



Ilari Aalto

POSSIBILITIES OF PUBLIC EXCAVATIONS IN THE URBAN CONTEXT

Abstract

Although urban and rural sites constitute inherently different contexts for community engagement in archaeology, this distinction has not really been studied. This article sets out to survey urban sites' advantages and disadvantages, the participants' motivation for attending as well as achieved values as perceived by the volunteers and archaeology course participants at Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova Museum (Turku, Finland). This dataset is compared to similar data collected from participants of public excavations in rural sites. The research suggests that the greatest benefit of urban sites is their easy physical and mental accessibility, and these qualities would make urban sites especially suitable for participants without prior experience in archaeology. For all the groups studied, the main reasons for attending were the will to learn new skills and knowledge and to assist in archaeological research. All the studied groups also felt that participating in public archaeology enhanced their well-being.

Keywords: public archaeology, community archaeology, urban archaeology, well-being

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INTRODUCTION

Although major archaeological excavation projects in Finland often take place in urban environments, public archaeology projects tend to be organized in rural areas (Moilanen et al. 2019: 3; Ruohonen 2019: 58). However, urban settings offer certain clear yet less utilized possibilities for public archaeology, such as easy physical and mental accessibility. This article sets out to assess the possibilities offered by urban sites by studying three categories: 1) what the main motives are of volunteers and public participants for attending an urban excavation, 2) what they see as the advantages and disadvantages of an urban site, and 3) how the public excavation experience affected their well-being. The case study of this article is two urban public archaeology projects organized by privately-owned Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova Museum (from this on referred to as AV&AN) in Turku (Sw. Åbo), Finland, in 2017–9. The Latin name of the museum ('Old

Turku and New Art') conveys the double content of the museum: AV&AN, situated in the centre of the city of Turku, houses the underground remains of several late medieval stone houses and a collection of contemporary art. The projects involved two groups of participants: volunteers who engaged in the activity for the whole duration of the excavation and museum course participants who took part in one and two day paid museum courses. Data gained from volunteers and community participants at AV&AN is compared with data from a similar survey conducted with participants of public archaeology excavations in rural sites. The methods used are qualitative and quantitative analyses of semi-structured surveys (eg. Valli 2001).

Urban and rural sites constitute inherently different settings for public archaeology projects, yet there is a lack of scholarly literature on how these contexts differ exactly. To the best of the author's knowledge, only a few studies have noted this difference, such as studies by Simpson

and Williams (Simpson 2008; 2009a; 2009b; Simpson & Williams 2008) and Lewis (2015). Simpson's work shows that the context does affect archaeologists' perceived values in public archaeology projects: urban sites were seen to put priority in creating a community, whereas rural sites put more emphasis on educational values, since in rural sites there is a perceived existing community (Simpson 2008; 2009b: 275–6). But how do these different contexts affect public participants and volunteers? What are the gains that the volunteers themselves perceive that they have received from the projects? Before discussing these questions further, the context is set by considering the theoretical framework of public archaeology and the current situation of public archaeology in Finland.

Theoretical and pedagogical setting

Public archaeology and community archaeology are partly interchangeable concepts that refer to public engagement in archaeology. In recent literature however the latter has often replaced other terms when discussing public participation in archaeology (Simpson & Williams 2008: 71–3; Simpson 2009b: 44–6; Thomas 2017; Jameson 2019: 6–7). The term community archaeology has also been criticised, as it is not always clear what constitutes a community (Schadla-Hall 2004; Pyburn 2011; Smith & Waterton 2012: 11–20; Belford 2014: 21–3). Moreover, archaeologists in the UK and North America have somewhat different understandings of the concept: in the UK community archaeology is seen as archaeology practiced by communities, whereas in the US it is seen as a multivocal practice within public archaeology (McDavid & Brock 2015). Community archaeology implies that there is an existing community of local residents that participate in the project (eg. Marshall 2002: 216–7; Enqvist 2015). Because of this, the more encompassing term *public archaeology* will be used in this paper to describe public participation in archaeology. The term has acquired quite different meanings after it was coined by McGimsey in the early 1970s in the sense of cultural heritage management (McGimsey 1972; e.g. Schadla-Hall 1999: 147–8; Simpson & Williams 2008: 71–3; Matsuda & Okamura 2011; Richardson & Almansa-Sánchez 2015). It is often used as a

wide blanket term to include all interaction between archaeologists and the public, famously defined by Schadla-Hall (1999: 147) as "any area of archaeological activity that interacted or had the potential to interact with the public". However, as noted by Matsuda (2004; see also Matsuda & Okamura 2011: 3–4), the double connotation of the English word *public* encompassing both the meaning of public as something open to all people or as something involved in the affairs of a community is difficult outside the anglophone world, where the concept was created. For example, the concept has been translated into Swedish as *publik arkeologi*, which has a narrower meaning than the English word (Svanberg & Wahlgren 2007: 11–2; Siltainsuu 2012: 32–3). Svanberg and Wahlgren (2007: 11) define the concept in their pioneering book *Publik arkeologi* (unfortunately not well known outside the Nordic countries) as "development of ideas and forms of sharing archaeology", especially in direct public engagement, in contrast to the broad definition proposed by Schadla-Hall (1999; 2006).

