the light of the other essays’ description of the two groups, that:

*Tieto sunni- ja šiiamuslimien eroista ei ole yleiseen sivistykseen kuuluvaa tietoa minkä vuoksi esimerkiksi suomalaiset osoittavat suurta ennakkoluuloa muslimeja kohtaan. / The differences between Sunni and Shi’ite Muslims are not part of the general education, which is why for instance Finns have great prejudices towards Muslims.*

The only other reference to Finland among the Islam texts was a bit in which it was mentioned that there is an Islamic political party about to be founded in Finland, “*ja moskeijakin löytyy / and there’s a mosque, too.*”

The most common referents for things, regions and people non-Muslim were ‘Western countries’, ‘the West’, ‘USA’ and ‘Europe’. The only reference to Turkey – and the European Union – was in one of the F2008/7A essays in which it was remarked – albeit a little incoherently – that for Europe’s relationship with the Islamic world, the entrance of Turkey into the EU is particularly crucial.

In chapter 2.2 I mention the defective knowledge of other cultures as a consequence of the dominance of the grand Euronarrative. This chapter on Islam has already showcased several such instances in which the image that Europeans still have of Islam is a very defective one, and largely structured upon stereotypes. In the following, we will have a closer look at what kind of differences the informants represent in their essays, and to what extent do the representations employ stereotypes.

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150 F2008/7A/8
151 F2008/7A/4
152 F2008/7A/12
4.3 Representation of Difference

At least three types of difference are repeatedly reproduced in the texts: the authors’ difference from Muslims, Europeans’ difference from the colonized people, and imperialist Europeans’ difference from present Europeans/author.

Both of the Islam assignments produced essays that depict many features of the Islamic culture as curiosities. Among the most commonly mentioned ones are the oppression of women, the strict following of the Sharia Law, and the ‘sensitivity’ with which the Islamic world reacts to critique from the West. Embedded in all of these observations one can read a difference being reproduced between Islam and Europe: the Islamic world is depicted as patriarchal, deeply religious, and emotional, whereas we know that Europe has for decades been promoted – by Europeans themselves – as gender neutral and egalitarian, secularized, and particularly rational. These dichotomies in fact seem to dominate Europe’s relationship to all of its external others: Europe is often represented in contrast to the deeply Christian United States, highly emotional Latin America, patriarchal and hierarchical Russia, and the emotional/spiritual Far East. Some of the supposed Muslim characteristics are taken for granted despite obvious difficulties in trying to present arguments for them:

\[\text{muutenkin maiden tulisi pitää välit kunnossa islamilaisiin maihin, sillä muslimit ovat hyvin herkkä väestö jos arvostelet heidän uskontoaan.} / \]

other countries should also maintain a good rapport with the Islamic countries, because Muslims are a very sensitive population if you criticize their religion.\textsuperscript{153}

One should be wary of judging representations stereotypical on too light grounds, but I would maintain that the above quote entails a stereotype: the emotional/sensitive Muslim.

In some imperialism essays the colonized people fell under another naturalized stereotype: “innate primitivism”\textsuperscript{154}. Several essays described the colonized peoples as under-developed or simple. The relative scarcity of such stereotypes in the essays, however, suggests that they have already been more efficiently challenged by postcolonial and other criticisms of the Eurocentric world view than the stereotypes that prevail about Muslims. Another impediment for analysis was that sometimes the use of

\textsuperscript{153} F2008/7A/4

\textsuperscript{154} Hall, "Spectacle of the Other", 244.
stereotypes was the author’s stylistic choice meant to describe the then-prevalent attitudes. This was clarified with the use of quotation marks in some essays, but not in all of them, and with many essays it was hard to determine whether the stereotypical representation was conscious or not.

Cultural and/or civilizational differences between the European colonizers and the colonized people were accentuated in a number of ways, many of which I presume were unconscious. One feature that is common to most representations of imperialism – especially in the S2005 set that produced the most general representations of the imperialist practice – is an affluent use of the word oma, ‘own’. I counted its occurrence from the majority of the S2005/5 essays. The word is typically used as an attribute to things such as ‘culture’, ‘race’, ‘religion’ and ‘quality of life’. I argue that its frequency in such connections indicates the informants’ perception of the permanent incompatibility of the two cultures: that of the colonizers and that of the colonies. It is probably correct to maintain that such an incompatibility existed, especially in light of the consequences imperialism had on the colonies’ culture. The emphasis put on the point so regularly by the informants is merely a sign that it is one of the aspects of imperialism that they really have internalized.

Although it has been 33 years since the publication of Edward Said’s Orientalism, its basic finding that Europeans have a tendency to imagine an exotic Orient remains topical and examples of it numerous – also in the essays.

Euroopan suurvallat halusivat laajentaa alueitaan. Mahollisuuksia aluelaajennuksille tarjosivat tuntematon Afrikka ja etäinen Aasia. / Europe’s great powers wanted to expand their territories. The unknown Africa and distant Asia offered opportunities for this. 155

As mentioned above, the vocabulary of several essays suggests that the imperialism assignments have inspired the pupils to identify with the European colonizers and imperialists. In addition to or instead of using the most common stereotypes, many essays, such as the above, approach the topic with a rather dramatic style. They equip their European protagonist with an “Orientalist” gaze with which they are imagined to have looked at their colonies. Who could determine the extent to which the actual historical

155 S2005/5/16
perceptions of a pupil who uses such a stylistic technique matches the reproduction she or he has chosen to write as an exam answer? The only deduction I can confidently make from the data is that the aforementioned Orientalist style of reproducing both imperialism and Islam is not uncommon among the essays. Naturally, the level of dramatic narration and Orientalist touch varies from blatant to very subtle, but the touch – which is basically a certain set of stereotypes – is certainly detectable.

