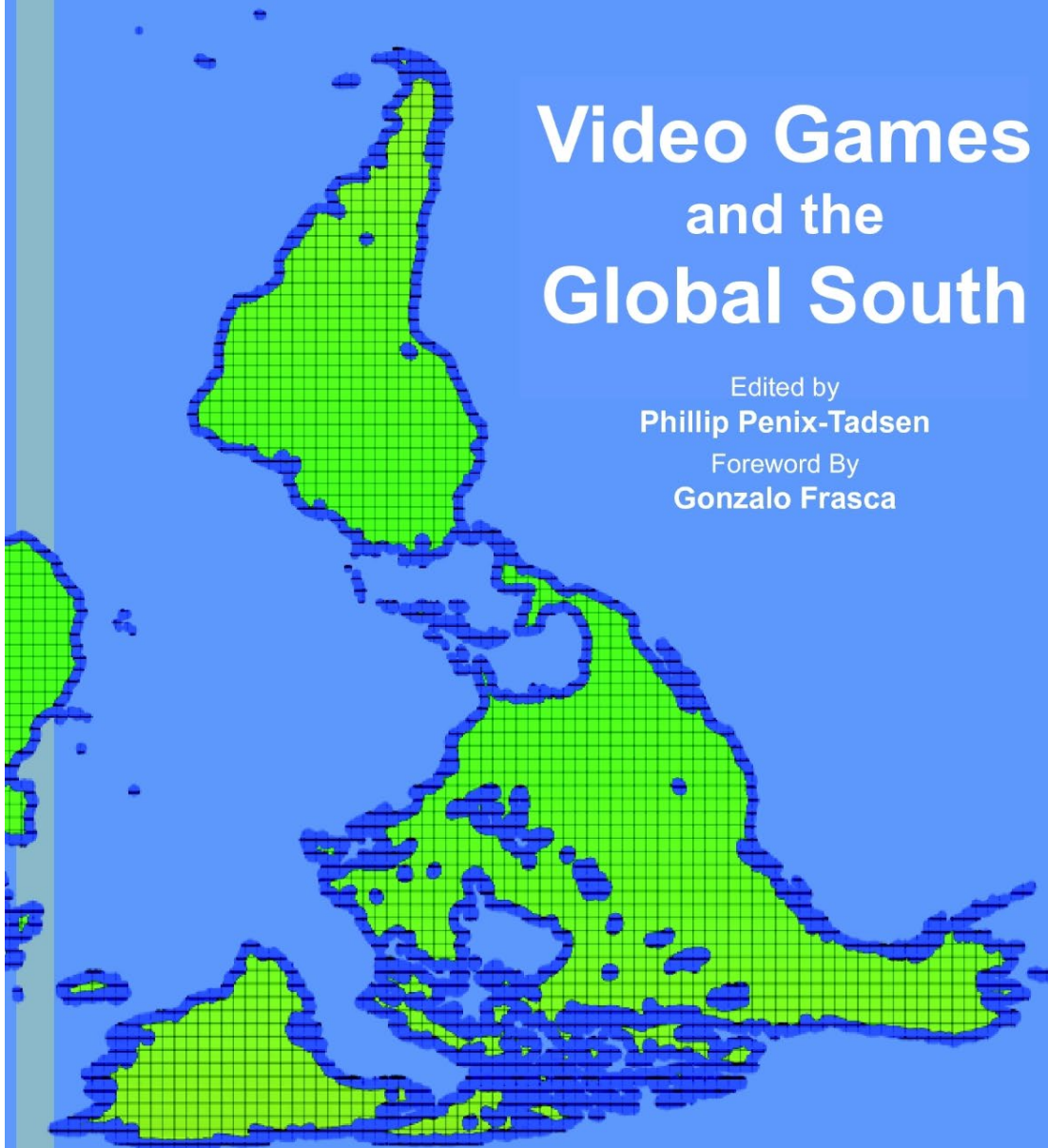# Video Games
and the
Global South

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VIDEO GAMES AND THE GLOBAL SOUTH

