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Reflecting on evaluation in public archaeology

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Abstract

As heritage professionals, our community-facing projects are embedded in the politics of cultural heritage and reverberate throughout the communities where we work. The only way to know if archaeological outreach and community engagement are working is to ask stakeholders, and there is growing support in our community of practice to further develop this aspect of the field. There is also increasing pressure to use evaluations, particularly standardized impact assessments motivated by neoliberal political critiques, to argue that archaeological projects are legitimate uses of economic resources. As the field continues to develop more robust mechanisms of self-assessment, we urge further reflection on whether our assessment of successful outcomes balances differing expectations and definitions of success, requirements of funding institutions, willingness of the participants, and needs of the practitioners. Are we working towards assessments of our own satisfaction with work done, the satisfaction of the dominant political forms of cultural value, the formal procedures of our funding streams, or the experiential and educational needs of the non-professional with whom we engage? We present a picture of the institutional contexts of US and UK public archaeology evaluation up to this point and propose ways to move forward that address the ethical underpinnings of public archaeology practice while strengthening the institutional visibility of public archaeology work.

Keywords

public archaeology, evaluation, public engagement, communication.

Introduction

The present era of global financial insecurity has led to significant cuts to public funding for archaeological work across the globe and greater vulnerability for heritage protections in national legislation (Howery 2013; Jackson et al. 2014). There is greater emphasis placed on demonstrable social and economic value of science in modern global politics (Grey 2008; James 2018: Vyck 2010) which places many archaeologists in a position of needing to provide evidence for the value and impact of their work. Assessing how we undertake evaluation and assessment of public archaeology projects is therefore a vital area for promoting and sharing impactful research, despite its underrepresentation as a discreet subject area in published academic work. In the following discussion, we will explore the current state of formal evaluation in public archaeology, from our perspectives working in the USA and the UK. We will discuss the formal evaluation requirements of major funding sources for public archaeology in each of these national contexts and the evaluation processes found there. These range from detailed assessments of learning outcomes to explorations of the impact on well-being and socio-economic profiles to simple collations of visitor numbers and anecdotal comments collected during events and activities. These data are not, as Gould (2016), Neal (2015) and the authors of this paper conclude, robust in their methods of data collection, nor are they representative of the discipline, the participants, or the aspirations of the sector. Additionally, we note several points for consideration that where formal project evaluations have been undertaken, these are often not aggregated nor made publicly available, the requirements of the funding body or similar are open to a range of interpretations by the organisations undertaking the work, or may simply not take place at all. This paper will then suggest some future directions for participatory evaluation, which reflect the values of the communities with whom we work, as well as reflecting our professional standards and responsibilities as archaeologists.

Public archaeology is critical to the wider discipline. Although there are many definitions of the term 'public archaeology' (Richardson and Almanza-Sanchez 2015; Skeates, McDavid and Carman 2012), any practice in which archaeology and "the public" intersect can qualify (McDavid and Brock 2014, 165). As austerity policies and neoliberal politics have further impacted the already-predominantly marketized archaeological sector, there are increasing demands for public archaeology practitioners to comply with 'policy audit practices to garner legitimacy for demands over the public purse (irrespective of whether they, in fact, promote or muddle issues of transparency, democratic accountability and effectiveness)' (Belfiore 2015, 96). Alongside these concerns, the use of 'impact' metrics to measure the "social, cultural and economic value" of academic work in higher education in the UK and elsewhere have emerged alongside governmental austerity agendas (James 2018, 312). There is a growing pressure for research to demonstrate "the economic and cultural values and impacts of archaeological resources" (Schadla-Hall et al. 2010, 62), but this emphasis may not help us understand our effect on, and improve our work with, stakeholder communities, especially when undertaken within a developer-led archaeological context. It is possible that these neoliberal agendas may reduce community projects to opportunities that impact perceptions of archaeology by local stakeholders and government officials, and in turn, simply further sustain financial support for the subject. Yet many public archaeology projects are undertaken because of a commitment to education, community well-being, and a strong sense of social justice amongst its practitioners - it is considered unethical to exclude stakeholders from research that might impact their perception of their own heritage, their local community, or even their financial situation (Jancovich & Bianchini 2013: Marshall et al. 2002: Neal 2015).

