

NUNANGAT AND BEYOND: ACCULTURATION AND THE RETAINMENT OF INUIT IDENTITY IN CANADA**Rita Nandori**

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Abstract

Examining how acculturative changes affect Inuit culture—especially lifestyle, customs, Inuktitut language proficiency, and intellectual endeavours—I assess Inuit culture and identity within the fabric of multicultural Canada. Taking John W. Berry's Fourfold Model of acculturation as an investigative framework, I use Peter Weinreich's Identity Structure Analysis to study the effects of acculturation on Inuit living in both Arctic Canada and the South. I propose that access to Southern culture for a people with strong attachment to the land transforms personal and collective identity and creates amalgamated identities—especially for Inuit relocated to urban settings—which reflect both tradition and acculturative build-up. The official recognition of the Inuit Nunangat, the homeland, was a fundamental necessity for positive self-image and is a driving force today in asserting a uniquely Inuit identity within the cultural context of Canada. Building on Inuit-led amendments to the curriculum already in place across the North, I propose a heritage language-based and traditional knowledge-enhanced school curriculum implementing the teaching of traditional texts, such as myths, classic tales, and songs in Inuktitut in order to foster traditional knowledge—known as IQ, or Inuit Quaujimajatuqangit—and Inuktitut fluency, which are vital aspects of cultural retainment for Inuit in Canada.

Resumé:

Examinant comment la culture inuite est touchée par les changements liés à l'acculturation -surtout le mode de vie, les coutumes, la maîtrise de la langue inuktitut, et les efforts intellectuels- j'évalue la culture et l'identité inuites dans le contexte d'un Canada multiculturel. Partant du modèle quadruple d'acculturation de John W. Berry comme cadre d'enquête, je me sers de l'analyse de structure identitaire de Peter Weinreich.

ich pour étudier les effets de l'acculturation sur les inuits, tant ceux vivant dans l'Arctique canadien que dans le sud du pays. Je propose que l'accès à la culture du sud pour un peuple avec des fortes attaches au territoire transforme les identités individuelle et collective et crée des identités en fusion -surtout pour les inuits ayant déménagé dans un milieu urbain- qui sont le miroir de la tradition comme de l'intensification des forces liées à l'acculturation. La reconnaissance officielle du foyer des inuits (Nunangat) était d'une importance fondamentale afin d'améliorer leur image d'eux-mêmes et constitue aujourd'hui une force motrice poussant à la promotion d'une identité inuite bien distincte dans le contexte culturel canadien. Partant d'amendements au curriculum poussés par les inuits, je propose que soit créé un curriculum centré sur la langue d'origine et le savoir ancestral donnant vie aux enseignements des textes traditionnels, tels que des mythes, des histoires classiques, et des chansons en Inuktitut. Ce afin de cultiver le savoir ancestral (Inuit Quaujimajatuqangit) et une solide maîtrise de la langue Inuktitut, aspects vitaux de la culture à conserver par les inuits au Canada.

Inuit Identity and Southern Influence

Inuit culture, while it demonstrates substantial changes due to the effects of the South since first contact with qallunaat, is still markedly one of the most traditional within Canada's quilt of unique cultures. This is not to say that the way Inuit live has not changed since the formation of Canada, but the remoteness of the far North contributes to the retainment of traditional lifestyles and the lessening of acculturative processes even with the prevalence of the Internet as far as the northernmost hamlets in the Canadian Arctic. Acculturation—such as in the case of Inuit—is defined as processes impacting traditional lifestyle leading to alterations in one's identity that result from continuous, direct contact between two or more different cultural groups (Fox et al.). The Inuit's attachment to the land allows for little travel outside one's community and homeland, thus influences from the South are far lesser than in the case of those Indigenous communities that live closer to urban areas further South. It appears that the geography of Inuit Nunangat limits Southern impact, which is apparent in many of the customs, such as hunting and sharing "country food," cultural manifestations of identity inherent to the millennium-old culture that are still practiced despite territory-wide access to modern lifestyle. The isolated existence of Inuit within Canada's cultural landscape helps ethnocultural practices remain relatively intact. Spatiality contributes to the integrity of the North as compared

to some Indigenous cultures residing in the South, but the formation of Inuit ethnic identity that is also Canadian might be hindered. Acknowledging the goals of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, federal policy is necessary to be considered as a guideline by which this situation is analyzed.

