



A Study on the Case-Focused Advocacy of Korean Archival Profession

Gyubin Yoon | PhD Student

Pusan National University, Busan, South Korea, yoonb@pusan.ac.kr



INTRODUCTION

- Advocacy encompasses activities through which archival professionals build support for the archival community based on their professional identity
- Given advocacy's reactive, case-focused nature, it is essential to examine Korean archival professionals' advocacy patterns after nearly 25 years of field development
- This study examines how Korean archival professionals have engaged in advocacy regarding critical archival issues, analyzing the background, strategies, characteristics, and underlying professional identity of their efforts

BACKGROUND

- Korean archival professionals emerged to address societal demands for administrative transparency and accountability (Kim, 2007; Seol, 2021)
 - Professions develop to meet newly recognized societal needs and claim responsibility over emerging jurisdictions (Austin, 1983; cited in Lee, 2011)
 - Korea's archival field formed after the 1997 IMF crisis, drawing primarily from history and LIS scholars, with few from public administration and computer science



RESULTS

COMPARATIVE CASE ANALYSIS

CATEGORY	U.S.: SAA	CANADA: ACA	AUSTRALIA: ASA
Case	Nomination of the NARA Archivist	Budget cuts for Indigenous residential School Investigation	State archives-library merger in Western Australia
Coalition	- Archival associations - Academic associations of History, LIS	Archival associations	- Press - Member of the House
Societal demands	Preservation of historical records	Nation-building through reconciliation with Indigenous people	National control over government records
Disciplinary Origins	History	History, LIS	LIS
Core Value	Protection of historical records	Reconciliation with Indigenous people	responsible record management
Goals	Ensure Archivist's independence and Neutrality	- Secure budget - Restore trust and reconciliation	Ensure the independence of state archives
Message	- Reveal the reason why change Archivist - Confirmation hearing - Procedural compliance	- support budget for investigation - Restore trust in Reconciliation	- Independence of archives - Expand funding of digital Infrastructure
Audiences	U.S. Senate, White House	Ministers of Government	State government, Minister of the government
Actions	(joint) statements release	Direct lobby: submission of statements	Online petition, Statements release, Press release, Direct lobby to lawmakers, academic paper

PUBLIC RECORDS & ARCHIVES ACT DECREE REVISION (2009-2011): Thin Consensus of Archival Professionalism

- Case overview: 2009-2011, advocacy and negotiation efforts by the Coalition Committee of Archival Professionals (CCAP) for decree revision
 - Contents of revision: Simplification of disposal procedures and Relaxation of academic qualifications (by Prime Minister's Office)



PRESIDENTIAL RECORDS WITH THE 12.3 MARTIAL LAW (2024-): Democratic Role of Archivists

- Case overview: After the martial law declared by former President Yoon on 12.3, 2024, the CAO (Working Group driven) launched a collective advocacy concerning the disposal, designation, and transfer of presidential records

	OBJECTIVES	AUDIENCES	ACTIONS
INITIAL	Issue Raising + Public Opinion Formation	Entire Society	Statement Issued, Press Conference, Funeral Wreath Protest
INTERMEDIATE (usually Contribution)	Coalition-based Pressure	Entire Society	Statement Issued, Press Conference, Participation in Emergency Forum

METHODS

CASE STUDIES	
PURPOSE	To conceptualize case-focused advocacy and develop interview protocols
SELECTION CRITERIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Archival associations in English-speaking countries Explicitly referencing 'advocacy' on their websites: SAA, ACA, ASA
CASES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAA: 2004 NARA Archivist nomination ACA: 2024 budget cut for Indigenous residential school inquiry ASA: 2017 merger of state archives and library in WA
FOCUS	Societal demands, disciplinary origins, goals, audience, actions, features

INTERVIEWS	
PURPOSE	To examine the background, processes, and characteristics of advocacy among Korean archival professionals
PARTICIPANTS	2 senior archival scholars involved in major advocacy efforts (2010 amendment to the enforcement decree of the Public Records & Archives Act, 2024 call for action on presidential records after the 12.3 martial law)
FORMAT & ANALYSIS	In-person interviews (75-110 minutes) were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed through open and thematic coding using Microsoft Excel
QUESTIONS	Activity overview, advocacy process, goals & objectives, audiences, action strategies, outcomes, additional comments

CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

- Background: South Korea's archival profession emerged from social demands for administrative transparency and accountability, rooted in history and LIS
- Advocacy Strategy goals: Address pressing issues—protecting disposal procedures, professionalism, and presidential records—based on core values
 - objectives: Shared strategies include issue framing, public opinion shaping, and coalition-based pressure
 - Requires internal organization and community-wide communication
 - audiences & actions: Varied by case but featured performative protests
- Characteristics continuity 2010-2024: The 2010 case became a symbolic success, influencing 2024 strategies
 - Unresolved professionalism issues resurfaced as weakened community
 - community reflection: 2010, Sparked debate on standardized curriculum
 - 2024, Prompted introspection: "Could we have acted more proactively?"
 - structural limitations: Most professionals are public officials, limiting autonomy and initiative
 - beginning pattern



Discussion on Successful Advocacy Strategies