Rather than spelled out in any overt statement or comparison, the difference that the informants implied existing between themselves and the previous generations of Europeans was embedded in between the essays’ lines. This difference becomes apparent in the coming analyses of continuity and attitudes in particular.

4.4 Historical Continuity

For analyzing continuity, my intention was to find out the extent to which the informants understood history as a continuing process, and individual events as effects of previous events. The temporal scope and causality of the essays varied greatly, and allusions to the present day were – quite in line with the curricular objectives – more frequent than references to a more remote past. I will illustrate my findings with a graph that shows how long timelines individual texts in the S2005/5 set included, and introduce the more and less common causalities below.\(^{156}\)

\[\text{temporal scope of essays (S2005/5 N=30)}\]

\[\text{Chart 4.4 Breakdown of the temporal scope of the S2005/5 essays}\]

\(^{156}\) The F2008/8 and S2008/8A essays were not very interesting in terms of mapping the temporal scope in them, as the phrasing of the assignments had already informed the time to be discussed to an extent that the essays only rarely stepped outside that period.
The above chart only gives an overall idea of the texts’ tendency to rather analyze the effects than the causes of imperialism. The 2 texts that start from the 15th century made a reference to the first expeditions, those additional three who picked up the story from the 16th century also talked about journeys of exploration or only stated that the period 1500 to 1700 was a time of colonialism, during which Europeans merely ‘settled’ new territories, while the 19th and 20th century imperialism was “bigger” and “faster”157 and included claiming total control over the natives. Several texts mentioned the 18th century industrialization as a backdrop for more fervent imperialist enterprises. When references were made beyond “the latter half of the 19th century” (phrasing of the assignment), they either presented dates for the age of imperialism, e.g. “(1871-1914)”, 158 referred to particular impacts of imperialism in the more recent history or in the present, or vaguely talked about the former colonies being Third World countries today, or suggested that:

*Maiden kansalaiset saivat kokea imperialismin iloja vielä pitkään jälkeenpäin.*

/ The citizens of the countries were privileged to the joys of imperialism for a long time to come.159

Among the more frequently specified further impacts and further developments were the resulting of imperialist competition to World War I (mentioned in 7 essays), the civil wars that have ravaged the African continent after the decolonization processes (also mentioned 7 times, often as a direct result of the arbitrary drawing of country borders that had ignored all tribal divisions), and the present economical plight of many former colonies as a result of the monoculture tradition (concentration of all agriculture to one or two “money plants” exported to Europe) that the colonizers had introduced in their colonies (likewise 7 occurrences).

There is not much to deduce from these learned causalities, but it is perhaps noteworthy that none of the essays mentioned such an evident effect of imperialism as immigration from former colonies into Europe. It seems that the two parties of the imperialism story are still conceived as emphatically separate from one another. The texts were unanimous in concluding that all present day consequences of imperialism take place outside Europe, almost always in Africa, while the home continent remains unchanged by its imperial past. Considering the various ways in which immigration from Africa and Southeast Asia

157 S2005/5/18
158 S2005/5/22; these years were specified as “the age of imperialism” in one of the textbooks, too.
159 S2005/5/27
is constantly on view in European public discussions (also in Finland), the failure of the
30 informants of S2005/5 to connect those current issues to imperialism entirely suggests
that – at least in the understanding of Finnish Europeans – imperialism is still considered
as having been of consequence only to the colonies, not a decisive part of Europe’s
history. My educated guess is that the results might have proved different among French,
British or Italian youth. However, in a discussion of the feasibility of a European identity
based on a European history it could be argued that these results of the Finnish youth are
more interesting.

The Islam essays are so focused on present issues that the texts only poorly lent
themselves to an analysis of continuity. What I did take note of was that only
approximately one third of the essays included any reference to the history of Islam
beyond the 1970s OPEC crisis and its consequences. This is best explained with the fact
that, as will be illustrated in 4.6, there is very little information (from 0 to some 5 pages)
of Islam’s history provided in the textbooks of the compulsory history courses. The texts
that have included a little or more of Islam’s historical developments vary greatly in their
representation of it – as can be expected. The two ends of the scale are represented by
one essay’s detailed and lengthy representation of the birth of Islam and its consequent
internal divisions as well as its connections to colonialism in the one end,\(^\text{160}\) and the
below statement in the other:

\[
\text{Islamilainen maailma on syntynyt kun Muhamed alkoi nähdä näkyjä.}
\text{ /}
\text{The Islamic world was born when Mohamed started to have visions.}\quad \text{161}
\]

4.5 Perspectives, Attitudes, and Identification

In this final section I will discuss the three categories that produced the most overlapping
results. These were also categories that did not lend themselves to any extensive analysis;
many of the results are more suggestive than definite.

Chapter 2 highlighted the existence and importance of multiple histories and multiple
perspectives in replacing of a fixed Eurocentric narrative. In the following, I will
illustrate my findings related to the application of perspectives in the essays. The

\(^\text{160}\) F2008/7A/2

\(^\text{161}\) F2008/7A/4
simplest and also perhaps the most important analysis was to compare whether the essays entailed multiperspectivity or monocausal explanations; are the informants capable of approaching past phenomena from a multitude of vantages, or have they settled for just one perspective? If the representation is monocausal, whose perspective does it inhabit? Perspective is something all texts presuppose, and I have therefore been able to analyze this aspect from the entire body of 91 essays.

The results of examining perspective are predictable by the findings presented above; especially the analysis of agency and its results do not encourage optimism. And indeed it turned out that while some informants were consistent in their multiperspectivity, exemplified in the excerpt below, such informants nonetheless formed a minority, while most students approached the topics from the perspective of the Europeans alone.