Former Canadian Prime Minister, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, considered multiculturalism as a framework that assures the cultural freedom of Canadians when he reflected that “[n]ational unity [...] must be founded [...] in one’s own individual identity; out of this can grow respect for that of others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes and assumptions” (qtd. in the House of Commons). His context in 1971 was that of the divided Anglo- and Francophone nation, however, in the current era, this approach can be extended to all ethnocultural groups within Canada. It is this very same balance of minority group and national identity that fuels a psychologically healthy populace that aims to retain a unique culture within the nation of Canada. Recent surveys such as those conducted by the independent Angus Reid Institute ranked multiculturalism as essential in terms of things that epitomise Canadian national identity illustrate this fact well (qtd. in Angus Reid). Multiculturalism, a policy uniting the Indigenous, settler and immigrant populace, certainly remains an integral part of Canadian public policy. Canada’s multicultural approach highlights the importance of different cultures within the one nation of Canada, additionally acknowledging a Canadian identity shared by all of its citizens regardless of their ethnocultural background. Identity structure analysis [ISA] – a method primarily designed to study immigrant communities – is an applicable tool to further examine whether a desired equilibrium of identities relating to the larger society and one’s ethnic group exists for the individual and within a specific minority group. ISA distinguishes between primordial perspectives showing ethnic continuity, and situational perspectives amplifying cultural revival (Weinreich et al. 115). This method analyses levels of acculturation, a process that indicates changes that happen as a result of direct contact with groups of culturally dissimilar people, such as in the case of immigration. ISA is a valid investigative tool for studying Inuit culture and identity as well when applying the reverse point of view of the Indigenous population as the minority group, given that the settler-immigrant population has become the majority in Canada, therefore substantially impacting Indigenous peoples.

According to identity structure analysis, heritage-cultural practices, values and identifications that are uniquely Inuit and those from the received culture shape the ever-emerging identity (Schwartz et al. 237). These processes have both beneficial and detrimental psychosocial outcomes on Inuit culture. It has been demonstrated that ethnic identity is not necessarily fixed but can be redefined and newly

constructed (Weinreich et al. 21), thus the way some Inuit experience their identity may be shifting. Ideally, the original culture is retained while elements of a new culture are acquired. This process is shown in how primordial perspectives are present in everyday life in the form of pursuing traditional customs, such as sewing amautit, giving a loved one a kuni, or using a kamutiq for transporting goods. A recognizably Canadian, situational layer of identity, however, when added to the already established Indigenous culture, can enrich it, but only if the already existing primordial elements are preserved. Sandra Katsak's case is such an example. Sandra is the third generation of Inuit women in the oral history Saqiyuq, in which a series of interviews with subsequent generations of Qikiqtani Region-Inuit women are conducted by Nancy Wachowich. Sandra is a fan of hockey and likes getting together with friends to play video games just like any Canadian teen (Wachowich et al.). In the meantime, she lives in a hamlet in the high Arctic and observes Inuit traditions—such as sewing kamik or preferring “country food,”—that are essential to her cultural identity. In Sandra's case, these practices offer a relative balance between primordial and situational aspects of identity, similarly to teens who since the prevalence of the Internet, have been following the same entertainers in social media as their peers in the South, however, at the same time many take pride in their ability to pursue traditional activities as well.

Shifts in ethnocultural identity as in the case of the women interviewed in Saqiyuq, are the result of acculturation, which beyond Weinreich's method, can be measured by John W. Berry's fourfold model of acculturation. Berry's model distinguishes four distinct stages as a result of the interplay between the minority group and the larger society. On the part of the ethnocultural group, the fallout of direct contact with culturally dissimilar people leads to separation, marginalization, acculturation, and integration—aptly describing stages of change that Inuit culture and identity has experienced since first contact with qallunaat. Through cross-cultural contact, as the model suggests, one or both cultures would change regarding social expectations around language, communication, food, leisure, and most aspects of lifestyle (Berry 698). The traditions and customs of the minority group, whether Indigenous or immigrant, are typically extensively changed by the majority through unintended influence and in some cases purposeful pressure, such as not condoning or supporting certain traditional customs deemed unfit by the larger society. In the case of the Inuit I Canada, due to technology, they have never been quite as connected to the rest of Canada as they are today. The shift in observed customs is indicative of the changing times as Inuit march from the Neolithic culture of nomads to modern Western society.