Several researchers have proposed varying kinds of theoretical models for public archaeology, starting from Merriman's (2004) division between more practice-oriented 'deficit model' and theory-oriented 'multiple perspectives model'. Deficit model (or the gateway model, see Grima 2016: 53–4) sees archaeologists as gatekeepers of archaeological knowledge that the general public cannot understand without archaeologists explaining it to them. The 'multiple perspective model' has a more bottom-up point of view, suggesting that public outreach should "encourage self-realization, to enrich people's lives and stimulate reflection and creativity" (Merriman 2004: 7). These models have been elaborated by several scholars, such as Holtorf (2007), Matsuda and Okamura (2011) and Grima (2016) to include more nuances. Matsuda and Okamura (2011: 5–7; Matsuda 2016: 2) have proposed that the approaches can be divided into four models: 1) educational model, 2) public relations model, 3) critical model, and 4) multivocal model. The first two models are more practice-oriented while the critical model and the multivocal model are more theory-oriented. The educational model is reminiscent of Merriman's deficit model, but with an emphasis

on archaeologists as educational experts communicating information to the public. The public relations model (based on Holtorf 2007) states that support for archaeology can be increased only if archaeologists are able to improve their public image (Holtorf 2007: 119). The critical model examines power relationships in archaeological interpretation and practice, highlighting a specific interpretation of the past, while the multi-vocal model acknowledges the multitude of different interpretations of archaeology made by different social groups (Matsuda & Okamura 2011: 5–6). In practice, public archaeology is practiced under several of these models. It should also be noted that the models proposed in public archaeology are highly reminiscent of models described in general literature on public engagement with science (Moussouri 2014). Volunteering has also a long history of being studied in sociology (e.g. Wilson 2000), and the best practices in volunteering can and should be applied in public archaeology.

The public archaeology project at AV&AN was planned to include elements from both the educational model and multivocal models presented by Matsuda and Okamura (2011). In effect it meant that although the project was planned and research questions were produced top-down, these were openly discussed with the volunteers. Both the archaeology courses and the volunteer project were mostly based on the public archaeological method described by Svanberg and Wahlgren (2007: 71–3) in their book *Publik arkeologi*: this included identifying possible target groups and a cognitive mapping before the project. The cognitive mapping identifies the points of interest a locality has in the minds of the general public. In the case of the AV&AN excavation, the two things which held the greatest interest both locally and nationally regarding the history of Turku were the medieval history of the city and the infamous fire of Turku in 1827. These were combined in the site, since it included ruins of a medieval house which was later destroyed in the fire. In addition to theory of public archaeology, the projects also had a strong pedagogical aspect, based especially on constructivist ideas of learning (e.g. Henson 2014). As pointed out by Henson (2011: 221), archaeological education should include “the imparting of knowledge, increasing people’s

understanding and the development of their own skills.” To achieve this, Vygotsky’s theory of zone of proximal development (Vygotsky 1963; Chaiklin 2003) was applied in both fieldwork and workshops. The zone of proximal development or ‘scaffolding’ represents the idea that learning is most efficient when the learner is at the limits of their capabilities. For example, in a numismatics workshop the participants had a short introduction of archaeological typology and what to look at in a coin (text, iconography, coat of arms, year etc.). Then they had to work together as a group to identify the coins using a numismatic manual. An archaeologist overseeing the group gave hints on what to look for, but the groups had to find the answers themselves, which the participants considered to be a challenging yet rewarding experience. This is exactly the idea of scaffolding: giving the participants an assignment slightly beyond their abilities and giving them tools to overcome it for a rewarding learning experience.

Public archaeology in Finland

Although the first public archaeological excavations were organized in Finland in the 1990s (Leskinen & Pesonen 2008: 33–4), public excavations have really become a trend after the turn of the 21st century – a process also observed elsewhere outside the anglophone world (Moilanen et al. 2019: 3; regarding the global context see e.g. Matsuda & Okamura 2011: 7). Today, public archaeology excavations are an established practice in Finland. They are organized by different agents, such as local museums, research project teams, and even individual archaeologists. Most public archaeology excavation projects centre either on Stone Age or on post-medieval sites, as they are considered less challenging than other prehistoric or medieval sites (Moilanen et al. 2019: 3). However, the temporal scope of community project sites is very wide: some recent examples include Mesolithic sites in South-Eastern Finland (Rostedt & Kriiska 2018; 2019), a Late Iron Age (800–1050 CE) settlement site at Tursiannotko, Pirkkala (Raninen 2017), and a WWII German military hospital site in Inari, Finnish Lapland (Banks et al. 2018). Public excavations that continue at a single site for several years are rare and such projects are mostly

organized by museums. Recent examples of projects lasting for several years include the excavation of a Neolithic settlement in Kierikki, Yli-Ii organized by Kierikki Stone Age Center (2005–; Viljanmaa 2015), a project at a Viking Age (800–1050 CE) cremation burial site of Kodjala Vainionmäki in Laitila (2004–11; Mikkola 2010), a project on a 19th-century medicinal spring in Kangasniemi (2015–19; Moilanen & Närväinen 2018), the excavation at the oldest known church site in Finland, Ristimäki in Ravattula, Kaarina (2014–16; Ruohonen 2019), and the case study of this paper, the excavation at AV&AN Museum (2017–19; Aalto & Mattila 2019a).

Although some community excavations have been in city areas (such as the excavation of a Neolithic site in Jokiniemi, Vantaa, organized by Science Centre Heureka), most public excavations in Finland are organized in rural settings. To date, public archaeology excavations including deep urban stratification have only taken place in Turku, in the South-Western coast of Finland around 200 kilometres west of Helsinki. Turku, founded around the year 1300, is the oldest town in Finland. During the Swedish rule (AD 1200–1809) it was one of many middle-sized urban centres dotting the shores of the Baltic Sea, and it was the only medieval town in Finland to have secular houses built of stone and brick (Niukkanen et al. 2012; Seppänen 2012; 2019). After the Russian conquest of Finland in 1809 Turku briefly became the official capital of then autonomous Finland, until the capital was moved to Helsinki in 1812 (Junnila 1986: 93–102). Turku's old townscape was destroyed in the disastrous fire of 1827, which also created a clear archaeological horizon (Aalto & Mattila 2019a: 39–40). Because of its long history of masonry buildings, remains of dozens of historic stone buildings exist buried underground in the historic town area (Uotila 2003: 121). Because of its unique archaeology, Turku is an excellent setting for public excavations. The first archaeological project with public participation in Turku was 'Early Phases of Turku' (Fi. Varhainen Turku) run by Turku Provincial Museum in 2005 and 2006 (Muhonen 2006; Pihlman & Muhonen 2007; Majantie 2010; Pihlman 2010). During the project, volunteers took part in sieving the soil, but they were not allowed to dig.