Imperialismin merkitys valloittajille ja vallatuille alueille olivat arvatenkin toisistaan hyvin poikkeavat. / The meaning of imperialism was supposedly very different to the colonizers and to the colonized areas.162

Perspective was easiest to determine from the 30 essays for S2005/5 that describe imperialism in general. Only a third of the thirty essays apply a multiperspectival approach to the topic, i.e. approach the phenomenon from both the colonizers’ and the colonies’ point of view. The relatively small proportion of such essays points quite directly to a generally Eurocentric historical awareness in matters of European history, especially as we know that the exam context is supposed to specifically encourage the candidates to employing their sharpest analytical skills. The application of perspectives varies in the rest of the texts, too. Out of the 20 remaining imperialism essays, less than half could be considered multiperspectival; the earlier analysis of the allocation of agency in the decolonization essays perhaps suggested this would be the case.

The texts that discuss Islam are perhaps even less prone to applying multiple perspectives. Only a couple of the texts really adopt the point of view of an average Muslim; as mentioned in 4.3, many resort to stereotypes and almost all of the essays only reflect Islam to Europe through difference. The couple of instances in which the texts contemplate the Muslim perception of Europe or the West, the idea is always the same:

162 5/S2005/5
they are “known” to disapprove. Many texts draw a straight line from the alleged disapproval to the attacks of Islamist terrorist cells. Thinking about Huntington and the likeminded, for such simplistic views the West has only itself to blame.

In the end of the 20th century, Islam’s opinion about the Western way of life turned from words to action. Jihad is holy war against the West and the infidelity it has brought forth.163

The above findings and quotations have perhaps already suggested that a majority of the texts do perceive and present the Europeans’ colonial and imperial actions as morally dubious. They also often form a rather clear juxtaposition of Europeans as the agents and active perpetrators and the rest of the world as the supine object of abuse. Muslims are quite invariably described from a seeming distance, as a sort of monolith, with only little analytical discussion about the diversity among the world’s Muslim population.

While the texts’ representation of the past and Others is by no means homogenous, they do break up into some kind of sub-groups when examined with an eye for condemnation. Consider the two definitions of “imperialism” below, written in response to assignment S2005/5:164

Afrikka pirskottiin eurooppalaisten palapeliksi./ Africa was shattered into a jigsaw puzzle for/by the Europeans.165

Imperialismi (1871-1914) merkitsee suurvaltojen harjoittamaa siirtomaiden hankintaa sekä siirtomaan usein julmaakin hyväksikäyttöä. Imperialismin syyt olivat taloudellisia, uskonnollisia, sekä ennen kaikkea suurvaltapolitiikkaa. / Imperialism (1871-1914) stands for the acquisition of colonies professed by the great powers, as well as the often cruel exploitation of the colonies. Reasons for imperialism were economic, religious, and above all power political.166

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163 F2008/7A/8
164 “The latter half of the 19th century has been called the age of imperialism. What did imperialism mean, and how was the imperial competition between European powers manifested in Africa or Asia?”
165 S2005/5/26
166 S2005/5/22
I tried to categorize the texts according to their attitudes towards the events that they were describing. After trying out several categories I had to conclude that once again the nature of the data was such that functioning with any fixed and definite categories would not be beneficial or produce any valid results. So I settled for a suggestive classification between critical and uncritical/neutral attitudes. Even with these categories, I must emphasize that they be considered indicative only, as evaluating exam answers as value statements was a very slippery road. The critical category of my analysis entails essays that do not hesitate to use spell out their condemnation of imperialism/Islam, the uncritical/neutral essays refrain from adding value judgments and keep an analytical distance, and might not include any reference to moral questionableness of the things discussed.

An overview of all the 91 essays with an eye for critical attitude provided the following suggestive results: a little less than half of the 50 imperialism essays voice their judgment over the imperialists’ oppression of the colonies, and can therefore be classified as representing a ‘critical’ attitude towards imperialism. The word ‘to oppress’ and some of the negative consequences of imperialism are included in almost all of the essays, but in several cases it is left at that – exactly like Hall described when talking about colonialism and stereotypes: as something so natural that it needs no comment. The below quotes are representatives of the uncritical/neutral category:

*Imperialismin aikaan Euroopan suurvallat pyrkivät laajentamaan valtaansa hankkimalla siirtomaita. / During imperialism, European great powers aspired to extend their power by acquiring colonies.*

or

*Niin hankittiin siirtomaita, joista raaka-aineet saataisiin helposti. --- Siirtomaiden kanssa oli hyvää ja halpa käydä kauppaa, ja ne olivat myös näyttö maan mahtavuudesta. / And so one obtained colonies from which raw materials were easy to get. --- Trading with the colonies was good and easy, and they also displayed the country’s greatness.*

In some texts, the entire process is in fact naturalized to quite remarkable extents:

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167 S2005/5/20
168 S2005/5/4
Vanhan kolonialismin pohjalle alkoi syntyä imperialismi. / On the foundations of old colonialism, imperialism begun to develop.  

For the Islam essays, the method of analysis had to be slightly modified: many of the essays that exhibit a negative attitude towards Islam cannot be described as critical: the level of argumentation in many of these cases is of such unsophisticated level. With the Islam essays, I thus changed the categories into positive, neutral, and negative attitudes. With these categories I got the following results: 5 out of the 41 essays (12%) are able to depict Islam as a positive thing. Such representations usually emphasize tolerance and solicitude, and might specifically mention that on average Islam is a peace-loving religion. The remaining 36 essays were divided into 26 neutral and 10 clearly negative representations. Texts could be considered negative despite the acknowledgement that not all Muslims are to blame for terrorism. A text would be categorized as negative if it for instance admits the above, but also states that

[k]ansainvälisten terrorin uhka leijuu ilmassa koko ajan. Saddam Husseinin teloittaminenkaan et tuonut sitä rauhaa, jota toivottiin. / The threat of international terror hangs constantly in the air. Not even the execution of Saddam Hussein has brought the peace that was hoped for.