Since acculturation is thought to happen along multidimensional models (Ryder et al.), it is apt to assume that the changes in identity may vary depending on the amount of majority culture influence a certain individual or group receives. Depending on the frequency of native language, as opposed to majority language use within families and communities, and on whether traditional Indigenous customs are observed rather than those of the majority culture, levels of acculturation may differ. At the same time, acculturation does not necessarily mean loss of ethnic identity as individuals are thought to be able to maintain multiple cultural identities, retaining their original ethnic roots and simultaneously adopting a new layer of identity to gain membership in the larger society, thus creating a new, amalgamated identity. Such duality is detected in Poul Rovsing Olsen's study of acculturation in the music of the Greenlandic Inuit. While their music shows Western influences, such as the choice of brass musical instruments and Western melodies, it also retains traditional components to it. Examining Inuit music and acculturation in Greenland, Olsen observes: "The Eskimo attitude has been either one or the other [...] Two or more different styles are living side by side without influencing each other in any conceivable manner. This duality may exist as an active social phenomenon [...]" (37). Olsen projects that this duality might be a social phenomenon that is apparent in the way Inuit are open to new elements of the majority culture while they retain their ethnic identity, culture, language, and style of social interactions. The openness of Inuit towards different cultures observed by him in the 1970s is evident today as well. Such an attitude can be both beneficial and detrimental to the preserving of cultural heritage, depending whether newly acquired customs are naturalized in the host culture.

In addition to cultural impact, acculturative changes may cause biological and psychological harm to Inuit population. The new Western, sedentary lifestyle based on reliance on processed foods and desk jobs, rather than hunting and fishing results in less habitual physical activity among Inuit which in turn leads to loss of fitness (Rode et. al 217). Due to the climate and lack of access, there is less opportunity to participate in team sports or focus on individual fitness through such activities as jogging or going to the gym, which are not customary traditional activities, nor are they necessary when a more traditional way of life is pursued. Sea lifts and stores make Southern goods available, but lack of awareness about the negative effects of low-quality, sugar-rich, processed foods causes health concerns, such as those regarding weight management, dental hygiene and other issues. Ownership of snow mobiles has increased by almost an order of magnitude in just ten years in the seventies, and the introduction of salaried work made hunting and fishing a pastime activity for many people. As a result of

such acculturative changes, as a study conducted by Rode and his colleagues suggests, new generations grow up less physically fit (228). Acculturation may generate psychological problems, especially in young adults, who are more susceptible to anxiety stemming from growing up in two very distinct worlds, and due to the pressure failing to meet the expectation of both. Acculturation-induced anxiety may be the leading cause of increased cases of substance abuse, self-harming, and suicide in Northern communities, its root cause being low self-esteem based on comparisons to either successful Elders from earlier generations or the perceived easy success of Southern youth. Excessive alcohol consumption, drug abuse, and engaging in violent or criminal behaviour are unfortunate coping mechanisms for diminished self-esteem and negative self-image some Northern youth experience as a result of psychological processes due to some of the effects of acculturation (Seltzer 173).

Inuit Identity and Language

As acculturation refers to changes that take place as a result of contact with culturally dissimilar people, groups, and their social influences, language is often severely impacted (Berry 698). Language is one of the most important cultural characteristics of a given ethnic group and it is the medium through which culture and identity are manifested. Thus, the language in which news, information, and literature are published and consumed is significant to one's identity construction. A substantial amount of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry by Inuit authors has been first released in English, not Inuktitut. The reason for this might be found in the territory-wide public education that has some Indigenous focus, but apparently not sufficient to foster Inuktitut language use enough to encourage young artists to write in their Indigenous languages. Well-known authors, such as Mini Aodla Freeman and Mark Kalluak's saw their works first published in English, and in fact, when the initial release of Freeman's autobiography came out in 1978, it was virtually unknown by Inuit readers until its 2015 publication by the University of Manitoba Press. In the case of the recently deceased Markoosie Patsuaq, author of *The Harpoon of the Hunter*, the first Inuktitut-language novel published (technically Mitiarjuk Nappaaluk's *Saanaq* was written earlier, but released later), the publishing process was largely different, as an English translation followed only years after the Inuktitut language release of his book. The scarcity of Inuktitut-language publications shows the pronounced signs of acculturation in Inuit intellectual life.