Compared to other public archaeology projects, the project at AV&AN is unique in Finland in two aspects: firstly, it is the first public archaeology project in Finland that actually lets the participants excavate an urban site and secondly, it includes a group of volunteers engaged in long-term voluntary activity. This is not totally unprecedented in Finnish public archaeology, as long-term volunteer commitment is also the basis of the Adopt-a-Monument scheme created by Pirkanmaa Provincial Museum (Nissinaho & Soininen 2014; Hinnerichsen & Soininen 2016). The difference is that Adopt-a-Monument engages existing communities and societies, whereas with AV&AN Museum the group of volunteers was created for the sake of the project.

Until recently, only a few public excavations in Finland were published academically. Although the situation has improved considerably during the last decade (Moilanen et al. 2019: 3), published projects only rarely include evaluation of project's impacts and if they do, the evaluation is often only anecdotal, which is a common problem in reporting of public archaeology case-studies (Moussouri 2014: 16; Gould 2016). Moreover, only very few projects have been published in international publications, the only exceptions being two projects centred on dark heritage (on the concept see Thomas et al. 2019): the community project at the WWII German military hospital in Inari (Banks et al. 2018; Thomas 2019) and the excavation around the hanging tree of Taavetti Lukkarinen in Oulu (Ikäheimo & Äikäs 2018). This article sets out to contribute in this discussion and to generate data for further comparison.

The projects

Having discussed the necessary background of public archaeology theory and the recent developments in Finland, this article proceeds now to describe the case study projects at AV&AN Museum before reviewing the survey results. In 2017, a new excavation project 'Let's expand Turku!' (Fi. *Laajennetaan Turkua!*) was initiated in the museum's courtyard, which had remained untouched since the large-scale excavation project that preceded the museum's founding in 1992–5 (Aalto 2017: 47–8; regarding the earlier excavations see Jokela & Lehto-Vahtera 2012).



Figure 1. Volunteers found spontaneously roles that suited them best. Some were more prone to digging while others enjoyed sieving the soil better. The building visible at the background is Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova Museum. The excavation area was separated from the cafeteria by a fence. (Photo courtesy by Jari Nieminen/Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova, 2019.)

The courtyard hid remains of several stone houses destroyed in the fire of Turku in 1827, many of them dating from the late medieval or early modern periods (Aalto 2017; Aalto & Mattila 2019b). The archaeological museum courses lasting for one or two days were run between 2017–9, lasting for two weeks each year and forming just a part of the longer excavation project lasting for the whole summer.

The archaeological museum courses included a short introduction into the museum's ruins and archaeology in general as well as into archaeological methods. Most of the course comprised of excavating, sieving, and identifying the finds with the two archaeologists working in the project. The two-day courses also included workshops on identifying and dating objects found in historical contexts, such as ceramics, clay pipes, and coins. There were no criteria for the participants other than that they should be over 10 years old – exceptions were made when younger children were accompanied by their parent. Around

half of the participants were locals, but several of them also came from elsewhere in Finland, many of them from the capital region. Some were even willing to travel several hundred kilometres to participate in the excavation, which reflects the value the participants saw in being able to participate in an archaeological project (cf. Burtenshaw 2017).

After the first year of archaeological museum courses the museum decided to facilitate more long-term volunteer participation, and a group of 15 volunteers was thus created in 2018 (Fig. 1). The aims of the project 'Get excited, follow, engage!' (Fi. *Innostu, seuraa, sitoudu!*) were to find new ways of engaging interested amateurs and help them become contributors in citizen science (cf. Wessman et al. 2019). There were no criteria for the volunteers other than that they had to be able to participate in the excavation weekly: the volunteers were allowed to attend the excavation three days per week for four hours per day, but they were free to participate



Figure 2. Volunteer Juha Nikki excavating a late medieval house destroyed in the fire of Turku 1827. Excavating such structures contain several possible hazards that need to be countered. This is especially important when working with the public. (Photo: Ilari Aalto, 2019.)

less if they wanted. The volunteers came to form a rather heterogeneous group of people, the youngest participants being high school students and the oldest being over 60 years old. Overall, the group's age median is clearly younger than for example in archaeological societies in the UK, where the average age of members is 55 years (Thomas 2010). This is positive, as young adults are often the most difficult target group to reach (Svanberg & Wahgren 2007: 50). There was also a clear divide between genders in the group: eleven of the volunteers were women and four were men. Most of the participants lived in Turku or in the vicinity, but one came from Stockholm and one from further inland Finland. Only two of the participants had any prior experience of public excavations.

Introductory meetings were organized prior to the project to get the volunteers acquainted with each other and the two archaeologists working in the project and employed by the museum. They were also given precursory lectures about

the site and excavation methods. The volunteers participated in excavating the site, carrying the buckets and stones, and sieving the soil. The daily routine involved coffee breaks which were financed by the museum. These breaks were important for socializing and updating on how the project was advancing. After the fieldwork, the volunteers took part in cleaning the find material twice a week. They were also familiarized how materials are catalogued and excavation maps drawn, although they did not participate in these activities.

