

Sovereignty in the Third and Fourth World: A Comparative Discussion on Two Levels

Peer-Reviewed

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ABSTRACT

The topic of colonialism has a rich scholarly history. Many scholars, with some success, have declared themselves postcolonial or developed theories such as neo-colonialism to describe the current international structure. The question of colonial structures, however, still plays a major role in current politics. This study looks specifically at expressions of sovereignty within the colonial framework today that have stemmed from historical events after the formation of the United Nations system. By comparing Third and Fourth World theories of sovereignty this study will show how these concepts are still relevant today and what implications they currently have for international politics. I submit, following Rudolph Rysler, Arthur Manuel, Glen Coulthard and others, that not only is the Fourth World a relevant concept, but it is the most important one in our current state of international governance. Both these concepts or theories describe most of the conflict in the world today.

Keywords: International Relations, Fourth World, Third World, UNDRIP, United Nations, Lesser Developed Countries, Indigenous Politics.

Introduction:

When Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and George Manuel of the Neskonalith nation met in the 1970s, they were both attempting to define sovereignty under a colonial system.¹ In both cases, people in their nations were either colonized by the First World, or capitalist world, or the Second World, the communist world.² What were the similarities and differences in Third and Fourth World conceptions of sovereignty? What challenges in achieving sovereignty arose in each context? What did the Neskonalith learn from Tanzania about sovereignty and vice-versa? How are the non-aligned Third World theories of Julius Nyerere (Tanzania) different from George Manuel's (Neskonalith [Kukstéc-

¹ Rudolph Rysler, 2012

² It is not entirely clear where the "world's theory" originates. Although it has been used throughout political history and academia, it is most often attributed to the French journalist and demographer Alfred Sauvy. <https://www.history.com/news/why-are-countries-classified-as-first-second-or-third-world>. In Mao Zedong's version, the most powerful were the First World and Japan and Europe the Second. For brevity and clarity, however, I will separate them and include China and Russia in the "Second World". https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/ziliao_665539/3602_665543/3604_665547/t18008.shtml

kuc Tqelt Kukpi7 t'e skectec-kuc t'e tmiaws-kuc]) Fourth World? The main question that guides this study is, are these concepts still relevant, and how have they evolved? In comparing the divergent pathways to sovereignty in these two vastly different conceptions of 'territory,' I will link the past to the present specifically by exploring how the joint meetings remain relevant today. This study will explore the current day impacts, for instance, the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous People (UNDRIP).

I submit, following Rudolph Ryser, Arthur Manuel, Glen Coulthard, and others, that not only is the Fourth World a relevant concept, but it is the most important one in our current state of international governance. That this theory has not become part of academic discourse and its absence is the result, arguably, of colonial and parochial academics. According to Ryser's book *Indigenous Nations and Modern States* (2012), the Fourth World theory explains over half of the conflict in the world today and the real politics that occur outside of popular news cycles and official state rhetoric. For instance, in safe and secure Canada, relations between indigenous nations and the Canadian state are resuming a rumbling boil. Few states in the world are free from the Fourth World and their politics. States, like Canada, the United States of America and Australia, that have denied indigenous rights are just now ratifying the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP). However, most of the world did this in 2007. These countries have much more to gain than is often imagined by working with the Fourth World theory. Colonialism is, after all, and as Franz

Fanon explained, a two-way street. Both sides are colonized, and its demise will free both.³

The work economically, socially, culturally, judicially, and politically, indigenous people have done to shine a light on sovereignty as it operates throughout the world is substantial, significant, and structured. My aim here is to shed light on sovereignty by comparing its framework in the indigenous Fourth World, alongside Third World theories of sovereignty, to shed light on its current world order. As will be clear, the Third World was a composition and reaction to the colonial and Westphalian state system. In contrast, in Fourth World Theory, the colonial three-state system is as separate as the oceans. The much explained First World capitalist theory ensured pacts were held with corporations and labor movements within a state framework that became international. The Second World or communist world made the state responsible for most human trade, labor, and commerce. The paper begins in the 1970s, when the Fourth World movement began in earnest and carries on until today. As with much of my work in political science, it is important to put forth alternative or denied histories to understand the present in a different light.

I have chosen to compare the theories of the Third and Fourth World on two levels. On the first level, I compare a deeply internal sense of sovereignty shared between these theories. Second, I look at the material aspects

³Franz Fanon, *Black Skin: White Mask*, 1967

of sovereignty and the differences in how these two theories have sought to institutionalize or operationalize their positions given the world structures that they are part of today.