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Carnegie Mellon University: ETC Press

Pittsburgh, PA

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EUROCENTRIC VALUES AT PLAY

MODDING THE COLONIAL FROM THE INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE

RHETT LOBAN AND THOMAS APPERLEY

Indigenous people and cultures are rarely included in digital games, and if they are it is often in a rather thoughtless manner. The indigenous peoples and cultures of many parts of the world have been portrayed in digital games in several ways that show little respect or understanding of the important issues these populations face. For example, in the Australian-made *Ty the Tasmanian Tiger* (Electronic Arts, 2002), Australian Aboriginal people are completely absent, replaced by anthropomorphized indigenous animals some of whom wear traditional face paint, while the plot involves rescuing other animals from the "dreamtime." So while a secularized white settler version of Aboriginal culture is a core part of the game, the people are absent. The controversial mobile game *Survival Island 3: Australia Story* (NIL Entertainment, 2015), was removed from the Google Play and Apple stores in January 2016, largely because of an online petition that was concerned the game encouraged violence against indigenous Australians. The game portrayed Aboriginal people as "savages" who contributed to the difficulty of surviving in the Australian outback. Other games have appropriated indigenous iconography and culture, like *Mark of Kri* (Sony Computer Entertainment, 2002) which used traditional Māori (the indigenous people of Aotearoa/New Zealand) facial tattoo or Tā moko on characters in the game. These examples are disappointing, and seem to represent a common occurrence in commercial non-indigenous media.[1]

However, there have also recently been a number of critically acclaimed commercial gaming projects which deal with indigenous culture and issues from an indigenous perspective, for example the game *Never Alone/Kisima Inŋitchuŋa* (E-Line Media, 2014), made by Upper One Games in partnership with Alaska's Cook Inlet Tribal Council.[2] With an interest in exploring how an indigenous perspective can be brought to strategy and grand strategy digital games this chapter considers the practice of "modding" digital games. In strategy games, Indigenous people, like other non-Western peoples (see Souvik Muhkerjee's chapter in this volume) are often depicted in an ahistorical, generalized way, which ignores their unique cultures and histories as sovereign people. We are concerned with how these depictions could be fleshed out through modding original games, in order to create a more detailed and balanced experience for both indigenous and non-indigenous players. Strategy games are a high stakes area for indigenous representation as they simulate complex history processes, often—explicitly or implicitly—including the colonization of the world by European powers.

This chapter is a collaboration between two scholars, Rhett Loban and Thomas Apperley. Rhett is a Torres Strait Islander, one the indigenous people of the Torres Strait Islands, which are a chain of islands in the Torres Strait between Cape York, Australia and Papua New Guinea. Torres Strait Islanders are distinct from the Aboriginal people of the rest of Australia. This chapter details an

1. Non-commercial "serious" games that deal with indigenous content more respectfully and authentically have been developed; see Jakub Majewski, "Oldest Culture, Newest Medium: What Emerges from the Clash?," *Proceedings of DiGRAA 2016 National Conference: Tensions* (2016).
2. Elizabeth LaPensée, "Video Games Encourage Indigenous Cultural Expression," *The Conversation*, 22 March 2017.

element of his Ph.D. project, which examines the use of strategy games for history education in informal and formal contexts. Thomas is a Pakeha (settler) New Zealander, who has been studying and working in Australian tertiary institutions since 2004, and he is one of Rhett's three Ph.D. supervisors. This chapter brings together their mutual interest in grand strategy games and is primarily a collaboration, but the mod that is discussed was developed solely by Rhett through research with his family members and other Torres Strait Islanders. Therefore, this chapter has two voices: "we" which is Rhett and Tom, and Rhett speaking alone in the first person singular, which we will signal throughout.

