



Europa Universalis IV and Fairly Radical History(ing)

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<p>Tiivistelmä - Abstrakt - Abstract</p> <p>Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan Europa Universalis IV-strategiapeliä historioimisen (history(ing)) kannalta kolonialismin kautta. Työssä määritellään peli historiana, jonka lisäksi arvioidaan pelaajien osallistumista "suhteellisen radikaaliin historioimiseen" pelin yhteisöfoorumeilla. Lähdemateriaali koostuu siis itse pelistä ja sen lisäosista sekä tekstuaalisesta osasta valikoitujen pelin kehittämistä koskevien keskustelujen muodossa. Työssä tutkitaan pelin kehittäjä-historioitsijan ja pelaaja-historioitsijan (developer-historian ja player-historian) historioimisen tasoa ja mahdollista kohtaamista em. keskusteluissa, jossa he ottaisivat osaa dialogiseen ja dialektiseen historioimiseen. Tutkielman metodologia rakentui yhdistämällä kaksi käsitteellistä tasoa: historiallinen-tarina-pelitila ((hi)story-play-space; Chapman 2016) ja ongelmatila (problem space; McCall 2012). Tämä mahdollisti sekä pelin mekaanisen retoriikan (procedural rhetoric) ja sen tekemien historiallisten väittämien avaamisen että myös syvällisen analyysin siitä, minkälaista historiaa peli pelaajille tarjoaa. Tekstuaalisen osion laadullinen analyysi keskittyi keskustelun tason molempien näiden näkökulmien osalta. Pelin laajuuden vuoksi materiaalia rajaamaan valittiin esimerkkitapaukseksi kolonialismi, jonka voi nähdä yhtenä tärkeimmistä pelimekaniikoista. Tutkielman tuloksena näyttää siltä, että yhteisöfoorumeilla todella osallistutaan "suhteellisen radikaaliin historioimiseen", vaikka kyseessä onkin vain pieni osa kaikista pelaajista. Keskustelussa käytettyjä väittämiä perusteltiin ajoittain tutkimuskirjallisuuden avulla, eikä keskustelu päättynyt historiallisiin aiheisiin, vaan jatkui itse pelin pohtimiseen historiallisen kerronnan muotona. Mikäli lähdemateriaalia olisi valittu yhteisöfoorumeilta tarkemmin, olisi saattanut olla mahdollista arvioida osallistumista historioimiseen vielä kattavammin. Lisäksi tässä materiaalissa pelin kehittäjän ja pelaajan välinen dialogi jäi todella vähäiseksi ja mahdollinen tuleva tutkimus voisi keskittyä tutkimaan nimenomaan kysymyksiä siitä, miten pelin muutettavat seikat valitaan ja ovatko muutokset jotenkin neuvoteltuja kehittäjän ja pelaajien välillä.</p> <p>This thesis defined the grand strategy game Europa Universalis IV as a historical piece, as well as looked into the engagement of players into fairly radical history(ing) on the community forums. The primary material for analysis consisted of the game itself with its expansions, along with a textual component in the form of selected Developer Diary entries. The aim was to explore the level of history(ing) by developer-historians and player-historians alike, and their possible confrontations in these Diaries, i.e., the engagement in dialogic and dialectical process of history(ing). The methodology was synthesized by merging two conceptualizations: (hi)story-play-space (Chapman 2016) and problem space (McCall 2012). This allowed not only to look at the procedural rhetoric of EUIV and the claims made about history in the game, but also at what kind of history it afforded to the players. The qualitative analysis for the text component concentrated on the level of discussion on both of these aspects. Colonialism provided a case study for analysis since it has central gameplay mechanics. In essence, the results of this study found that there certainly is some "fairly radical history(ing)" (Chapman 2016) going on in the community forums, albeit by a small minority of the players. The discussion was sometimes backed by actual sources, and not only was history debated, but also the game form itself in respect to history. With a more carefully planned selection of primary material from the community forums, it would have been possible to estimate the actual level of participation, which was not possible with the current data. Furthermore, there was very little dialogue between the Developer and the player-base, and more research should go into how the mechanics to be altered are chosen, and whether these changes are negotiated or not.</p>	
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Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1. Topic and Research Questions.....	1
1.2. Concepts and Research Methods	6
1.3. Source Material and the Current State of Research	12
2. Procedural Rhetoric of Europa Universalis IV.....	15
2.1. Constructing the Problem Space	15
2.2. Exploration... of Affordances and Constraints	23
2.3 History Afforded for Exploration in This (Hi)story-play-space	32
3. Engaging in Fairly Radical History(ing).....	35
3.1. The Premises for Developer- and Player-Historian.....	35
3.2. Wealth of the Expansions – the Discussion	39
3.3. The Extent of Involvement.....	49
4. Conclusions.....	52
Sources and Bibliography	56

List of Figures

Figure 1 – A dynamic future narrative.....	8
Figure 2 – The main user interface.....	15
Figure 3 – A problem space within a (Hi)story-play-space	18
Figure 4 – The Mission Tree	20
Figure 5 – The ‘Colonist’	26
Figure 6 – The ‘Colonial’ and ‘Trade Company’ regions	29
Figure 7 – Affordances and constraints.....	34

1. Introduction

1.1. Topic and Research Questions

In short, this research will seek to address history(ing) within the context of *Europa Universalis IV* through colonialism; colonialism was chosen as the focus since it is more or less clearly definable as an 'event' within the timeframe and has also major gameplay functions. The project seeks to explore the following questions:

1. What kind of *affordances* and *constraints* comprise the *procedural rhetoric* on colonialism, i.e., what kind of history can players explore through the game?
2. How has the *procedural rhetoric* changed over time due to DLC and updates and how is change commented on by the player community; on what level do the players engage in history(ing)?