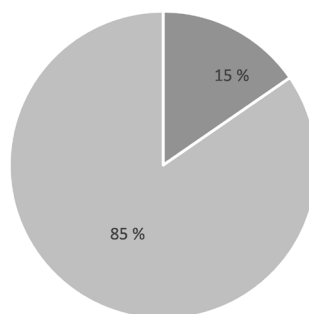
The site's four-metre-deep stratification and fragile structures meant that safety issues were given special attention while planning the project (Fig. 2). Volunteers have been working for decades in different, demanding and even dangerous settings, and against this background archaeology is in no way unique in regards of precision and skills required in volunteer engagement activities. In public archaeology, as in any volunteering, sufficient instructions are the

key to success and avoiding damaging persons or cultural heritage. Luckily, most of the possible hazards were easy to avoid by proper precaution, and the volunteers were properly introduced to the tasks undertaken before they could work on site. Only volunteers with enough excavation experience and suitable skills were allowed to excavate inside the ruin.

Evaluating the impacts

Three semi-structured surveys were done to answer the research questions of this paper. The surveys were based on general principles in sociological surveys (eg. Groves 1989; Fowler 2009). All of them were executed as internet surveys. The surveys were conducted in the spring and summer of 2020, one year after the excavation. A total of 13 (out of 15, completion rate of 86.67%) volunteers and 17 (out of 28, completion rate of 60.71%) museum course participants answered the surveys. Although the sample is small, in both cases it represents majority of participants, giving a good idea of how these groups feel about the project. The surveys were conducted with total anonymity to maintain privacy. Lastly, to produce a relevant case study for comparison, a similar survey was conducted with participants of public archaeological excavations in rural sites. It was not possible to conduct the survey with participants of any single excavation, so the survey was made open for anyone who had experience of such excavations; the only criterion was that the site had to be in the countryside. A total of 14 persons answered the survey. The collected dataset consists of both open and closed answers. The open answers were subjected to content analysis, where reoccurring elements were described in quantitative terms (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018: 117–46). The closed answers produced a set of data that was subjected to quantitative analysis. The results of both analyses are presented here.

In the surveys aimed at the volunteers and community participants of the AV&AN excavations the participants were asked if they had been to any other public archaeology excavations and how they thought that the AV&AN experience differed from them. Then they had to choose the most important reasons for taking part in the project – the amount of choices was not limited.



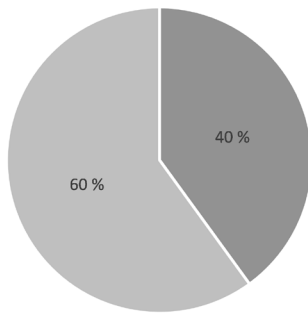
- Has participated other community archaeology excavations (2)
- Has not participated other community archaeology excavations (11)

Figure 3. The number of AN&AV volunteers with and without prior experience of public excavations.

After this they were asked what advantages and what disadvantages they saw in organizing public archaeology excavations in urban areas. The participants were also asked to evaluate on a five-step agree-disagree Likert scale how the experience had affected their well-being and if the communication with the experts worked seamlessly. The questionnaire conducted with the participants of rural excavations was principally the same, but they were asked to consider the advantages and disadvantages of organizing public archaeology projects in the countryside.

EXPERIENCE IN PUBLIC EXCAVATIONS

The volunteers and public participants were asked if they had prior experience of public archaeology excavations and if they did, they were asked to compare what differences they found between these excavations. In the case of the volunteers, only two out of thirteen had participated in this kind of activity before (Fig. 3). The archaeological museum course participants had generally more prior experience in public excavations (six out of seventeen), but for the majority the project at AV&AN was their first public excavation (Fig. 4). This was not asked from the participants of rural excavations, because the answers would not have reflected the participants of any single excavation. However, their open answers show that most participants in rural



- Has participated other community archaeology excavations (6)
- Has not participated other community archaeology excavations (9)

Figure 4. The number of AV&AN museum course participants with and without prior experience of public excavations.

excavations are archaeology enthusiasts that have participated in several public excavations. This reflects only the fact that the questionnaire was distributed in archaeology hobbyists' social media groups and it did not reach persons not actively engaged in public archaeology.

Of the volunteers and public participants combined, only eight participants could compare their experience at AV&AN to other excavations. Although the sample is exceedingly small, they raised some important points. Two participants commented that the AV&AN excavation offered much more background information about the site than their prior public excavations. This is understandable, as in an urban site

one is able to utilize hoards of written accounts, such as historic maps, tax accounts, juridical registers, and even fire insurance documents to give background to a site. Two participants noted that the workshops on identifying and dating objects were useful. One volunteer commented that compared to the public excavation at the Ristimäki in Ravattula early medieval church site, the excavation at AV&AN progressed more quickly. According to this answer, working at AV&AN was more arduous, but also more rewarding because of the finds and because of being able to see the progress in an extended period of time.

MOTIVATION FOR PARTICIPATION

The section asking for the most important reasons to participate shows clearly that although all options were considered at least somewhat important by all the researched groups, learning new skills and knowledge was by far the most important reason for attending, chosen by every volunteer and all except one community participants (Fig. 5). Second to learning new skills and knowledge was assisting in archaeological research, chosen by 50% of the volunteers and 59% of the community participants. Physical exercise/spending time out received almost the same values from both groups, 31% (volunteers) and 29% (participants). Interestingly, the answers differed significantly in two categories between the two groups: 42% of the volunteers thought social activity was important, whereas

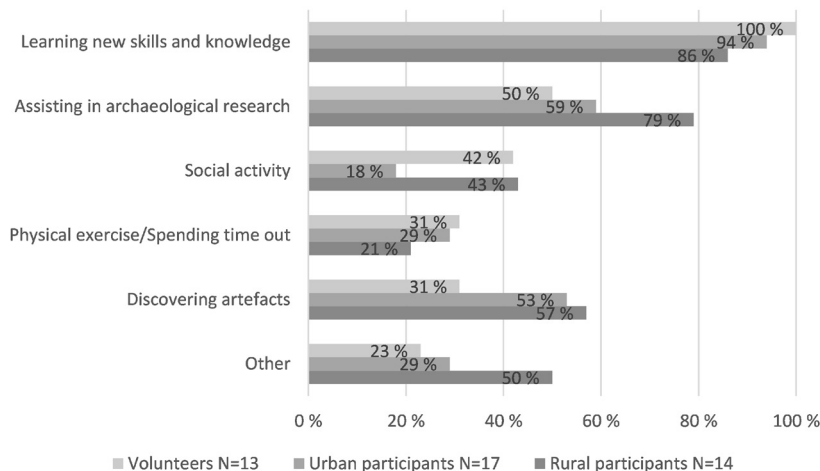


Figure 5. The most important reasons for participating by AV&AN volunteers, urban participants and rural participants.