The chapter proceeds in three parts. In the first part we reflect on how grand strategy games have represented indigenous people, with particular attention to both problematic issues and more recent efforts that have been made to be more inclusive. In the second, Rhett discusses his research and process of making his mod "Indigenous People of Oceania," which adds an indigenous perspective to *Europa Universalis IV* (*EUIV*) (Paradox Interactive, 2013). In the third section, we consider the limits of working with mods in these games, considering how Eurocentric models of nation and sovereignty are embedded in the game rules and mechanics. Through this journey we explore the question: can the Eurocentric version of history and culture that informs strategy games and places indigenous peoples and cultures on the outside of history be effectively given an indigenous perspective through practices like modding?

Before we go any further, the practice that we refer to as modding is an umbrella term that encompasses a large number of practices (see also the chapters by Mukherjee and Messias, Amaral and Oliveira in this volume). It can include modifying game software to such an extent that a new game is created.[3] But other practices of modding are less extensive, the software interventions make changes to existing games, or develop additional content for them. Some definitions of mods extend to game hardware.[4] But the key attribute of modding is that it involves customizing, tailoring or remixing the game or game content by players, in order to suit their desires and interests. In this chapter, "modding" refers to the process of altering the files of a game to create a new game content or a new version of the game; while a "mod" is the product of that alteration.

GRAND STRATEGY GAMES AND INDIGENOUS CULTURES

A key concern of many grand strategy games is European colonization, which makes the representation of Indigenous people a crucial issue as they are the key victims of the colonial process. While the United Nations has no strict definition for the word "indigenous," they do highlight key attributes including self-identification as indigenous, strong links to territories, distinct social, economic and political systems, unique languages, cultures and beliefs and, crucially, an existence as a pre-colonial society.[5] Indigenous people had autonomous histories prior to colonization,[6] and continue to struggle for preservation of their culture and way of life after colonization.[7] They are the "conquered descendants of earlier inhabitants of a region who live mainly in conformity with traditional social, economic and cultural customs that are sharply distinct from those of dominant

3. Baptiste Monterrat, Elise Lavoué and Sébastien George, "Learning Game 2.0: Support for Game Modding as a Learning Activity," *Proceedings of the 6th European Conference on Games Based Learning*, 2012, 340. See also Ibrahim Yucel, Joseph Zupko and Magy Seif El-Nasr, "It Education, Girls and Game Modding," *Interactive Technology and Smart Education* 3.2 (2006), 144.
4. Walt Scacchi, "Computer Game Mods, Modders, Modding, and the Mod Scene," *First Monday* 15.5 (2010), 2.
5. United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, "Fact Sheet: Who Are Indigenous Peoples?," *United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues*, 2006, https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/5session_factsheet1.pdf.
6. Franke Wilmer, *The Indigenous Voice in World Politics: Since Time Immemorial* (Sage, 1993), 97. See also Ted Robert Gurr, *Peoples Versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century* (U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 2000), 17.
7. Wilmer, *The Indigenous Voice in World Politics*, 97.

groups."[8] Even though indigenous people often maintain many elements of their traditional way of life, they are still effectively defined by colonialism in settler versions of history.

Grand strategy games also tend to understand indigenous people in this way. They are presented not as sovereign people, but as potential subjects for European-style colonialism. The "actors" in these games are the nations and culture historically associated with colonization (e.g. the Netherlands, or Great Britain), and any conflict with indigenous peoples is uneven, both in terms of the relative resources available to each side in the game, and in the respect of the rich historical detail given to their culture and history. For example, there has been a tendency in strategy and grand strategy games to group indigenous people together in an ahistorical manner, and represent indigenous populations in a generic way, as is found in the *Sid Meier's Civilization* series, which used generic (and pejorative) term "barbarians," to describe nomadic populations.[9] In *Sid Meier's Civilization IV* (2K Games, 2005) indigenous nations such as the Aztec and Maya are individually represented, however the Native American tribes have been amalgamated into an ahistorical faction labeled "Native American." Similar issues have been noted in *The WarChiefs* expansion for the *Age of Empires III* (Microsoft Game Studios, 2006), which added greater detail to the playable Indigenous factions.[10] In *Sid Meier's Civilization V* the Polynesian faction is based on a muddled collection of Polynesian themes: the leader of the faction is Kamehameha, the first king of Hawai'i/Hawaii; their unique unit is the Māori warrior, referencing the indigenous people of Aotearoa/New Zealand; while their unique civilization improvement is the Moai (a giant stone head) from Rapanui/Easter Island.