The focus thus lies on the discrepancies in the perceived authenticity of the simulation and the developers attempt to mend and change the *procedural rhetoric* of the game to produce something with more 'flavor', i.e., something with an increased level of suspension of disbelief.¹ Thus, in greater detail, the first goal is to unravel the ways in which history is simulated in the game, using colonialism as a focal point: exploring which mechanisms govern this integral aspect of expansion in the game world and how is it presented to the player via the actual theoretical claim, the rhetoric; what is colonialism in *EUIV*? The second question addresses the quality of the discussion in which the player community address the *issues* in the game, i.e., mechanics or lack thereof which conflict with their understanding of history - the dialogue between the developer(-historians) and player(-historians) could constitute fairly radical history(ing).

The game chosen for analysis - *Europa Universalis IV* - is the most recent iteration of a 4X-games series with multiple instalments developed by Paradox Development Studio and published by Paradox Interactive. Before further delving into the actual research, it seems natural to provide the reader with a brief overview of the game and the academic context.

¹ "something with an increased level of suspension of disbelief" is just a way to conceptualize the expansions and their possible goals.

The first *Europa Universalis* came out in 2001 and the latest, the fourth one, in 2013. The game, or rather its first iteration, was based on a board game from the early 1990s of the same name.² This boardgame, with some 172 pages of rules and annexes, 1412 counters and two maps, one depicting Europe and the other rest of the world, was undeniably one of those more ambitious games that were way too complicated to be comfortably played on the board; it is ranked as one of the longest playtime games on BGG (BoardGameGeek, a website for all with an interest in boardgames) and has a playtime of approximately 60 hours, or 7.5 full working days on average.³ In all the games, players choose a country they wish to play as - European one in the original - and govern their chosen realm for the designated time of each scenario, of which the longest is the grand-campaign, spanning from 1444 to 1821. Although the original board game did not, surprisingly, reach huge popularity, its conversion to PC by Paradox really did and its fanbase has only grown along the years: *Europa Universalis IV* was released in 2013 and reached a million registered players on STEAM (the most prominent gaming platform in the world)⁴ in June 2016, which is historically high for a game of this kind - pun intended.⁵

EUIV is categorised as a grand strategy, or historical sand-box game and the description on Steam store goes as follows:

Fulfill Your Quest For Global Domination: Paradox Development Studio is back with the fourth installment of the award-winning *Europa Universalis* series. The empire building game *Europa Universalis IV* gives you control of a nation to guide through the years in order to create a dominant global empire. Rule your nation through the centuries, with unparalleled freedom, depth and historical accuracy. True exploration, trade, warfare and diplomacy will be brought to life in this epic title rife with rich strategic and tactical depth.⁶

² Funnily enough, the circle has now been completed as Paradox is publishing a boardgame based on their videogames: *Europa Universalis: The Board Game* (2019).

³ <https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/4102/europa-universalis> 30.3.2016 22:26

⁴ <https://www.pcgamer.com/steam-has-over-one-billion-accounts/> 24.08.2013 12:02 Registered users reached one billion in early 2019.

⁵ <https://www.paradoxplaza.com/news/Grand-success/> 12.01.2017 03:31

⁶ https://store.steampowered.com/app/236850/Europa_Universalis_IV/ 24.08.2019 14:22

Even from just this description, it is clear that we are speaking about a game that is attempting to simulate empire-building in the early modern period on a grand level. “To create a dominant global empire” also suggests that we are speaking about a 4X game: explore, expand, exploit, and exterminate - a genre defined by Alan Emrich already in 1993.⁷ But what does historical accuracy mean in this context? This question is undeniably relevant as, along with its popularity within the gaming community, EUIV has garnered the interest of educators.