only 18% of community participants were of this opinion. Secondly, only 31% of the volunteers thought discovering artefacts was important, while 53% of the community participants were of this opinion. Reasons such as ‘achieving meditative state of mind’ and ‘getting close to the people of the past’ were listed in the category ‘other’.

In the case of rural excavations, motivation for participation seems to be principally the same as in urban excavations. Learning new skills and knowledge and assisting in archaeological research were both seen as the two most important reason for attending. Although learning new skills and knowledge was somewhat less important for them than for the other two groups (86%), this group’s emphasis on assisting in archaeological research was markedly higher than the two other groups’ (79%). These differences might be explained by the fact that the participants were experienced amateurs who already possess comprehensive knowledge of archaeological methods and believe that they have the necessary skills to assist archaeologists in their research. Interestingly, social activity was an important reason for participation by 43% of the participants, which is markedly higher than the number given by public participants at the AV&AN excavation. This can also be seen in the open answers given by rural excavation participants: one of them mentioned that participating in public excavations was an important facet of belonging to an archaeology club and another participant mentioned that they enjoyed digging with their friends. A total of 8 out of 14 participants also considered discovering artefacts to be

one of their main motives, which is markedly more than volunteers at the AV&AN excavation. In the category ‘other’, four participants mentioned that their interest in archaeology or history was an important reason for attending.

THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF URBAN AND RURAL SITES

The following section of the questionnaire inquired the participants’ opinion about the advantages and disadvantages of organising public excavation in the middle of a city. To answer this question, the answers of both AV&AN volunteers and public participants were studied together. Their answers were almost unanimous that an urban site has several benefits. 22 out of 30 answers pointed out the easy accessibility of urban sites (Fig. 6). Eleven participants commented that urban sites have better range of necessary facilities, such as restaurants, toilets, and accommodation. Eight answers pointed out that urban sites are also visible to the public, and it is easy to engage more people with the excavation. Lastly, two participants wrote that urban sites had varied and interesting finds. For the disadvantages, 22 out of 30 answers could not come up with any possible drawbacks in organizing public archaeology excavations in an urban setting. The rest of the participants thought that possible disadvantages included limited or crowded space for the excavation (four answers), vandalism (two answers), and noise (one answer). Some participants found discussing with the public disturbing or time consuming (three answers). One participant also

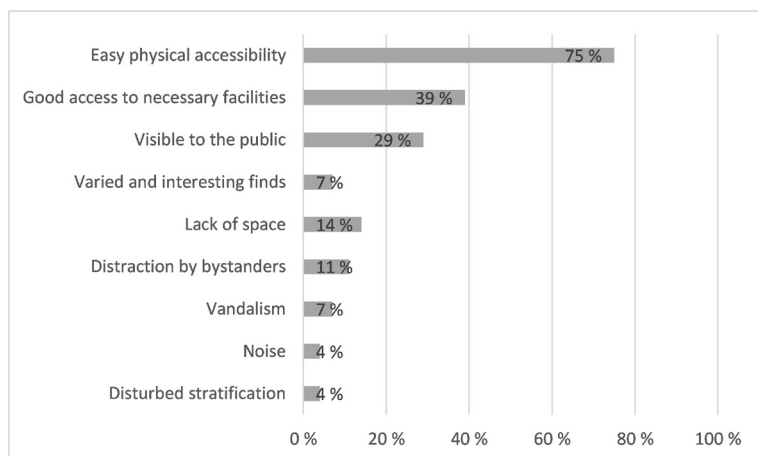


Figure 6. Positive and negative aspects of urban sites according to participants of the AV&AN excavation.

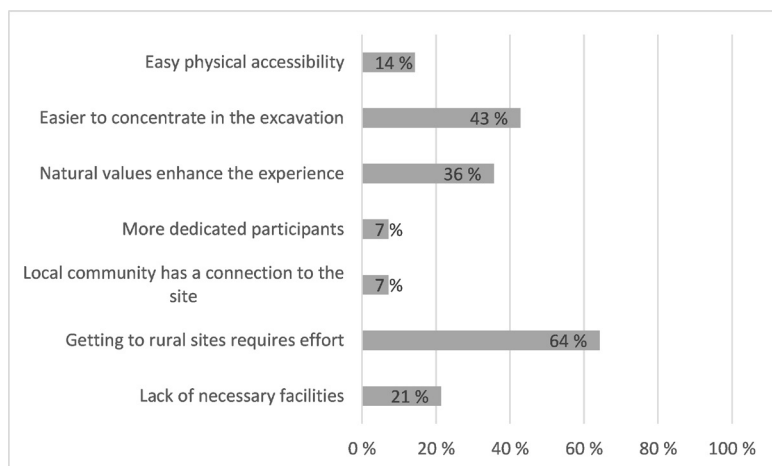


Figure 7. Positive and negative aspects of rural sites according to public participants of rural excavations.

commented that urban areas have a higher risk of recent construction work having damaged the archaeological record.

