INUIT IDENTITY IN THE CANADIAN ARCTIC

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Abstract

Contemporary Nunavut Inuit perceive their identity to be a combination of inherited substances as well as knowledge, skills, and values that one must learn in order to be considered authentically Inuit. Inuit understand the latter part of their identity as examples of inuktitut, which is learning how to act in the Inuit way. Equally important for the expression of Inuit identity is knowledge of qallunaatitut, the way of “white people.” This is why Inuit identity is best understood as an ethnic identity that influences how Inuit perceive themselves, their culture, and their relations to non-Inuit. The dominant discourse of Inuit identity rests on a reified notion of culture as well as a logic that equates the boundary between Inuit culture and Qallunaat culture as primordial and permanent. As such, Inuit identity is experienced as a set of primordial ties to specific places and persons and as a way of life that must be protected from the incursion of non-Inuit culture. Ethnic identity, Nunavut Inuit, Canadian Arctic

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Canada's Arctic policy includes the plans and provisions of these regional governments. It encompasses the exercise of sovereignty, social and economic development, the protection of the environment, and the improving and devolving of governance. Canada, along with the 7 other Arctic nations, is a member of the Arctic Council. The Inuit are Aboriginal peoples originating in the Canadian Arctic and other polar nations. The word Inuit means "people" in Inuktitut, the language of the Inuit. Although the 50,480[13] Inuit listed in the 2006 Canada Census can be found throughout Canada the majority, 44,470 (88.1%[14]), live in four regions lying north of the 54th parallel.[15][16][17][18]. Inuit – which means "people" in Inuktitut – have occupied Canada's Arctic lands and waterways for millennia. Long before the arrival of Europeans, Inuit hunters, fishers and their families moved with the seasons and developed a unique culture and way of life deeply rooted in the vast land. Our nation's strong presence in the Arctic today is due in large part to the contributions of Inuit, who continue to inhabit the North. The Arctic Ocean connects us in new ways to our neighbours in the Arctic region. Cooperation, diplomacy and international law have always been Canada's preferred approach in the Arctic. Canada's North is at the very heart of Canadian identity. Canada's future is intimately tied to the future of the North.