

The magic of Greenland

On 13 January 1997 I landed for the first time in Greenland. The plan was to have a job a few years and then move on in life. 'Travelling through', as the famous Danish author Karen Blixen described her stay in Africa.

I think my plan was to use my stay in Greenland as a fieldwork to use as an empirical research project about the development of a peripheral economy. Fifteen years later, I am still living in Greenland. I am a part of Greenland, and Greenland is a part of me.

The life here hardens a man, but I still feel the magic of this great country and the fantastic inuit people. My feeling of Greenland was originally created by the insights I could get from reading geography books about the world's largest island and read about the expeditions that attempted to conquer the wild nature.

It was not that Greenland, I arrived in. My first expedition on the day of arrival was a dramatic attempt to go shopping in a supermarket in a hurricane-like storm. Places and roads were wet and slippery. I did not arrive to Greenland with big illusions. But I was quickly impressed by this nature shaped society.

The nature and the climate have always created special conditions for the human life in Greenland. The international development also gives huge affects on the human life. A generation experiences only the changes as small changes, but measured in centuries, the changes are huge.

I can only describe the very short space of time, I live in. Greenland is changing constantly. Some conditions in Greenland are changing faster than other factors. One very visible change is when human activity expands, and the result is inclusion of new land. Deafening explosions remove large rocks. In few days giant machines move around with the nature that has evolved over millennia. New houses spring up as mushrooms.

In this rapidly evolving man must find his place. The traditional occupations disappear and new businesses develop. This is the theme for the collage in this photo of the week.



A traditional boat of wood and a modern Greenlandic shrimp trawler