I similarly look at how these theories and practices of sovereignty are similar or different today. Finally, I interviewed Dr. Rudolph Ryser from the Centre for World Indigenous Studies. I asked him specifically to shed light on other areas of similarity and difference that he sees between the Third and Fourth World frameworks.

This discussion is a qualitative comparison of two bodies of literature and two coherent theories not often used in international relations, although they address politics in most of the world. My submission is that the era of ‘great power’ politics has long ended, and new theories surpass its explanatory power. Although I am using here what many may perceive as old theories, I suggest that the world’s theory has never been properly used or understood as it relates to Third and Fourth World conceptions of sovereignty. This paper is exploratory, and I hope it is helpful in its explanatory power to scholars in these fields.

Part One: Third World

The Third World was a theory created in response to decolonization and the Cold War. As Ghana’s first independent leader Kwame Nkrumah said, sovereignty was a very precarious and uncertain time for the colonies.⁴ Among the freedom flags, colonies joined the United Nations (UN) and set up new relationships with their former colonial powers. Tanzania paid bureaucratic severances, Ghana made oil and

infrastructure deals with mega-corporations, and Uganda’s banking remained British. These small examples display the times of independence. Across the globe sovereignty was being negotiated, and new world structures were created to smooth the transition. Perhaps this was necessary to transition out of formal colonialism but European and North American First World wars against the United Soviet Socialist Republic and Cuban Second World (and vice-versa) traveled the globe and continued long after World War II and the formation of the UN. The First and Second World’s, began the Cold War, battling each other for world supremacy and trying to get the former colonies to align with them. To a certain extent, we see this continue today as communist China races to develop the continent of Africa against the influences of the “imperialist” capitalist west.⁵

In 1955, six African and twenty-three Asian nations (all former colonies) joined together to discuss their future in Bandung, Indonesia. Before this, they had met as the League Against Imperialism, although those meetings were illegal under colonialism. By Bandung, the Cold War was heating up, and the new countries were painfully aware of how this new war was affecting their sovereignty. The Afro-Asian or Bandung conference brought high-level leadership to meet and discuss decolonization in the rest of the world. There were many issues within the Third World. While they talked of non-alignment

⁴ Nkrumah, 1965

⁵ Xinhua, Rwanda New Times <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/africa/china-africa-cooperation-prospers-against-covid-19>

and south-south cooperation, many countries were making pacts with Moscow, Washington, or Paris, and storing weapons. The path towards independence had been a bloody one for all these people. In most cases, nations were subsumed under a state framework, and pacts were made to promote decolonization from foreign powers. Odd international laws like the “saltwater principle” or “blue water rule”⁶ solidified territorial sovereignty for the Third World states, which may have tried to include indigenous groups and nations but ultimately subsumed them. This process is part of the explanation for the rise of ethnic politics throughout Africa because one nation may control the state government or be slightly more numerous. In contrast, other nations may straddle two or more state boundaries.⁷

Over a few decades, the Third World came into being. At Bandung, a certain basis of the Third World was hammered out even if all countries had trouble complying. The Third World would be non-nuclear, non-aligned, and encourage economic alliances between countries of the south to sever the economic stranglehold the imperial countries still had over most of their former colonies.⁸ Many of them met at the UN as the Group of 77.

It was essential to stay out of the Cold War, but like most African, South American, South Asian, and many more people learned, staying out of the Cold War and being non-aligned would be a major hurdle. However, what became clear through Bandung was that the UN would be an organization that former colonies would uphold. The state and the concept of sovereignty through the state was upheld as at least a form

of independence. Despite the Security Council’s control of the General Assembly and the weighted voting systems of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, these state governments reaffirmed the main principles of the Third World at the UN, including non-interference and territorial integrity. The Group of 77 was formed in 1964 at the UN Trade and Development Forum in Geneva. The G77 remains today negotiating for south-south cooperation and the rights of less powerful countries on the international stage. They are much more numerous than 77 countries today but keep the name for historical reasons.

After the following section, I will discuss the basis of Third World sovereignty through both its ideological and institutional accomplishments. I will discuss how the Third World concept is still relevant and how it operates in the UN. The Third World has relevance and meaning despite the international trend to consider the ‘third world’ as a pseudonym for impoverished places (and the Fourth World as the poorest among the poor). The fact that the idea of being non-nuclear was an invention of the Third World has been so drowned out by other voices of history that the world has forgotten these roots of world peace and the leaders who ensured that being non-nuclear. At the same time, the USA and

⁶Rudolph Ryser, <https://intercontinentalcry.org/blue-water-rule-self-determination-nations/#:~:text=The%20%E2%80%9Cblue%20water%20rule%E2%80%9D%E2%80%94of%20boundaries%20would%20be%20needed.>