Since the diminished use of native language is a significant marker of acculturation levels, the continued use of Inuktitut in the North is of great significance. Based on interviews conducted in Igloodlik and Quaqtaq by Louis-Jacques Dorais, present-day Inuit view their

language as an essential part of their identity (302). Participants in the survey expressed that English or French language skills are primarily regarded as a tool for getting a good position (Dorais 295). The use of Inuktitut – which is crucial to Inuit identity – is fostered at home, at cultural functions, and social gatherings. However, in order to have equality of opportunity in higher education and the job market, the Inuit populace, under federal law, attends the same K-12 system offered by the provincial and territorial governments. As a result of a policy intended as inclusive, public education in the Nunangat, though culturally enriched, is conducted primarily in English or French, lacking substantial engagement in Indigenous perspectives necessary for balanced education.

To date, approximately seventy percent of Inuit speak some version of Inuktitut. The latest census shows that Inuktitut is spoken by a little above fifty percent of those under fourteen years of age as their mother tongue. According to data gathered by Ian Martin, nearly fifty percent of Nunavut, the most populous Inuit territory, use mostly English at home, while only sixty-one percent of the homes use some Inuktitut. Compared to the results of a similar survey conducted in 1991, nearly twenty-nine percent used English, and seventy-six percent of Nunavut families spoke Inuktitut (“Inuit Language Loss”). The rapid language loss is a mark of acculturation that can only be tackled – if that is the expressed wish of Inuit – by the protection and promotion of Indigenous languages in school, work and official settings. Natan Obed, the current head of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, argues: “[t]he fact that [he doesn’t] have fluency in Inuktitut is only one small part of who [he] really [is]” (qtd. in Madwar). Since nearly half the Inuit teenage population in the North does not have native Inuktitut fluency, thinking about language as one of the most relevant markers of ethnic identity is worth re-evaluating by both psychologists and politicians. A colleague of Obed, Jesse Mike remarks that “now we have ‘leaders’ abusing fellow Inuit for not speaking the language,” arguing that questioning Inuit identity based on language skills only echoes colonial efforts (qtd. in Madwar). Obed observes that:

There’s so many young Inuit now that are not completely fluent in Inuktitut, that have grown up with one parent who’s not Inuk and one parent who has grown up outside of it. I think sometimes that’s lost in the debate. That if you don’t have Inuktitut, that somehow you can’t be an advocate for it or that you are not ever going to be a good one. (Natan Obed qtd. in “I’m an Inuk”)

While I concur that Inuit identity cannot be questioned solely based on one’s language skills, however, native language fluency is undeniably a crucial factor in identity construction. Belonging to an ethnic

group and sharing its language is a key component of identification with an ethnocultural group. Albeit, excluding someone from a group based on insufficient language skills is reasonably deemed as one harkening back to English-only policies of the residential school system. Mike has a point in critiquing those Inuit failing to see that scrutinizing Obed for his lack of Inuktitut fluency echoes less tolerant approaches from recent history.

Beyond the detrimental effects of acculturation shown in Martin's study focussing on language loss, the reasons might be manifold for such an abysmal data. One likely cause can be not only the lack of a proper Inuktitut-based school curriculum, but the mixed use of Inuktitut and English (or French), and reliance on English for vocational purposes, especially when the opportunities arise outside of the Nunangat. The result can be that instead of bilingualism, speakers might be less articulate in one of the languages, or in some cases fail to be fluent in either one of them.

