

# Ford and Civilization

**The 4X Game** - The 4 X's stand for: - Explore, Expand, Exploit, Exterminate

**The Cons:**

- **Invisibilization**
  - Active erasure of lack of visibility of certain groups
    - \* In civilization:
      - All emphasis is put on colonizers and not the other non-colonizing cultures
      - All win scenarios require a sense of greed, nulling the effect of having many different world cultures to choose from. Extermination and erasure is always a part of the end goal.
- **Othering**
  - Highlighting supposed superiority in one group over another; the act of dehumanizing and villainizing others that aren't you
- **Universalization**
  - Projecting an identical notion of sameness onto everyone
  - Flattening of diversity of values, needs, motivations, and ethics
    - \* Civ portrays the White and Western history as the probably path for all other societies
- **Technological Determinism**
  - All prior technological and philosophical discoveries are portrayed as predictable or easily foreseen
- **Social Evolutionism**
  - Every society follows a specific path of “civilization”
    - \* Nomadic to Agricultural to Industrial to the Arms Race, etc.
  - Incorrect as societies develop according to the needs and desires which are heavily influenced by local constructs and less so global advancement or influence
- **Portrayal of Indigenous People**
  - “Additive Approach”
    - \* Base level additions into the game that only add the mere presence, voice, or appearance of other cultures
    - \* Doesn't result in any real core changes
    - \* Potentially leads to stereotypes being embraced in the characters, ignoring the knowledge or will of the families and tribes that it seeks to include
- **Authoritarianism**
  - The *only* leadership model is Dictatorship
    - \* Revolution, peaceful transfer of power, etc. are not represented
  - Based heavily in Ethno-Nationalism
- **The End Goal of Advancement**
  - What does “winning” in Civ tell us about the present and the future
    - \* Are answers provided for threats such as Climate Change, over consumption, etc.?

## Explore

- Assumes that until a colonizer steps onto some land, it is empty or only filled with resources to be exploited
  - Historically, Papal Authority declared all land not explored by Christians to be open for expansion (1100 - 1500)
  - Explicitly sanctioned murder and genocide of non Christians

## Educational Value

### 3 General Stances

- Valuable since it inspires interest and self motivated learning
- Not Valuable because it is inaccurate and leaves out critical thinking or information, making it invaluable for teaching
- Valuable, if and only if it is supplemented by critical inquiry and reading

# How to Change the Narrative

## Modify the win scenarios

- Survival rather than domination
- Mutually assured survival or cooperation
- Introduce wellness measures outside of one's GDP, money, etc.

## When River's Were Trails (Sovereign Games)

- In part a response to the Oregon Trail where Indigenous people are only ever seen as obstacles to the player's win condition
- Formatted like other games (such as Where the Water Tastes Like Wine) that focus on coming at history from a certain groups perspective and focusing on the accumulation of stories
- Developed as part of a statewide curriculum for public school students