



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



1807 Commemorated

The abolition of the slave trade

Inhuman Traffic: The Business of the Slave Trade British Museum

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Introduction

As part of the work of **1807 Commemorated**, the large-scale audience surveys carried out at partner museums included specific questions regarding the demographics of museum visitors. This information reveals the types of visitors to the museum and their motivations for visiting. This forms a highly useful resource for questions of social inclusion and the outreach of museums, both within specific regions and within the country as a whole.

Visitor demographics

Gender

During the period from the 5th of November to the 11th of November 2007, 93 male and 113 female visitors were interviewed at the Inhuman Traffic exhibition hosted by the British Museum in London (fig. 1).

Gender: The Inhuman Traffic, British Museum

	Frequency	Percent
Male	113	54.9
Female	93	45.1
Total	206	100.0



fig. 1: Gender: Inhuman Traffic, British Museum

Age Distribution

The majority of the respondents to the survey belonged to the 16-24 and 25-34 age group, though there was a good representation of individuals between the ages of 35 and 44 (fig. 2).

Age groups: Inhuman Traffic, British Museum

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
16 or under	1	.5
16-24	50	24.3
25-34	48	23.3
35-44	39	18.9
45-54	27	13.1
55-64	21	10.2
65 or over	20	9.7
Total	206	100.0

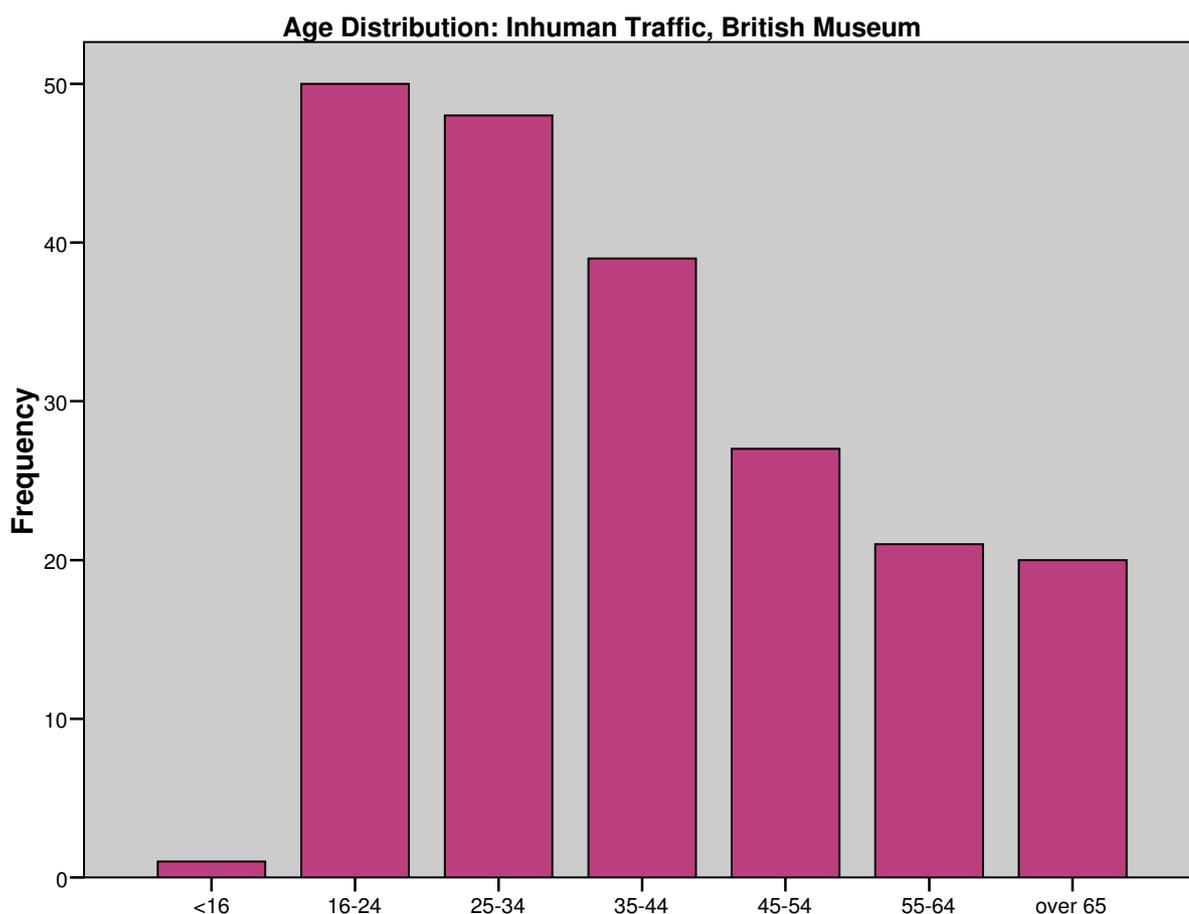


fig. 2: Age distribution: Inhuman Traffic, British Museum

Occupations

Almost 8 out of ten visitors held higher and lower managerial professional occupations (75.3%), whilst only 12.2% of the visitors had intermediary, semi-routine and routine occupations (fig. 3).