Inuit Identity and Homeland

Borders can reinforce the notion of "us". Although regional boundaries, just as identity itself, are a social construct, it is important where a boundary is located, how it is established and internalized through collective identity construction (Légaré 110). However, borders also indicate where certain groups of people traditionally reside, even though an area may be home to several different such groups. Inuit identity has received a beneficial boost with new land-related formations within Canada, as a result of successful land claims. The most prominent of the recognized Inuit lands is Nunavut, the largest Inuit territory created in 1999, followed by the recognition of Inuit Nunangat. The latest of a string of successful land gains was the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement in 2007. These nation-forming acts have brought along the use of symbols on flags, official buildings, and documents that unify Inuit. The introduction of Inuit national holidays, the use of logos and Inuktitut geographical and socio-political names – such as Qikiqtaaluk, replacing Baffin Island – are crucial factors in strengthening Inuit identity (Légaré 110). However, regional borders are often arbitrary, as instead of precisely separating cultural groups, they denote economic agreements, therefore creating complex situations. An example of this is the traditional Dene hunting and trapping grounds that overlap those belonging to Inuit, creating a peculiar situation where ancestral Dene lands are located within the Inuit territory of Nunavut (Légaré 106). Such complicated ownership claims to just one territory make egalitarian divisions a challenge. Overlapping areas, as in the case of Inuit and Dene territories in Nunavut, create difficulties in experiencing individual and collective

identity for both peoples.

The answer to how several ownership claims to one territory can arise can be found in the nomadic past of the Indigenous populations in the pre-contact era. Prior to regular Southern contact beginning in the early twentieth century, there were several migrating Inuit and First Nations groups in the Canadian Arctic (Damas 17) whose size varied between 30 to 100 individuals. Historically, neither Inuit nor First Nations tribes had specific claims to land signified by exact borders, since family units or groups followed game on a seasonal pattern, relocating as needed. Contact with the Hudson's Bay Company changed the purely subsistence culture into that of a mixed economy. After World War II, the Canadian government intervened in Inuit nomadic life in an effort to create year-round settlements where access to public education, healthcare and welfare was provided. Permanent settlements heralded the end of the era of migrating groups for all Indigenous peoples. For some, relocation involved an undesirable move to the distant Far North, such as in the case of the new residents of Grise Fjord but others welcomed centralization partially because of fears of famine due to changes in caribou migration patterns. In the case of the Ihalmiut, several relocations took place, which did not improve the quality of life for the people, and in some instances relocations were forced in order to utilize Inuit-inhabited lands (Burch). As detailed by David Damas in his comprehensive study of "Government Era" Inuit life, *Arctic Migrants, Arctic Villagers: The Transformation of Inuit Settlement in the Central Arctic*, initially, settlements were created in order to open up an accessible avenue for government aid to reach the Arctic migrant groups in need. Those suffering from starvation due to change in the availability of game to hunt and the end of an economic era based on pelt, recognized the advantages of living in settlements built for year-round stay where shelter and healthcare were provided, staple foods were available, and aid was distributed. However, countless many suffered from their changed circumstances which they felt were forced upon them. Not until the formation of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami [United Inuit of Canada] and the Inuit Circumpolar Council—organizations representing Inuit across the polar regions—were Inuit able to regain control over their lives enough to find themselves in a bargaining position regarding land claims. A stream of successful land claims was a crucial factor in order to access an important avenue to experiencing collective identity, albeit in a different manner than throughout most of their nomadic history. Reconciliation is another important area relating to land, which has been addressed by the Canadian government. The work of the Inuit sub-group of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is a valuable and necessary component of identity construction for not

only Inuit who experienced the fallout of government policies, but young Inuit who want to be knowledgeable about their history.

The northern hamlets of the arctic tundra, many of which have been created by the government of Canada, have become the primary locations of collective Inuit identity. Identity is emphasized by naming smaller groups – with often distinct linguistic and cultural practices from other settlements – by their geographical location with an addition of the suffix “-miut”; for example: Inuit living in the hamlet of Igloodik are the Iglulingmiut. Beyond the hamlet lies the land, to what the people have great attachment, hence one’s ability to harvest and survive on the land is of primary importance to become Inummariit, a real Inuk, someone who has “true grit” and is familiar with the traditional knowledge of Inuit, the qaujima-jatuqangit. Sharing the harvest of the seas and the land remains a practice that is the foundation of identity and an Inuit prerogative (Patrick 94). In addition to sea lifts and procuring food in one of the businesses operating in the North, traditional land-based practices, such as hunting and fishing are still part of Inuit life. Rather than for economic benefit, the preservation of traditional activities is crucial in order to sustain Inuit identity.