To date, in the archaeological literature, there is little work published on whether or how scholars might formally evaluate their public engagement practice, and find out whether these activities achieve their organisational aims as well as their social functions. Many sources of funding for community archaeology do not ask for formal evaluation of outcomes and where guidance for evaluation exists, the format and extent of such evaluation appears to be open to interpretation. Beyond the imperatives provided by relevant funding bodies to understand indicators of success, which we set out below, there is little guidance from the main archaeological bodies in the UK and USA, on methods to use to measure education, well-being, or social impact outcomes or to evaluate the range and participation in activities (Simpson and Williams 2008). The discussions that do exist in the available guidance on the subject of evaluation and measuring success are invariably positive and embellish what Fredheim (2018, 622) identifies as the “exclusively positive discourse of heritage” and this in turn “normalizes certain experiences and thereby silences and excludes others”.

National Contexts

Community archaeology projects often develop networks and communities, and set out to engage groups of people with a specific archaeological subject, site or historic period. It is both common sense, and a necessary budgetary reporting mechanism, to collate data that can measure these engagements, successes, or failures, and facilitate lessons learned within and between organizations. However, as Neal (2015, 135) points out, “measuring the impact of interventions on individuals is something that many community archaeology projects attempt, but not in any formalized sense”. There is an overall lack of methodology, a heavy reliance on anecdote, and sometimes crude measures for success (Neal and Roskams 2013).

This section examines the contexts within which public engagement and community archaeology work takes place within the USA and UK, and briefly examines the forms of evaluation required by the major funding streams in both countries.

USA

In the USA, archaeological work takes place in development-driven contract archaeology, academic research, and through museums and community organizations. Although we are not aware of any concrete data on the relative prominence of each category, it is accepted by most practitioners that Cultural Resource Management (CRM) archaeologists conduct the most archaeological projects (see synthesis in Neumann 2001).

CRM professionals work within private companies, State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (known as SHPOs and THPOs), and in government agencies managing public land such as the National Parks Service (NPS) or the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Archaeologists excavating on public land require a permit, the allocation of which is based on the qualifications of the researcher (and whether the proposed work is consistent with the agency's priorities and management plans, e.g. National Park Service 2016a). Excavations on private land, however, are typically only regulated by legislation protecting specific types of material, and only under certain circumstances. Although there are numerous federal laws, federal policies, state laws, local laws, and other legal structures which govern access to cultural resources, there are very few which mandate routine outreach. A notable exception is the National Strategy for Federal Archeology established in 1990 by the US Department of Interior, and affirmed as official government policy in 1999 (United States Department of the Interior 1999). The strategy document describes how the Department's employees – who manage the Nation's natural and cultural resources and commitments to Indigenous governments — will use volunteer programs and public interpretation activities to increase participation in the nation's archaeology by the general public.

Outside the government in particular, public archaeology in the United States is characteristically diverse and contextually specific. The publications that describe public archaeology projects in the US typically focus on the impetus for the work, but do not describe the methodology employed to fulfill the goals set forth if public engagement was a focus, or they mention public presentations done in addition to the research which is framed as of central importance. In short, public archaeology methods and reflection on their efficacy have not been a focus of scholarly discussion in American public archaeology. This does not mean that work up until this point has not been carefully designed or that colleagues are not assessing their work, but that publishing methods and results in scholarly journals does not seem to be understood as the standard intellectual contribution in this scholarly community, so a routine literature review does not capture the richness of what has been done in the field.

Most non-commercial archaeology funding in the USA comes from the federal government, and little of this funding is designed specifically to support public outreach. Major funding sources for archaeologists include federal agencies funding scientific research (National Science Foundation - NSF), humanities and teachers (National Endowment for the Humanities), and private organizations dedicated to developing anthropological theory (e.g. Wenner Gren Foundation, School for Advanced Research), amongst others. While many of these organizations require applicants to explain the intellectual impacts of the proposed work at multiple scales, none explicitly require applicants to assess the public impact of their work. In addition, a 1980 study analyzing how much money the National Science Foundation (NSF) granted for archaeological research found that the amount of funding did not keep up with the growing number of archaeologists (Casteel 1980:171–176). In short, there seems to be less funding than there was for previous generations, and funding institutions appear disinterested in systemically promoting or assessing public outreach.