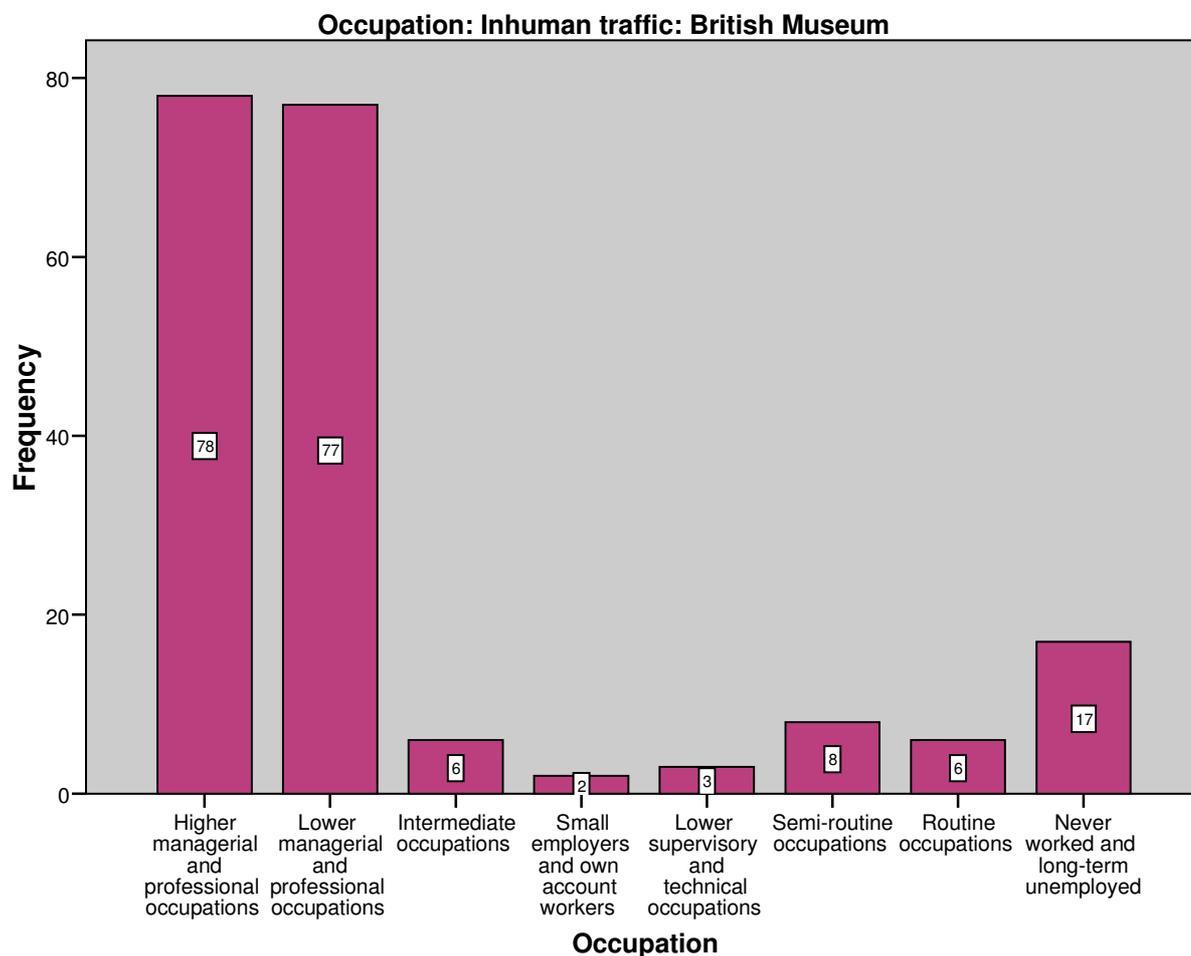


fig. 3: Occupation of the main income earner in the household: Inhuman Traffic, British Museum

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Higher managerial and professional occupations	78	37.9
Lower managerial and professional occupations	77	37.4
Intermediate occupations	6	2.9
Small employers and own account workers	2	1.0
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	3	1.5
Semi-routine occupations	8	3.9
Routine occupations	6	2.9
Never worked and long-term unemployed	17	8.3
Total	197	95.6
Missing	9	4.4
Full total	206	100

Education

The proportion of visitors educated to degree level (77.6%) is much higher than the national average (46%)¹ while only 1.5% of the interviewees have no formal qualifications (fig. 4).

Highest educational qualification: Inhuman Traffic, British Museum

Education	Frequency	Percent
GCSE/O levels	12	5.8
A Levels	15	7.3
Undergraduate University Degree	93	45.1
Postgraduate University Degree	67	32.5
Trade/Technical Qualification	11	5.3
HNC/HND	4	1.9
No formal qualifications	3	1.5
Sub-Total	205	99.5
Missing	1	0.5
Full Total	206	100.0