Better depicting the world's indigenous people is not just the "right thing to do," it will also make games a more rewarding, vibrant and insightful experience for the community of players. Although some players will attempt to just "win" the game through following the colonial logic of world conquest, they may still be interested in the history in the game being "true" or "accurate."[11] Previous research has noted that some players also play strategy games to explore and roleplay alternative realities, also called counter-factual or "what if" histories.[12] Other players may try to "accurately" roleplay history attempting to recreate historical empires or nations, and sharing fictional accounts called after-action reports.[13] Many fans of history and strategic games enjoy playing them in part because of the histories, cultures and peoples depicted in them. Adding detail to indigenous peoples in the games would serve to enrich these players' experiences.

The Grand Strategy genre epitomized by *EUIV* has managed to depict Indigenous people with more detail than other strategy games. For example, in the *Europa Universalis IV: Conquest of Paradise* (Paradox Interactive, 2014) expansion and update, Native American tribes are developed as uniquely conceptualized cultures through game mechanics and pop-up decision and text boxes. All North American tribes (including Apache, Huron, Cherokee, Sioux, Comanche, Iroquois, etc.) have the Native American or tribe-specific benefits that are unique to each tribe or North American Indian group. They also introduced a specific government type "the Native Council," a unique religion called "Totemist," and a unique set of buildings that can only be constructed by Native American tribes. The

8. Jeff Corntassel, "Who Is Indigenous? 'Peoplehood' and Ethnonationalist Approaches to Rearticulating Indigenous Identity," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 9.1 (2003), 78-80.

9. Emily Bembeneck, "Phantasms of Rome: Video Games and Cultural Identity," in *Playing with the Past: Videogames and the Simulation of History*, eds. M. Kapell and A. Elliot (Bloomsbury, 2013), 81-82.

10. Beth A. Dillon, "Signifying the West: Colonialist Design in Age of Empires III: The WarChiefs," *Eludamos. Journal for Computer Game Culture* 2.1 (2008): 129-144.

11. Apperley, "Modding the Historians' Code," 185-198.

12. Apperley, "Modding the historians' code," 8; Adam Chapman, *Digital Games as History: How Videogames Represent the Past and Offer Access to Historical Practice* (Routledge, 2016).

13. Thomas Apperley, "Counterfactual communities: Strategy games, paratexts and the player's experience of history," *Open Library of the Humanities* 4.1 (2018): 1-22.; Souvik Mukherjee, *Video Games and Storytelling: Reading Games and Playing Books* (Palgrave, 2015).

expansion also gives all Native American Tribes a special function called "Migration," which allows them to migrate from one province to another, reflecting the pre-colonial nomadic lifestyle of some of the tribes.[14] Federations between tribes may also be formed as a defensive alliance mechanism to ward off attackers and defend the tribe, an acknowledgement of the tribal organization use by the Iroquois from the fifteenth century.

In the *Europa Universalis IV: El Dorado* (Paradox Interactive, 2015) expansion and update, the Aztec, Maya and Inca nations are reflected in greater detail in terms of their religion which was fundamental to their society. For example, the Aztec religion is reflected by way of the Doom system, which simulates the millennial elements of Aztec religion and culture. Doom incrementally builds up from 0% to 100% over time and through events, and when it reaches 100% grave penalties are imposed on the Aztec faction. Doom can be decreased with sacrifices, which is reflected in the game by the option of declaring war on neighboring nations via the "Flower War" Casus Belli in order to capture sacrificial prisoners (a real historical reference), or by sacrificing the leaders of subject nations.[15] It should be noted that the elements of Aztec culture that are embedded in the software are based on an outsider perspective in the form of accounts by Spanish priests.