Most results on google scholar search with ‘Europa universalis’ indeed yield results on the possible use of videogames in education, which in the very least indicates some level of success in the games representation of *a* history. The consensus seems to be that the effectiveness of games as pedagogical tools is unquestionable, for their potential for teaching and learning is apparently unlike any other medium, even though they require a tremendous effort from the actual teachers.⁸ This effort usually means mastering the game and its mechanics, i.e., internalizing its *procedural rhetoric*, but it also requires the understanding of the particular *problem space* and its limitations. Specifically, research using an installment of Europa Universalis concluded that: students developed a more holistic understanding and interest in historical information through playing the game.⁹ And this is the key to understanding what ‘accuracy’ means in this case: it is not accuracy in events or dates, but rather accuracy in the historical simulation as a particular *problem space*, e.g., how accurately it depicts *the possible*, the multiplicity of plausible past realities.¹⁰

⁷ Alan Emrich, ‘MicroProse’s Strategic Space Opera Is Rated XXXX’, *Computer Gaming World*, 110 (1993), 92–93. p.92

⁸ Kurt Squire and Sasha Barab, ‘Replaying History: Engaging Urban Underserved Students in Learning World History through Computer Simulation Games’, in *Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Learning Sciences* (International Society of the Learning Sciences, 2004), pp. 505–12. p.507 & Simon Egenfeldt-Nielsen, ‘Practical Barriers in Using Educational Computer Games’, *On the Horizon*, 12.1 (2004), 18–21. p.18

⁹ Aroutis N Foster, ‘The Process of Learning in a Simulation Strategy Game: Disciplinary Knowledge Construction’, *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 45.1 (2011), 1–27. p.26

¹⁰ Rather than ‘historical accuracy’ one could evoke ‘authenticity’; the level of *suspension of disbelief* the simulation possesses when it comes to the processes it tries to simulate, or the history it tries to tell – authenticity. Usually this is referred in DLC’s or forums as ‘flavor’, as added mechanics add flavor to the simulation and make it more ‘real’. Again, this is just a conceptualization to make sense of this activity.

This is exactly the locus of current academic interest: in what ways do games engage in history and what does that afford to the user/player. Arguably, the developer can be understood as engaging in doing history in a very real manner:

The recognition that history is not an objective science but a process of ‘shaping’ the past into something meaningful means that the history that emerges in narrative form depends on two factors. First, it depends on which data are chosen (the facts), and second, on how they are put together (the process).¹¹

This conceptualization in which the developer arranges past fragments into an interpretation, into a historical simulation, is the base for understanding the developer as a *developer-historian* in Chapman’s theoretical framework. Consequently, although this medium does not intuitively seem a very natural way to transmit historical knowledge - as in comparison to peer reviewed articles or referenced books - it does offer an extra something: an access to ‘doing history’, a shortcut into *historical thinking*.

By first acknowledging the *developer-historian* this would enable the user becoming a *player-historian*: by the process of internalizing the games mechanics, its *procedural rhetoric* by experimenting with the game (i.e., playing it), the player becomes able to criticize it, to criticize a certain historical claim or claims in it.¹² These concepts will be further explored and defined in detail in the following subsection, but for now it should be clear that games like EUIV can be understood to engage the user in history(ing), engaging them in ‘doing’ history on some level.

Following this logic, historical games such as EUIV can be understood as a historical form, and in some ways also as historiographical pieces; they make arguments about the past, and more importantly, throughout their existence they are constantly being altered through updates and DLC (downloadable content, usually *expansions* or *flavor packs*). This constant change could be seen as an effort to negotiate a more authentic simulation of the past, and sometimes players engage in this discourse as well through a process of ‘modding’. Specifically, Thomas

¹¹ Andrew Elliott, ‘Simulations and Simulacra: History in Video Games’, *Práticas Da História Journal on Theory, Historiography and Uses of the Past*, 2017.5 (2017), 11–41. p.23

¹² Adam Chapman, *Digital Games as History: How Videogames Represent the Past and Offer Access to Historical Practice* (Routledge, 2016). p.22

Apperley suggests that by modding the games code, its *procedural rhetoric*, the modder directly engages in a discussion about the past with the developer, in a debate about the games' historical verisimilitude or authenticity.¹³ In a very loose sense this could be seen as historiography, and the proposition herein is that historical games like EUIV are perfect breeding grounds for a kind of *popular historiography* or at least serious history(ing). Adam Chapman, for example, posits that most engagement with the 'historian's diagetic mode' for the player comes from just playing the game and by internalizing its logic(the procedural rhetoric) through mastery of the game, but that there is potential for further engagement through different platforms of engagement like forums.¹⁴ And this is what this thesis aims to explore further:

- I. the player/developer-historian's emergence in Developer Diaries, e.g., how the procedural rhetoric is scrutinized by the players through voicing concerns on the changes – possible simply through the observation of results this said rhetoric brings about through play and whether they fit the players' understanding of history.