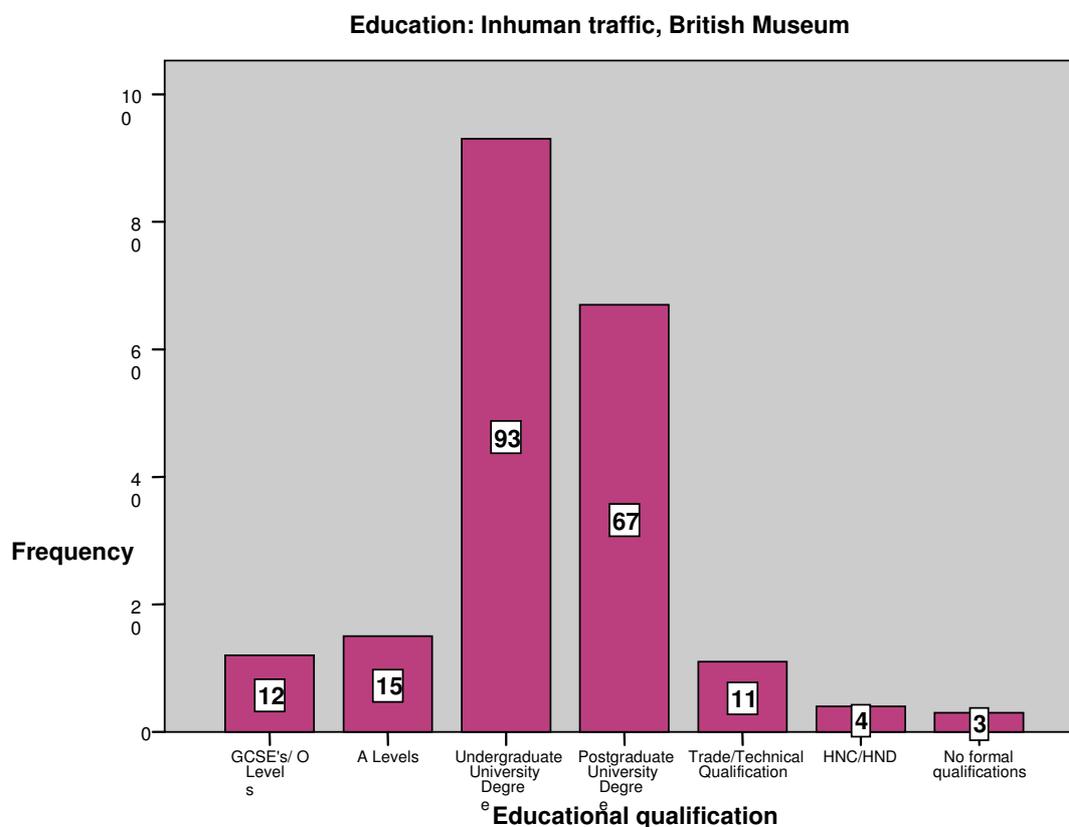


fig. 4: Education: Inhuman Traffic, British Museum

¹ Museums, Libraries and Archives, 2007.

Ethnicity

The majority of the visitors in the *Inhuman Traffic* exhibition (81.1%) were White British (including English, Scottish and Welsh), White Irish or White European, whilst 16% of the respondents defined themselves as Black or belonging to an ethnic minority (BME) (fig. 5). This proportion is above the national average (5%)².

Ethnic Background: Inhuman Traffic, British Museum

Response	Frequency	Percent
White British, Irish, European	167	81.1
BME	33	16.0
Other international	6	2.9
Total	206	100.0

