

Principles of Advocacy and Constituencies and a Review of a Recent Example¹

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Abstract – Archaeological and cultural heritage organisations, whether they are more academic membership groups (think EAA, SAA, SAFA, DGUF)² or professional associations (e.g. RPA, ClfA)³ or indeed trade organisations (FAME, ACRA)⁴ all choose to devote time and energy to representing what they see as the best interests of their subject matter or their members. Such representation may be more or less overt and may be variously focussed. We often think this means efforts to affect how governments or international organisations act by, for example, advocating that politicians enact legislation with specific characteristics that we consider will have the most beneficial effects upon our chosen fields such as archaeological heritage management. For some years a loose unofficial network of members of various archaeological and cultural heritage organisations have undertaken advocacy aimed at some of the international organisations that are funders of extremely large projects (such as mines, or gas pipelines) with considerable archaeological impacts and in which each of the organisations might have an interest in seeing quality heritage work undertaken to help inform decisions. Experience suggests clarity of authorship, membership – who the constituency represented is – and desired outcomes are important.

Key words – Cultural heritage; advocacy; constituencies; professional association; special interest group; sectoral interest group; mass-based interest groups; NGO; network

Titel – Interessenvertretung und Lobbyarbeit

Zusammenfassung – Dieser Beitrag ist die überarbeitete Fassung eines Vortrags, der auf der Jahrestagung der European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) in Budapest 2022 gehalten wurde. Archäologische und Kulturerbe-Organisationen, seien es Fachgesellschaften (z.B. EAA, SAA, SAFA, DGUF), Berufsverbände (z.B. RPA, ClfA) oder Gewerkschaften (z.B. FAME, ACRA) investieren viel Zeit und Energie in die Vertretung dessen, was sie als die Interessen ihres Fachgebiets und/oder ihrer Mitglieder betrachten. Eine solche Vertretung spezifischer Interessen kann mehr oder weniger offenkundig und mit unterschiedlichen Schwerpunkten erfolgen. Wir denken oft, dass dies bedeutet, dass wir uns bemühen, das Handeln von Regierungen oder internationalen Organisationen zu beeinflussen, indem wir zum Beispiel dafür eintreten, dass Politiker Gesetze mit Bestimmungen und Regelungen erlassen, die unserer Meinung nach die besten Auswirkungen auf unsere Interessenssphären wie z.B. die Verwaltung des archäologischen Erbes haben. Seit einigen Jahren setzt sich ein loses Netzwerk von Mitgliedern verschiedener archäologischer und kulturhistorischer Organisationen für die Einflussnahme auf große, internationale Organisationen ein, die sehr große Projekte mit erheblichen archäologischen Auswirkungen finanzieren. Die Erfahrung zeigt, dass für ein erfolgreiches Agieren eine hohe Klarheit über die Urheberschaft, die Mitgliedschaft – d.h. wer der vertretene Personenkreis ist – und die gewünschten Ergebnisse wichtig sind.

Schlüsselwörter – Archäologie; Kulturerbe; Kulturelles Erbe; Interessenvertretung; Berufsverband; Fachgesellschaft; Nicht-Regierungsorganisation; Gewerkschaft; Verein; Netzwerk

Advocacy

In this paper, I define advocacy – or campaigning – primarily in terms of efforts we exert by choosing to devote time and energy to representing what we think of as the best interests of our chosen subjects to affect how governments or other organisations may act. This may, for example, be by promoting new legislation or policy or amendments to existing legislation.

Who are we? Archaeological constituencies

In this paper, I will simplify the spectrum of cultural heritage and archaeological organisations into four groups and linking networks. This is useful in this context but not in other ways where this is too simplistic. These groups are various and are closely related to their aims. The categories are not exclusive or clear – in Europe, the

division between membership and professional groups is blurred by two different fundamental legal systems and the concepts of the academy of sciences'. Despite the complexity for present purposes the basic groups for discussion are shown in **Fig. 1**.

One IAGC action was engaging in protest at Rio Tinto's actions at Juukan Gorge Western Australia in which the mining company knowingly damaged archaeological remains acknowledged, by the company, to be of national or international significance. In consequence, the CEO and a handful of other top executives all resigned. Time will tell whether more significant change in corporate culture ensues. But this looks like a success.