The engagement of the players and the developer in the 'doing' of history is herein thus mostly within the realm of contrafactual history. In all simplicity, the idea that divergent narratives give us tools for understanding *the ground zero* - the initiative moment - is one of the most important building blocks for why one can claim that by playing the game, the 'gameplay' becomes the locus of the most important engagement with the 'doing' of history. However, one could also claim that equally importantly, the 'doing' from a theoretical point of view, is present in the communal activities like AAR's (After Action Reports) and forum discussions, not just within each gamer's own, private experience. In other words, apart from playing the game, in order to call games enabling agents for players to act truly on a *historians diagetic level*, there should be a shared component, since this is arguably the defining aspect of a historian's work: the argument, the debate. Indeed, according to Chapman, this kind of engagement

¹³ Tom Apperley, 'Modding the Historians' Code: Historical Verisimilitude and the Counterfactual Imagination', *Playing with the Past: Digital Games and the Simulation of History*, 2013, 185–98. p.195

¹⁴ Chapman, *Digital Games as History: How Videogames Represent the Past and Offer Access to Historical Practice*. p.251

“would seem to represent the very discourse that counterfactual history is claimed to inspire and which, as a presence in popular culture, is, arguably, actually fairly radical history(ing).”¹⁵

1.2. Concepts and Research Methods

In the previous subchapter some of these concepts were already introduced, and they will further be explored in their respective space for the purposes of analysis. It still seems worthwhile to sacrifice a moment to have a brief overview of these central concepts as in to facilitate the legibility for those not well versed specifically in ludic concepts. Furthermore, a brief definition for the most important historical concepts is necessary, as for example, historians can hardly agree on what *colonialism* stands for, or on the other hand, why is *contrafactual history* so important for understanding games as a historical form?

Historical Concepts:

Colonialism

The difficulty to define *colonialism* is borderline notorious within history as a discipline: what is the difference between it and imperialism; by colonialism do we refer to settler colonialism or some other form of assertion of dominance? For the purposes of analysis, the term *colonialism* here is taken as a very broad term, much like it is defined here by Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

“Colonialism is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another ... [a] concept that refers to the project of European political domination from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries...”¹⁶

¹⁵ Chapman, *Digital Games as History: How Videogames Represent the Past and Offer Access to Historical Practice*. p.251

¹⁶ Margaret Kohn and Kavita Reddy, ‘Colonialism’, 2006.

https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/colonialism/?fbclid=IwAR10jpgfTWIU5LEG3JgFnPA3308-81_cMXg3bSchrzX26exDn3ZiaiLPkSQ#Def 27.08.2019 15:43

This way the debate of what can be considered as colonialism can be somewhat averted, although the identification of the mechanics governing this aspect of the game necessarily bring about a discussion on what should or should not be included... For clarity's sake, the different 'modes' of colonialism will be defined in each instance, e.g., is the mechanic interested in merely political or economic dominance or actual settler colonialism (in territorial dominance or in the displacement of the native).¹⁷

Contrafactual History – Games' Historical Form

This one is sort of between ludic and historical concepts but in order to understand games as a historical form, it has to be explored from history's vantage point. Basically, contrafactual history(ing) is the core for *Europa Universalis IV* – or historical games of its genre in general – to be considered a historical form, albeit it is not the only one.

Due to its nature, the game allows the players to experience multiplicity of past realities or *possible histories* within the boundaries of its procedural rhetoric. Each game begins from a historical starting point from which the spatial and temporary trajectories will deviate from the *true* past in various ways.¹⁸ These emerging narratives can be defined as dynamic future narratives: EUIV by definition is a 'sandbox'-game with very little restrictions for storytelling and no fixed narrative. Thus, the narrative is necessarily always created through play; within the boundaries of the mechanics which possibilitate a multiplicity of possible pathways.¹⁹ The watershed moments of a playthrough (the emerging narrative) can be picked up and organized into a believable history, as “[a dynamic narrative consists of] tellable events...which would retrospectively make good stories.”²⁰

¹⁷ Patrick Wolfe, 'Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8.4 (2006), 387–409.

¹⁸ Peter C Seixas, *Theorizing Historical Consciousness* (University of Toronto Press, 2004). p.203

¹⁹ Ludonarrative is a concept further explored in the first chapter, basically it just means player created narrative through play.

²⁰ Lisbeth Klastrup, 'A Poetics of Virtual Worlds', *Proceedings of MelbourneDAC2003*, 2003. p.104