⁷Martin Meredith, 2013

⁸Vijay Prashad, 2008

USSR threatened each other, and the world is an important cornerstone of Third World theory and practice.⁹

Part Two: Introduction to the Fourth World

“My belief in the Fourth World is an act of faith”, George Manuel wrote in his 1974 book *Fourth World: An Indian Reality* authored with Michael Polsun.¹⁰ He meant that the Fourth World is a continuous journey, not a destination or resting place. It represents a thriving, often peaceful, thoughtful people that live in spirit with the land. What Manuel created, and in some sense stumbled upon on his long journeys across the world, was nothing short of a theory that challenged the modern post-war sovereign arrangements, notable throughout international law and the UN.¹¹

The Fourth World, like the Third World, is a comprehensive theory. That it has been largely ignored in academia is a subject I will revisit in the conclusions of this paper. It differs from the Third World because Manuel conceived of it as a “global village”.¹² Furthermore, it is open to anyone to join. There are no boundaries in the Fourth World, unlike the First, Second or Third. The move is a swift departure from what the rest of the world was doing in its Westphalian ordering based on states within the UN system. The Fourth World is not based on statehood, race, ethnicity, or language. Countries have been challenged by the First Nation’s sovereignty or self-government throughout the world—it is a worldwide movement, a situation that all state governments must contend with today.¹³

In the 1970s, when George Manuel was Chief of the National Indian Brotherhood in Canada (NIB), he had many opportunities to meet diplomats and travel. He claims that his first encounter with the idea of the Fourth World came from a Tanzanian diplomat in Canada who said, “When native people come into their own, with their own cultures and traditions that will be the Fourth World.”¹⁴ After this, Manuel traveled around to meet many indigenous peoples. Manuel began to appreciate the differences and relationships with the Third World after going to Tanzania. Still, in particular, he was interested in how the tools of sovereignty were not what would create a sovereign territory. In other words, simply the structures alone do not make a thriving, peaceful territory. The Third World had made this evident with their many wars, dictators, and plundering of nature. This pattern was and is today still evident throughout the Third World.

The Fourth World as a theory has approaches to land, education, spiritual establishments, technology, community, and sharing, to name some areas. Indeed, much of the work that indigenous people in Canada have been doing reflects these views. In 1975, the first World Council of Indigenous People (WCIP) was hosted

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ G. Manuel, 1974. p. 261.

¹¹ The word “sovereign” comes from the French word for king. A ruler that did not need to consult with the people. See Michael Lerma, 2014.

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ There are many terms for indigenous peoples throughout the world. First Nations, Indian, Adivasi, indigenous or people are named according to their culture, such as Sami, Maori, Catalanian, Ewe. etc.

¹⁴ *ibid.* p. 236.

by the Nuu-chah-nulth nation on Vancouver Island. Representatives' included people from Argentina, Guyana, Ecuador, Finland, Norway, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Guatemala, Greenland, for a total of 260 participants.¹⁵ In their movement to protect indigenous people and land from colonial oppression and subjugation, the WCIP wanted a) international recognition of indigenous sovereignty, b) that the UN recognize indigenous treaties as binding in international law c) the UN should build institutions and instruments to respect indigenous rights to self-determination, land, and resources. The Canadian National Indian Brotherhood gave up its observer status at the UN to the WCIP. Though the WCIP no longer exists as an organization as of 1996, it has found a home in global forums at the UN, such as the Permanent Forum on Indigenous People in 2002 and the long-awaited United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) in 2007.¹⁶ However, the fact remains that in international law, as at the UN, Fourth World peoples are subject to state law in territory that is most often overlapping with state governments.

In Indigenous Nations and Modern States: The Political Emergence of Nations Challenging State Power, Rudolph Rysler notes that between 5000 and 9000 nations (depending on the source) are pressing the international system and waiting for their seat at the international table.¹⁷ According to Rysler, the small steps taken by the UN to recognize indigenous rights are not enough. As nations challenge the Westphalian system, they are emerging among the many peoples left out of international law. Numerous states face low-

level intensity or straight-out violent conflicts with nations within their state boundaries.¹⁸ The evident need to create international structures that reflect the existence and integrity of self-determined people throughout the world has yet to be realized. The UN is a state-based organization joined by the recognition of other states. Indigenous nations and people are left out in their own nation-based system.

