

Examples for Stakeholder Values in Hallstatt-Research - Archaeology from the Perspective of Public, Economics and Politics

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Abstract: When it comes to the topic of interaction with the general public in archaeology, we mostly talk about how to communicate known archaeological subject matters to people with a different and sometimes lower education level than ourselves. But professional communication can do a lot more for us and our research. With simple tools, which are well known in daily public relations (PR) work, archaeologists can create a better working environment for helping to ensure the protection of our cultural heritage. To use these tools, knowledge about our stakeholders is required, as well as an understanding of the basics of communication. In this article the stakeholders of the Hallstatt research of the Natural History Museum Vienna provide an example to demonstrate which different interests, desires, problems and habits characterize stakeholders of archaeological research projects and how they must be taken into account if we want our stakeholders to support our work in research and conservation. Knowing the stakeholders is a prerequisite for the establishment of durable and sustainable relationships, on which archeology in the communication age depends more and more.

Keywords: communication, public relations, stakeholder values, strategy, Hallstatt

Introduction

When it comes to the topic of interaction with the general public in Austrian archaeology¹, we mostly talk about the adaptation in communicating known archaeological facts to people with a less high education level than ours². In museums - whether it be houses with an archaeological collection or archaeological open-air museums - one often finds staff that has extensive knowledge in marketing and sales. These skills are usually used to stimulate people to visit exhibitions or to attend events.

¹ A more recent publication, which deals with the topic of archeology and the public in German speaking countries is GEHRKE, H.-J. – SÉNÉCHAU (ed.) (2010): *Geschichte, Archäologie, Öffentlichkeit. Für einen neuen Dialog zwischen Wissenschaft und Medien. Standpunkte aus Forschung und Praxis*. Bielefeld.

² According to §11 paragraph 1 of the Austrian Monument Protection Act only a person with a university degree in a relevant field can obtain an excavation granting. <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10009184> [called on 19.6.16] According to the latest statistical survey in 2011 the proportion of university graduates in general in Austria is 13.1% of the total population. The proportion of graduates varies between urban and rural areas. In Vienna it amounts to 21.5%, while in Upper Austria it is 10.0%.

http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/bildung_und_kultur/bildungsstand_der_bevoelkerung/104310.html [called on 19.6.16]

Classical PR work is only part of a very small extent of current archaeological research projects or institutions, and in these cases it is often reduced to collaboration with media representatives. Although the increasing use of online tools - most notably Facebook, but also more and more blogs - illustrates the general willingness to communicate with a broader audience, it is apparent that a profound knowledge of professional public relation work is rarely visible in everyday archaeological work. Using the example of the archaeological research in the village of Hallstatt, Upper Austria, where a famous burial field (800 – 400 BC), eponymous for a prehistoric culture in central Europe, and a prehistoric salt mine are examined under the lead of the Natural History Museum Vienna, it will be pointed out in the following, how a stakeholder analysis is done and why it is the basis for professional and targeted communication processes.

The term "stakeholders" refers to all those people who are affected by our actions. Stakeholders may be affected for various reasons by archaeological research. They do not have to want this; in fact they do not even have to be interested in archeology or have to have a clear idea of what archaeological research is. Nevertheless, the relations with our stakeholders have a decisive influence on the framework of conditions for research that dominate our working conditions in everyday practice, determine the safety of archaeological remains or create an atmosphere in which the appreciation of research results can be increased (or reduced) and much, much more³. As the influence of the stakeholders is of such great importance, the construction and maintenance of viable, sustainable relationships with them is one of the core responsibilities of PR work.

Stakeholder analyses

The basis of all PR work is a solid stakeholder analysis⁴. The basis for this is provided by research into the social environment and questioning of key individuals⁵. Once the stakeholders have been identified in this way, they can be grouped and assigned to "clusters" by various parameters. E.g., the focus for can be on the basic attitude of the stakeholders towards an excavation or their degree of accessibility through communicative actions. The main cluster is basically the one that groups stakeholders by their decision-making powers and influence on a project.

By the example of the Stakeholders of the Hallstatt research I will demonstrate below how different their interests may be and what they could possibly expect from the archaeologists. The Hallstatt research is currently divided into four research priorities: burial ground, salt mine, trading hub and Hallstatt textiles. As a fifth player, there is an archaeological monitoring of construction work in the context of torrent and avalanche

³ The topic of the relationship between Archaeology and the public lately finds (probably not the least under the impression of a now independent and visibly communicating public on the Internet) increasing attention in our field of study. The German Society for Prehistory and Early History (DGUF), for example, organized a conference entitled "Does the public creates a different archaeology? Analyses of a power shift" in Tübingen (Germany) in May 2015. The topic will also be in the focus of the annual meeting of the DGUF in Berlin (Germany) in 2016 under the title "Archaeology & power. Staking out positions for the future of research into the past".