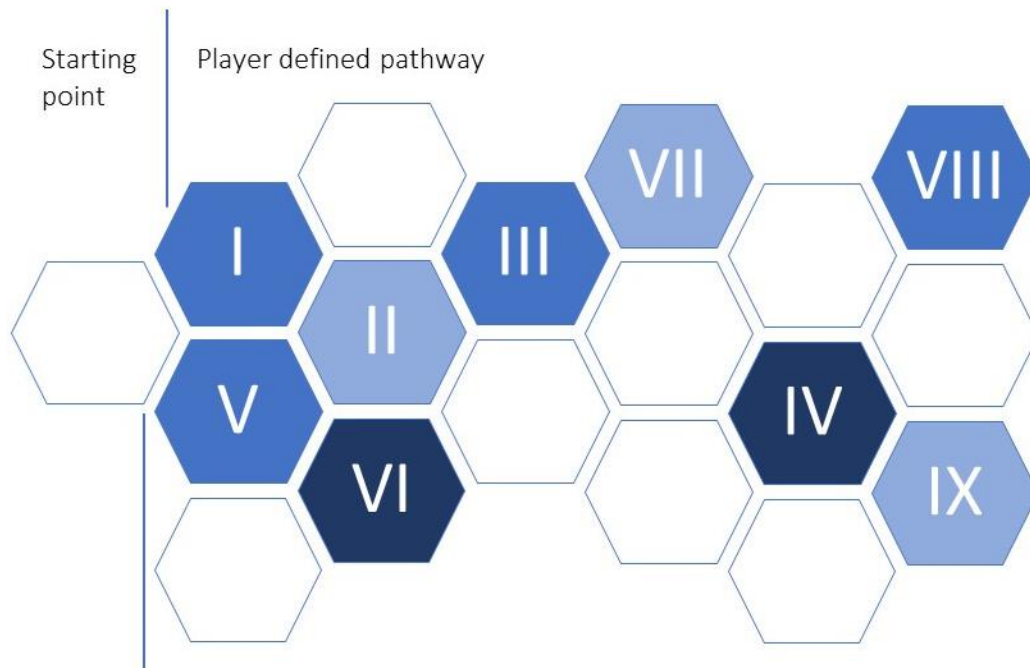


Figure 1 – A dynamic future narrative

Possible nodal situations with realized ones marked as I-IX in order of realization. The emerging narrative often does not mean realization of all the possibilities, nor that these possibilities would be realized immediately after unlocking them.

The narrative thus is constructed through possibilitating decisions and events – *nodal situations* - leading to further ones which usually allow for more than one consequence and which can be played or *narrated* in different order and having differing levels of importance (as demonstrated in I-IX in Fig.1).²¹ Players, by making sense of the game-world *now* by organizing its past actualities, engage in learning the mechanics that bring these nodal situations about; making it possible to discern which mechanics seems accurate and which ones produce ‘wrong’ results in this (hi)story-play-space.²² Once a certain level of mastery is reached, players can start to seriously discuss strategies and perceived flaws within the procedural rhetoric of the game.

²¹ Sebastian Domsch, *Storyplaying: Agency and Narrative in Video Games* (Walter de Gruyter, 2013), iv. p.1. Intro

²² Chapman, *Digital Games as History: How Videogames Represent the Past and Offer Access to Historical Practice*. p.34 (hi)story-play-space refers to the game as a ‘story space’ in which players can engage in telling stories, and possibly in history(ing) like a historian would.

In other words, through exploring the contrafactual histories, players can operate on a very similar level as a historian: within highly specified set of rules – the procedural rhetoric(theory) -, any number of scenarios can be consistently tested. Consequently, altering the procedural rhetoric through updates and DLC to create more ‘authentic’ simulation, the game can also be termed historiographical, as Josué Barrera claims that: “...developing an alternative narrative is not historiography but reflections upon the point of departure of a particular event, is.”²³ Thus, debating what needs to be changed in order to make the game more ‘authentic’ is what seems to be the locus of historiographical engagement, in other words, ‘fairly radical history(ing)’.

As demonstrated: “digital games, particularly strategy games—exemplified by Europa Universalis II [a predecessor of EUIV]—offer a mode of engagement with an alternative historical text that provides an opportunity for the player to consider critical and reflective interpretations of historical events.”²⁴ Thus, understanding EUIV in this way, it makes it clear how it can be argued that games can constitute ‘a historical mode of expression’.²⁵ The quest for accuracy or in the very least historical verisimilitude is fueled by contrafactual explorations within the (hi)story-play-space and in a sense then, as both the developers and players engage in a debate on the history projected by the game, one could think of the it as a collective, popular historiographical endeavor in very loose sense. However, this is not to say that games equal academic history, much like historical film does not equal academic history...

²³ Víctor Hugo Palacios Cruz, ‘La Libertad y La Comprensión Histórica. Los Límites de La Historia Contrafactual’, *Pensamiento y Cultura*, 7.1 (2004). Josué Barrera, ‘La Historia Contrafactual En La Época Contemporánea’. p.11

‘... se debe tener claro que el desarrollo de una historia alterna no aporta en nada a la historiografía, sino la reflexión que se realiza acerca del punto de partida de un acontecimiento en particular’
author’s translation.

²⁴ Apperley. p.186

²⁵ Adam Chapman, ‘Privileging Form over Content: Analysing Historical Videogames’, *Journal of Digital Humanities*, 1.2 (2012), 1–2. <http://journalofdigitalhumanities.org/1-2/privileging-form-over-content-by-adam-chapman/> 27.08.2019 20:50; Dawn Spring, ‘Gaming History: Computer and Video Games as Historical Scholarship’, *Rethinking History*, 19.2 (2015), 207–21. p. 209

Ludic Concepts:

Developer- & Player-historian

Adam Chapman's seminal work on developing theoretical and analytical concepts includes the idea of a developer-historian and a player-historian.²⁶ Broadly speaking, these terms refer to how both these parties engage in history(ing) to some extent. As this theme – in the context of Europa Universalis - was already explored in depth in *Contrafactual History – Games' Historical Form* it will not be further examined here. Suffice to say that recognizing games as history is widely accepted, as defined by Jerremie Clyde: “[translating history into] an interactive gamic digital mode that utilizes computer mediation and procedural rhetoric; which one could call a gamic mode of history.”²⁷ Still, ascribing that quality of engagement of the player though gaming in some type of history(ing) is quite new, i.e., the player as not just a ‘learner’ but also actively functioning on *historian's diegetic level*. This simply means that due to EUIV being a conceptual simulation (like many grand strategy games) it allows: “[the game] to abstract to a macro scope that no human agent could possibly experience, but at which historical narratives traditionally operate ... This entails a shift from the diegetic level of the historical agent towards the diegetic level of the historian.”²⁸ Thus, both the developer and the player can be seen as engaging in history(ing), as proposed by Chapman.