Participants of rural excavations were asked the same question but concerning rural sites. Six out of fourteen participants thought that a rural setting was more tranquil and quieter than urban environments, so it is easier to concentrate on the task at hand (Fig. 7). A total of five participants mentioned that they enjoyed nature in rural sites. Two answers pointed out that it is easier to concentrate when there are no passers-by asking questions. One of the participants elaborated that participating in an archaeological dig at a site with beautiful nature can feel like a time travel experience. Two participants remarked that rural sites attract more dedicated community participants than urban sites. One participant also thought that rural sites were more likely to engage members of the local community with a connection to the researched site. The only negative aspects were seen to be the effort needed to reach rural sites (nine answers) and the lack of necessary facilities (three answers). In contradiction, two participants thought that rural sites are in fact easier to access. This might be due whether the participants themselves live in urban or rural areas.

EVALUATING THE IMPACTS

The success and impacts of the projects were evaluated with a five-step Likert scale. Surprisingly, the results were very much alike in all the groups. All participants felt that

collaboration with archaeologists was successful, and they also felt that the projects helped them understand archaeological methods better: 76% of the AV&AN public excavation participants (Fig. 8) and 85% of the volunteers (Fig. 9) felt this very strongly. This is very close to the number given by rural participants, 79% of whom strongly agreed with the claim (Fig. 10). Perhaps the most impressive result is that 100% of the volunteers, 88% of the AV&AN course participants and 86% of the rural participants felt that taking part in the project had a positive effect on their well-being. The only marked difference between the groups was how they felt the project had effected their relationship to the research locality: 100% of the AV&AN volunteers and 94% of the AV&AN course participants felt that their relationship to the old town of Turku had grown stronger, whereas only 56% of the rural site participants felt the same with their research locality. Some 14% of them even somewhat disagreed that their relationship with the locality would have grown stronger.

Although the volunteer project at AV&AN can be deemed successful, it does not mean it could not have been done better. It is often noted that publications on public archaeology projects tend to give overly positive results on social impact, downplaying any possible failures (Richardson & Almansa-Sánchez 2015: 205; Ellenberger & Richardson 2018: 81). This is unfortunate, since possible pitfalls and failures are equally as relevant as successful aspects in striving for better public archaeology. A key area that could have been improved in the project

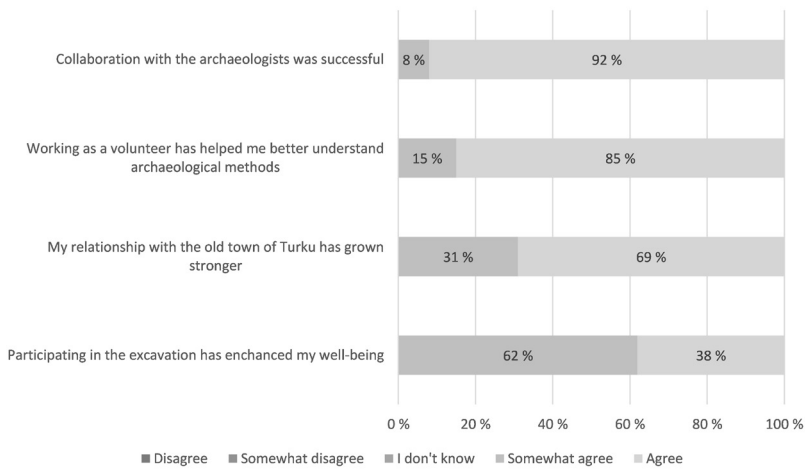


Figure 8. The achieved results of the AV&AN excavation according to the volunteer participants. N=13.

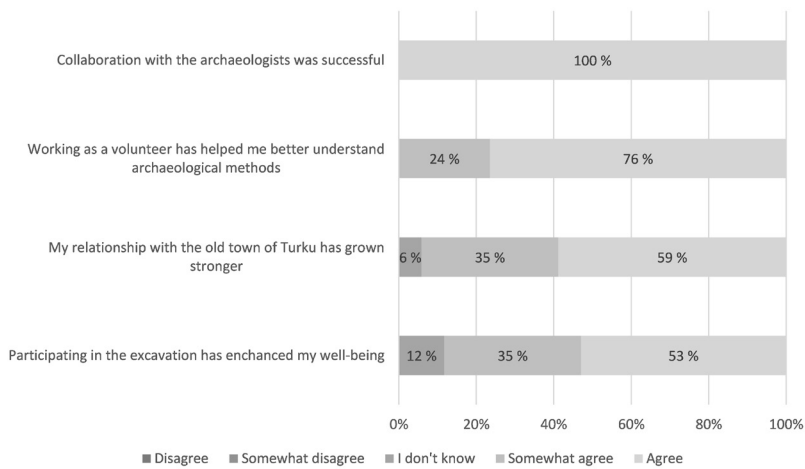


Figure 9. The achieved results of the AV&AN excavation according to the museum course participants. N=17.

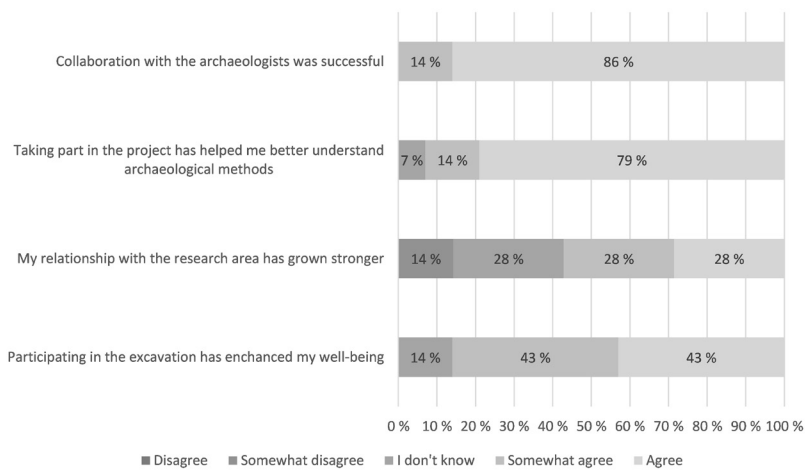


Figure 10. The achieved results of rural excavations according to the rural participants. N=14.