Changes at the NSF and Wenner-Gren Foundation seem to signal that public perception of archaeology is of greater concern in the past 20 years. In 1995, the NSF overhauled its application format and made it mandatory for applicants to explain the "broader impacts" of their project beyond the discipline (Brenneis 2009:243-244), requiring researchers to re-frame their research to articulate the disciplinary, scientific, and societal impact of knowledge production (NSF 2016). All but one analysis of NSF Archaeology (Cullen 1995; Goldstein et al. 2018; Yellen et al. 1980) and Anthropology (Plattner et al. 1987; Plattner and McIntyre 1991) funding patterns was done before this change took place.[1] It is unclear whether the establishment of the "broader impacts" criterion led to any changes in what sorts of archaeological research were funded, as the Archaeology and Anthropology Program

1 In the United States, Archaeology is taught as one of four sub-fields of Anthropology, so the Cultural Anthropology and Archaeology funding programs are often considered together in studies of National Science Foundation funding.

Officers have consistently stated that the purpose of the funds is to fund "basic research" which directly studies the material remains of the past (e.g. Brush et al. 1981:11).

In 2016, the Wenner-Gren Foundation, which disburses over three million US dollars per year for anthropological and archaeological research funding (Goldstein et al. 2018:4), took visible steps to promote what they call "public engagement with anthropology as a research field" (Lindee and Radin 2016:S294). At that time, they established a publication and grant meant to improve public understanding of anthropology. Each of these is a significant, but measured, step toward acceptance of public outreach as a rigorously pursued part of anthropology in the US. The Engaged Anthropology Grant is described as dissemination support for those who have already been funded by Wenner-Gren and have completed their research (Wenner-Gren Foundation 2018a). Grantees are required to provide a 500-1000 word report at the end of the grant period which is posted on the Wenner-Gren Engaged Anthropology Blog, but no assessment of outcomes is required. Their digital publication, Sapiens, similarly supports the institution's focus on public understanding as well as their long-standing goal to "develop a world community of anthropologists" (Wenner-Gren Foundation 2018b) by carefully recruiting anthropologists to write articles for public consumption and employing a professional editorial process in the style of a journalistic magazine (Wenner-Gren Foundation 2018c). The Wenner-Gren Foundation has dedicated funds and reviewers to assessing principled public outreach efforts, and this makes them stand out among the high-dollar funders of American archaeology. It is unclear, however, to what extent they are interested in implementing assessment of outreach activities beyond the peer-review processes they already employ.

Pressuring funding organizations to reflect research-based best practice – such as routine evaluation of public archaeology activities – has worked before in the USA. According to Brenneis' study of the NSF, for example, the overhaul of the application in 1995 took place when professionals voiced concerns about the fairness of the review process while simultaneously the federal political climate favored reducing financial commitment to the NSF (Brenneis 2009, 243-244). The motivations behind the 1995 NSF application changes came from above (federal politics) as well as below (specific tensions between applicants and review committees). In 2018, public accountability is becoming an imperative in science funding worldwide, and it would not be surprising to see politics and scholarly concerns once again converge in a revision of the NSF application guidelines to require evaluation of a project's public impact. For private funding institutions like the Wenner-Gren Foundation, it is less clear what sorts of changes might result from such feedback, but their recent move toward supporting outreach could signal willingness to further integrate best practices of assessment as a component of their funding guidelines.

While institutions have moved slowly on the issue of public archaeology evaluation, it has been a frequent topic of scholarly activities at national conferences and workshops since the mid-2000s (Gibb and McDavid 2008; Jeppson 2003, 2004; Jeppson and Brauer 2008; Malloy et al. 2009; Matthews et al. 2010, 2012). Authors of these foundational works explored what assessment could accomplish intellectually and presented case studies in evaluating one's own outreach, usually woven together into a single contribution. Subsequent authors have often described how specific assessment tools have yielded valuable insights for their own public archaeology efforts (Ellenberger and Gidusko 2018; King 2016), but a few have focused broadly on what widespread assessment would mean for the discipline (Ellenberger and Richardson 2015; Gould 2015, 2016; Pageau 2015). We see this as evidence that both theory and method in public archaeology are developing rapidly as they are more widely accepted as important. While public archaeology practitioners appear to be starting to develop norms for evaluation amongst themselves, we see little evidence that institutions which represent, fund, employ, or publish American archaeologists have adopted frameworks for evaluating outreach.