However, even with these expansion packs, in *EUIV* large parts of the Americas, Africa, Asia and Oceania are portrayed as "empty" lands ready for anyone to colonize. Each province does portray an indigenous population, but there are no ways to diplomatically interact with or playing these peoples like other nations (such as the Iroquois or Aztecs). Considering the overwhelming detail of the game, these areas stand out as peculiar. Inclusion of more indigenous specific nations, models, ideas and in-game content would provide players with a much more consistent and, to an extent, informative experience.

As games like *EUIV* have the potential to offer multiple perspectives on history,[16] adding an indigenous perspective through modding is consistent with an increasingly interactive and customizable player experience. As these games are often criticized for presenting "Western" version of history in a way that excludes other cultures,[17] developing a mod that augments the game with an Indigenous perspective is useful for establishing a version of history that embraces a version of multiplicity that includes Indigenous people. Other work on *Europa Universalis II* has underscored how the game may be used in ways that disrupt official versions of history.[18] For these reasons Rhett decided to develop a mod that added cultural details from the indigenous perspective to *EUIV*, in order to allow interested players to be exposed to the autonomous history and culture of indigenous people in a manner that may challenge and complicate the Eurocentric view of history that they have learned through schooling and exposure to popular culture, the same worldview portrayed and implicitly endorsed in *EUIV*.

A MODDING SOLUTION?

While playing a mod (just as you play a game) requires no initial training, some aspects of modding require quite specific skills. Games such as *EUIV* are designed to be modified and the Paradox Interactive online forums are explicitly mod-friendly, with community-developed wikis to guide the

14. History.com, "Native American Cultures," *A&E Networks*, 2009, https://www.history.com/topics/native-american-history/native-american-cultures.

15. Ross Hassig, *Aztec Warfare: Imperial Expansion and Political Control* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 3, 10.

16. William Uricchio, "Simulation, History, and Computer Games," in *The Handbook of Computer Game Studies*, eds. J. Raessens and J. Goldstein (MIT Press 2005), 335-336.

17. Souvik Mukherjee, "Playing Subaltern: Video Games and Postcolonialism," *Games and Culture* 13.5 (2016), 3; Kacper Pobłocki, "Becoming-State," *Focaal - European Journal of Anthropology* 39 (2002), 166.

18. Apperley, "Modding the historians' code," 185-198; Chapman, *Digital Games as History*.

user through the mod making process. Modding is one of the elements of gaming cultures that is often pinpointed by educators as being a key area where unofficial but work-relevant literacies are developed.[19] There have been other initiatives to make game content more individual and relevant for indigenous communities through modding. This is in parallel to a widespread interest in modding from a cultural perspective by artists, activists and game designers as a way of remixing media from the point of view of local marginalized populations (see the chapters by Muhkerjee and Messias, Amaral and Oliveira in this volume).[20] Key indigenous initiatives include a recent project with Native American youths in Canada. Youths became involved in video game content creation to depict the histories of the Iroquois, as told by their families.[21] By persuading the Native American community in Montreal to become involved, Mohawk Youths were able to convey their stories in a creative and respectful manner while also allowing them to learn programming skills that are often confined to the non-indigenous population. In this respect making mods is a useful learning exercise. However, while it is often though modding served a mainly as IT, computer science and game development learning tool;[22] there is also potential for using modding as learning tool for other disciplines such as history and cultural studies.

Rhett chose to use *Europa Universalis IV* as a case study because the game aims to present a high degree of historical accuracy and also supports a large community of modders, who are able to circulate their mods through Paradox Interactive's official online forums. Mods in *EUIV* can vary from simple mods that change a few variables in order to add greater balance to the game, to complete overhauls of the game that replace the game scenario with a completely different setting, for example the "Song of Ice and Fire Mod"—a *Game of Thrones* for *Europa Universalis*. However, it is more common for modders to use mods to make adjustments to the game that they believe will further its historical realism and accuracy. *EUIV* modding usually takes the form of adding new data to existing game mechanics and data sets, as opposed to creating entirely new functions. Paradox Interactive, the developers of *EUIV*, encourage modding in the *EUIV* community and draw knowledge and information from them which they use in subsequent iterations of the game.[23]