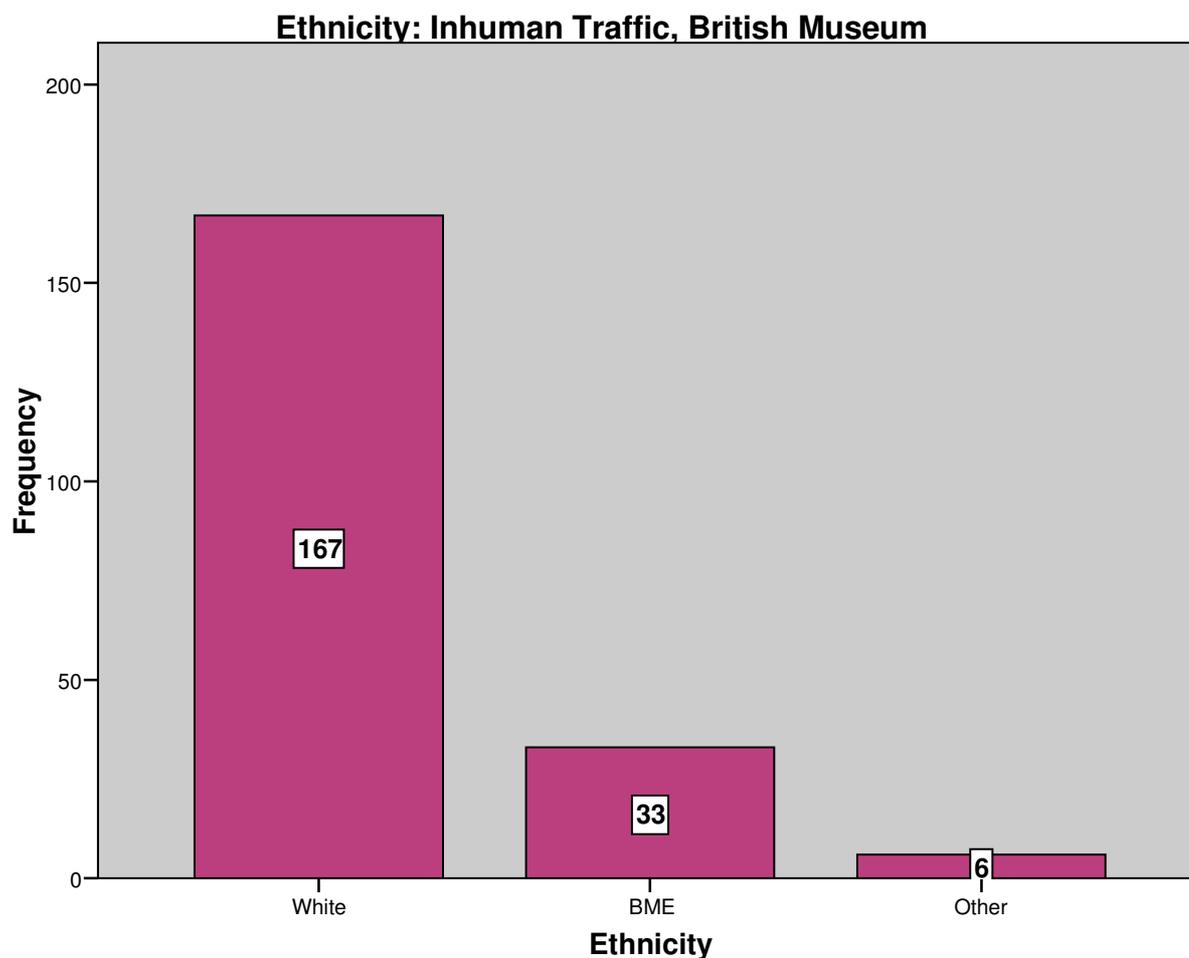


fig. 5: Ethnic background: *Inhuman Traffic*, British Museum

² Museums, Libraries and Archives, 2007.

Visitor profiles

Party profile

The majority of the interviewees in British Museum (39.3%) came alone. This contradicts with the steady decline in lone visitors which has been progressing since 2003 (24% in 2003)³. A significant proportion of visitors visited the museum with other adults (36.9%), while only 2.4% of the respondents visited the museum and the exhibition as a family group with children (fig. 6).

Group type: Inhuman Traffic, British Museum

Group Type	Frequency	Percent
On my own	81	39.3
Group of adults	76	36.9
Adult family group	35	17.0
Family with children	5	2.4
Organised group	9	4.4
Total	206	100.0

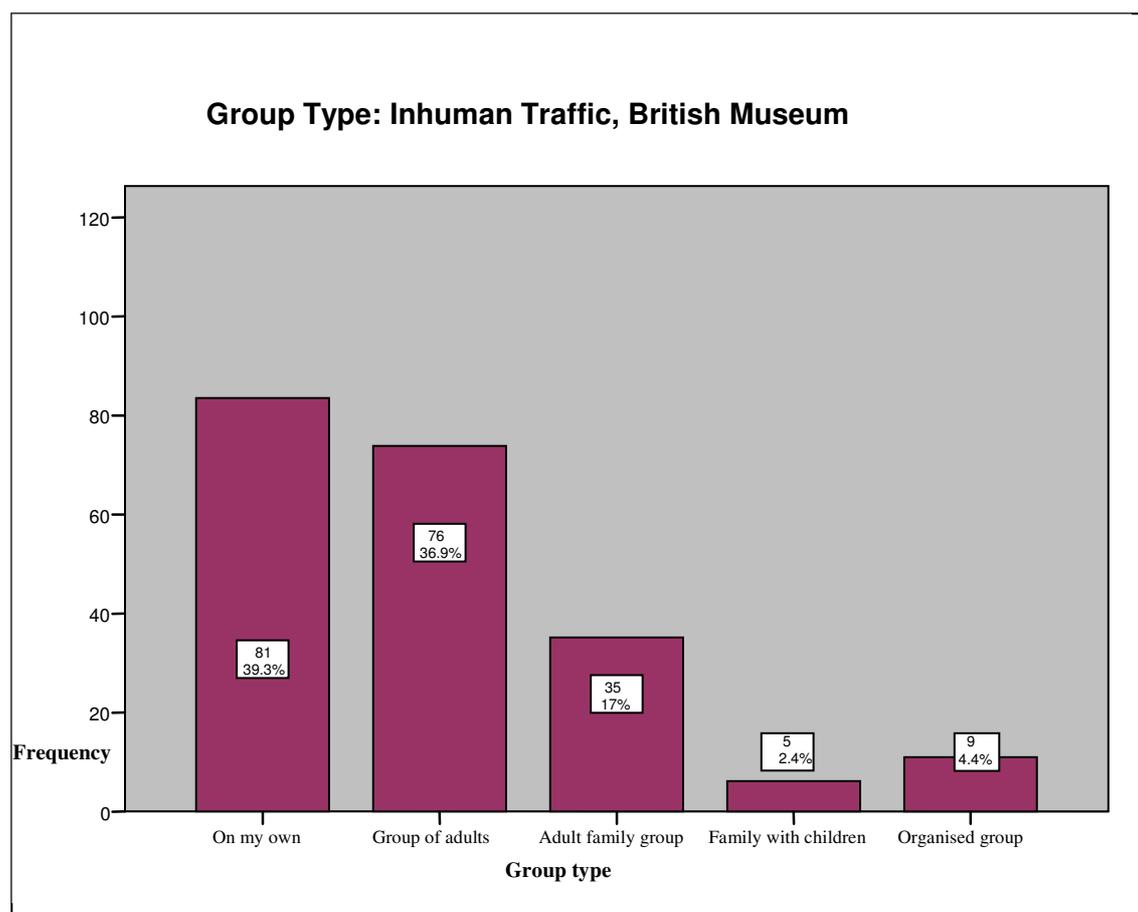


fig. 6: Group type: Inhuman Traffic, British Museum

³ Museums, Libraries and Archives, 2007.