And, while the above might still have left me wondering about my classification, a verdict is reached when the text concludes in the observation that after the bombs in London and Madrid, “todettiin ettei kukaan ole turvassa. / It was realized that nobody is safe.” So the jury is somewhat sensitive on its scale of negativity.

Even after the general attitude of a given text has been identified, the question remains whether the text in fact presents its authors’ image of the entire Islamic culture, or whether the author has gotten carried away with writing about the things she or he has heard of. This is just one of the precautions with which the results should be approached.

Moving on to the final category of identification. The most unambiguous linguistic indicators of identification are probably pronouns. I went through all the data in hopes of

\[169\] S2005/5/19
\[170\] E.g. F2006/8A/11
\[171\] F2008/7A/14
\[172\] F2008/7A/14
finding a reference to Europeans as ‘we’ or ‘us’ – sadly there were none.\(^{173}\) Three texts from the F2006/8A essays did apply first person plural when discussing the contemporary image of the Islamic world, e.g.: “Meidän kaikkien olisi ehkä hyvä oppia islamilaisesta kulttuurista jotain. / We might all benefit from learning something from the Islamic culture.”\(^{174}\) In these cases, however, the identification cannot be considered historical, as the texts discuss the present; the use of first person plural is thus more telling of an embedded Otherness in the authors’ gaze from their own culture to the Islamic one – very much in the same vein as the use of ‘people’ to denote normalcy in one of the previous quotes from the Islam essays.

Europe and the West – if not necessarily self – were relatively often identified as representing Christianity:

\[
\text{Pyhässä sodassahan muslimit käännyttävät vääräuskoiset islamin uskoon, mutta käytännössä käännyttäminen on ollut sivuseikka ainakin 1900-luvun kristittyjä vastaan hyökänneillä. / In Holy War Muslims convert infidels to the Islamic faith, but in practice converting has been a minor point at least with those who have attacked the Christians in the 20th century.}^{175}\]

Looking at the imperialism essays, it seems that identification is actually already revealed by the analysis of attitude: presumably those informants whose attitude was classified as critical did not identify with their imperialist ancestors. However, due to the context in which the data is produced, a neutral or uncritical attitude towards the imperialist’s actions is only indicative of potential for identification, not of identification. Conducting an interview or survey about imperialism would probably provide more accurate and valid information on the youth’s actual level of identification with the white man’s burden. With this category I had to admit that my data was more limited in its applicability to such analysis than I had evaluated beforehand.

What can be deduced from all of the findings presented in this chapter is that majority of the informants do seem to identify with Europe when asked to depict the Islamic world. Their perceptions of European imperialism, on the contrary, are dominated by a

\(^{173}\) During my research period I did come across one essay referring to Europeans as ‘us’, but later decided to exclude all essays answering that assignment from my final database.

\(^{174}\) F2006/8A/4

\(^{175}\) F2006/8A/3
noteworthy distance, and their opinion of it is more critical than uncritical. Further elaboration of what the results are indicative of will be presented in chapter 5 below.
5 DISCUSSION

In this last chapter the results of the research will be discussed and contrasted to one another. The chapter will open with an analysis of the interfaces of the essays and the textbooks. After that, the focus is back on the essays, but the conclusions remain informed of the textbook analysis.

5.1 On the Relationship of the Textbooks and the Essays

A comparison of the textbook contents and the essays produced wide-ranging results about their interface and suggestive evidence of the formers’ influence on the latter. Majority of these results relate to the representations of imperialism and decolonization, but some deductions on the representations of Islam could also be made.

I was very surprised to identify from both Aikakirja 3 and Forum III a reference to Samuel Huntington’s theory about the “Clash of Civilizations”; textbooks rarely include theories of such speculative nature. The validity lent to the theory by including it in these textbooks is probably explained by the time of publication of the books: the War on Terrorism was a relatively new political development, and Huntington’s ideas had not yet
been condemned by as many critics as today. *Aikakirja 3* only refers to “certain experts” who have talked about a “clash of cultures/civilizations”, but the reference is obvious: “future global conflicts will no longer be wars of the accustomary kind. Humanity will be divided according to cultural and religious juxtapositions”.\(^{176}\) *Forum III* does also mention what Huntington has consequently been criticized of, but goes on to state – rather misleadingly in my opinion – that “despite all the criticism, Huntington’s theories have also been proven correct”, referring to the development of international politics into global politics.\(^{177}\) The textbooks authors’ decision to introduce the readers to the Clash of Civilization interpretation goes to show their history political power.

The 9/11 attacks are given the most page space in *Aikakirja 3!*’s chapter “the Enemy is everywhere”, in which the attacks are described in detail and bin Laden’s al-Qaida named as the suspected perpetrator, “who apparently has been behind aforementioned attacks”.\(^{178}\) *Muutosten maailma 3*, on the other hand, goes as far as to mention in a caption that the US attack to Afghanistan in fall 2001 “enjoyed worldwide acceptance”.\(^{179}\) *Muutosten maailma 3!*’s depiction of Islam emphasizes the conflict in Middle East instead of the War on Terrorism.

The power of media to misrepresent and strengthen prejudices was mentioned in both *Aikakirja 3* and *Forum III*.\(^{180}\) Also the inaccuracy of considering ‘Muslim’ and ‘Arab’ synonyms is pointed out in both books, in connection with the above observation about the media. *Muutosten Maailma 3* makes no such observations – one of the differences in the books’ profiles that could be predicted already by the books’ respective prefaces.\(^{181}\)

Next, let us have a look at some textbook characteristics that might have been reflected in the imperialism essays. In chapter 4 the table of content coverage illustrated that *Muutosten maailma 3* has put the most emphasis on Europe’s imperial past, and also devotes the biggest page space to the processes of decolonization. Comparisons between the books are included to make a point about the potential role of textbook selection in the pupils’ examination performance and the historical narratives they produce. What is

\(^{176}\) *Aikakirja 3*, 170.