was the introduction. Although only one volunteer commented on it in the survey, it is evident from discussions on the field that the volunteers would have wanted more concrete instructions of different find categories and also archaeological decision making: it was not self-evident why all the pieces of clay pipes but not all fish scales were saved. Giving the volunteers an introductory booklet could have answered such open questions. The volunteers were also encouraged to write in the project's blog; however, one volunteer commented that although this was a good idea, the volunteers felt that they lacked the expertise to write about the finds and the progress of excavation and they would have wished for more concrete instructions on how to write blog posts. In short, the volunteers would have actually wanted more traditional one-way communication from the archaeologists. This serves as a good reminder that different communication models do not need to be mutually exclusive (Moussouri 2014: 14). For example, traits of the educational/deficit model can be utilized even if the project's aims are more multivocal.

Although the survey was conducted in anonymity, one volunteer also gave a lengthier feedback outside the questionnaire.² He applauded the spirit of cooperation within the group and how the volunteers and archaeologists could learn from each other. On the critical side he pointed out that the limited working area (the excavation pit was 100 square metres and the fenced area around it was around 200 square metres) caused some tensions, as everyone could not fit in to simultaneously dig in the most interesting areas and it was not possible to avoid working together with conflicting personalities. He also felt that the easy accessibility made it too easy to leave from the site when the day was over – he would have liked to spend time with other volunteers outside the excavation.

Key findings

Urban sites:

- Easy physical accessibility and the vicinity of necessary facilities make urban sites easy to attend.
- The quality and quantity of finds make urban sites mentally accessible.

- Public participants might find the noise and visiting passers-by disturbing.

Rural sites:

- Participants felt that it is easier to concentrate on excavating in rural settings.
- Natural surroundings are considered appealing.
- Rural sites attract more motivated and engaged attendees.
- Difficult physical accessibility and lack of facilities make rural excavations more difficult to attend.

Motivation:

- Learning new skills and knowledge was the principal motivation for attending for all the groups studied.
- All three groups had a strong will to help in archaeological research.
- Social activity was important for people who knew themselves beforehand (AV&AN volunteers and rural excavation participants), but not for first-timers.

Values:

- All groups felt that participating in public excavation had a positive effect on their well-being.
- Volunteers and community participants at the AV&AN excavation felt that the project made their connection to the locality grow stronger, but for the participants of rural excavations the effect was not that marked.

DISCUSSION

The survey data clearly shows that possibilities offered by urban sites for public archaeology greatly outweigh the negative aspects, at least in the viewpoint of public archaeology participants. According to this data, the most marked advantage of urban sites is easy physical accessibility, since public transports can also be used. This makes urban sites especially suitable for beginners who might not be willing to invest time and effort often needed to reach many of the rural sites. More initiated amateurs might

be willing to go to greater lengths in reaching interesting research sites. As pointed out by the survey, urban settings are not only easy to reach by the participants, but also by the passers-by. According to Moshenska (2013: 213), archaeological excavation provides "greater opportunities for public engagement with the creation of knowledge than virtually any other scholarly practice". This is especially true in urban contexts which offer maximal visibility for archaeological excavation (cf. Simpson & Williams 2008: 74–5, 78). However, the participants had somewhat mixed feelings about passers-by stopping to see the excavation and discussing with the archaeologists and volunteers, and the constant distraction caused by the passers-by was considered one of the disadvantages of urban sites. In the case of AV&AN, around 30 persons visited the excavation daily and most volunteers seemed comfortable with them. One volunteer even commented that listening to the archaeologists and the passers-by and the visiting groups discussing was one of the best parts of the experience. The volunteers might have been more accustomed to encounters with the public, as in the survey especially the public participants voiced concerns that passers-by make it difficult to concentrate on practicing archaeology.

Physical accessibility aside, urban sites might also be more mentally accessible. Mental accessibility is easier when the phenomena, artefacts and structures are relatable to the participants (eg. Svanberg & Wahlgren 2007: 111; Simpson 2009b: 278; Grima 2017: 77–90). For a volunteer, finding a 19th century porcelain cup can be as or even more rewarding than discovering a Mesolithic scraper, as the ability to relate to a find is often more important than the age of a discovered artefact (cf. Holtorf & Schadla-Hall 1999: 241). In urban sites, written sources can be utilized more often than in (often prehistoric) rural sites to give background to the excavation. Learning about the events and persons whose archaeology is being researched can create historic empathy and make the experience more meaningful and memorable (eg. Savenije & de Bruijn 2017). Although it was not specifically asked, not a single participant commented on the possible safety issues at urban sites. It might be deduced that the participants felt that the necessary precautions were enough to ensure their safety.

In comparison, rural sites are less accessible physically, but not necessarily mentally: several of the rural excavation participants thought that being able to enjoy the nature and distance oneself from modernity made it mentally easier to understand the atmosphere of an archaeological site, the *genius loci* (eg. Loukaki 1997: 308–10). They considered it easier to get immersed in archaeology in a motivated group of like-minded amateurs. Participants at rural sites thought that although the difficult physical accessibility of some rural sites caused challenges, such sites attract only motivated diggers, whereas easy accessibility might mean that less engaged participants might also attend the excavation. Some of the participants also compared participating in a rural excavation to hiking and other outdoor activities.

