

The project aims to identify and understand the social and affective impact of independent documentary initiatives (community archives). These archives, often run for example by NGOs and informal groups, are becoming an increasingly important element of the archival landscape in Poland and worldwide. However, rigorous empirical studies on this component of non-state archival holdings are still lacking. The goal of the project will be achieved through empirical studies in which PI will first learn the detailed context of the three selected community archives (e.g. what is their history, their goals, the nature of the archival materials collected, the activities undertaken, problems and plans). This context (a thick description of these community archives character) will be used to further explore the impact of these archives on their constituents - community archivists (usually volunteers), donors, and users. The project focuses specifically on social (e.g., stimulating the community, enhancing intergenerational dialogue, contribution to lifelong learning) and affective (emotional) impacts. The expected results of the project include the production of a detailed description of three functioning community archives; identification of ways in which community archives impact people and communities, and thus the estimation of their value that goes beyond the archival materials they collect; bringing the subject of assessing the impact of archives to Polish archival researchers. In a broader context, this study is part of an exploration of the contemporary role of archives in society, public history and uses of the past.