Some modding tools are highly accessible and already built into game interfaces. Common examples are the *Age of Empires* (Microsoft, 1997) "Scenario Editor" and the *Warcraft III* (Blizzard, 2002) "World Editor," which are tools for making shareable and playable maps. Paradox Interactive grand strategy games are often accompanied by modding tools such as "Modder mode" in *Hearts of Iron IV* (Paradox Interactive, 2016), an in-game interface aimed at assisting with game modding and the "Clausewitz Maya Exporter," which allows the modder to export 3D models from Maya into Paradox Interactive games. The tools typically used to mod *EUIV* include:

- the *EUIV* software;
- a code editing program, or text editor such as notepad :
- specific tools like the "Clausewitz Maya Exporter" ; and
- access to the internet for historical research and modding guides

19. Thomas Apperley and Chris Walsh, "What Digital Games and Literacy Have in Common: A Heuristic for Understanding Pupils' Gaming Literacy," *Literacy* 46.3 (2012): 115-122.
20. Padmini Ray Murray and Chris Hand, "Making Culture: Locating the Digital Humanities in India," *Visible Language* 49.3 (2015): 141-155.
21. Beth Aileen Lameman, Jason E Lewis and Skawennati Fragnito, "Skins 1.0: A Curriculum for Designing Games with First Nations Youth," *Proceedings of the International Academic Conference on the Future of Game Design and Technology* (2010): 105, 111.
22. Magy Seif El-Nasr and Brian Smith, "Learning through Game Modding," *Computers in Entertainment* 4.1 (2006): 18-19; Yucel, Zupko and El-Nasr, "IT Education, Girls and Game Modding," 154.
23. Trin Tragula, "Eu4—Development Diary—2nd of May 2017," *Paradox Interactive*, 2 May 2017, https://forum.paradoxplaza.com/forum/index.php?threads/eu4-development-diary-2nd-of-may-2017.1018557/.

Typically, when modifying a file, modders will only change the more accessible script files in the game files, rather than the deeper level code that makes up the core functions of the game. Through the script files a potential modder can access and alter most of the graphical interfaces and models, most in-game variables/datasets and in-game texts.

What makes the process of creating a mod for *EUIV* different from other forms of modding is that it often requires additional history research. In a developer diary, Trin Tragula, a content designer at Paradox interactive describes how the development team divided historical research conducted during game development into two categories:

- Database/Setup Research which relates to game mechanics (like religious mechanics) and pop-up boxes about history; and

- Background/Content Research which entails the initial and historical staring condition of the game and the variables/characterizes of each game province.[24]

These are also the typical points where modders will mod the game, unless they are developing completely new in-game mechanics.

As mods are often implemented to "correct" perceived inaccuracies it is important that thorough research is conducted. Many information sources can be used, but most often the internet has the most readily available information, though it may be less reliable than other sources. Other common resources include books and documentaries (like those found on YouTube). For the *EUIV* mod Rhett developed, the "Indigenous People of Oceania," oral accounts from family and other members of the Torres Strait Islander community were important. Family and oral history can provide insight into indigenous history and culture that is not otherwise available in other sources. In some instances, these oral accounts can reconfirm what are in other sources, or they can provide an important variation that diverges from other sources.

The next step requires inserting the historical and cultural information into the game. This can be done in many ways, for example the simplest and most obvious way to do this in *EUIV* is through pop-up boxes or other text based aspects of the game such as national ideas. These are short pieces of text that convey an event, cultural practices, or other sorts of historical or cultural information. The pop-up box might outline a significant event in a history or culture, usually accompanied by an in-game positive or negative modifier. The approach Rhett took with the "Indigenous People of Oceania" mod was to create a playable nation where in the original game there is only a blank piece of land. Quite a lot of information is required to flesh this out, so that there is a comparable level of detail to existing playable nations. These details include national flags, graphic models, national ideas, provincial information, extra mechanics and so on.