Origin

More than half of the visitors to the British Museum travelled from overseas (55.8%). Almost four out of ten visitors (37.4%) travelled from the UK (including London and England). This figure is totally different with the national result according to which the majority of museum visitors (93%) come from the UK of which 27% come from the local area (fig. 7).

Origin: Inhuman Traffic, British Museum

Origin	Frequency	Percent
Local area	38	18.4
England	37	18.0
UK	2	1.0
Overseas	115	55.8
Total	192	93.2
Missing	14	6.8
Total	206	100.0

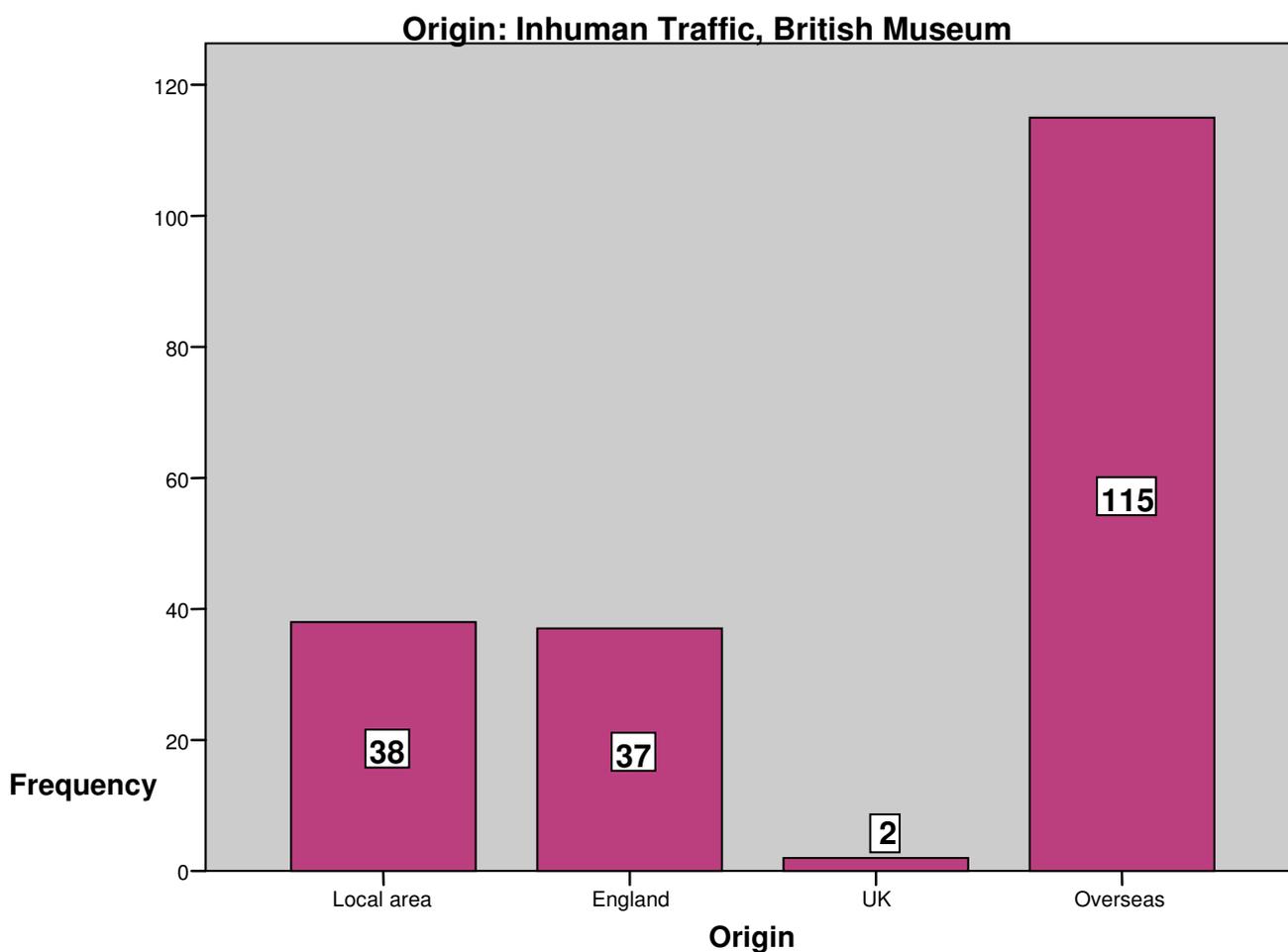


fig. 7: Origin: Inhuman Traffic, British Museum

More than half of respondents travelled to the British Museum from a holiday address (60.2%) while 4 out of 10 visitors came from a home address (fig. 8).