⁴ For a comprehensive general description of this process, see also DEG, R. (2009): Basiswissen Public Relations. Professionelle Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit. 4th ed. Wiesbaden, p. 29ff.

⁵ Not all of them do necessarily have to be decision makers.

control in the Hallstatt mountain valley. All these research priorities and the monitoring have their own communication needs and content. However, they cannot communicate independently from one another or independently from the Natural History Museum Vienna, whose Department of Prehistory directs the Hallstatt research work.

Stakeholders in the Natural History Museum Vienna

The Natural History Museum Vienna defines the framework, within which the Hallstatt research staff can communicate by defining a corporate identity. This corporate identity⁶ comprises, inter alia, rules for communication⁷, corporate design⁸, and ideally also a code of conduct⁹ or a mission statement¹⁰, and this determines the picture that all the research done by the Natural History Museum conveys to the outside. In the Natural History Museum, the Hallstatt research is just one of countless research fields and externally funded projects, as the Natural History Museum is one of the most important research institutions in Austria - a fact that it wishes to make visible in public.

Therefore the Hallstatt researchers have to make visible the quality of their research and its meaning in the archaeological field as well as all other researchers at the Natural History Museum. In addition, they are - equally to their colleagues - well advised to emphasize the special benefits of their research for the museum itself.

This task is less simple for the archaeologists as it seems, because most other departments of the museum belong to the natural sciences and the director general is a natural scientist. In the natural sciences, other parameters characterize the quality and significance of research than in the humanities. If the Hallstatt researchers want the director general and their colleagues to understand that their research is important, prestigious and beneficial to the Natural History Museum, they have to convey this information in a manner understandable for these stakeholders.

⁶ The corporate identity can be described as the sum of those features that characterize an organization and differentiate it from others. This includes corporate behaviour, corporate communications and corporate design. A detailed explanation can be found for example in SEEBOHN, J. (2005): *Gabler compact encyclopedia Advertising Practice: Look up 1,400 terms, understand, apply*. 3rd edition. Wiesbaden, pp. 39

⁷ These include for example a particular tonality of the language or rules on whether first or last name are used in social media.

⁸ Corporate Design is a consistent look in all visual designs, from stationery, through maps to the site.

⁹ The Code of Conduct is a voluntary commitment of a company to a certain code of action, for example, up to what value gifts may be accepted. See <http://wirtschaftslexikon.gabler.de/Archiv/18000/code-of-conduct-v7.html>, called on 1/15/16.

¹⁰ Mission statements define the image that an organization wants to be identified with, outwardly but also inwardly. It answers the questions: Who are we? Where do we come from? What do we want to achieve?, How do we work? How do we deal with each other? Mission statements - provided that they are developed professionally - are very helpful in everyday work. In particular, they are a powerful tool in working with volunteers, as they set some ground rules. In reality, mission statements are unfortunately often determined by the decision makers together with the marketing or PR department, without giving the employees any say. Thus, discrepancies that would be disclosed in a bottom-up developed mission statement, remain invisible. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that all members identify with it.

The Shannon-Weaver model

The Shannon-Weaver model, derived by the founders of information theory Warren Weaver and Claude Elwood Shannon, illustrates this process in a very simplified form. The model understands communication as the transmission of information from a transmitter to a receiver and displays the individual elements of this process and the possible dangers arising from the transmission¹¹.