Comparison One: Red Power/Black Power

Comparing the Third and Fourth World could be done in several ways. One may wonder why it has to be done at all. To be interested, people would have to accept that we have missed something in political science, politics generally, and political philosophy. A perspective, which has significant explanatory power. The differences between them, which I will demonstrate in the next section, deepens our understanding of Third World states and Fourth World sovereignty. The similarities capture solidarity and allow us to see world politics differently. As I have said, the Fourth World, in particular, presents itself as an indispensable theory that has been severely underutilized.

The first level I look at in terms of sovereignty in the Third and Fourth World is where they have a striking similarity. Both Third and Fourth World theories of sovereignty begin and cannot

¹⁵ Arthur Manuel, 2015. p. 170.

¹⁶ *ibid.* 171.

¹⁷ Rudolph Rysler, 2012. p.12

¹⁸ *ibid.* p.10

be understood without the internal level. As both agree, colonialism is an intellectual exercise as much as it is a military, strategic or economic one. Colonialism could not have occurred anywhere in the world without its intellectual component. The military strength of the great powers was forceful but not strong enough to conquer on its own. As Edward Said describes in *Orientalism*, colonialism operated through renaming and categorizing cultures.¹⁹ As a result, 'race' became a vast category of civilization, as did education and economic status. As evidenced in the residential 'school' systems in Canada or the buffer class status of Indians (of India) in Africa, colonialism was a massive network of intellectual, personal, and economic attacks. Cultures, races, genders, and spiritual traditions were all effectively shaped by the colonial experience. Therefore, the first level of the sovereigntist movement was to reclaim and empower cultures and traditions throughout the world.

In his 1952 work *Black Skin/White Mask*, Franz Fanon is concerned with the pathology of racism that had taken over the human mindset. Yet when Fanon explains the situation he finds, as a psychiatrist for both sides of the battlefield, the colonial experience had shaped both whites and blacks (and browns) so thoroughly that we address it. The colonial system traps all races in psychosis, and he said, a dichotomy of the world that is neither truthful nor accurate.²⁰ This pathology, a psychological framework that has shaped the world, must be dismantled before any true sovereignty can be gained, he said. If a black man wants to be a white man, then there is no hope for freedom; all men have to be men-

human--neither white nor black. "I constantly tried to demonstrate to the black man that in a sense he abnormalizes himself, and to the white man that he is both mystifier and mystified."²¹

Fanon was quick to show that the category 'bourgeois white man' was not an enviable position. Without a psychological shift, anti-colonial movements and decolonization are just a dream. What is more, without a shift, bourgeois white men are doomed to intellectual death. Fanon writes:

I will remark on something I have found in many writers: intellectual alienation results from bourgeois society. And for me, bourgeois society is any society that becomes ossified in a predetermined mold, stifling any development, progress, or discovery. For me, bourgeois society is a closed society where it is not good to be alive, where the air is rotten, and ideas and people are putrefying. And I believe that any man that takes a stand against this living death is in a way a revolutionary.²²

Fanon's writing helped spark the Black Power movement throughout the world. Africans and Americans, Caribbean, like Fanon, alike fought this battle and continue today. The Black Lives Matter movement (BLM) has exploded once again in our conscientiousness, recognizing the ongoing nature of this work.

¹⁹ Edward Said, 1979.

²⁰ Edward Said, 1979.

²¹ *ibid.* p. 200.

²² *ibid.* p. 199.

In Canada, First Nations were not at all deaf to the movements of Black Power and the many writings of black revolutionaries throughout the world. In *Fourth World*, George Manuel describes in detail his travels to meet anti-colonial revolutionaries everywhere.²³ Lee Maracle has continued this line of thinking. For instance, in one of her many books, *I am Woman*, 1996, she writes, “The result of being colonized is the internalization of the need to remain invisible”²⁴ In her work, like Fanon, she remains steadfast to the idea that sovereignty begins by revitalizing the cultures that were decimated by colonialism: “Those who held fast to the essential principles of their culture went in the direction of sovereignty; those who became alienated from their communities trod in the direction of sub-normal integration.”²⁵ Maracle, like Fanon, also maintains that the relationship is mutual. And that colonized and colonizer are transformed by the end of colonialism: “what is revival and renaissance for a Native is death for the colonizer. For both of us, there is reconstruction and a future full of passion and compassion.”²⁶

The connection between Africa and First Nations in North America is clear in indigenous scholarships such as Lee Maracle, Glen Coulthard, Taiiike Alfred, and the Manuel’s, Arthur and George. Lee Maracle directly cites Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana’s first independent President, as a basis of “left-wing politics” in North America.²⁷ Coulthard discusses and mirrors Fanon in his book *Red Skin/White Mask*, and George and Arthur Manuel attribute the nomenclature of “Fourth World” to Tanzanian diplomats in Canada. Furthermore, because colonialism was

so thorough in eradicating languages and “re-educating” populations, education has been a central aspect of Third World and Fourth World revitalization. Under Julius Nyerere in Tanzania, decolonizing the mind and regaining pride was central to *Ujamaa* and what he would call the new ‘African Socialism’.²⁸ As Maracle writes, “... the settler’s education achieved, for a time, its goal: the imprisonment of the Native mind in the ideology of the oppressor.”²⁹ Therefore, the shift in internal value and personal will to rejuvenate the peoples destroyed by colonialism is the first premise of sovereignty and something both the Third and Fourth Worlds have in common.