Attachment to the homeland, however, may not entirely shield from acculturation. Although Canadian Inuit mostly stay in the homeland, they tend to use many of the twenty-first century equipment sea-lifted from the South. Inuit, in many respects, live not entirely differently from their Southern fellow citizens: they live in houses, drive snowmobiles, quads, and boats, own a TV and cell phone, and use the Internet. Furthermore, the amalgamated use of English and Inuktitut is widespread in school environments where most classes are taught in English, but students freely speak in Inuktitut during class or breaktime. Multilingualism is widely observed among the young who use English or French for professional purposes while they speak Inuktitut at home or for traditional activities to connect with both their communities and their personal Inuit identity. Those Inuit who do leave the homeland experience higher levels of acculturation.

According to the statistical survey conducted by the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami in 2018, about seventeen-thousand of the sixty-five thousand Inuit in Canada live outside the homeland. For those who leave their traditional settlements and choose to live in a community where they are a minority, Southern influence becomes more pronounced, and keeping traditional customs a challenge. Away from their homeland, Inuit struggle with the lack of access to both “country food” and the land along with the customary activities relating to it. Not being able to speak Inuktitut also has an alienating effect. Nevertheless, some Inuit artists and professionals remarkably flourish in the South and make urban settings expand

and enrich their identity (Patrick 101). This is mostly possible if a concerted effort is made to safeguard Inuit ethnocultural identity. Urban Inuit are a significant part of contemporary Inuit identity, especially so in the case of mixed-heritage people, such as Natan Obed, the leader of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. Southern Inuit author, Norma Dunning states that Indigenous artists “walk inside two worlds,” but regardless where they are, they are Inuk. For those, however, who leave their cultural homeland in the North, acculturation is more intensive as life in a Southern city hub entails speaking mostly English, which may have a deterritorializing effect. This suggests that both Inuktitut language use and territoriality are linked to Inuit identity (Patrick 105).

The role of territory in Inuit personal, group, and national identity is palpable in frequent references to the homeland, a place slightly different for various Inuit groups due to their history of being arctic migrants. The postmodern stance is that boundaries worldwide are in the process of disappearing. The theory of boundary removal—the idea that boundaries are constantly changing as globalization erases them—is based on the observation of economic realities in the West (Newman et al. 198-200). Boundary removal, however, is equally applicable to Inuit geopolitical situation, as the multicultural nature of the Canadian state encourages immersion in different cultures within Canadian borders. To date, approximately sixteen thousand Inuit live off land. Also, by meeting other ethnic groups that travel, work, or live in the North, Inuit socio-spatial identity—the feeling of belonging to a region—is affected, resulting in social identity manifesting changed habits and customs. This impact is still observable in those cases where people stay in the homeland but allow Southern lifestyle, through the Internet and other commodities, in their home without keeping traditions alive. The change in identity formation and self-identification may culminate into a creation of a new, cultural, Canadian Inuit identity parallel to what remains of the original, ethnocultural Inuit identity. In the case of Inuit, a people with marked cultural specificity, spatiality has strong influence on constructing one’s identity.

Since the latter half of the twentieth century, the articulation of Indigenous identity has been greatly influenced by local and national efforts. However, Indigenous identities have also been shaped by global issues, such as socio-political movements supportive of Indigenous causes, especially those relating to energy management, exemplified by environmentalist groups siding up with the Indigenous, against industry that would utilize Indigenous lands for its purposes. As Indigeneity has come into focus, the protection of Indigenous languages and cultures has received institutional support from both the government and non-governmental organizations.

In this advantageous setting, it is everyone's best hope that Inuit in Canada will continue to receive the necessary tools to retain their identity by safeguarding their immediate culture and homeland in the North while feeling at home in the larger geographical and cultural homeland of Canada.