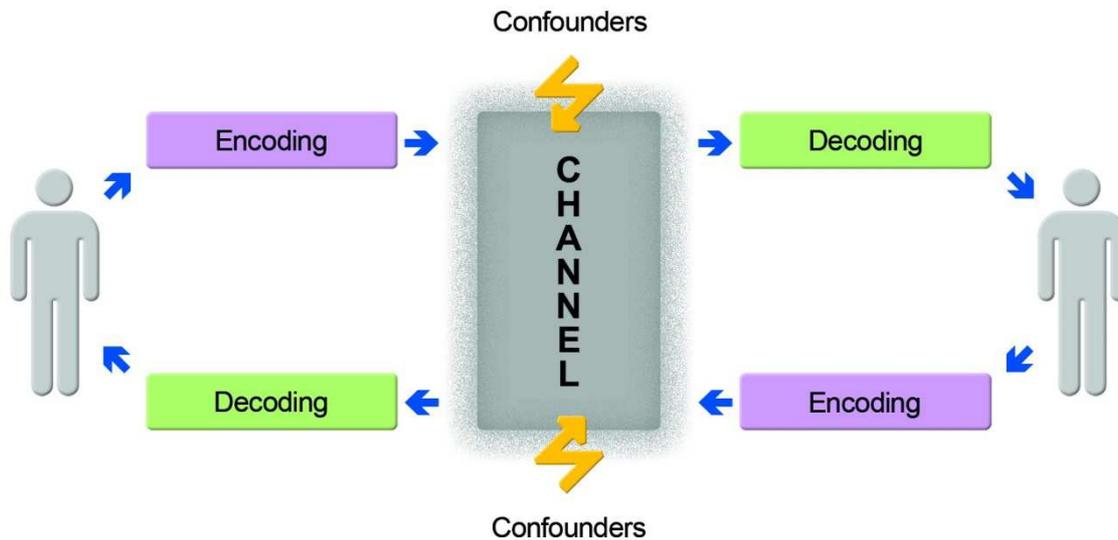


Fig. 1 – The Shannon-Weaver-Model (Copyright: P. Grömer – C. Löw)

In order to transmit the information, the transmitter must first encode it in characters - for example, words or images. The code is then sent via a channel to the receiver, which must decode it to obtain the information. The decoding is only guaranteed when the transmitter is able to understand the chosen characters. To make sure of this, he or she - with respect to individual knowledge and habits - is to be taken into account already in the beginning of the process.

Using the example of Hallstatt research, the information to be transmitted could be: "The scientists of Hallstatt research do high-quality research, publish it in an appropriate form and thus enhance the image of the museum as a research institution." If the Hallstatt-researchers wanted to transmit this information in-house in the Natural History Museum, an encoding in the form of a presentation of a newly published monograph - a highly valued publication format in archaeology - might not be convenient to their colleagues or the director general, since the majority of the scientists working there represent the natural sciences, where monographs do not have a comparable value¹².

¹¹ The mathematical model reduces the communication process to the bare essentials. In reality, communicative processes are of course far more complex. For a first approach to the matter, this model is for this very reason particularly helpful. SHANNON C.E. (1948): *A Mathematical Theory of Communication*, in: The Bell System Technical Journal, Vol. 27, 1948, pp. 379–423, 623–656.

¹² In many scientific disciplines, scientists are trying to publish as many papers as possible in scientific journals with the highest possible impact factor.

Main stakeholders in the economic world

Stakeholders of Hallstatt research are not only to be found at the Natural History Museum, there are also two major sponsors from the business community, the companies Salzwelten GmbH and Salinen Austria AG. Salinen Austria AG is a stock corporation that extracts salt in the Hallstatt salt deposit. Its subsidiary, the Salzwelten GmbH, belongs to the tourism industry and runs the visitors' mine in Hallstatt Salzberg along with two other show mines in Hallein and Salzburg.

Salzwelten benefits rather directly from the academic results of the excavations. Firstly, the growing knowledge can be utilized as content in the edutainment of Salzwelten, so there is constantly the potential of having new visitor attractions. Secondly, especially those objects among the finds are very interesting for Salzwelten, which can be marketed as an attraction for visitors. In addition, the excavations themselves, if open to the public, can be highlights in the guided tours.

The interest of the Salinen Austria AG is a different one. The salt mine in Hallstatt has been supporting archaeological Hallstatt research since its beginnings, that means for more than 150 years. For the present company, the continuation of this support can be an expression of their sense of duty - a value which can be often found in mission statements.

These three stakeholders may be those that are most visible for the Hallstatt researchers, but they are by no means the only ones.

The wider group of stakeholders

In addition to the Natural History Museum, the Salinen Austria AG and the Salzwelten GmbH, the mayor and the political representatives of the municipality of Hallstatt are among the key stakeholders of the Hallstatt research, as well as the district of Gmunden and the province of Upper Austria. The UNESCO of course is a stakeholder, too, since the cultural landscape of Hallstatt-Dachstein is part of the UNESCO World Heritage. Also the Federal Monuments Office, the Upper Austrian Provincial Museum and the Museum Hallstatt have a special interest in Hallstatt research.

There are also numerous partners in the academic community. They come from humanities, natural sciences or technical sciences and belong to very different institutions, such as at the University of Vienna, the MAMUZ Museum Center, the FWF and many more from Austria but also from other countries. In addition to the Salinen Austria AG, the Austrian Federal Forests are affected in their role as land owners by the Hallstatt research, as well as some private persons. Further stakeholder can be found among many other people, who are interested in archaeology, tourists in the region and colleagues or students, who are not directly involved as co-workers.