UK

The biggest funding source for public facing archaeology projects is the government-managed Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), followed by local authorities and local charities, UK Higher Education, and developer-led archaeology companies, although a large percentage (74.6 per cent) of volunteer projects fund themselves (Hedge and Nash 2016, 55). There has also been a steady growth in the number of crowd-funded projects in the UK in recent years (Bonacchi et al. 2015, 4).

It has been estimated that around 90 per cent of all archaeological work in the UK from 1990-2011 took place as part of the development and planning process, rather than in formal academic contexts (Fulford 2011, 33). For the UK, where private commercial archaeology companies undertake the majority of archaeological works within these development-driven contexts, the completion of archaeological mitigation may be the only measure of success, even if public outreach takes place during the programme of work. Developer-led archaeology organisations often publicize their outreach work through various media, for example, Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA 2018) has undertaken extensive community archaeology projects in Greater London and beyond and has a robust outreach and community engagement strategy and reporting mechanisms. However, in most archaeological companies, there are few indicators of the types of evaluation that have taken place, if at all, unless the projects involved received external funding - from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for example. This is a missed opportunity for shared learning and improvement of project outcomes, despite the challenges of a pressured commercial archaeology environment.

The HLF is subject to state policy control, and the organization reports to Parliament through the department where 'decisions about individual applications and policies are entirely independent of the Government' (HLF 2018a). All funded projects must undertake a programme of evaluation (HLF 2018b). The HLF provides a detailed guide to evaluation good practice, which makes clear recommendations for measuring impact using qualitative and quantitative evidence. The guidance is clear that achievement indicators "determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability" (Heritage Lottery Fund 2016b, 3).

Unfortunately, the full range of HLF evaluation reports are not publicly accessible (Claire Butler-Harrison, HLF, pers comm.), and no summaries of feedback or evaluation methodology are currently available on the central HLF website, although individual projects may publish their final formal evaluation summaries on their own websites (for example: Jones et al 2015: SCAPE 2017).

In the UK, non-professional, community or ‘amateur’ participation in archaeology accounts for a relatively small percentage of the amount of archaeological work undertaken each year, although participation in these groups and activities is well-supported. Research by Historic England suggests that, between 2010-2015, the community archaeology sector had undertaken 12,000 projects (Hedge and Nash 2016, 10). In 2010 the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) recorded over 215,000 people in the UK who are active in heritage, history or archaeology volunteer groups (Thomas 2010, 12). A wide variety of smaller, often local, charitable funding sources for heritage and archaeology exist throughout the UK, although most of these smaller funding streams do not have rigorous guidance for evaluating success (or failure) and their expectations for project outcomes, and projects that are self-funded by participants and community groups may not be evaluated at all. For example, the CBA manages one funding stream for community archaeology, the Mick Aston Archaeology Fund (Council for British Archaeology 2016), which asks for an interim and final project report but no form of evaluation.

Funding for public and community archaeology that is undertaken with UK Higher Education organisations is often part of the work of UK Research and Innovation, which is a strategic partnership of the former UK Research Councils. This body aims to work “in partnership with universities, research organisations, businesses, charities, and government to create the best possible environment for research and innovation to flourish” (UK Research and Innovation 2018). Funding and evaluation of Higher Education-funded archaeology projects have been affected by the UK impact agenda in higher education and the shift to metrical analysis of knowledge exchange and public engagement which is a wider topic beyond the scope of this paper (James 2018). However, overall, most UK based university archaeology projects do not at present share easily accessible evaluation summaries or reports, with a few notable exceptions, such as the University of Salford (Murphy 2015: Nevell 2013: 2015).

As Gould (2016, 2) points out, case studies are not necessarily generalizable, nor applicable beyond supplying anecdote. The research for this article included a search for evaluation reports from a wide variety of archaeological contexts in the sectors outlined above. This proved difficult if not impossible to do with any comparative meaning, and highlighted some of the challenges of methodological approaches to evaluation and best practice. In the context of the UK, few community-facing project evaluation reports are routinely available in the public domain; those from non-HLF commercial archaeology public archaeology projects are extremely rare. Locating any of these reports in the aftermath of short term project work depends on a number of factors: funding for evaluation to take place; archival standards and practice in the individual project; project websites being maintained and digital reports and information remaining stable; knowledgeable staff being retained after projects end if no online copies of evaluation reports are available; and evaluation reports being confirmed as public documents, rather than reports for funders, trustees, or organisational management only. As Gould (2016: 8) outlines, the HLF has only analyzed the first 100 project reports submitted under its programme (Boyd and Stafford 2013) and the analysis of these is revelatory. Eight projects did not submit an evaluation report, 16 per cent were rated 'very good' or 'good' and 22 per cent were considered to be 'poor'. Practices are, of course, locally driven but this diversity of availability and quality supports the urgent need for a comprehensive synthesis of existing material, to shape evaluation best practice and impact assessment in the future.