\(^{177}\) *Forum III*, 190.

\(^{178}\) *Aikakirja 3*, 175.

\(^{179}\) *Muutosten Maailma 3*, 126.

\(^{180}\) *Forum III*, 181; *Aikakirja 3*, 170.

\(^{181}\) see chapter 3.2
more relevant to this project, however, is to form an overall idea about textbook representations of Islam and imperialism. I will continue on that road by presenting a chart of the most commonly used referents for imperialists used in the three textbooks. It enables a comparison with the similar chart from the 50 imperialism essays in 4.1. In the textbook count, I have included every occurrence of every referent from the relevant pages of the books, i.e. the pages specified in the content coverage table of chapter 4.1.

Chart 5.1 Most common referents for imperialists in the HI3 textbooks

Comparing the above statistics with those in 4.1 from the essay data only provides a moderate surprise as regards the top 3: while the British are in the lead and France the runner-up in both statistics, with the essays the third most occurrences go to Germany.

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182 As the textbooks’ representation of decolonization is much more focused on the colonies than the decolonization essays, these statistics only include referents used in the discussion of the age of colonialism and imperialism. Including the decolonization chapters would only have strengthened the lead of France and the UK, and left the other referents more or less at their current status.
The textbooks refer much more to “Europeans”, a term that does appear fourth in the essay statistics as well. It is difficult to determine why Germany is so widely present in the pupils’ perceptions of imperialism; one would expect for instance Spain and Portugal to appear before Germany because of their pioneering voyages that lead to colonialism. In the textbooks, Germany only appears in sentences where it is mentioned that it colonized territories from Eastern and South-Western Africa, and where European colonial powers are listed. The gap between referents to Britain and France is also surprising, but is explained by the books’ extensive discussion of India. The rise of Russia and Japan to occupy the fourth and fifth place in the textbook statistics is largely but not only due to their dominance in *Muutosten Maailma 3* – in the essays both are mentioned only twice. On the contrary, despite rare appearance in textbooks, Belgium is mentioned in as many as 9 essays. This popularity is, I believe, largely indebted to how the whims of King Leopold II make a good anecdote.

The textbooks’ content coverage might explain the dominance of France and Britain in the essays: all of the textbooks include the narrative of the clashing of British and French imperialist plans in Sudan’s Fashoda in 1989. Similarly, the fact that only two African countries, Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and Liberia, remained uncolonized is mentioned in all three textbooks, and repeated (if at times inaccurately with wrong country names) in numerous essays. The high correlation of textbooks content and exam essays on the type of content that is explicitly included in all the textbooks under observation would support the claim that the pupils acquire at least parts of their historical awareness – in this case the history of imperialism (in Africa) – primarily from the textbooks. In a country such as Finland, it is also plausible to maintain that there are no other relevant sources of information on the topic in question that would reach even nearly as wide an audience as the Upper Secondary School history textbooks. Certainly, many students will have read Rudyard Kipling’s *The Jungle Book* (in Finnish, *Viidakkokirja*), seen *The African Queen*, or encountered other fictional accounts of imperial Africa and Asia, but such components of historical awareness vary between individuals according to their personal experiences of history culture.

The relatively extensive coverage of Russian and Japanese experiences of imperialism which was *not* met by the topics’ coverage in the essays suggests that for historical knowledge to be transmitted from textbook to reader on the upper secondary school level,
certain narrative elements – I would suggest a limited amount of characters, some juxtaposition or competition, and an identifiable climax – are required. In addition, the disaccord between the coverage of Japan and Russia in the textbooks and in the essays seems to suggest that imperialism is really perceived as a fundamentally European phenomenon, and non-European actors play no part in the hegemonic understanding of it.

When the examination task assignment addressed the period of decolonization in S2008/8, the informants allocated agency to both the colonizers and the colonial subjects on average very equally and used the passive voice in abundance – even if, based on the topic in question, one might have expected a dominance of the actions by the colonies. Naturally, I investigated whether the textbooks’ distribution of agency in the decolonization chapters correlates with that of the essays. To ensure best possible correlation with the exam answers, I condensed my analysis to only apply to those sections of the textbook that most directly discuss decolonization in Asia and Africa. Rather than insert another chart, I will this time present my findings verbally only.

_Aikakirja 3_’s chapter 9 on the Third World includes 5 pages dedicated directly to decolonization, including the gaining of independence of India and Pakistan. The relevant subchapter is titled _Siirtomaavallan purkautuminen_, ‘the dissolution of colonial power’, for the Finnish language does not include a more concise term for decolonization. In search of agency, I concentrated again on the use of active and passive verbs as well as the subjects of the active verbs when they are referents for states, people or groups of people. I discovered that within just 5 pages, the point of view (agency) shifts back and forth between the colonizers and colonized, depending on which colony and events are being discussed. The introductory section sketching the overall developments of decolonization in Asia and Africa is dominated by the agency of the colonizers, but the gaining of independence is reported by ‘colony-acts’ on several instances, e.g. “During the 1960s the countries of Middle and Eastern Africa gained their independence, and last, in the 1970s, it was Portugal’s colonies’ turn.”183 The topic whose description most empowered the colonies and depicted their resistance was the decolonization of India, which was represented by the acts of India and Indians alone. This section only included 8 sentences, however, so the sample was not very extensive. _Aikakirja 3_ devotes an entire page to the decolonization of France’s colonies, particularly Algeria. The section on

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183 _Aikakirja 3_, 105.
Algeria is quite interestingly entirely dominated by France, i.e. all events are described with verb clauses that have France as their subject.