Inuit Identity and Intellectual Traditions

Inuit identity, as it is revealed through folklore and stories, delivers culture orally down the generations since the beginning. Unipkaaqtuat, the traditional stories are an authentic source of traditional knowledge and identity formation for young Inuit today, albeit, the storytellers are absent from the qaggiq. As Markoosie points out in the foreword to *Harpoon of the Hunter*, few elders tell the ancient stories anymore. However, the young generation might not abide by the old lessons. As Iqaluit elder, Lucassie Nutaraaluk laments, [Southern] education makes young people ask questions, which in turn leads them to not listening to the Elders (qtd. in Martin 55), which is the age-old criticism upcoming generations receive from their forbears. It cannot be emphasized enough that unipkaaqtuat, pisiit, ayaya, ivvi-utiit, katajjaq, and Tuniit stories are part of the traditional knowledge, the Inuit qaujimajatuqangit, thus recording them and familiarity with them is tantamount to recalling and establishing collective Inuit identity. Slowly rising literacy levels among the young have an advantageous effect on not only the continued recording of the ethnographical treasures that the traditional stories represent but listening to them and learning from them as well.

Dunning explains that "Inuit people do not read and write and ingest culture the way non-Inuit do. I believe Inuit people do not place a high value on the written word. Instead, we come from a culture with roots that lie within the passing on of stories orally." Nonetheless, written traditions have been a part of Inuit intellectual culture ever since the introduction of writing by the Moravians in the mid-nineteenth century using Latin script and later in 1870 Cree syllabics were also introduced by Anglican missionaries. Literature in a variety of genres—such as life writing by Mini Aodla Freeman, a novel by Markoosie, short stories by Norma Dunning, and poetry by Alootook Ipellie and Luke Issaluk—originating in Inuit Nunangat are indicative of the Inuit embracing written tradition to express their identity that is built on, but not solely influenced by, the traditional Inuit storytelling. Dunning's collection of poems entitled *Eskimo Pie*; a *Poetics of Inuit Identity* is a prime example of the identity forming force of a people's literature. Beyond western genres, reliance on Inuit literary genres published first in Inuktitut would result in the overwhelmingly English publications would give way to bilingual and

Inuktitut language releases.

The inclusion of traditional stories in the fold of Inuit literature, and therefore opening them up for criticism deserves further discussion. The treatment of, especially unipkaaqtuat, as literature, rather than oral stories recorded, may help readers relate to intellectual culture from the Inuit past even when access to Elders who would tell these stories is limited. On paper, these stories might lose their elusive and unique nature, which characterises stories that used to be told slightly differently each time, adding the flavour of the specific storyteller, and influenced by the atmosphere of the qaggiq, or the storyteller's relationship to the audience. Even so, the inclusion of oral tradition stories into the fold of Inuit literature helps solidify Inuit intellectual tradition (Martin 45). For Inuit youth, especially those living in urban areas, written tradition might provide the only means of reconnecting to their roots. Current Inuit authors may also be more influenced by the old stories if they are readily available in a print form. As some Inuit pop singers do incorporate traditional katajjaq singing in their songs; so could the same cultural revival occur in the case of fiction writing as well.

Just like the Inuit custom of sharing food, sharing the knowledge of the Elders is the essence of these stories and was the method of teaching the next generation in a time without writing or public education. This form of knowledge may still carry important messages to the youth of this age, especially regarding origin stories, and those relating to myths, morals, and traditional thinking. Although many ancient stories are preserved in a written form, they are mostly recorded in English. However, original collected material from the ethnographic expeditions of early researchers such as Diamond Jennens and Rasmussen could be transcribed from the orthographies used by them and published in Inuktitut, thus significantly contributing to the use of Inuktitut for cultural purposes and the fostering of Inuit identity retainment through providing access to Inuit intellectual heritage. The beneficial aspects of reading traditional folk tales in the original language to inspire and to connect young writers to their identity is undeniable. Promoting Inuit intellectual culture in such a manner might produce new literature in Inuktitut, which would engage all Inuit audiences. This would be essential to keeping alive not only the language, but also the stories and the intrinsic traditional knowledge. With the trinity of such a cultural force, the speed at which acculturative processes diminish Inuit culture could be halted in order to preserve what remains, and feed Inuit personal and collective identity.

My conclusion is that there is an administrative-spatial duality inherent to Inuit identity; the Indigenous people of the high Arctic are not only Inuit but Canadian as well. Contemporary Inuit are an ethnocultural group within the Canadian multicultural framework.

