

Inuit Identity South of 60

Inuujunga – I am Inuk



The Inuit population in Canada is just over 70,000

- Approximately 21,865 Inuit live outside of their land claims areas.

- The StatsCan 2021 survey found that, “the Inuit population living outside Inuit Nunangat is moreover increasing at a much faster pace than the population within the Inuit homeland: 23.6 per cent versus 2.9 per cent.

- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-urban-population-1.6592103>

- Picture:

- <http://america.aljazeera.com/multimedia/2014/11/urban-inuit-canada.html>

Inuit Canadians are commonly thought of as living in the Arctic regions of Canada but Inuit live everywhere!

And who are Inuit when they reside outside of the north?



alamy

Image ID: PYS6N
www.alamy.com

- Four in ten Inuit living outside Inuit Nunangat live in a large urban population centre
- In 2011, 37.5% of Inuit living outside of Inuit Nunangat live in large urban population centre.
- The 2021 census metropolitan areas with the largest Inuit populations were
 - Edmonton (1,250)
 - Montréal (1,130)
 - Ottawa - Gatineau (1,730)
- <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220921/dq220921a-eng.htm>

STATUTES OF CANADA 2019
CHAPTER 24

An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit
and Métis children, youth and families

•According to Tungasuvvingat Inuit, (Ottawa TI) on April 10, 2019 in reference to Bill C-92, An Act respecting First Nations, Métis and Inuit children, youth and families, **non-Nunangat Inuit are defined as: The Fifth Region – Non-Nunangat Inuit region** –There must be consideration for the Inuit who are no longer living in or members of their respective land claim. With approximately 40% of Inuit (self identified ancestry) there is a growing number of Inuit who are not connected to one of the four land claim regions,yet remain connected to Inuit culture and identity.

•This “fifth region” is not recognized by Inuit leadership and land claims organizations, however the Inuit fully consider themselves as Inuk with all the culture, traditions and rights inherent to that identification.



So what am I driving at here?

It's simple.

Inuit who reside in the southern areas of Canada are without formal representation and based on their locale the 'benefits' per their lands claim area become diminished.

The national leader only represents and speaks on behalf of Inuit who live in the north.

- Once a land claim was signed, signaling a business transaction between the Canadian Federal Government and Inuit residents of the north, simultaneously Inuit who resided in the south were becoming less significant because of their locale. While one door opened, another slammed shut (Dunning, 2019).

Indigenous identity is always under scrutiny and being a southern Inuk seems to amplify that scrutiny.

For myself the worst of all the racist comments always falls back to having coffee with a white prof. I was no longer her student and was very touched that she wanted to visit with me.

Early in our visit, this white prof who I had studied under, looked at me and asked, “Norma, all your sons – do they all have the same dad?”

- I was stunned and so amazed by the question that I felt like it took me hours to reply, “Yes,” while in my head I was thinking, “Would you ask a white woman that question?”



For an Inuk who resides and studies outside of their land claims area, funding is supplied by a third party.

In my case Freehorse Family Wellness Society.

- Funding through FFWS meant that I:
 - 1) allowed the funder to contact my faculty at any time to check up on me
 - 2) would supply midterm grades which meant I needed all my profs to sign off on my standing, if not supplied I would be in jeopardy of losing my funding
 - 3) was not assured of funding from year to year and had to apply for funding as a new application each year
 - 4) would fax a form into Iqaluit so they could reject my application for a Nunavut based student loan
 - 5) could never apply into Northern based scholarships because I was and am a nonresident of Nunavut and did not graduate grade 12 out of Nunavut

Often mainstream Canada thinks all Indigenous students receive free post-secondary Education

- I did receive tuition payment but no cost of living/no book allowance
- I worked a minimum of three jobs per semester
- I was constantly tired!
- What stats Canada began to put together were ED success and wellness charts comparing Inuit Nunangat and Inuit 'outside of Nunangat.' or non-Nunangat
- So who cares??

I do!!

- When we talk about wellness we are talking about more than the physicality of humans, we are also talking about spirit, soul, core spiritual beliefs, and what a sense of self entails.
- When Inuit in the south are constantly scrutinized – it all becomes so tiring. I wrote this poem:

- **Inuit**

- **Inuit breathe in two worlds.**
 - **Past and present.**
 - **Yesterday and today.**
 - **North and South.**
- **We are one in two ways.**
- **We live on in our Old Ones**
- **Ancientness blankets our young**
 - **Whispers of tradition**
 - **Are carried by soft winds**
- **From the tundra to city sidewalks**
 - **Inuttigut – We the Inuit**

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We are here