Comparison Two: One World/Many Worlds

From the beginning, it was evident that sovereignty, institutionally, for Fourth World nations would be very different than that of the Third World states. Third World states fought hard for their independence, but in trying to be a part of the new system after colonialism and embracing the UN, as discussed above, many of the government’s oppressed nations within their boundaries. Some governments, like India, continue to have a special status for “scheduled tribes.” These peoples were Criminal Tribes

²³ It should be noted here that nearly the first half of George Manuel’s book *Fourth World* describes his land, people, and values. They are the source for all the meetings and institutions George Manuel created and in which he participated.

²⁴ Lee Maracle, 1996 p.8.

²⁵ *ibid.* p.37.

²⁶ *ibid.* p.10.

²⁷ *ibid.* p.106.

²⁸ Nyerere, 1973.

²⁹ Maracle, 1974 p.40.

under British rule, Adivasi, tribal, indigenous, minority, aboriginal, or First Nations people around the world.³⁰ Yet within the Third World, Fourth World people remain impoverished, lacking in land, resources, and education. Third World states have territorial sovereignty but with the same institutional trappings of the First and Second Worlds. Their operationalization of suppressing native lives and viewpoints to industrialize and grow their state. George Manuel suggests that Tanzania and a few other countries were the only ones to escape this. In Africa, however, as in Tanzania, most state governments are straddled by two or more nations. In most cases, including Tanzania, it wasn't easy to conceive a universally held belief system that could unify the country under one state government.

As Third World states sought and gained independence, beginning with India in 1947, each country gained a seat at the UN's General Assembly (GA). Yet not until the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995, any of the UN agencies based on 'one nation, one vote' systems. Also, everything the GA did was subject to the power of the permanent five countries on the Security Council (P5) at the UN. Newly forming states were aware of the troubles with sovereignty. The 'development regime' started, and countries became subject to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, to which many are still heavily indebted.³¹ On both sides, the First and Third World agreed that territorial sovereignty became a much better option than colonialism. For Fourth World nations, however, colonization continues to this day.

Although the idea was not entirely fleshed out in his theory, Kwame Nkrumah believed the sovereignty of individual states to be the "well-spring" of neo-colonialism, indicating the importance of political structures in the new foreign policy.

Decolonization is a word much and unctuously used by imperialist spokesmen to describe the transfer of political control from colonialist to African sovereignty. The motive spring of colonialism, however, still controls sovereignty.³²

Nevertheless, Third World states have used the UN to try and establish co-operation amongst themselves, such as with the G77, and continue to define themselves by their "third way" agenda.³³ Recently, governments of the Third World have voted overwhelmingly in favor of UNDRIP. The only states that were not signatories to this in 2007 were Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand.

According to Rudolph Rysler of the Centre for World Indigenous Studies and editor of the Fourth World Journal, over half of the wars in the world today are Fourth World wars.³⁴ The carving up of Africa in the late 1800s is evidence of this. In that agreement, 54 states were made from the 2000 tribes' territories of Africa, and most nations crossed at least two or three state

³⁰ Mohan Guruswamy <https://scroll.in/article/773759/adivasi-indias-original-inhabitants-have-suffered-the-most-at-its-hands>

³¹ Frans Schrumman, 1994, Dambisa Moyo, 2009.

³² Kwame Nkrumah, p.31

³³ <https://www.g77.org/doc/>

³⁴ <https://www.cwis.org/>

boundaries.³⁵ The tension between nations and states in Africa is high. Still, so too is it for Second World nations (Chechnya, Bosnia, Poland) and First World nations (Sami, Catalonia, Celtic, Maori, First Nations, and American Indians). All Third World states struggle for their sovereignty internationally, in forums of the UN and elsewhere, and to be sure, they are all slightly different, but holding on to sovereignty has been difficult for them because of their colonial history and internal nations constantly buck their authority.³⁶ “Sovereign structures may be uniting and strengthening, but they may also assimilate peoples who resist state forces.”³⁷

To have international sovereignty, you must be recognized as a state by other states in the world. There is no such agreement for recognizing Fourth World nations, but the Council of World Indigenous Peoples continues to push for international mechanisms that recognize indigenous people and their rights on the same level as states. Nations have made passports and other internationally recognizable means to prove sovereignty, but to date, no mechanism allows them to speak to states on an equal playing field. Therefore, the accouterments of the state remain highly attractive because they allow you to speak on an international stage and be heard as a leader of people in a way that is not available to the Fourth World yet.

