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

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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 roll in current politics.** This study looks specifically at expressions of sovereignty within the colonial framework. By comparing third and fourth world theories of sovereignty this study will ask if these concepts are still relevant today and what implications they may have for international politics.

Introduction:

When Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and George Manuel of the Neskonlith nation met in the 1970s, (Ryser) they were both tasked with attempting to define sovereignty under a colonial system. What were the similarities and differences in these conceptions of sovereignty in the 1970s? What challenges in achieving sovereignty arose in each context? What did the Neskonlith 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 (Neskonlith) fourth

world? **Are these concepts still relevant and how have they evolved?** In comparing the divergent pathways to sovereignty in these two territories, I will link the past to the present specifically by exploring why the joint meetings remain relevant today. This study will explore the current day impacts of the unlikely intersection of leaders from two vastly different parts of the world.

I submit, following Rudolph Ryser, Arthur Manuel, Taiaike Alfred 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 really become part of academic discourse and its absence is the result of colonial and parochial academics. Academics that seek to conform and pad the status quo rather than look for truth. According to Ryser's book *Indigenous Nations and Modern States* (2012), The fourth world theory enables us to explain over half of the conflict in the world today, and the real politics that occur outside of popular news cycles and official state rhetoric. In safe and secure Canada, it is finally beginning to boil. No state in the world is free from the fourth world and their politics, but the ones that attempt to maintain a politics of oppression through denial of the existence of indigenous people, such as in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, have the most to lose by the acknowledgement of the premise of their sovereignty. Finally, I submit that these countries have much more to gain than is often imagined by working with this theory. Colonialism, is after all, and as Franz Fanon explained, a two-way street. Both sides are colonized and both will be freed by its demise.

The work indigenous people have done to shine 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. The paper is mostly set in the 1970s when this movement began in earnest, and carries on until today.

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 of sovereignty and the differences in how these two theories have sought to institutionalize or operationalize their theories given the world structures that they are part of. Finally, I look at how these theories and practices of sovereignty are similar or different today.

This 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. It is my submission that the era of 'great power' politics has long ended and new theories are surpassing its explanatory power. This paper is exploratory and I hope useful to scholars in these fields.

Part One: Introduction to the third and fourth world

The third world was a theory created in response to decolonization and the Cold War. As Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first independent leader said, sovereignty

was a very precarious and uncertain time for the colonies. (Nkrumah 1965) Among the freedom flags, colonies joined the United Nations (UN) and set up new relationships with their former colonial powers. Tanzania paid severances, Ghana made oil and infrastructure deals, Uganda's banking remained British. These small examples display the times of independence. All across the globe sovereignty was being negotiated and new world structures were created to smooth the transition. Perhaps this was necessary for Europe to stop warring but the wars traveled the globe and continued after the end of World War II and the formation of the UN.

In 1955, 6 African and 23 Asian nations, former colonies, came together to discuss their future in Bandung Indonesia. Before this, they had met as the League Against Imperialism although those meetings were illegal. 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 national level leadership to meet and discuss decolonization in the rest of the world. There were many issues within this third world. While they talked of non-alignment and south-south cooperation, many countries were known to be making pacts with Moscow, Washington or Paris, and storing weapons. The path towards independence had been a bloody one for all these nations.

Over a few decades the third world was formed. 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 in order to sever the economic strangle-hold the imperial countries still had over most of their former colonies. It was important to

stay out of the Cold War, but as most African and South American countries, India and Pakistan and many more learned, staying out the Cold War and being non-aligned would be a major hurdle. What became clear through Bandung, however, was that UN would be an organization that former colonies would uphold. Despite, the Security Council and the weighted voting systems of the World Bank and IMF, these countries reaffirmed the main principles of the UN including non-interference and territorial integrity. (Prashad, 2008)

In the rest of this paper, I will discuss the basis on third world sovereignty through both its ideological and institutional accomplishments. I will discuss how the concept of the third world 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 poor or impoverished places.

"My belief in the Fourth World is an act of faith", George Manuel wrote in his 1974 book *Fourth World* authored with Michael Polsun. (Manuel, G. 1974, 261) What he meant was that the fourth world is a long journey not a destination or final resting place. It represents a thriving, 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.