Digital Public Archaeology

Exploiting the affordances of digital technologies in order to encourage participation in public archaeology is an increasingly popular activity within the discipline (Bollwerk 2015; Richardson 2013). The practices of archaeological communication and co-production within a wholly digital environment can offer new perspectives on public archaeology practice, and these projects are potentially less expensive and easier to manage than 'real-life' projects. In the UK, the HLF provides guidelines for its grant recipients on how to undertake some basic forms of evaluation for this type of public engagement, and as many archaeological projects are extending their use of digital media, the potential benefits of evaluation are clear (HLF 2018c). Since the use of this media has an impact on staff time and budget, gathering data on the use and interactions of these platforms are a necessary part of a strategic approach to digital public engagement. Organisations undertaking this form of engagement can use evaluation to better understand user behaviour and user experience within their digital environments. This type of pre-and post project evaluation can help to establish how easily people can find and interact with the information provided, and ultimately learn how to improve future communications and information provision in the landscape of digital technologies. There have been a number of developments of guidance for approaches to the evaluation of the use of these platforms on an individual basis in the culture and museums sector, especially in the UK. For example, Culture 24's "Let's Get Real" project provides extensive guidelines for digital projects in cultural heritage, including how to understand user experiences and evaluating digital outputs (Culture 24 2018). King's College's "Balanced Value Impact Model" 'draws evidence from a wide range of sources to provide a compelling account of the means of measuring the impact of digital resources and using evidence to advocate how change benefits people' (Tanner 2018). Formal evaluations of digital project work in archaeology often measure outcomes and impact through simple assessments of the numbers of attendees, basic demographic data, the quantity of website 'hits', Twitter followers, Facebook page 'likes', or through a selection of participant comments about their enjoyment of activities, made online or offline (Richardson 2014, 153). No analysis of the extent to which digital projects have been collectively successful in terms of encouraging public participation and extending opportunities promised to 'democratize archaeology' has taken place to date. This data would seem to be vital to evaluate the success thus far of the participatory turn in digital archaeology. Meta-analyses of the wider impact of these digital participatory projects are an area ripe for further research in the field of digital public archaeology.

The Evaluation Imperative

The key to successful project outcomes may be to include community consultation and partnership into project design itself, but this is not an easy undertaking, and the potential for participatory initiatives to "maintain, rather than upend, existing power structures through the control of acceptable forms of, and locations for, participation" must be acknowledged (Fredheim 2018, 625). There are concerns within the discipline that these types of collaborations could lead to exploitation of volunteers (Fredheim 2018; Perry & Beale 2015) or to less academically rigorous archaeological projects with vague aims which are more apt to be misinterpreted by those outside the profession (King 2012; Nevell 2013: Simon 2011). While there may be some degree of flexibility afforded by the current lack of institutional structure for public archaeology evaluation, the benefits of existing institutions committing to rigorous and reflexive public archaeology in their codes and institutional mission statements would empower rather than hamper practitioners. However, a critical eye to these issues is vital. It is possible that highly prescriptive evaluation guidelines aligned to institutional agendas for participation could be exploitative, or overlook, silence or other traditionally underrepresented voices in the field, and create structural boundaries between Western practitioners and publics, and 'others' (Atalay 2012: 252-5). In light of these concerns about how to further the usefulness of evaluation in public archaeology, a brief examination of some of the assumptions that professional archaeologists make about the meaning of participation and the use of evaluation is useful.