For the "Indigenous People of Oceania," Rhett used modding techniques to create new technology groups that reflect the differing lifestyles (land-based or seafaring) of the oceanic peoples, and many new indigenous pacific nations (including Mabuiag, Fiji, Hawai'i, Ngāi Tahu, Asaro, Gubbi Gubbi) with their ideas in game bonuses and information about the nations people's history, as well as the addition of new religious faiths present at the time. A comparison between the original *EUIV* map and *EUIV* "Indigenous People of Oceania" mod map shows the inclusion of many cultural groups in the Pacific region in the IPO map (see Image 1.5.1 and Image 1.5.2). The mod is far from perfect, but it

24. Ibid.

gives the game an indigenous perspective on the region's history, mainly by providing specific detail about the different indigenous nations of the Pacific.

Image 1.5.1. EUIV original map showing Oceania.

Image 1.5.2. EUIV "Indigenous People of Oceania" map.

THE SOVEREIGN CODE

In spite of the strengths mentioned above, Rhett found that the modding tools that were easily available had some crucial limitations because of the Eurocentric frameworks in which issues such as sovereignty and even the concept of the nation are embedded in the game's rules and mechanics. While the "Indigenous People of Oceania" mod was able to successfully add details which portrayed many aspects of indigenous culture, the mod still had to work within European concepts of nationhood, territory and sovereignty. In this sense Rhett's process pinpointed the limitations of modding by demonstrating how the structure of *EUIV* limited the extent to which indigenous people could be represented. From a game design and technical standpoint, modding games such as *EUIV* to portray indigenous people from their own perspective is difficult, particularly because of centrality of very Eurocentric notions of the state, nation and sovereignty that are embedded in the game software.

Sovereignty is understood as having sole control or authority of a given geographic area. Liberal independent theorists might say sovereignty is state ability to control actors within its defined borders, while realists might say it is in the ability to make great decisions such as war.[25] For Weber, sovereignty is the "monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force" as a defining characteristic of the state.[26] Sovereignty appears to be a defining feature of a state, and it is noted that a state is not just a government, as a state rules over a defined area and continues to exist even if the government changes. In *EUIV*, historic states which exercised sovereignty over their territories are usually defined with some detail and are potentially playable nations, while "empty" or "blank" territory which is ripe for colonial expansion was inhabited by people who had patterns of land use and systems of government which did not register with a Eurocentric concept of sovereignty. An infamous example from history was the British and White Settler Australian legal understanding of Australia as a "Terra Nullius," an empty land which was used to deny the sovereign rights of the Indigenous Australian and Torres Strait Island people in Australian courts until the 1990s.[27]

The state is an age-old organization with much history, although it is usually defined through modern notions such as law, citizenship and its responsibilities to its citizens.[28] States, nations and nation-states are inherently intertwined.[29] A nation is centered on the idea of collective cultural heritage, linguistic unity or a sense of shared identity amongst the members, while the state is an institution defined mainly by its use of force, the legitimacy of the institution, the presence of institutional bodies to operate government tasks and control over a territory.[30] A nation-state embodies a concept that is a state defined by nation. But at what point does nationhood come into being?[31] This realization may be tied to a national conscience, a national identity, a nation-formation process or some ancestral connection. Smith argues that the nation is manifested through the creation of a collective name, myths/memoirs of communal history, common laws and customs, shared public culture and a historic territory.[32] However, defining a nation by race, language, religion or geography is problematic given the constant integration, fragmentation and transformation of beliefs, people and cultures.[33] While white settler histories acknowledge that some indigenous tribes did have significant political and