The decolonization of India is extensively represented in all three textbooks. *Muutosten maailma 3* describes India’s developments in 4 pages. Africa’s decolonization is explained in 5 pages with an emphasis on South Africa, while there is no general description of decolonization, and for instance the decolonization of Northern Africa and the Algerian War have been reduced to these three short sentences: “The wave of decolonization set off from France’s colonies in Northern Africa. Libya was the first of them to gain freedom in 1951. Algeria was freed only after bloody battles in 1962.”\(^{184}\) India’s gaining of independence is presented in *Muutosten Maailma 3* in colonizer terms: “In 1947, Great Britain granted India its independence.”\(^ {185}\) Once the subchapter continues to describe independent India’s and Pakistan’s developments until the 1990s, the point of view and agency are shifted to the independent states in question. Similarly, *Muutosten Maailma 3*’s representation of decolonization in Africa is first colonizer-dominated, but then the attention is turned to ANC and tribal battles, dismissing the old colonizers.

*Forum III* discusses decolonization in a total of 11 pages. Its general, introductory description is written entirely from the colonizer point of view: the colonial powers had experienced losses in WWII, their citizens did not want to support the costs of maintaining the colonial system, Communists regarded imperialism as a capitalist form of economic oppression, and so forth.\(^ {186}\) India’s independence is depicted with agency of India, Gandhi, and the Indians, like it is depicted in the two other books, too. No wonder that many essays represented India’s imperial (hi)story as one example of “when it was not that bad”. In its discussion of decolonization in Africa, *Forum III* devotes one paragraph (6 sentences) to the decolonization of Northern Africa and the Algerian War. Congo and South Africa are introduced as examples of countries in which independence did not bring fortune. South Africa and Apartheid are topics that were discussed – or mentioned – in several essays. In their case, I would put equal weight to textbooks and the rest of history culture; Apartheid and Nelson Mandela have been quite extensively

\(^{184}\) *Muutosten maailma 3*, 175.  
\(^{185}\) *Muutosten maailma 3*, 169.  
\(^{186}\) *Forum III*, 132.
represented in news media and fictional accounts for several decades already; another “good story”.

Almost one fourth of Aikakirja 3’s decolonization subchapter discusses the stages of decolonization in Algeria, whereas in the essays, the topic was very rarely mentioned. Being a little familiar with international media contents, and contemporary debates on European history, I was at first surprised about the Algeria-France relationship’s absence from the texts. On second thought, the absence started to feel more logical: I cannot think of any products of Finnish history culture, outside history textbooks – and we have already seen how they vary in their representation of the liberation of Algeria as well – that would represent France’s Algeria in the imperial times, or even of the Algerian war which was major conflict that lasted for almost a decade. Either have I seen the recent postcolonial developments between the two countries or the issues raised by their respective emigrated minorities make the Finnish news. Come to think of it, I was very poorly informed about that part of history myself when I was 18. The Algerian War is thus one component of imperialism that I would maintain has been considered central and symptomatic on the European level, but has been largely omitted from public discussion and historical awareness in a more distant country such as Finland.\(^\text{187}\)

All in all, my comparison of the essays and the textbooks has shown that there seems to be a strong correlation at least on the level of contents: the narratives and individual events that were extensively covered in the textbooks were reproduced in the essays in equally extensive proportions. As the case of Japan and Russia demonstrated, the correlation did require relative simplicity from the narratives. This conclusion was reached first and foremost on the basis of the findings made in the imperialism contents. The depiction of Islam was perhaps more susceptible to influences coming from outside the textbooks. On the other hand, also a majority of the textbook contents on Islam was more suggestive and impressionistic than definite, as most of the description handled contemporary affairs that are to a great extent still open for multiple interpretations and not as thoroughly researched and historicized as the age of imperialism.

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\(^\text{187}\) In France, the war has admittedly been a minor taboo until recent years, which has most probably caused the scarcity of for instance cultural artifacts relating to the war.
5.2 On the Essays and their Clues for a European Past

Conducting a wide research on the Finnish youth’s identification with 20th century history in the 1990s, Sirkka Ahonen observed that a part of the young adults did not consider themselves as having any connection to events that had had a strong impact on Finland earlier in the century, not even to the dramatic wartime events experienced by their grandparents. In her conclusions, she declares the historical identity of this generation “shallow but positive”.188

If the connection that the Finnish youth has experienced to its national past has been discovered as being this shallow, the presuppositions for the level of their connection to European past are perhaps not very high. A difference between the present study and Ahonen’s work lies in the projects’ respective contexts and research questions. Ahonen participated in an international research project that compared the historical identities of the youth of different nationalities, whereas a central premise of the present project has been to place all European nationalities on the same line and treat the informants as Europeans; in addition the focus is on European topics. Conducting the research in Finland, with Finnish sources only, of course makes the present project very much national and intertwined with national identity, and I have not been able to avoid referring to the national context every now and then. But the idea of this research is that more or less the same questions could be asked from any European source material, irrespective of the sources’ national context. The themes of the project, and consequently the identity and history under primary observation, are conceived as European, not national. Having said that, it must be acknowledged that especially the level of state control over upper secondary school curricula may be very different in different European countries. In other words, while the conditions of this project were largely national, its informants nonetheless represent European citizens. What kind of a consensus and emphases emerged from the informants’ reproductions of the European past?

The dominant perception of the age of imperialism was one of European, first and foremost French and British, activity on the African continent and in India. Europeans were depicted as dynamically fulfilling their wishes of expansion and the Europeans’ perspective dominated the majority of the essays. It became clear that the informants did

not locate consequences of imperialism inside Europe. Consequences were often included in the discussion, which implies a relatively high level of understanding historical continuity, but the geographic scope turned out to be narrower than the temporal one: all the consequences mentioned – excluding World War I which as a topic that regularly followed the imperialism chapter in all the textbooks – happened on former colonial grounds.