Stakeholders in the village of Hallstatt

I would like to take a closer look at the mayor of the village. In his position, he has to care for the benefit of the community. It is likely that his decisions are influenced by the needs of the community, his personal interests and the basic guidelines of his party. A very dominant topic in Hallstatt is mass tourism that leaves its decisive mark on the daily life of Hallstatt's population: During the summer months, there are about 3,000 tourists daily

and only 779 permanent residents. Many of the visitors stay only for a few hours. Often they come to the village as participants of bus trips. The tourists - a lot of them from Asia - crowd the narrow streets of Hallstatt from 9.00 am until evening. Not infrequently, they photograph incessantly and try to look through the small windows into the houses. The promotion of tourism - something not seldom used by archaeologists to underline the value of archaeological research - might be not the best argument one could use in such an environment, especially not the promotion of mass of tourism and short term stays. By contrast, the aspect that archaeology can help to define identities can be assumed to be of particular importance for a population in such a context.

Apart from the experience of intense confrontation with the phenomenon of mass tourism, the population in Hallstatt does not differ much from the typical rural population in Austria. With target group typologies one figures out the characteristics of the population of a region quite clearly. In such typologies people are sorted into groups. Members of these groups are similar to each other by their living conditions and their basic attitudes towards work, family, leisure time as well as money and consumption.

The characteristics of these social environments clearly point out the diversity behind the so often used term "general public". A closer look reveals that this public is extremely inhomogeneous and might be interested in very different aspects of archaeological research. There are certain groups that we can reach very well with our content. On average, the people of this milieu are of older age, they usually have a low up to medium income and they are largely conservative in their beliefs and values.

Such tools also point out clearly that we cannot reach everyone with our content, regardless of how well we adapt it. For example, those people with mostly very low levels of education whose interest is primarily focused on consuming, are usually not interested in archaeology. Overall, there are indications that archaeological content, respectively the use of different aspects of it, is interesting to the majority of the Austrian population. Knowledge of target group typologies is the easiest way to find the essential basic information, how a professional communication with our stakeholders should look like¹³. It is very helpful in deciding what content should be chosen from the multitude of available facts and information for those people who we want to reach in a specific situation. Subsequently, the content can be processed appropriately to the target group and the chosen channel, in order to forward it in the best possible way to those audiences¹⁴.

¹³ The target group typology of the market research institute Sinus Sociovision in Heidelberg on the Austrian population including short characterizations of the different milieus can be viewed online at <http://enterprise.orf.at/sinus-milieus0/>, accessed on January 15th, 2016.

¹⁴ Not only in the print sector is it easy to find the appropriate medium for a special target group. Most newspapers usually give information about consumers on their websites. For example see Verlagsgruppe News <http://www.vgn.at/vgn-media/mediadaten>, accessed on on January 15th, 2016. Data on the reach of newspapers are freely accessible on the website of Statistics Austria, at <http://www.oek.at/>, accessed on January 15th, 2016

This brings me to the last of the stakeholders of Hallstatt research that I would like to take a closer look at in this paper: Media representatives¹⁵. Archaeological research contains different news factors. The news factor or its strength determines whether a subject is worth to be reported or not¹⁶. The news factors are not all equally important. Journalists are usually very aware of their readers' interests and are therefore looking for the best messages to satisfy these interests. Generally archaeological research is very attractive for local media, as for them the news factor "closeness" has a strong value. In addition to news values "closeness" and "new", Hallstatt research usually contains three news factors that make it interesting for several media. Firstly, the town of Hallstatt in Austria is quite well known, not only for its archaeological heritage but also as a popular tourist destination. Hallstatt itself must therefore be considered as "prominent". Secondly, the media reported for several decades on the archaeological research in Hallstatt. This is the news factor "already known". The third factor is "powerful source". This is given by the Natural History Museum Vienna, a well-known research institution throughout the country.

The different research areas in Hallstatt research have individual, sometimes very different news factors. Some of them are continuous, some temporary. The bones from the Hallstatt burial site with their marks that indicate hardest work even for children under the age of ten evoke the news factor "Emotion". The extraordinary state of preservation of the finds from the salt mine provide the news factor "exceptional". A news value that is potentially given in all monitorings of construction-measures and all rescue excavations, would be "conflict". This series of news factors can be extended and should be similar in many research projects. To cooperate in an effective way with journalists, it is essential to point them out so that they are clearly visible to the media representatives.