Problem Space - (hi)story-play-space

“(Hi)story-play-spaces means [player] occupying a larger role in the process of historical narration, in comparison to most other forms of history. The player is both narrator and audience. In historical games, doing also means writing.”²⁹ Chapman pushes this concept to support his conceptualization of the player-historian's engagement in doing history, but it does

²⁶ Chapman, *Digital Games as History: How Videogames Represent the Past and Offer Access to Historical Practice*. p.15,22

²⁷ Jerremie Clyde, Howard Hopkins, and Glenn Wilkinson, ‘Beyond the “Historical” Simulation: Using Theories of History to Inform Scholarly Game Design.’, *Loading...*, 6.9 (2012). p.

²⁸ Chapman, *Digital Games as History: How Videogames Represent the Past and Offer Access to Historical Practice*. p.73

²⁹ Chapman, *Digital Games as History: How Videogames Represent the Past and Offer Access to Historical Practice*. p.34

not provide a very concrete analytical tools for the game itself, even though it does provide for what history the game affords to the player to explore. However, Jeremiah McCall's conceptualization of games as problem spaces is utilized as well in order to analyze the actual procedural rhetoric on colonialism: "the design of a simulation game embeds affordances and constraints that impact the operation and understanding of the game, and of history."³⁰ In the simplest level then, the success or failure of the player in the simulated problem space depend on his/her adeptness in understanding the affordances and constraints in that space.³¹ Understanding these mechanics then means understanding the rhetoric, which is imperative in order to understand the claims the game makes, and what is being debated with the expansions. The main components in a problem space consist of the agent, as well as:

Affordances of the space, which can include quantifiable resources, cultural frameworks, psychological tendencies or any kind of mechanic that facilitates engagement in a certain activity.

Constraints of the space, which can include finite quantifiable resources and scarcity, cultural frameworks, psychological tendencies or any mechanic that constraints a certain activity.³²

Procedural rhetoric

Developed by Ian Bogost, and defined as follows: "[video games] make explicit claims about the way a material or conceptual system works ... these games use procedural rhetoric to make an argument, and players unpack that argument through play."³³ This means that the argument embedded in the code that governs the workings of the simulation, the game processes and mechanics, which become a representation of historical real world processes

³⁰ <http://journalofdigitalhumanities.org/1-2/games-and-historical-narratives-by-jeremy-antley/>
28.08.2019 00:01

³¹ <http://journalofdigitalhumanities.org/1-2/historical-simulations-as-problem-spaces-by-jeremiah-mccall/> 28.08.2019 00:09

³² <http://journalofdigitalhumanities.org/1-2/historical-simulations-as-problem-spaces-by-jeremiah-mccall/> 28.08.2019 00:11

³³ Ian Bogost, 'The Rhetoric of Video Games', *The Ecology of Games: Connecting Youth, Games, and Learning*, 2008, 117–40. p.130

and systems, making claims to as to how they work.³⁴ Consequently, a player reaching mastery in a game thus translates into learning ‘to think like the game’, internalizing its logic, which in turn allows for critical insight into the representation of these processes when discrepancies in authenticity surface. This conceptualization thus is also critical in allowing for a player-historian’s existence.

1.3. Source Material and the Current State of Research

The core of the research has to do with the analysis of colonialism presented in the game and how it has evolved through updates and DLC’s. This requires two kinds of material: firstly, the game itself; secondly, the developer diaries touching on the subject *colonialism*. The source material thus consists of the following, with the methodological approach included:

EUIV in it’s most recent iteration (1.28.3) is imagined as a *problem space*, as suggested by McCall. This means identifying the affordances and constraints within the problem space on colonialism, revealing the game’s procedural rhetoric. The greatest changes that have come through the various DLC³⁵ will then be analyzed as to in how they have altered the problem space and formed it into what it is now:

Source material: EUIV 1.28.3 and the DLC/expansions that most prominently include changes to the mechanics governing colonialism: *Conquest of Paradise* (2014), *El Dorado* (2015), *Rule Britannia* (2018), *Dharma* (2018), *Golden Century* (2018)

Method: defining the (hi)story-play-space and more importantly, the *problem space* with its *affordances* and *constraints* and their evolution through DLC – exploring the changes made into the procedural rhetoric governing colonialism.