Using UK case studies, Simpson and Williams (2008) and Woolverton (2016) suggest that there are complex reasons why participants in community archaeology may not know about, nor be interested in, active participation in project design. Reasons why people may choose not to engage with project design might include demographic and socio-economic issues such as age, ethnicity, gender, disability, or class. There may be concerns about educational attainment and confidence, or there may be activities and events which exclude those who are not assimilated fully into in the dominant culture (Dawson 2014a; 2014b). Participants may also be restricted by time, family and work responsibilities, or the desire for archaeology to be a social activity, a hobby and a form of relaxation (Hart 2009: 155-159).

Professional archaeological organizations are quiet on the matter of evaluation and outcomes of public archaeology in their ethics statements – no organization in the USA or UK explicitly mentions the need to evaluate public projects and share best practice. Whilst this might seem like a small point for consideration within a greater sectorial management framework, where ethics is an oft-neglected subject, this can create a further disjuncture between our professional interests and values, and those of the communities within which we live and work. What we may perceive to be a successful and engaging project may not provide the kinds of outcomes that participants want, unless the project has input from participant communities during the process of project creation and evaluation. Without this, our assessments of project outcomes will not reflect the subjective, and often nuanced and affective, human experience of participation in archaeological work. If the results of project evaluations do not offer avenues for reflexivity and meaningful change, they may not be worth doing. But how can we learn from the vast insights already existing in our colleagues and communities if there is little iterative guidance and very few robust, published case studies to learn from?

What Can We Do?

Although there are only a handful of publications that specifically address approaches and methods for evaluating public archaeology projects (for example Apaydin 2016; Human 2015; King 2016; Nevell 2015), archaeologists have been undertaking this work in order to improve their ongoing outreach activities for many years, but these are much less frequently published as formal case studies in scholarly journals. Several dissertations (McDavid 2002; Morgan 2012; Richardson 2014; Stottman 2016) and conference presentations (Gibb and McDavid 2008; Gidusko 2017; Jeppson 2003, 2004, 2011, 2012; Jeppson and Brauer 2008; Malloy et al. 2009; McDavid 2011) have explored evaluation in more depth, although these have not yet been the focus of subsequent journal articles and these may not be universally available in the public realm.

Scholars have discussed public archaeology evaluation significantly more in conference sessions than in published literature, one recent example being the 2016 Society for American Archaeology session where we presented the first version of this paper (Ellenberger 2016). As demonstrated by the enthusiastic response of that audience, there are interested readers for this topic, and this aspect of practice needs to be better represented in published literature, to share experiences and open up formal assessment practices for further debate. We suggest that the following actions would help to support a better understanding of what our participants want from our work, aid us to share and extend our best practices, and support public archaeology professionals to address the needs and values of the communities in which we work.

Action 1: Better Define Our Goals for Public Engagement

We must first clearly and honestly define our epistemological, ethical, political, and practical goals if we wish to develop further in our practice. Are we vigilant to the possibility that we may simply reflect, in the methodologies of our work and our evaluations, the types of markers for success that our funders seek, corresponding to 'contemporary official representations of cultural value' (Newsinger and Green 2016: 2)? Do we then marginalize not only the desires of the non-professional participants, but also the evaluation aspirations of the practitioners themselves? We need to examine the dominant discussions of the meaning and method of evaluation with as much attention as we have with 'participation in practice' – since the practice of public archaeology does not begin at the trowel's edge and finish once the last archival box has been packed and we have all gone home.

Guilfoyle and Hogg (2015: 111, also Figure 1) have created a useful intent-based framework with which to classify dimensions of community-based projects, laying the groundwork for comparing public archaeology projects systematically.

TABLE 2. Attributes of Community Engagement.

Attribute	Description
Degree of Community Support	What was the level of community support for the project?
Degree of Community Control	Was the community in control of designing the project goals/outcomes? Was the community in control of designing the project process/outcomes?
Degree of Community Involvement	What was the level of personal participation by community members? What percentage of the community was aware of the project?
Degree of Information Flow	Was there open communication and dialogue between the archaeologists and the community?
Degree of Community Needs Met/ Archaeologist Needs Met	Were the needs of the community met? Were the needs of the archaeologists met?

Figure 1. Guilfoyle and Hogg's (2015: 111) proposed framework for the characterization of community engagement in archaeological projects. Used with permission from Society for American Archaeology, Copyright 2015.