For all the groups studied, the greatest motivation for attending was the will to learn new skills and knowledge. This can probably be applied also outside the Nordic cultural sphere, as Kowalczyk (2016) received a very similar result in her survey of community participants of Swede Hollow Park public archaeology excavation in Minnesota, where 89.8% of the participant strongly agreed that they believed "there are many things you can learn by doing archaeology." The emphasis put on the importance of learning new skills and knowledge reasserts the idea proposed by such scholars as Jameson (1997) and Siltainsuu (2012: 31–2) that any public archaeological excavation should be first and foremost considered as a learning environment, a physical context where learning new skills happens by doing. An archaeological excavation provides the best possible context of showing how archaeological fieldwork is done. Although the AV&AN projects had tangible pedagogical goals, several participants would have wished for even more. This shows that although multivocality and bottom-up approach are the trends in public archaeology, a traditional educational model approach is also needed in public archaeology projects: according to the survey several participants wished for more one-way communication and lectures.

All the studied groups considered assisting in archaeological research to be the second most important reason for participation. This shows that most public archaeology participants have

a strong belief that their contribution is helping archaeological research. Belford (2014: 33–7) has underlined the requirement of intellectual sustainability in public archaeology, meaning the volunteers' ability to do archaeology properly. However, it would be naïve to think that first-timers would be very efficient labour in archaeological excavation, especially during one- or two-day digs. The participants have a genuine will to do archaeology properly, and this is best utilized in long-lasting volunteer projects. For example, in the case of the AV&AN volunteer project lasting for two years the volunteers became very efficient fieldworkers, without whose contribution the research goals of the excavation could not have been reached. Then again, it is against the principles of volunteering that volunteers should replace professional paid workforce. The goal of public archaeology excavations is not to save resources by using amateur labour, but to engage ordinary people in archaeology and heritage. Moreover, public excavations tend to be more expensive than ordinary excavations (Belford 2014: 38).

The most marked difference between the studied groups was the importance of social activity. This seems natural, as the volunteers at AV&AN met each other three times a week for the duration of a whole summer, and at the time of conducting the survey most of them had known each other for two years already, whereas the community participants were for the most part complete strangers to each other, and they would spend only one or two days together. The participants of rural excavations also considered social activity to be an important reason for participation. This was probably because many participants of rural excavations are members of archaeology clubs and they like to participate on the digs with their amateur friends, as was mentioned in one answer. Social situations might also cause friction, especially in confined spaces: when the team of volunteers consists of different personalities, they might not always get along harmoniously (cf. Sayer 2015: 257).

The marked difference in the way the volunteers and public participants evaluated discovering artefacts is more difficult to explain. This might be a result of archaeological education and discussion between the volunteers and professional archaeologists, as one of the focal

points in the volunteer activity was to provide understanding that the whole archaeological record of a site is more interesting than any single find. Still, during the fieldwork, there was evident competition between the volunteers on who would find the most interesting objects.

All the studied groups thought that taking part in the projects had a considerable positive effect for their well-being. Although the five-step Likert scale is a very crude way to assess personal feelings and emotions (Fowler 2009: 103–5), this is a remarkable result. Lately, public archaeology's impact on well-being has been studied by Sayer (2015; 2018). Although some scholars (eg. Holtorf 2005; Renfrew 2006) have suggested that archaeological excavations have innate ability to increase well-being, Sayer (2015) has shown that this is not always realised. Her study in well-being of community participants and archaeology students revealed that although participating in an excavation had positive impact on the well-being of community participants, it had an adverse effect on the well-being of archaeology students. She points out that the impact on well-being is dependent on both external factors such as weather and the quality of archaeology excavated and internal factors such as social influences (Sayer 2015: 258). The AV&AN excavation certainly included elements that have been considered necessary for well-being and personal happiness, such as enabling people to have meaningful social activity, be active, take notice, learn, have a feeling of doing important contribution to archaeological research and being able to take part of history and interpreting it (Henson 2011: 223; Sayer 2015: 258).

In the case of the AV&AN excavation, the problem of continuity was also raised by two participants. Despite the positive results the project was suppressed because of economic reasons – a reoccurring challenge in the heritage sector (Moshenska & Burtenshaw 2010; Belford 2014: 38–9; Moilanen et al. 2019: 13). Although continuation of the project is unknown, the volunteers have embraced more active archaeological engagement in other areas of their life as a result of the project, attending archaeological courses, visiting ancient monuments, and doing spontaneous field surveys. Two of the volunteers are also adamant about beginning to study archaeology when they enter university. It might

be considered that the project's aim of creating citizen scientists was realized to some extent at least but ensuring the sustainability of these values the activity should find resources to continue the well-begun work.

CONCLUSION

This research has shown that urban sites have many advantages for public archaeology excavations, the most important of which is easy physical and mental accessibility. Based on the survey, urban sites are especially suitable for beginning amateur archaeologists, who might find rural sites too difficult to reach. However, more experienced archaeology hobbyists might find rural sites with a small and dedicated group of participants more rewarding than urban excavations with lots of passers-by. The study also revealed that the main motivation for public participation in archaeology is a wish to learn new skills and knowledge and to assist archaeologists in their research. Based on this, public archaeology excavations should include consideration of pedagogical elements and they should also include one-way, top-down teaching activities. The case-studies of this paper all had significant impact on the well-being of the participants, which demonstrates archaeology's potential for having therapeutic and social impact in society. For reasons not quite clear, the AV&AN excavation made the participants feel a stronger relationship to the area under study, whereas the participants at rural sites did not feel this strong effect.

Based on this survey, it is hoped that the potential advantages of urban sites would be considered more in public archaeology both in Finland and in a broader geographical area. Although successful public archaeology in an urban site might require more resources and more precautions than excavating a rural site, the potential gains in the form of high visibility, easy accessibility and the participants' ability to relate to a site are worth considering. Also, every single public archaeology excavation should put serious thought in the pedagogical goals of the project to meet the participants' expectations and to generate intellectual sustainability in public archaeology.

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NOTES

¹ ”[E]n utveckling av idéer och former för arkeologisk förmedling” (Svanberg & Wahlgren 2007: 11). Translated by the current author.

² I thank volunteer Kimmo Leijala for his comment and for his permission to publish his name.

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