The Development Diaries constitute a platform on which the developer-historian and the player-historian converge into a discussion of the game and its procedural rhetoric. These

³⁴ Chapman, *Digital Games as History: How Videogames Represent the Past and Offer Access to Historical Practice*. p.71

³⁵ Patches and Hotfixes are free updates for the game. Major patches generally have DLCs released alongside them and add new features. Hotfixes generally fix bugs and tweak the balance of the game. They usually do not add new content. <https://eu4.paradoxwikis.com/Patches> 28.09.2019 09:37

entries will be analyzed qualitatively, mainly on what is said, i.e., how the rhetoric and changes are commented on.

Source material: Paradoxplaza forums - Development Diaries for EUIV: 144 threads between 01/09/2016 and 20/08/2019 w/approx. 100-600 replies in each. Focusing on those governing the major DLC as defined earlier.³⁶

Method: qualitative discourse/textual analysis. How the affordances and constraints are debated: the level of history(ing)?

Searching for articles directly using 'Europa Universalis' yields hundreds of search results, although roughly 40% of those articles look at the educational possibilities of the game and similarly concentrate mainly on what kind of claims are made in the game. Still, theorists like Adam Chapman or Ian Bogost have given aspiring game studies enthusiasts great tools for analyzing and understanding this kind of games from a different point of view. The central concept of this thesis is that some games encourage the players to engage in history(ing): discussing the game mechanics and processes amongst themselves as well as along with the developers. Thus, the research has more to do with what kind of history can be explored in this game - rather than what claims does it make of it – and how players engage with this history in the discussion. Adam Chapman, for example, recognizes the possibility for this kind of further engagement:

the online communities surrounding these games, with their discussions of plausibility, evaluation of counterfactuals (after action reports) and even digital-ludic revisionism (mods) ... These would seem to represent the very discourse that counterfactual history is claimed to inspire and which, as a presence in popular culture, is, arguably, actually fairly radical history(ing) ... the ludonarrative multiplicity and uncertainty inherent to these kinds of digital games has the possibility to work against both the excesses of overly deterministic perspectives and the teleological metanarrative strands that exist in some of

³⁶ <https://forum.paradoxplaza.com/forum/index.php?forums/europa-universalis-iv.731/> 23.08.2019 19:22

these games' own narrative structures. Thus, "the historiography of the games is therefore made complex by their very format" (De Groot 2009, 142).³⁷

And this is the focal point, the 'fairly radical history(ing)' that supposedly could happen. The proposition here is to explore this mode empirically, which has not been done before exactly with this source material.

³⁷ Chapman, *Digital Games as History: How Videogames Represent the Past and Offer Access to Historical Practice*. p.251

2. Procedural Rhetoric of Europa Universalis IV

2.1. Constructing the Problem Space

Constructing the ‘colonial’ problem space for EUIV requires some exploration into the qualities of the particular constructed (hi)story-play-space of the game, i.e., what kind of simulation the game can be classified as, and consequently, what kind of history does it afford for exploration.³⁸ Apart from further delving into the questions of how games could be understood as ‘doing’ history, the nature of a (hi)story-play-space informs directly many aspects of the problem space, as it defines the limits for the components of the *possible problem spaces* that could be constructed in it; a first-person shooter can hardly argue about grand narratives in a meaningful way just like a grand strategy does not afford exploration of battlefield dynamics in the level of a soldier. Following Chapman’s framework for formal analysis, the simulation style, epistemology, time and space will be briefly explored to define this (hi)story-play-space.



Figure 2 – The main user interface

³⁸ Alun Munslow defined ‘story space’ as a reference to the theoretical framework in which a historian constructs a narrative; Chapman added the ludic aspect to it: (hi)story-play-space. This would afford the player’s contribution in creating a narrative within the story-space constructed by the developer, i.e., writing a (hi)story within a defined theoretical framework (‘hi’- in parenthesis as not to confuse it with actual academic *history*).

Due to the level of abstraction and complexity, the game offers an almost overwhelming amount of information to a player, e.g., there are 40 different map-modes just to help make sense of the space in the game (here w/terrain map mode and economy tab).

Since EUIV attempts to simulate “the political, economic, social, and cultural state of the whole world, day-by-day” between 1444 and 1821, it is clear that it falls into the category of, using Chapman’s terms, a *conceptual simulation* - as opposed to a *realist simulation* – as, instead of showing how the past was, it makes claims in how it could have been.³⁹ More precisely, the simulation functions in the “subjunctive realm of plausibility”, making claims of the processes, rather than attempting to recreate a certain event ‘accurately’. Furthermore, the importance is not in the visuals as can be seen in the relatively simple graphical style, which also hints at this genre of simulation: “[despite the simplicity of visual representation] the rules are often very complicated and the representation is therefore built mainly through procedural rhetoric.”⁴⁰ This is apparent in the games interface (Fig.2.). Evidently, the game does not immerse the player in the game world through visual representation, but rather by believable argumentation on how the complex systems it attempts to simulate functioned in the past. Because of these qualities, Dawn Spring advocated games like Europa Universalis as the ideal platform for developing a *scholarly videogame*: it offers means to construct historical narratives and can utilize historically informed game mechanics.⁴¹

