

## **Abstract**

'Moving Archives' deals with personal and collective memories of industrialization in the Disko Bay area in Greenland, focusing on how people remember their local agency and autonomy during these seminal transitional years where 'the modernization of Greenland' gained speed. The main argument in the dissertation is that whereas the theme of modernization is often associated with a discourse of Greenlanders as victims of development, the memories of people who worked with the natural resources in the mining and the fishing industries offer alternative and pivotal narratives that often contain the emotion of pride and a sense of strong personal agency. Their absence remains a problem for historical self-knowledge.

The point of departure for my PhD project was a digital return of film material from the National Museum of Denmark to all local museums and the National Museum of Greenland. In such museum contact zones we are moving archives between us. On the other hand, archives – objects that we associate with memory - also move us as they motivate us to act in certain ways, feel attracted to some and repelled by other phenomena, people, places, actions or utterances.

Cultural heritage and memory are central to processes of decolonization and nationbuilding in Greenland. The dissertation demonstrates how dynamic interplays between personal and collective memory practices powerfully produce and transform agencies for instance in the case of the memory works on the abandoned mining city of Qullissat. Certain functional memories support, guide and perhaps even industrial heritage release the individual, legitimize some group solidarities and delegitimize others, and sometimes produce agentive collective memory practices that lead to political action.