Interview with Dr. Rudolph Ryser

Dr. Ryser is the author of many books and had worked with George Manuel for many years. In our interview, I asked Dr. Ryser to explain the Fourth World, and he said, “Fourth

World is a construct linked to a concept in the four directions.” He said that George Manuel had traveled the world to meet indigenous people. When he discussed the four directions with Hopi people, he learned that indigenous people throughout the world related to the four directions. In that sense, the term Fourth World had a double meaning, establishing independence from state-based, three-world thinking and the ability to incorporate speaking to the four directions in almost any nation on the planet. The Third World, Ryser says, was an international creation to help the great powers of the time to decolonize. It was the attempt to bring in the era of “great power politics,” which would “dictate the conditions of peace in the world.” The new arrangement, he said, “allowed those who wanted to dominate to find a way to keep dominating”.

As this paper is about similarities and differences in the Third and Fourth World, I asked Dr. Ryser to shed light on other comparison areas other than the two I had. Although he said that comparing the Third and Fourth World was “like comparing apples and prunes,” he shed light on a significant area of difference that may have come under the material comparison in this paper. The Third World, of course, materialized as part of what was conceived as three levels in this world. The most important countries of the Second and First World would control the UN.

³⁵ Moammar Quadaffi, 1974.

³⁶ It should be noted here that nations and states cannot be divided that easily. Some nations control the state apparatus and govern according to their own cultural nations’ laws (such as Kenya). In contrast, others are nation-states, meaning their entire nation has a state apparatus (Vanuatu or Papua New Guinea).

³⁷ George Manuel, 1974 p.4

Britain, France, and the United States make up the First World on the Security Council P5, and China and Russia (the USSR) comprise the Second World. The Third World would be a construct created by the international system-if it did not want to align with the First or Second World, in most cases the former colonial powers-the Third World had to be formed. Claiming “sovereignty” was needed to be able to play in the same international system. Territorial sovereignty made them equal on at least one level.

The big difference between the Third and Fourth World that Dr. Ryser explained is that in one, we are describing a vertical framework, the ‘Third World’, mimicking the highly chauvinist and centralized systems of the First and Second World. Whereas in the ‘Fourth World,’ power and relationships are defined horizontally. In the Fourth World, people define themselves in dynamic and evolving relationships with other peoples, cultures, the land, and the cosmos. In that way, it must be understood, Ryser said, that in many ways, the Third World is made up of decolonized nations, but they wear the material of a state. “They don’t have the right pajamas,” he said. Dr. Ryser worked on the Declaration of Sovereignty in 1975 in the United States. Leaders of the US tribes at that time said, “sovereignty? - what the hell is that”? They took a few years to come around to the idea that to claim “sovereignty” in a way that states understood, in a language they understood, was important to explain to states that nations, Fourth World nations, were independently structured and governed. “Sovereignty”³⁸ was a French word coming from God and the pope, and it had little meaning to indigenous people in North America.

It was very interesting to learn about Dr. Ryser’s journey into this work. In 1844, his Cree ancestors joined a wagon train of about 200 Cree, Iroquois, and others from Red River to take space in Oregon for the Hudson’s Bay Company. The boundary for the United States was going to be lower than the 44th parallel, but it ended up-and they ended up-in the United States. The governments and the Hudson Bay company abandoned them, and they could not return Rupert’s Land³⁹ that was becoming Canada. His great-grandmother and grandfather took up work translating for treaty negotiations between the US government and tribes.⁴⁰ They began connecting with Nisqually, Cowlitz, Taidnapum, Chinook, and other peoples in what would become called south Puget Sound. His mother officially got status with the Cowlitz tribe in a large ceremony when her eight children were young.⁴¹ State recognition was not important to his mother, but tribal relationships were. She was very interested in learning, and all his siblings learned together and at a young age. His eldest brother gave him a typewriter, and he learned to type English. When

³⁸ The word “sovereignty” originates in the 14th century from the Anglo-French “sovereynete.” It means absolute authority, rule, supremacy of power or rank.

³⁹ It should be noted here that nations and states cannot be divided that easily. Some nations control the state apparatus and govern according to their own cultural nations’ laws (such as Kenya). In contrast, others are nation-states, meaning their entire nation has a state apparatus (Vanuatu or Papua New Guinea).