Among the multiplicity of variables, how do we explain – or understand – why we succeed or fail when we do?

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1. Membership Groups

These are organisations that effectively anyone interested in the subject matter may join, usually with a simple, and usually reasonably priced, membership fee. (Examples include the European Association of Archaeologists, the Society for American Archaeology, Society for African Archaeology).

3. Trade organisations

These are organisations whose members are not individuals but rather commercial entities ('companies') that undertake paid work in the field of interest. Two examples are FAME, the Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers (in the UK) and the American Cultural Resources Association (ACRA, in the USA).

5. Networks

There are also networks of individuals or committees, based in one or more of the three basic groups, who work together on any of many issues - and coordinating efforts. The SAA for example has an International and Governmental Affairs Committee (IAGC) specifically for this purpose and while I am not authorised to speak for them, I nonetheless offer a few comments on a couple of actions in which I have been involved.

2. Professional Associations

Membership is aimed at those who – usually – work in the field. Membership depends on demonstrating education experience and expertise, so membership is open to any and all who can demonstrate competence as defined by the organisation, and generally agree to abide by a formal code of conduct/ethics with formal sanctions for 'unprofessional conduct'. Examples include the Register of Professional Archaeologists (in the USA) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists based in the UK but with a wide European membership and a branch in Germany.

4. Non-governmental Organisations

Examples in the heritage sector include Europa Nostra⁵ and ICAHM/ICOMOS.⁶ The International Scientific Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management (ICAHM) advises ICOMOS and the World Heritage Committee on matters that pertain to all aspects of the management of archaeological sites and landscapes. Europa Nostra who say they 'are the leading citizens' movement to protect and celebrate Europe's cultural and natural heritage'.

Fig. 1 Five different kinds of organisation.

An illustrative study of advocacy

Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page (2014) undertook a very large-scale analysis of the rules and effectiveness of advocacy or campaigning groups in the USA: *"Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens"* (GILENS, M. & PAGE, B. I., 2014).⁷

The study was huge in scale and spanned many years, so to be brief and leaving out the really academic and complicated statistical analyses the study encompassed an analysis of a total of 1,923 cases that met four criteria: dichotomous pro/con responses, specificity about policy, relevance to federal government decisions, and categorical rather than conditional phrasing. Of those 1,923 original cases, 1,779 cases also met the criteria of providing income breakdowns for respondents, not involving a Constitutional amendment or a Supreme Court ruling (which might entail a quite different policy-making process), and involving a clear, as opposed to partial or ambiguous, actual presence or absence of policy change. Gilens and Page distinguished 4 theoretical models (Fig. 2).

It turns out, in fact, that Gilens and Page's interpretations cast grave doubt on arguments that organized interest groups tend to do a good job of representing the population as a whole. Indeed, even the net alignments of the groups they have categorized as "mass-based" correlate with average citizens' "preferences only at the very modest (though statistically sig-

nificant) level of 0.12." Nor did they find an association between the preferences of economic elites and the alignments of either mass-based or business-oriented groups.

But the picture changes markedly when all other independent variables were included and were tested against each other. The estimated impact of average citizens' preferences dropped precipitously, to a non-significant, near-zero level. So, not only did ordinary citizens not have substantial power over policy decisions; they had little influence on policy at all. By contrast, economic elites were estimated to have a quite substantial, highly significant, independent impact on policy. Economic elites stood out as influential - more so than any other set of actors studied - in the influencing of U.S. public policy.

But interest-group alignments were also estimated to have a large, positive, highly significant impact on public policy. These results suggested that reality is best represented by mixed approaches in which both individual economic elites and organized interest groups (including corporations, largely owned and controlled by wealthy elites) played a substantial part in affecting public policy, but the general public had little independent influence.

The differences between the preferences of the affluent and the median citizen may represent situations in which economic elites want something quite different from most (ordinary) Americans, and the elites generally got their way.

1. Theories of majoritarian electoral democracy, as positive or empirical theories, attribute U.S. government policies chiefly to the collective will of average citizens, who are seen as empowered by democratic elections. Theories of Majoritarian Electoral Democracy (for example, rational models of electoral competition that include no societal actors other than average citizens), predict that the influence upon policy of average citizens is positive, significant, and substantial, while the influence of other actors is not.