25. Janice Thomson, "State Sovereignty in International Relations: Bridging the Gap between Theory and Empirical Research," *International Studies Quarterly* 39.2 (1995): 213-214.
26. Max Weber, *Politics as a Vocation* (Fortress, 1968), 1.
27. Stuart Banner, "Why Terra Nullius? Anthropology and property law in early Australia," *Law and History Review* 23.1 (2005): 95-131.
28. Global Policy Forum, "What Is a 'State'?"
29. James Paul, "Nations and States Part 1: Nations and States—What's the Difference?," *Global Policy*, https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/172/30345.html; Peter Ravn Rasmussen, "Nations or States: An Attempt at Definition," *Nations, States and Politics*, http://www.scholiast.org/nations/whatisanation.html.
30. Rasmussen, "Nations or States."
31. Walker Conner, "When Is a Nation?," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 13.1 (1990): 93; Anthony Smith, "When Is a Nation," *Geopolitics* 7.2 (2002): 5.
32. Smith, "When Is a Nation," 17.
33. Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?," in Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*, trans. Ethan Rundell (Presses-Pocket, 1992).

administrative bodies, they also claim that they lacked a hierarchy of authority or formal government.[34] This approach to understanding indigenous nationhood also reflects how *EUIV* depicts indigenous nations with no sovereignty or government, and thus as territories rather than states.

Some indigenous tribes are documented as having systems that are closer to the Eurocentric notion of sovereignty and statehood. Historically a number of the Torres Strait Islanders of Australia had ownership of residential land and areas of gardens that could be passed down from generation to generation.[35] One island in particular had fetish priests who ruled over other islanders through fear of black magic. Europeans that documented the island's way of life saw the fetish priests as a type of hereditary government that could control others and had the capacity to enforce their own laws.[36] The extent to which Torres Strait Islanders exerted control over their lands, was crucial in the robust recognition of indigenous title in Australian courts in the 1990s.

The core challenge of working with *EUIV* to mod indigenous perspectives is that the game uses the sovereign nation-state as a fundamental actor and driver of history. These concepts—nation, state and sovereignty—have done a great deal of harm indigenous people and indigenous culture, as they are the conceptual tools that European colonial powers and white settlers used to justify displace Indigenous people from their lands and institute new forms of colonial governance that ignored traditional rights and native title. *EUIV* offers very little scope to challenge these perspectives, particularly without disrupting the drive to be "realistic,"[37] which could potentially just mean that "Indigenous Peoples of Oceania" is creating a richer experience for a simulation of colonialism.

CONCLUSION

Some strategy games, such as *EUIV*, have made some effort to portray indigenous people as autonomous people with rich cultural heritage through aesthetics, gameplay, written text and historical narratives. However, this has largely been achieved through targeted expansion packs to the game which provide finer grained detail on regional indigenous cultures, a measure that upholds the relegation of indigenous history to a secondary tier vis-à-vis the central European-focused storyline. Thus, there is a strong case for *EUIV* to include more indigenous content given that it increases the entertainment and educational value of the game for all of its players, as well as the profitability of the game to the developers and publishers. Furthermore, there is considerable scope for players to create their own game content through mods, as Rhett's "Indigenous People of Oceania" mod did. This process also adds to the player experience and profitability of *EUIV*. Through fuller and more detailed depictions of indigenous people, non-indigenous players may become better informed about otherwise unfamiliar indigenous histories. There is also potential for mods of these games to be used as expressive tools by indigenous people to portray their own perspectives on history. But it is here that the crucial problem arises: the central place of Eurocentric concepts such as nation, state and sovereignty in the design of games like *EUIV*. Modding *EUIV* from the indigenous perspective necessarily involves positioning indigenous culture in relation to the concepts of nation, state and sovereignty that were used by European colonial powers and white settlers to justify displacing indigenous people from their land by violence or other means.

34. Mervyn Meggitt, "Indigenous Forms of Government among the Australian Aborigines," *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land-en volkenkunde* 1 (1964): 163-180.
35. Jeremy Beckett, *Torres Strait Islanders: Custom and Colonialism* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 115-116.
36. Ibid., 116.
37. Adrienne Shaw, "The Tyranny of Realism: Historical Representation and the Politics of Representation in Assassin's Creed III," *Loading...The Journal of the Canadian Game Studies Association* 9.14 (2015): 20.

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