The fourth world, like the third world, is a comprehensive theory. That it has been largely ignored in academia is a subject I will re-visit in the conclusions of this paper. It differs from the third world because Manuel conceived of it as a "global village". (Manuel, G. 1974, 261). Furthermore, it is open to anyone to join. It is not

based on statehood, race, ethnicity or language. Although, the Canadian government, along with most others in the world, has been challenged by First Nation's sovereignty, it is clearly a worldwide movement, a situation that all governments must contend with today.

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". ((Manuel, G. 1974, 236) 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. But 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 fourth world as a theory has approaches to land, education, spiritual establishments, technology, community and sharing. 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 by the Nuu-chah-nulth nation on Vancouver Island. Representatives' included people from Argentina, Guyana, Ecuador, Finland, Norway Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Guatemala, Greenland, a total of 260 participants. (Manuel, Arthur. 2015, 170) 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 their observer status at the UN to the WCIP. (Manuel, Arthur. 2015,171). Though the WCIP does not exist as an organization as of 1996, it has found a home in global forums at he 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.

In *Indigenous Nations and Modern States: The Political Emergence of Nations Challenging State Power,* Rudolph Ryser notes that the between 500- 9000 nations (depending on the source) in the world are pressing the international system and waiting for their seat at the international table. (Ryser, 2012, 12) The small steps taken by the UN to recognize indigenous rights are not enough. As the Westphalian system is challenged nations are emerging. Numerous states face low-level intensity or straight out violent conflicts. (Ryser, 2012, 10).

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. In order to be interested one would have to accept that we have missed something in political science, a perspective, which has significant explanatory power. The differences between them, which I will demonstrate in the next section, deepen our understanding of third world states and fourth world sovereignty. The similarities capture solidarity, and allow us to see

Canada and world politics differently. As I have said, the fourth world in particular, presents itself as an indispensible theory.

The first level I'd like to look at in terms of sovereignty in the third and fourth world is the one where they have a striking similarity. Both third and fourth world theories of sovereignty begin at the internal level. Colonialism is an intellectual exercise as much as it is a military y, strategic or economic one. Colonialism could not have occurred anywhere in the world without its intellectual component. Military strength of the great powers was strong but not strong enough to conquer on its own. As Edward Said describes in *Orientalism,* colonialism operated through renaming and categorizing cultures. (Said, 1979) As a result 'race' became a huge 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 in Africa, colonialism was a massive network of both intellectual personal and economic attacks. Cultures, races, genders and spiritual traditions were all effectively shaped by the colonial experience. The first level of the sovereigntist movement therefore, 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, that the colonial experience had shaped the mindset of both whites and blacks so thoroughly that it must be addressed. Both whites and blacks a trapped in psychosis, a dichotomy of the world, which is neither truthful nor accurate. (Fanon, 1967, xviii) This pathology, a psychological framework that has shaped the world, must be

dismantled before any true sovereignty can be gained. 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." (Fanon, 1967, 200)

Fanon was quick to show that the category 'bourgeois white man' was not an enviable position. His writing helped spark the Black Power movement throughout the world. Africans and Americans alike fought this battle and continue today. Without the psychological shift, anti-colonialism and decolonization are just a dream. Fanon writes:

> I will remark on something I have found in many writers: intellectual alienation is a result of 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. (Fanon, 1967, 199).

In Canada, the First Nations were not deaf to the movements of Black Power and the many writings of black revolutionaries throughout the world. In *The Fourth World*, George Manuel describes in detail his travels to meet anti-colonial revolutionaries everywhere. He created a worldwide indigenous movement. Yet, it should ne noted here that nearly the first half of his book F*ourth World* is a description of his land, his people and his values. They are the source for all the meetings and institutions.

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" (Maracle, 1996, 8) 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." (Maracle, 1996, 37) Maracle 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." (Maracle, 1996, 10)

The connection between Africa and the indigenous people of Canada is clear in indigenous scholarship such as Glen Coulthard, Taiaike Alfred and certainly the Manuels, Arthur and George. Lee Maracle directly sites Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first independent President as a basis of "left-wing politics" in North America. (Maracle, 1996, 106). Coulthard discusses Fanon, and George and Arthur Manuel attribute the nomenclature of "fourth world" to the Tanzanian diplomat in Canada at the time.

Furthermore, because colonialism was so thorough in eradicating languages and 'reeducating' populations, education has been a central aspect of both third world and fourth world revitalization. Under Julius Nyerere in Tanzania it was central to *Ujaama* and what he would call the new 'African Socialism'. (Nyerere, 1973) 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." (Maracle, 1996,40) The shift in internal value and personal will to rejuvenate the peoples

destroyed by colonialism is therefore the first premise of sovereignty and something both the third and fourth worlds have in common.