Did you travel from home or from a holiday address?
Inhuman Traffic, British Museum

Response	Frequency	Percent
From Home	76	36.9
From a holiday address	124	60.2
Came for work	5	2.4
Other	1	.5
Total	206	100.0

Did you travel from home or a holiday address? Inhuman Traffic, British Museum

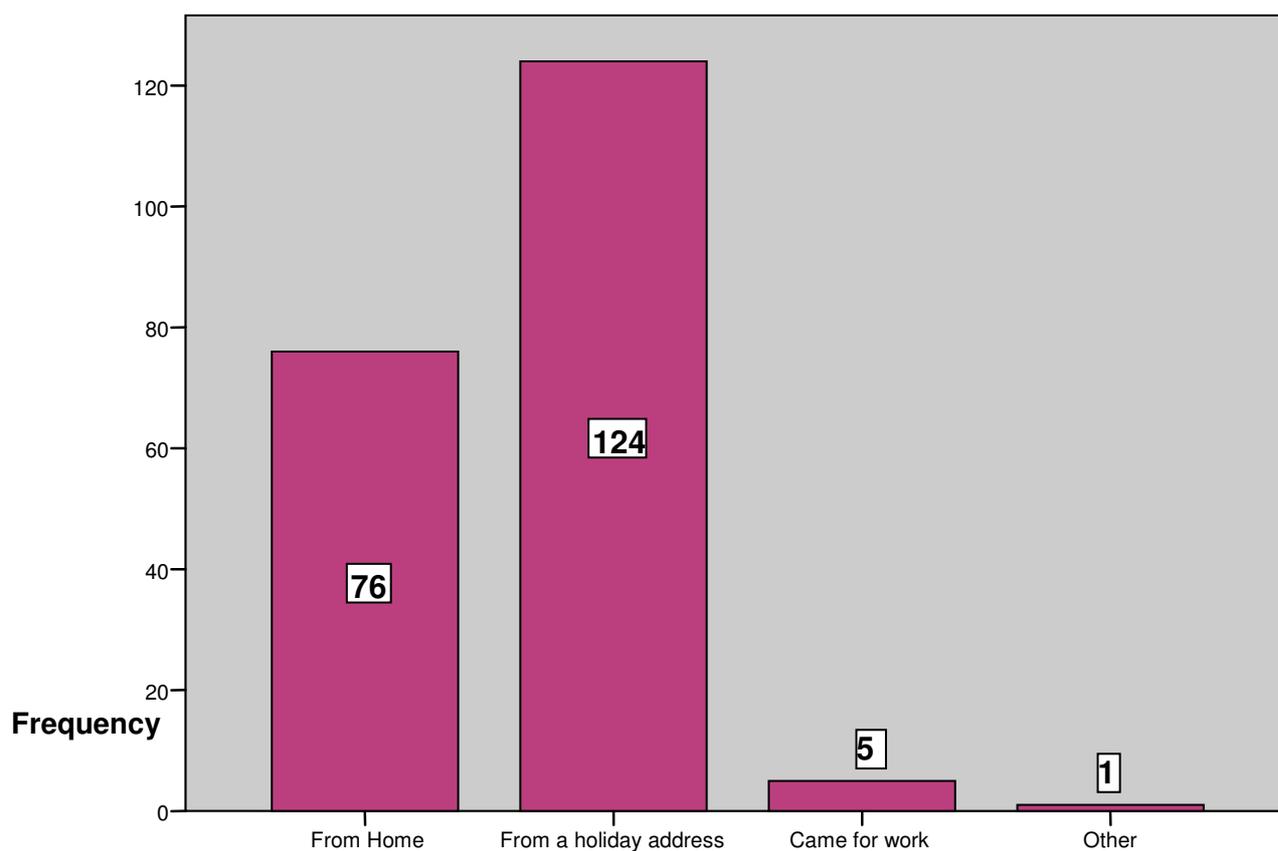


fig. 8: Locality: Inhuman Traffic, British Museum

Museum visiting

First Time or Repeat Visitors

More than 9 out of 10 visitors came to see the museum in general rather than the *Inhuman Traffic* exhibition (fig.9).

Did you come specifically to see the Inhuman Traffic exhibition at the British Museum?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	18	8.7
No	188	91.3
Total	206	100.0