Another useful framework is Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation (Cornwall 2008: 270). Her model defines participation through numerous practices, which include: taking part in consultations; deciding how to share information; understanding how to set policies, goals and research frameworks; undertaking programmes and activities; and distributing community benefits and resources. The spectrum of community participation is 'defined by a shift from control by authorities to control by the people or citizens' (Cornwall 2008: 271), although the model, and other similar typologies (White 1996) suggest that the scale of participation ranges from genuine to manipulative and rhetorical. With these frameworks in mind, we should ensure we (and our audiences and participants) have clarity from the outset of our projects exactly what our collective goals are and what everyone wants from their participatory experiences.

Action 2: Share Best Practice

We need to be able to identify good working practices in community and public archaeology, be aware of good practice within evaluation, and understand how we can incorporate similar activities within our own projects. Measuring impact and outcomes only from community archaeology projects may not provide the types of nuanced information that can inform our future collaborations in any meaningful way. Critiques of participatory practice from other disciplines can help us reflect on other ways of understanding the value (or lack of value) placed on public archaeology and find examples of effective evaluation strategies. Evaluation practice in participatory research, visitor studies, and community engagement all provide examples that we could use and adapt (Johanson 2013). Literature under the label of 'heritage work' provides useful examples (Smith 2006) as well as museum studies (Diamond et al. 2009; University of Leicester 2016) and historic site management (for example: Cameron and Gatewood 2000; Markwell et al. 1997).

Action 3: Evaluate with Purpose

We need to be clear and critical about why we are undertaking project evaluations, and what we want to do with the results. Often, formal evaluation reports in the public realm steer clear of reporting problems and difficult situations, or downplay and ignore any areas where impact has not been felt and needs have not been met. Are we afraid of sharing failure and projects that did not turn out as we expected? Do neoliberal agendas drive these fears because of a pressured financial environment? If we are afraid of failure, then we cannot improve our projects (Graham 2016), or respond to the changing needs and abilities of our stakeholders and partners.

Action 4: Lobby Archaeological Professional Bodies

Within professional organizations in the USA and Europe (European Association of Archaeologists 2013; Society for American Archaeology 2016), public archaeology interest groups have developed, and facilitated greater collaboration among practitioners. These organizations have the broad reach and infrastructure to support scholarly exchange among public archaeology practitioners, and many have hosted professional meetings that have become central to scholarly exchange between public archaeologists. While it must be recognized that attendance at these events has a high financial cost for registration and participation, which may exclude potential speakers and attendees, we have the opportunity to lobby these organizations to put further effort into writing ethical and professional guidelines on public archaeology, and to require reflexive evaluation for public archaeology projects.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that formal evaluation practice in archaeology is an under-researched and under-valued area of scholarly consideration. Archaeology projects can give voice to communities involved in heritage engagement, but 'there are dangers here of tokenistic work being undertaken to meet institutionally prescribed targets' when government policy filters to the policy aims (and financial capabilities) of heritage organizations, funding bodies and universities (Jackson et al. 2014: 82).

There is a growing need to understand these issues both as part of the dominant cultural value debate of the neoliberal austerity agenda (Jeppson 2012a), and as an opportunity for a progressive development of deeper and broader public participation in archaeological work. Assessment and evaluation may not be uppermost in the minds of archaeologists designing community-based projects, but this call for greater critical discussion of the outcomes of community archaeology is not naive and misplaced idealism. In the prevailing atmosphere of political instrumentalization of culture and economic austerity, it is all too easy to reduce archaeology to a vehicle for rhetorical nods to issues of social cohesion and well-being, and for the emphasis to be placed on assessments of its economic value to wider society.

Moving beyond the traditional interpretations of 'top-down' or 'bottom-up' public archaeology projects and into an understanding of the relationship between participatory process and satisfactory outcome, is a challenge for public archaeology evaluation. Archaeologists working in both public and privately funded arenas need to be able to demonstrate the impact, credibility and value of their work, but must also recognize the potential for sustainable change and transformation presented by a greater understanding of the social and educational needs and aspirations of our audiences before, during and after our work alongside them. There needs to be opportunity to include these concerns in any formal evaluation processes. As Gould (2016: 4) notes, 'only a sound methodology can generate the sound data necessary to identify such practices'. The action points outlined in this article offer some ideas for approaches to formal evaluation with which to shape projects, and to further include stakeholders, influence policy and begin to challenge 'the emerging norms of austerity and neoliberal capitalism' (Newsinger and Green 2016: 2).

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