The distance embedded in this outsourcing of effects and consequences was repeated in the results of the essays’ attitudes: while most of the essays did depict imperialism with words such as ‘oppression’ and ‘exploitation’, less than half of the imperialism essays were outspoken in condemning the acts as wrong or as taken in the name of false claim of superiority. The rest saw no reason to comment or question the imperial competition. What this suggests is that while the existence of a naturalized colonial rhetoric of European superiority has been understood in principle by most Europeans today, its persistence and ubiquity might not yet be: traces of Eurocentrism are echoed in many representations of the past.

The Eurocentric attitude was even stronger among the Islam essays. The Islamic world was perceived from a distinctly European vantage; irrespective of the task assignment, it was approached mainly through what seemed foreign, different and often conceived unfathomable about it. The polarization – actual plus what has been added by media framing – of Islam-West relations in the 21st century were very strongly embedded in almost all of the 41 essays. The historical relationship of Islam and Europe, on the contrary, was not mentioned in any of the essays, and only a handful of essays described the history of Islam in more than one sentence. It is perhaps also noteworthy that while the majority of the world’s Islamic regions ended up under Western rule during the age of imperialism,189 this connection of Islam and imperialism was only mentioned in a couple of essays (all from the Islam data), none of them pointing out any consequences of the colonial relationship.

The results of analyzing the perceptions of Islam and the representations of difference were more symptomatic of Anthony Smith’s vision of a collective identity built on cultural exclusion, than Delanty & Rumford and others’ idea of a cosmopolitan, tolerant

189 Out of the more salient Islamic states only Turkey, Iran, and the Arabian peninsula (a particularly central area for Islam), remained free of colonial oppression; Hämeen-Anttila, Islamin käsikirja, 63.
constellation of multiple identities. There were also individual expressions of tolerance and intercultural understanding, but such expressions remained quite marginal. Whether the Othering of Islam eventually fortifies the fortress Europe by contributing towards an emergence of a collective identity, or weakens it by directing attention and attitudes towards the claimed incompatibility of European and Islamic cultures, is an interesting question.

I have also tried to contemplate the level of influence of the national context. Finnish postcolonial studies have commented on the Finns’ tendency to situate oneself outside certain phenomena, such as racism and the entire colonial dynamics. Referring to a more established concept, ‘American Exceptionalism’, Anna Rastas dubs this feature ‘Finnish exceptionalism’. However, Mikko Lehtonen and Olli Löytty have responded to this by pointing out that while there is little point in maintaining that Finns’ relationship to former colonies would be similar to the citizens’ of the former imperial powers, there are no grounds for claiming that Finland could consider itself as being ‘outside’ colonialism, either. Reminding the reader of the theses of Edward Said and Homi Bhabha, they emphasize that nothing happens in isolation and all cultures are hybrids. This is a condition that applies globally. An observation that supports the transnationalism of the research is that neither the essays nor the textbooks studied comprised more than a couple of references to Finland; entire Scandinavia was excluded with the exception Denmark and the Mohammed cartoons.

It would be interesting to study, as I have already mentioned, the development of the narratives and attitudes studied here by conducting a similar study on similar source material from both earlier and more recent years. An equally relevant and interesting option would be to execute a cross-national comparative study in which the status of perceptions on imperialism and Islam and the degree of Eurocentrism in people’s historical awareness would be investigated in several European regions – and ideally for several consecutive rounds to map their development. Such a study would perhaps require developing or refining the categories of analysis used.

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191 Lehtonen & Löytty, "Suomiko toista maata?", 106. See also Said, "Mikään ei tapahdu eristyksissä"; Bhabha, The Location of Culture.
In terms of source material and tools of analysis, this has been a tentative project without any clear role model. From here, the approach can be developed into countless direction. The focus of analysis may be shifted towards critical discourse analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics, a study of rhetoric, or a stricter focus on the postcolonial discourse – to only name a few!

With this research I set out to study the historical dimension of a possible European identity. My intention was to discover the emphases and contents of the current hegemonic perceptions of the age of imperialism and Europe’s relationship to Islam, and to reflect the influence that history textbooks as hegemonic national narratives of history have on their readers’ perceptions of the past. In the above discussion, I hope to have summarized my main findings in a manner that reclaims these intentions fulfilled.

Based on the findings made from the essays, and informed by their connection to the textbooks, I would maintain that the historical identification on my informants, when evaluated for its potential for becoming European, is in line with Ahonen’s findings: shallow but positive. There is little criticism, but also a distinct distance towards the past that was studied. The Finnish youth, whose national myths are not very closely connected with those of any larger mnemonic community, whose ancestors did not take part in the “founding events” of perceived European history, and who experience relatively little personal encounters with Europe’s cultural Others, do not identify with any European conception of the past.

While conducting the analysis, I kept coming back to the thought of ‘ownership of history’ as a synonym for historical identification. I realized, however, that claiming ownership over the past is in fact a presumptuous construct – a remnant of the European illusion of writing the history of the world? – as the past cannot and should not be owned. Neither should it be disowned, however, by ignoring the paths taken on false moral grounds in the past which have lead to unjust power structures and unequal representation. A critical historical understanding is indeed called for; ideally, it should reach from reconsiderations of the ‘civilizing mission’ to a rewriting of the shared past of Europe and the Islamic world.

It is clear that it takes much more than the present research to determine the feasibility or composition of a shared European identification of the past. What I hope to have
contributed with my work is a confirmation of the diversity that prevails over Europe’s next generation’s perceptions of European history and the Islamic culture, and proof of the persistence of a Eurocentric historical narrative. The results are “limited” to a national context, but rather than considered a limitation, I suggest this be seen as an opportunity to comment on intra-European diversity by conducting further research with perhaps a wider representation of nationalities, ethnicities, or generations.
5.3 Epilogue

My style of research reporting, as you will have noted, is quite reflexive. I feel I have explicated most of the issues that I had to tackle in the course of the research in their corresponding sections of this text. There is therefore very little left to be said. However, I should like to tie this thesis into its immediate context, the *present* that is now as opposed to the past or the future, by documenting some national and global developments that took place during the period I was occupied with this project.