If media work fails, then it is not necessarily the fault of the journalists. Nor does it have to be the public's mistake, when public relations don't work the way archaeologists expect them to work. Professional communication must take a lot more into account than we currently are willing to provide in archaeological everyday work. It is not only the level of education of the stakeholders that is important, but also their interests, desires, problems and habits if we want them to value and support our work in research and conservation. Solid knowledge of one's stakeholders is a prerequisite for the establishment of lasting and sustainable relationships. A pure knowledge transfer cannot lead to this result. It is aims to an "understanding" and most often it is still too rarely questioned whether at least this has indeed succeeded.

An information cascade, which is usually attributed to the ethologist Konrad Lorenz¹⁷ demonstrates the process of stakeholder evolution towards a lasting agreement.

¹⁵ The blogosphere is also growing in archeology. In the future, this group will need to be considered more and more as a multiplier of our content. An overview on archaeological blogs can be found at <http://www.archaeologie-online.de/links/586/642/index.php>, accessed on January 15th, 2016

¹⁶ See note 13.

¹⁷ The attribution to Lorenz is not confirmed by any documents.

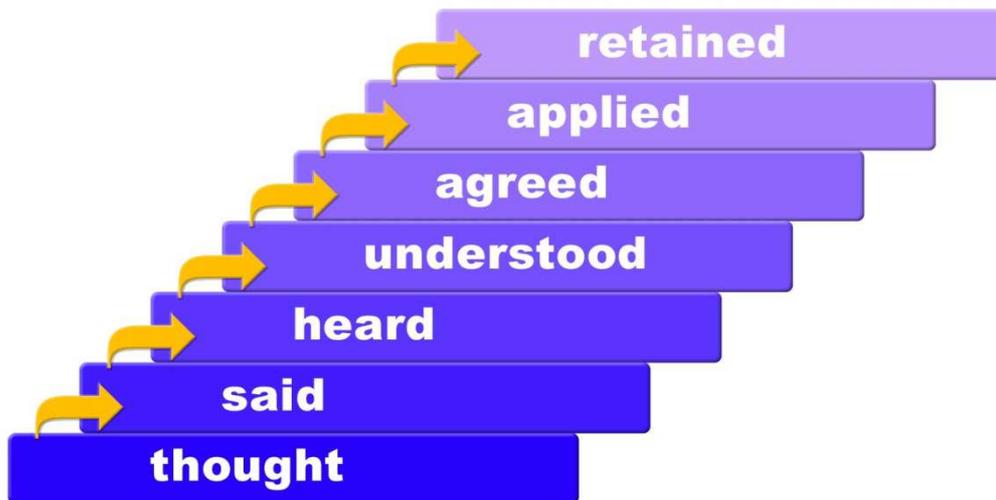


Fig. 2 – Information cascade (Copyright: P. Grömer – C. Löw)

It shows the steps from thought or desire to the maintenance of the desired behavior. It makes clear that understanding (which can be achieved with the knowledge transfer) is not necessarily equal with an approval, that further an approval doesn't necessarily need to trigger the desired action or the desired behavior, and that such a one-time action or a once demonstrated behavior doesn't have to be kept.

A bond between archaeology and society - and that is what is in the focus of practical PR work - can only be achieved when we take people as they are. And that means also to consider their interests and consciously set priorities that are important for them when we present our work and results.

Of course it is an opening up to an outside world, considering the wishes and needs of others. It is an opening up towards a society that needs its archaeological heritage for a myriad of reasons - not least as a guide for current decisions¹⁸. Such an opening cannot and should not be possible without consequences. An archaeology that takes on an active role in the social discourse will also be confronted with special needs for research from the outside world. Independence and freedom of research are thus far less in danger than by purely state and tax money related financing, which depends on the goodwill of involved politicians. Broad public support, which may also be seen in the cooperation with citizen scientists and donors, protects the independence of archaeological research more profoundly. But it also forces us to make our knowledge available to the public in a way that goes beyond fundamental research on theoretic discourses and has real-world applications.

¹⁸ B. Röder also notes that the attractiveness of prehistoric topics is not least based on its social and political relevance. ROEDER, B. (2010) „Schon Höhlenmänner bevorzugten Blondinen.“ *Gesellschaftliche und politische Funktionen der Urgeschichte im Spiegel von Medientexten*, in: GEHRKE, H.-J., SÉNÉCHAU, M. (ed.), *Geschichte, Archäologie, Öffentlichkeit. Für einen neuen Dialog zwischen Wissenschaft und Medien. Standpunkte aus Forschung und Praxis*. Bielefeld, p. 80.

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