3. “Majoritarian” interest-group pluralism go back to the early 1700’s when James Madison analyzed politics in terms of what he called “factions” - a somewhat fuzzy concept that apparently encompassed political parties and even popular majorities, as well as what we would today consider organized interest groups, business firms, and industrial sectors. Theories of Majoritarian Pluralism predict that the stands of organized interest groups, all taken together, rather faithfully represent (that is, are positively and substantially correlated with) the preferences of average citizens.

2. A quite different theoretical tradition argues that U.S. policymaking is dominated by individuals who have substantial economic resources, i.e., high levels of income or wealth—including, but not limited to, ownership of business firms. Not all “elite theories” share this focus. Some emphasize social status or institutional position - such as the occupancy of key managerial roles in corporations, or top-level positions in political parties, in the executive, legislative, or judicial branches of government, or in the highest ranks of the military. Theories of Economic-Elite Domination predict positive, significant, and substantial influence upon policy by economic elites. Most such theories allow for some (though not much) independent influence by average citizens, e.g., on non-economic social issues.

4. Theories of biased pluralism generally argue that both the thrust of interest-group conflict and the public policies that result tend to tilt toward the wishes of corporations and business and professional associations. Theories of Biased Pluralism, too, see organized interest groups as having much more influence than average citizens or individual economic elites. But they predict that business-oriented groups play a major role.

Fig. 2 Four theoretical models distinguished by GILENS & PAGE, 2014.

Economic-Elite Domination theories do pretty well in the analysis, even though their findings probably understate the political influence of elites. Their evidence clearly indicates that - controlling for the influence of both the average citizen and economic elites - organized interest groups have a very substantial independent impact on public policy.

An important feature of interest group influence is that it is often deployed against proposed policy changes - interest groups swing into action when their desired outcomes are threatened by proposed new legislation or policies. Gillens and Page suggest that interest group alignments are almost unrelated to the preferences of average citizens. This is a clear warning for those of us engaging in advocacy to check - and double-check - how our sectoral interests, no matter how well-intentioned, actually mirror wider public opinion. It may be that our first and more fundamental campaigning action should be to affect public opinion, not a legislator’s voting patterns.

The composition of the U.S. interest-group universe is heavily tilted toward corporations and business and professional associations. This might be viewed as an ‘American characteristic’ but even a relatively superficial examination of UK and European legislative processes and patterns of legislative consultation suggest that the fundamental pattern is the same. Dismissing the American example isn’t so straightforward!

The advantage of business-oriented groups in shaping policy outcomes reflects the infrequency with which business groups are found simultane-

ously on both sides of a proposed policy change. This is interesting and important and sets these actors apart from mass-based groups (which would include most heritage/archaeological efforts) where clarity and unity or even aligned messaging may be missing with apparently *bona fide* heritage organisations arguing with each other and more mainstream groups, and thus reducing the whole discussion to one of ‘noise’ in the ears of legislators.

Relatively few mass-based interest groups are active in the US, they do not (in the main) represent the public very well, and they have a less collective impact on policy than do business-oriented groups (at least it seems on a national level). It is possible that European contexts feature a relatively larger number of and more advocacy actions from mass-based groups.

So as for ‘democracy’: the preferences of the average American appear to have only a statistically non-significant impact on American public policy. The cynical among us might say that this explains a great deal about American politics - but we might do well to look closely at our exercises of democracy before jumping to conclusions. Interest groups do have substantial independent impacts on policy, and a few groups (particularly labour unions) do represent average citizens’ views as expressed in public opinion polls and surveys, reasonably well. But the interest-group system as a whole does not. Overall, interest-group alignments were not significantly related to the preferences of average citizens in the US.

Juukan Gorge and Rio Tinto Mining

The SAA worked with the Australian Archaeology Association to oppose Rio Tinto actions and then to see censure when Rio Tinto proceeded. The Rio Tinto decision was to essentially destroy rock art sites and shelters, which were highly significant to the area's Aboriginal traditional owners, the Puutu Kunti Kurrama and Pinikura people, in May, so that it could mine better quality iron ore, despite knowing for years of their importance and having previously seemed to follow a track for preservation in situ (BUTLER, ALLAM & WAHLQUIST, 2020; HIRINI, 2020; KOOLMATRIE, 2020). The SAA response was written in terms agreed with the AAA in advance so that the responses from these two organisations, and others, would harmonise and thus amplify the effects upon Rio Tinto.