The world witnessed many turns of events while I was sitting in the National Archives with the exam essays and later by the computer putting my findings into words that are this thesis: several EU countries plunged to national bankruptcy causing injuries on the entire Union’s economics; numerous national leaders were replaced in the name of democracy in the Muslim states of Northern Africa and the Arabian peninsula with Muammar Gaddafi’s refusal to hand over power resulting in an ongoing state of war in Libya, the Finnish populist right-wing Eurosceptic party True Finns entered the domestic political field with a vengeance (parliamentary elections 17 April 2011), president Sarkozy and prime minister Berlusconi called for radical changes in the Schengen agreement to hold back immigrants and refugees (26 April 2011), USA celebrated the killing of Osama bin Laden (1 May 2011), and a public discussion on increased racism surfaced in Finland (6 May)\(^\text{192}\). All developments, as you probably noticed, are related to the premises of this research. Admittedly, many of the above turns of events do not denote positive developments; from the perspective of my research they merely attest to its topicality, and for that I am pleased.

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\(^{192}\) Matti Mielonen, "Näkökulma Suomessa lisääntyneestä rasismista: Nyt riittää", *hs.fi* 6 May 2011. Accessed 7 May 2011. [http://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/artikkeli/N%C3%A4k%C3%B6kulma+Suomessa+lis%C3%A4%C3%A4ntyneest%C3%A4+rasismista+Nyt+riitt%C3%A4/1135265931798;](http://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/artikkeli/N%C3%A4k%C3%B6kulma+Suomessa+lis%C3%A4%C3%A4ntyneest%C3%A4+rasismista+Nyt+riitt%C3%A4/1135265931798;) and consequent discussions in the social media.
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: The task assignments

(Translation by the author)

**SPRING 2005, 5:**

5. 1800-luvun loppupuolta on kutsuttu imperialismin ajaksi. Mitä imperialismi merkitsi, ja miten Euroopan suurvaltojen välinen imperialistinen kilpailu ilmeni Afrikassa tai Aasiassa?

Translation: The latter half of the 19th century has been called the age of imperialism. What did imperialism mean, and how was the imperial competition between European powers manifested in Africa or Asia?

**FALL 2006, 8A:**

8A. Islamilainen maailma nähdään nykyään usein kulttuurisesti yhtenäisenä. Arvioi näkemystä esimerkiksi avulla.

Translation: Today, the Islamic world is often seen as culturally uniform/homogenous. Evaluate this view with examples.

**SPRING 2008, 8A:**

8A. Vertaa siirtomaavallan purkautumista Aasiassa ja Afrikassa toisen maailmansodan jälkeen.

Translation: Compare the decolonization processes in Asia and Africa after the Second World War.

**FALL 2008, 7A and 8:**

7A. Millä tavoin ja mistä syistä islamista on tullut 1900-luvun lopulta lähtien merkittävä poliittinen voimatekijä maailmassa?
Translation: In what ways and for what reasons has Islam become an important political power in the world since the end of the 20th century?

8. Miksi eurooppalaiset onnistuivat 1500–1800-luvuilla aistamaan hallintaansa muissa maanosissa laajoja alueita, joilla myös väestömäärä oli usein huomattavasti suurempi kuin eurooppalaisten valloittajien määrä?

Translation: In the 16th to 19th century, why did Europeans succeed in oppressing under their domination on other continents such vast areas that usually had a population notably larger than the number of European conquerors?
## Appendix 2: A bilingual glossary of terms used

This glossary entails terms and concepts that I have translated from their Finnish form, in which they have been used in my sources, into English. Not all of the Finnish terms below are terms that would be used in academic discourse, or can be a dictionary – I have, nevertheless, included all the different terms used by the candidates in their essays, including all the peculiarities, and tried to come up with a correspondingly peculiar translation (e.g. ‘kohdemaa’, target country, is not a word one would generally use in the colonial context, however the author’s choice to use it is relatively self-explanatory, and the word choice in itself quite emblematic and therefore particularly interesting in terms of analysis).

Should a pupil or a textbook use a term not included in this glossary, that term will be presented in its original appearance and in translation in the running text.

As a rule, I have always substituted a given word with a given translation. However, there have been instances in which the semantic context of the original word has suggested a synonym of the English word usually used might better translate the connotation of the original word. In such cases I have always used that synonym. The below glossary is alphabetized according to the English translations: the reader should thus be able to find the correct correspondent original word for each translated quote that this thesis entails.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finnish</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>afrikkalainen</td>
<td>African</td>
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<tr>
<td>amerikkalainen</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mielivaltainen</td>
<td>arbitrary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aasialainen</td>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>siirtomaavalta</td>
<td>colonial power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>siirtomaa- / -maiden isäntä, -herra</td>
<td>colonial master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>siertomaalainen*</td>
<td>colonial*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>valoittaa, vallata (see also conquer)</td>
<td>colonize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>siertomaa</td>
<td>colony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>valoittaa</td>
<td>conquer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>valoittaja</td>
<td>conquering country</td>
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<tr>
<td>valoitus</td>
<td>conqueror</td>
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<tr>
<td>konkistador</td>
<td>conquest</td>
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<td>maanosa, manner</td>
<td>conquistador</td>
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* Both attribute and subject
### THE UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL HISTORY COURSES:

<table>
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<td>Man, the Environment and Culture</td>
<td>Ihminen, ympäristö ja kulttuuri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI2</td>
<td>European man</td>
<td>Eurooppalainen ihminen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI3</td>
<td>International relations</td>
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<td>HI4</td>
<td>Turning-points in Finnish History</td>
<td>Suomen historian käännekohtia</td>
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<td>Finland from prehistoric times to autonomy</td>
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