They retain their distinct Inuit identity while adopting a Canadian identity (Dorais 302) similarly to all the other various minority groups constituting the cultural quilt of Canada. Linguistic, educational, and socio-political questions are crucial to tackle if Inuit personal and collective ethnic identity is to survive the cultural loss of the past few decades which is epitomized by the diminishing levels of Inuktitut language skills. This is especially so in the case of the about fourteen thousand Inuit living in Southern city hubs, away from the homeland. Access to federally and provincially funded services in urban centres, such as Native Friendship Centres and the Inuit-specific community service, the Tungasuvvingat Inuit (TI) Community Centre, is pivotal in fostering well-being and identity retainment for urban Inuit. Also, through the continued use of Inuktitut not only in private, but in professional—such as educational and business—venues, the erosion of Inuit ethnic identity could be lessened.

The remoteness of the Inuit homeland limits Southern influence, serving as a buffer for the acculturative processes that living as an Indigenous minority in Canada entails. Both Berry's and Weinreich's models show that ethnic identity can be fluid and reconstructed, and as such, it is possible for Inuit ethnic identity to survive as well as to expand. Adaptation to new living conditions in an interconnected world has become one of the new foci of Inuit life. The material and non-material goods—food, spiritual, and intellectual practices—are provided by the land and reside in traditional culture. Customs that span hundreds of years are amended by Southern comforts, while there is a decrease in harvesting and consuming country food and engagement in traditional activities. Such changes relating to modernization, and in this case acculturation, have implications to Inuit identity. Keeping Inuit intellectual culture—such as storytelling, singing, and traditional knowledge alive—are vital to fostering Inuit identity. People remaining in their own local community develop their identity based on the history and geography of the homeland and the use of Inuktitut language and participation of specific cultural events on a family and community level, which for those who leave remains a challenge. Finally, wider access to recorded oral-era and modern Inuit literature in Inuktitut—both in school environments and beyond—would greatly aid ethnic and cultural retainment of Inuit identity both on a personal and collective level.

Notes

Qallunaat is “outsider” in Inuktitut, which refers to anyone who is not Inuit. In the context of this study, European travellers and settlers are referred to as such. “Southern” refers to Canadian citizens or culture South of the Arctic Circle.

Inuit Nunangat means Inuit Homeland in Inuktitut.

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the United Inuit in Canada, is the representative organization of Inuit living in Canada.

The term newcomer is used throughout my study for recent immigrant populations.

John W. Berry is a psychologist known for studying cultural influences on behaviour, as well as the adaptation of immigrants and Indigenous peoples following intercultural contact.

The amautit is a hooded parka worn by Inuit women for carrying children; kuni is an Inuit custom of greeting by touching noses and forehead; the kamutiq is a long wooden sled used for travelling with winter gear and is pulled by dogs.

Kamik is a kind of Inuit winter footwear made from the hide of caribou or seal.

Based on personal conversations with high school-age youth while working as an English Language Arts teacher in Igloolik, Nunavut in 2016.

Western is understood as a broad term referring to European influence, while Southern is a specific geographic designation within Canada.

Both Inuktitut and English (or French, in the case of Nunavik in Northern Québec) are considered as native languages for Canadian Inuit.

Inuktitut is used as a collective term for languages spoken in various Inuit communities.

Dene is a First Nations tribe with hunting grounds in the Inuit territory of Nunavut.

Ihalmiut are Inuit that lived in the Keewatin Region (now Kivalliq) and experienced large-scale starvation due to a complicated situation partially regarding game migration patterns.

Hunting and fishing of certain species, such as the baleen whale, are allowed, by law, for Inuit fishermen only.

Qaggiq is an Inuit song house where people would gather to listen song and stories and communally eat.

Unipkaqtuat are folk tales, pisiit, ayaya, ivviutiit are genres of song-poems, katajjaq is a vocal singing style without words and Tuniit stories are those of the “giants” living in the North before the Inuit.

Inuit qaujimaqatuqangit denotes Inuit traditional knowledge.

The Moravian Brethren were missionaries of the Moravian Church, originating in Bavaria, Europe. These missionaries arrived to Greenland and Labrador in the 1800's; in an attempt to evangelize, they introduced the Latin script to Inuit.

Inuit-style throat singing practiced by women only, usually in pairs singing a kind of dialogue with each other.

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