⁴⁰ Dr. Ryser’s great-grandmother was Oneida, and she died of liver disease in 1852. She helped with his Iroquois connections as well.

⁴¹ He was given a tribal ID card at this ceremony. (Number 861). The disbursement from Red River caused Ryser’s family to be in many tribes across America going back 360 years. He has discovered family in the Cowlitz, Oneida, Cree, Waskarini. His father is Swiss.

he was old enough, he joined tribal meetings where Colville Tribal Leader Lucy Covington and Blackfeet leader Earl Old Person were speaking. At that time, John F. Kennedy asked people to give up their Reservations for \$10,000 each person. Dr. Ryser joined a group of hard-working tribal leaders and activists lead by Colville Tribal Chair Mel Tonasket, with Bobbi Miller, Sherwin Broadhead, Ken Hanson, Joe Tollakson, Wendel George; and he said he learned then that any idea could be turned into a reality “not just rubbed on the belly.” He also learned from his upbringing that learning was a collective proposition. Learning together is the antithesis to university education in most places, where education can be competitive and isolating.

After working with American Indian Tribes across the United States, Dr. Ryser, following George Manuel, went global. Lately, he says, he has been unsatisfied with the International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions and unsatisfied with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Both the ILO statements and UN documents have elements and clauses that guarantee the territorial integrity of states. Nations are sidelined, and human rights and land recognition for indigenous nations do not have teeth--enforcement. Nations’ rights must be guaranteed and agreed to by the states, often the ones with which they have grievances. There is no international diplomatic platform upon which nations and states can speak to each other on an equal level. That is why Dr. Ryser is now attempting to convene the Congress of Nations and States. It brings together legal, economic, social, cultural, political, judicial, and security

ideas from around the world, trying to define and operationalize phrases such as “free, prior, and informed consent”, for both nations and states. For 50 years, indigenous people have been meeting at the UN but having little luck securing human and environmental rights. There are many international agreements between states and nations but no platform where grievances can be aired and heard.⁴²

Conclusion

The Fourth World was always set to be international. It was imperative for George and later Arthur Manuel that the fight for anti-colonial sovereignty was a global one. Indigenous nations had great strength together against a system of sovereignty and statehood that oppressed them. Also, as Arthur Manuel writes in *Unsettling Canada*, the indigenous people cannot fight for their rights against the state itself. Primarily, this is because legal fights cannot be conducted without courts being in a conflict of interest. Violence becomes the only option to win against a state, but Fourth World nations would most likely lose in that regard even if there was such a will. It is worth putting in a long quote from Ryser here to explain this further. It describes how to transform the wars between nations and states into something productive.

The nation, the human organism from which all humans originate, is the parent of the state. It is from the heart of nations that the concept of the state arose. The “modern

⁴² <https://www.cnsint.org/>

state” is another of many experiments attempted to constructively advance the human condition. As the parent from which the state springs, each nation is obligated to ensure that the state fulfils its purpose. But, when the experiment fails, there is no obligation to force the continued existence of the state. The nation is more than adequate to serve as an independent international personality on its own. It is quite realistic that the world’s political landscape should contain both nations and states as independent political entities.⁴³

In *Indigenous Nations and Modern States*, Ryser gives us several tools to create institutions that would deal with the conditions that exacerbate the violence in the world. He believes that not only can there be peace, but it would be a much more productive and interesting world to live in. Ryser is again putting these ideas into motion by attempting to create the Congress of Nations and States.⁴⁴

As for the world’s theory, at the UN the Third World regularly meets as the G77. There are now 133 countries, but they retain their name for historical reference. At the UN these countries have now been labelled “developing countries”, but the nomenclature does not reflect the meaning of the G77 who affirms the need for the organization and continue to fight for “full employment, collaboration and south-south cooperation”.⁴⁵ The G77 claims that economic and environmental failures have exposed the wide inequalities in the world and problems with the system. In 2014, in Bolivia, the group met (with

China too) and laid forth 242 points to create a “new world order for living well”. Point 141 calls for direct reform of the IMF but in relation to the discussion here it is interesting to note how many points relate to indigenous nations within their states. For instance, point 28 reads:

We reaffirm that indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State. In this regard, we emphasize the need to respect and safeguard indigenous cultural identities, knowledge and traditions in our countries.

Also, in point 104 they call for technical exchange between indigenous nations and states, so they can harmonize and live together fighting for their goals through an “inter-governmental” scientific panel. The G77 agrees that “policy space” to deal with the economic and environmental issues across the globe has not been created at the UN and must be developed.⁴⁶ Needless to say, this group continues to meet and show the significance of the Third World movement.