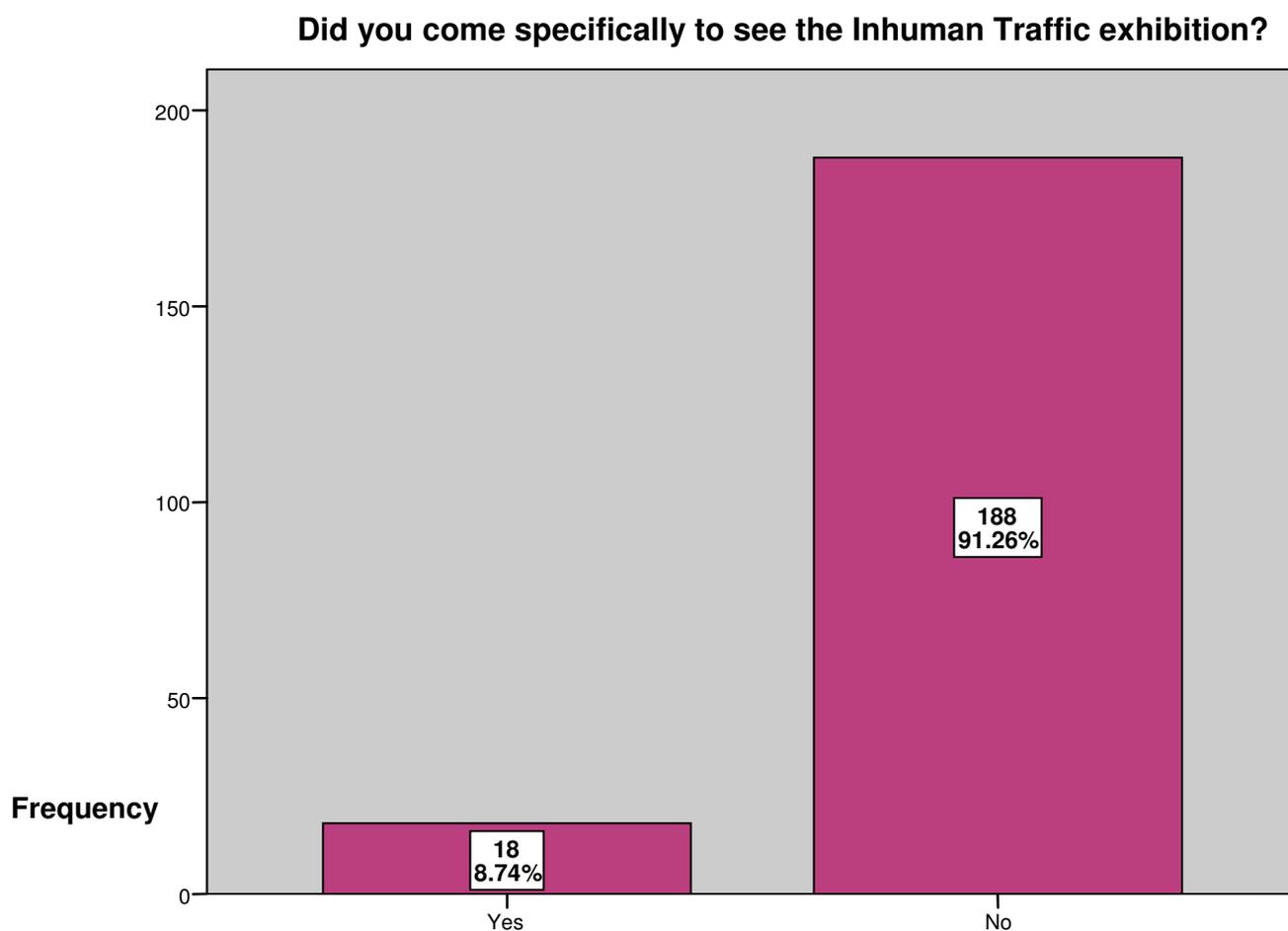


fig. 9: The International Slavery Museum: Exhibition Visit

Only 2 out of 18 visitors who came specifically for the *Inhuman Traffic* exhibition had visited the exhibition before (table 1).

Table 1: Exhibition visit-repeat visit: Inhuman Traffic, British Museum

		Q: Is this your first visit to the exhibition?		
		Yes, this is my first visit	No, I have visited the exhibition before	Total
Q: Did you come specifically for the <i>Inhuman Traffic</i> exhibition?	Yes	16	2	18
	No	182	5	187
	Total	198	7	205

Visiting Trends

Three out of ten of the respondents stated that they did usually visit museums (31.1%) (Table 2); their reasons for visiting the British Museum and the exhibition do not differentiate from the reasons stated by the typical museum visitor. These are, ‘education’, ‘recreation’ and ‘thinking about the life of slaves’ (Table 3, fig.10).

Table 2: Museum and Non-museum visitors: Inhuman Traffic, British Museum

Response	Frequency	Percent
Visiting museums regularly	142	68.9
Not visiting museums	64	31.1
Total	206	100.0

Table 3: Museum and non-museum visitors: reasons for visiting exhibition

Reasons for visiting the exhibition	Type of visitor		Total
	Museum visitor	Non-museum visitor	
Recreation/leisure	27	10	37
Education generally	57	27	84
Taking the children	0	2	2
To find out about Britain's role in slavery	14	10	24
To mark the abolition of Britain's involvement in the slave trade	3	0	3
Think about the lives of enslaved Africans, what they endured and achieved	2	0	2
Think about the lives of enslaved Africans, what they endured and achieved	24	9	33
Other	7	3	10
Personal link	4	0	4
Special interest	4	2	6
Missing	0	1	1
Total	142	64	206

The main reasons for visiting the museum stated by were *education in generally* (26.8%) *recreation* (17.9%) and *thinking about the lives of enslaved Africans, what they endured and achieved* (16.8%) (fig. 10).

What are your overall reasons for visiting the exhibition? Inhuman Traffic, British Museum

Responses	Category	Frequency	Percent
Recreation/leisure	A	37	18.0
Education generally	B	84	40.8
Taking children	C	2	1.0
To find out about Britain's role in slavery	D	24	11.7
To mark the abolition of Britain's involvement in the slave trade	E	3	1.5
Think about the abolitionists and their movement	F	2	1.0
Think about the lives of enslaved Africans, what they endured and achieved	G	33	16.0
Personal Link	H	4	1.9
Special Interest	I	6	2.9
Other	J	10	4.9
Total	-	205	95.5
Missing	-	1	.5
Full Total	-	206	100

What was the main reason for visiting the exhibition?: Inhuman Traffic, British Museum