Fig. 3 Rock-shelters in Juukan Gorge. Accessed at <https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/juukan-gorge-inquiry-urges-national-laws-to-protect-sacred-sites-20211018-p590xi.html>

The consequence: The Rio Tinto chief executive, Jean-Sébastien Jacques, and two other senior executives left the global mine company after its board bowed to intense investor pressure for strong action over its decision to blow up 46,000-year-old rock shelters at Juukan Gorge in Western Australia's Pilbara region (Fig. 3). In this case SAA's IGAC had taken the preparation to coordinate with in-country specialists and organisations and in some ways harmonise the messages of protest. This would appear to be a success story – at least so far.

Take-away lessons

1. Sectoral interest groups (what Gillens and Page called mass-based interest groups) statistically have a good track record of effecting



Fig. 4 Excavations at Juukan. Accessed at <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-16/rio-tinto-grilled-at-juukan-gorge-inquiry/12775866> [19.9.2022].

political change. Especially when there are few 'contra' sectoral interest groups – for example when there are few if any 'anti-archaeology heritage' interest groups, so that everyone who is 'an archaeologist' could reasonably be expected to speak from a fundamentally similar perspective. (As a warning: over the past 30 years the UK government and heritage sector have grappled with the A303 - Stonehenge situation, in which visits to Stonehenge also include the sight and sound of a major highway just a couple of hundred meters away. Several attempts at solving the juxtaposition of the major highway and the monument were thwarted as much by internecine archaeological infighting as by other factors).

2. Individual sectoral groups have a less successful record – success seems to arise when the interest or actions of different sectoral groups coincide and combine. So one "voice" about archaeology or heritage in environmental impact assessment may be good – but a number of 'different' voices from apparently different groups apparently saying the same basic message will be far stronger – and thus more effective. Also, using the different groups to approach different legislative actors, so that each actor/legislator has at least one apparent 'constituent' advocating for the policy outcome may arguably be more effective than all organisations writing equally to all legislators.
3. We should not assume that our sectoral – archaeological – interests coincide with the public – make the case very plainly. Every Single Time. It is a truism that the public loves archaeology and history but translating that basic interest into a willingness to support po-

Indigenous investigations
Rio Tinto

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Rio Tinto CEO and senior executives resign from company after Juukan Gorge debacle

In a statement to Australian Stock Exchange the company confirms move that follows the blowing up of 46,000-year-old caves in Western Australia

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Rio Tinto's outgoing chief executive Jean-Sébastien Jacques, who is leaving the company along with two other senior executives. Photograph: Hannah McKay/Reuters

Fig. 5 Screen shot of reporting in the UK national press *The Guardian*, 11-09-2020.

litical action is a different matter with implications for public service and therefore taxation.

4. Even better – we should make the case that our sectoral interests coincide with some of the basics of ‘Big Business’s’ interests to weaken their opposition. Or at least make their opposition seem less credible to other vested interest groups.
5. We should try and make advocacy positions stated positively – so that we – corporately – are seen by the various publics to be ‘for’ and in supporting positions and not always in opposition to the actions or positions adopted by political agencies. This is perhaps more important over time than in any single response, but nonetheless important for this.

Advocacy is, after all, a long-term endeavour, not a quick win.

Notes

- ¹ This paper is an amended and extended version of a presentation made at the European Association of Archaeologists Annual Meeting, held in Budapest 2022.
- ² Websites: <https://www.e-a-a.org/>; <https://www.saa.org/>; <https://safarchaeology.org/>; <https://www.dguf.de> [19.9.2022].
- ³ Websites: <https://rpanet.org/>; <https://www.archaeologists.net/> [19.9.2022].
- ⁴ Websites: <https://famearchaeology.co.uk/>; <https://acra-crm.org/> [19.9.2022].
- ⁵ Website: <https://www.europanostr.org/> [19.9.2022].
- ⁶ Website: <https://icahm.icomos.org/> [19.9.2022].
- ⁷ This is an American political example and comes with a warning – many of us, maybe very wary of taking any commentary about advocacy in the political sphere coming out of America as anything more than an oddity. But bear with me, this is very interesting and bears close consideration.

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