Different approaches to Institutional politics

In 1975, George Manuel was President of the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB), which had observer status at the UN. He had already been meeting Indigenous people throughout the world and planned to create the World Council of Indigenous People (WCIP) which convened for the first time in that year in Port Alberni, British Columbia, and hosted on the traditional territories of the Nuu-Chah-nulth. The WCIP was plagued by internal troubles. Yet, the WCIP was one of the first meetings to establish the fourth world and their position within the UN. Manuel gave the representatives of the WCIP the UN observer status of the NIB and became the institution's first President.

From the beginning, it was obvious the sovereignty, institutionally, for fourth world nations would be very different than that of the third world. Third world nations fought hard for their independence, but in trying to be a part of the new system after colonialism, many of the governments oppressed nations within their boundaries, George Manuel suggests that Tanzania and a few other countries were the only ones to escape this.

The third world had met for many years, beginning with the League Against Imperialism in the 1920s, to combat colonial systems of governance. As they started to become independent, beginning with India in 1947, each country gained a seat at the General Assembly of the UN, yet not until the creation of the World Trade

Organisation (WTO) were any of the UN agencies based on 'one nation, one vote' systems. Newly forming states were well aware of the troubles with sovereignty. It became, however, a much better option than colonialism (and the great powers could no longer afford them). 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.

> Decolonisation is a word much and unctuously used by imperialist spokesman to describe the transfer of political control from colonialist to African sovereignty. The motive spring of colonialism, however, still controls sovereignty. 31

Nevertheless third world states have used the UN to try and establish co-operation amongst themselves, such as with the Group of 77, and continued to define themselves by their 'third way' agenda. Recently, governments of the third world have voted overwhelmingly in favour of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The only states that were not signatories to this were Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand.

According to Rudolph Ryser 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. The carving up of Africa in the late 1800s is evidence of this. In that agreement, 54 states were made out of the 2000 tribes of Africa (Quaddaffi, 1974) and most nations crossed at least two or three state boundaries. The tension between nations and states in Africa is high, but so too is it for second world nations (Chechnya, Bosnia, Poland) and first world nations (Sami, Catalonia, Celtic). 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 not only because of their colonial history but because internal nations constantly buck their authority. "Sovereign structures may be uniting and strengthening but they may also assimilate peoples who resist state forces." (George Manuel, 1974, 4)

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. They 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 most likely lose it that regard. 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 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. 227 Rudolf C Ryser

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.

> We must establish new international institutions, new international tools for providing the transition from a world of states to a world of nations and states. We must provide the means for nations to resolve long-standing disputes between them – most will be concerned with unresolved land and natural resource questions. The means must be provided for nations and states to resolve disputes between them after the collapse of a state as well as before the collapse. Finally, we must create new transitional structures between nations, and nations and states to replace crumbling state structures and in this way minimalize violent conflict and maximize systematic peaceful change. 228 Rudolf C Ryser

Comparatively, the third and fourth worlds have a different institutional approach. Yet no matter, all states on the planet must deal with the fourth world - it is an entrenched issue and needs attention. As I said in the beginning of this paper, that political science as a discipline has scarcely paid any attention to the fourth world is problematic. 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.

Conclusion

This paper is inspired by my personal journey. I was born in Kamloops (home to the Manuel family) and lived there off and on for some years. 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. I would say I began studying

international development because white academia thought it a good place for an Indian girl. The reality of this finally shocked me. How can I be educated and no so little about my world? Bring in Fanon's version of bourgeois education, stale and putrefying, not the living breathing reality of the worl around us.

Not only are these concepts, third and fourth world, still relevant but they are crucial to our worls. International relations based on Kant and Spinoza will no longer due. States have tried to order to world in their image but the nations of the world remain strong and committed. Without addressing the possible flow of this connection we are doomed to violence.

The implications of using the fourth world theory are important. UNDRIP has finally been entrenched at the UN but many more organizastions are needed to make indigenous rights a reality. One sadly only need look at Canada, home of the theory of the fourth world, to see how much work is needed. Women go missing, people are jailed at an alarming rate, water quality is poor and suicide is high. The Idle No More Movement was an important one is Canada but all people, indigenous or not, should look to the journey and dream of the Manuel's. A world where we are all invited to respect the land and the people.

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