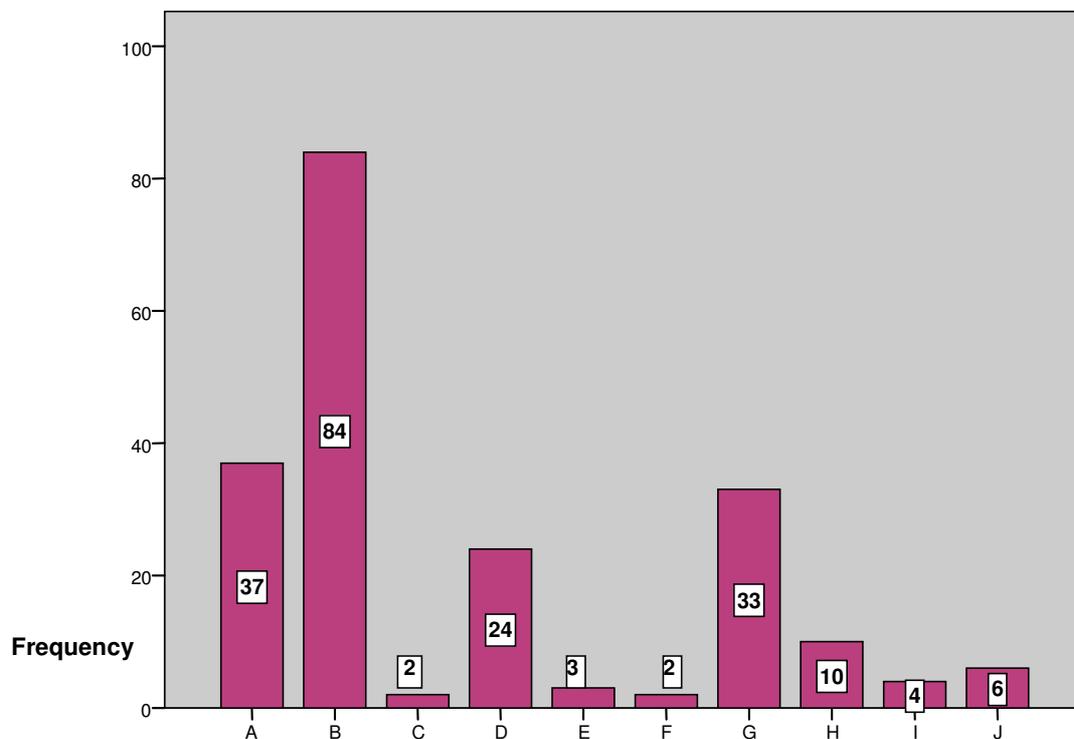


fig. 10: Reasons for visiting the Inhuman Traffic exhibition, British Museum

The majority of the non-museum visitors (55 out of 64) are White European, hold higher or lower managerial positions (47 out of 63) and hold a university degree (49 out of 64) (tables 4, 5, fig.11). This reveals that *ethnicity, education and occupation status* are not major social exclusion indicators at British Museum exhibition.

Table 4: Museum/Non-museum visitors and ethnicity: Inhuman Traffic, British Museum

	Ethnic Background			Total
	White European	BME	Other international	
Museum Visitors	112	24	6	142
Non-museum visitors	55	9	0	64
Total	167	33	6	206

Table 5: Occupation of Museum and Non-museum visitors: Inhuman Traffic, British Museum

Occupation			Total
	Museum visitors	Non-museum visitors	Visiting museums regularly
Higher managerial and professional occupations	49	29	78
Lower managerial and professional occupations	59	18	77
Intermediate occupations	1	5	6
Small employers and own account workers	1	1	2
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	1	2	3
Semi-routine occupations	7	1	8
Routine occupations	4	2	6
Never worked and long-term unemployed	12	5	17
Total	134	63	197

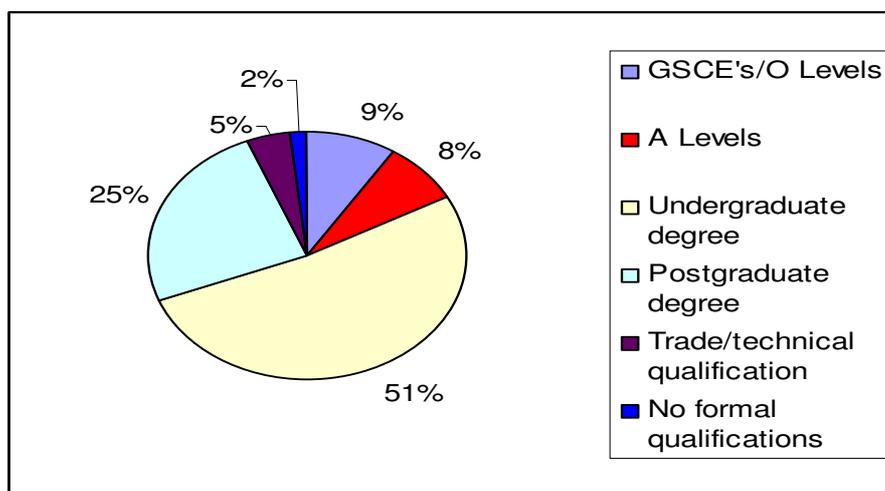


fig. 11: Education of non-museum visitors: Inhuman traffic, British Museum

Implications: social inclusion

The visitor profile at the Inhuman Traffic exhibition does not differ significantly from the visitor profile of the museum as a whole, since the majority of the visitors came for the museum as a whole. The majority of the interviewees were on holiday and had travelled from Europe, Australia or the United States of America. They mainly held higher/lower managerial positions and a university degree.

References

Museums, Libraries and Archives, 2007. *Renaissance Hub Exit Survey 2006: Research Study Conducted for Museums, Libraries and Archives Council*. Unpublished document. [previous Hub exit surveys can be accessed on http://www.mla.gov.uk/website/programmes/renaissance/hub_data/]