As has been noted this comparative analysis explains many of the conflicts in the world. States

⁴³ Rudolph Ryser p.227.

⁴⁴ www.cnsint.org

⁴⁵ [https://www.g77.org/doc/A-68-948\(E\).pdf](https://www.g77.org/doc/A-68-948(E).pdf)

⁴⁶ Ibid.

fighting nations and vice-versa has not abated as shown by current problems with the Rohingyas in Burma and the Uighurs in China, Ethiopia and Tigris and many others. The persistent problems in the continent of Africa shows how damaging the state can be to indigenous nations and the lasting consequence of the creation of African states during colonialism. These boundaries remained in Africa because the changing of state boundaries was deemed too violent. Nevertheless, today many nations span two or three state boundaries and the jurisdictions between them becomes blurred and often violent. Yet the imperialist nature of the world system persists. Many African or other Third World countries find themselves grovelling and shifting to austerity in order to fit the conditionalities of IMF loans. This debate continues in Africa as China tries to be the 'non-imperialist' developer of the continent. Unless the world system becomes more democratic, the battle between countries able to influence the vast riches of Africa will continue. The material gain of state sovereignty in the Third World has not been able to make the Third World equal to the First, particularly in economic, environmental, women's, or cultural justice.

In terms of internal sovereignty and the similarities in the Third and Fourth World, we have seen an explosion of the importance of internal decolonization. In the BLM movement, for instance, indigenous, black and people of colour have worked together across the globe to push for internal sovereignty and recognition of the importance of their lives. With so many indigenous and black people incarcerated in North America, there is no doubt of the need

to create democratization between people and institutions of power and there is no doubt of the need to develop the understanding between racialized groups and white people or people in power.

This comparison has brought forth the notion that Fourth World nations may pick up some ideas from how the Third World was formed. Recently in Canada, indigenous lobster fishers have been involved in violent confrontations with non-indigenous fishers and in some cases state police. What has happened is nation-to-nation cooperation much like the south-south cooperation emphasized by the Third World. The First Nations Finance Authority helped to buy a fishery in Nova Scotia, Canada so that they can control operations.⁴⁷ The concept of First Nations helping each other out could be a precedent going forward that would at least develop more solidarity between indigenous nations.

Comparatively, the Third and Fourth Worlds have a different institutional approach. Yet no matter, all states on the planet must live with the Fourth World-it is an entrenched issue that needs attention. As I said in the beginning of this paper, political science as a discipline has scarcely paid any attention to the Fourth World. In Canada, much is being said about the myriad of problems facing indigenous people of Turtle Island, yet the foundations of the Fourth World have scarcely been paid attention to even though it was George

⁴⁷ <https://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/first-nations-chief-calls-1-billion-clearwater-deal-a-generational-acquisition-1.5181778>

Manuel and the relationship with Canada and the UN, that created the wholistic concept. All disciplines are desperately trying to increase indigenous presence and departments on campus, but the fundamental basis of European education is not addressed. Cooperative, open, oral and indigenous knowledge are scarcely brought to the table.

This paper is inspired by my personal journey as I was born in Kamloops (home to the Manuel family). Almost no one in my white settler world to this day, educated or not, has heard of George Manuel or the amazing work he inspired worldwide. Enter in Fanon's version of bourgeois education, stale and putrefying, not the living

breathing reality of the world around us. The Third and Fourth World are still very relevant concepts even if one day we decide to change the nomenclature.⁴⁸ (Dictionary.com has already done this!)

Finally, in truth, and as Dr. Ryser pointed out, these two entities, the third and fourth world, cannot be compared. In ways, the Fourth World is akin to the four directions in indigenous belief and has nothing to do with the idea of the First, Second and Third World. Yet, this study has revealed that if we are to understand conflict in the current day then we must engage states and nations and must accept that the state is a young creation that can keep growing and evolving.

⁴⁸This paper is being sent to publish just as the bodies of 215 children were found in Kamloops. Bodies will be found across the country and the numbers are already in the 500's with Manitoba, Canada (home to the Red River). The lack of education and isolation in my own childhood was bad but this has been an outrageous act of genocide. We hope the children finally get home.

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Sabina was born in Kamloops BC to parents who came from India. Her PhD was a case study in Uganda, and she taught African Politics at the University of Victoria. After finishing her degree, Sabina began to research and write about connections between indigenous people throughout the world following the work of George Manuel. She is now helping to convene the Congress of Nations and States with the Center for World Indigenous Studies.