Along with the simulation style, the narrative style is equally important in informing the games epistemology - the kind of claims the game makes of the past. As a conceptual simulation, the emphasis in EUIV is mostly on the *ludonarrative* with very little framing narrative, i.e., the creation of the narrative is in the hands of the player in interaction with the system created by the developer. As explored in the introduction on *dynamic future narrative*, this is merely a way to conceptualize the type of *ludonarratives* in the game, as it encompasses the most important aspects of them: multiplicity of plausible, emergent narratives.⁴² As the game thus

³⁹ Oscar Moralde, ‘Conference Paper Delivered at Society for Cinema and Media Studies Atlanta, Georgia, USA 31 March 2016’, *Atlanta*, 31 (2016). p.5

⁴⁰ Chapman, *Digital Games as History: How Videogames Represent the Past and Offer Access to Historical Practice*.p.71

⁴¹ Spring. p.211

⁴² “... the formation of the ludonarrative is an active collaboration between developer and player.” Chapman p.122 *Ludonarratives* are multiple within a game, thus, dynamic future narrative is just a

affords a multiplicity of possible histories within clearly defined theoretical frame (represented by its procedural rhetoric), it could be defined as a constructionist piece. Alun Munslow defines the constructionist way of *knowing*:

[T]he constructionist genre of historical knowing is highly complex conceptual and theory-laden [approach, while empirical,] nevertheless acknowledges that explanation demands a body of knowledge that is usually referred to as 'theory'.⁴³

Thus, reiterated: the arrangement of past fragments into a history demands *a theoretical framework*, which, in ludic conceptualization, would comprise of the *procedural rhetoric* through which the play unfolds, and the narratives emerge. To give some credibility to this 'theoretical framework', Paradox has employed historians to inform the design of the game, even though it is not clear to what extent and should probably receive some more attention when discussing the game's 'historical accuracy'.⁴⁴

EUIV then can be defined as a constructionist conceptual simulation with a very loosely framed ludonarrative. The nature of this (hi)story-play-space would then also suggest, that the problem space to construct within it can indeed touch institutions like colonialism on an abstract and conceptual level. This 'Colonial problem space' is constructed following the analytical scheme synthesized here by combining McCall's ideas on a problem space and Chapman's theoretical framework on (hi)story-play-space (Fig.3.). In this conceptualization, the play unfolds by the agent using affordances within the limits of set constraints to interact with the space in the game, with the player goals or motivations directing the chosen actions - all of these components are interrelated and changing one affects the others.

definition for the kind of ludonarrative the game creates without delving deeper into the narrative concepts, which are not the focal point of this study.

⁴³ Alun Munslow, *Narrative and History* (Macmillan International Higher Education, 2018). p.12

⁴⁴ Elliott. p.32

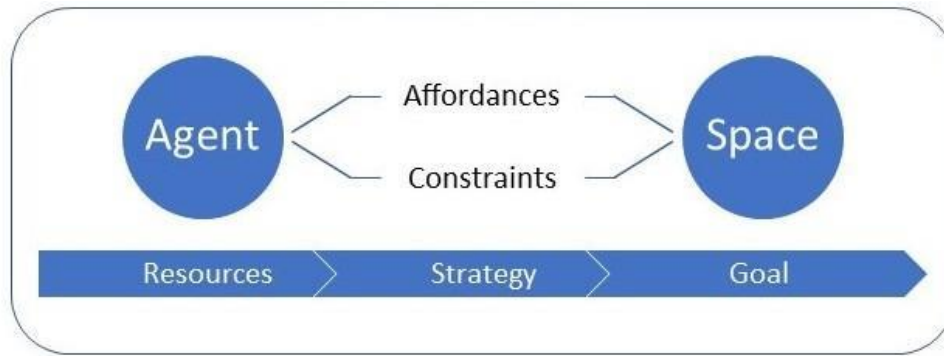


Figure 3 – A problem space within a (Hi)story-play-space

The agent interact with the (play-)space within the limits of affordances and constraints; this warrants a process of identifying the resources and possibilities, implementing a strategy based on them and attempting to reach an external or internal goal.⁴⁵

The agent

The *agent* of a problem space defines what *could have* constituted an affordance, and what aspects of the past can be omitted due to little or no importance for decision-making on that agent's level. McCall argues for the importance of this design-element as follows:

Because simulation games must function as a set of working systems, however, the choice of problem space, or more specifically the choice of *whose* [emphasis added] problem spaces to represent necessarily locks the game into certain portrayals of the past.⁴⁶

What this means, is simply, that the chosen agent in the (hi)story-play-space defines what can be seen an affordance: in a first person shooter, where the agent is a soldier, a gun or an obstruction constitute an affordance; in a conceptual simulation like EUIV, the affordances are defined on a state apparatus level, and thus encompass more abstract things, like explorers or colonists. The agent further defines the *focus* of the conceptual simulation, what it can represent, and how the developer constructs affordances. Designing affordances for an agent

⁴⁵ McCall https://gamingthepast.net/2019/08/30/interactive-history-class-teachers-log/?fbclid=IwAR0ct9fVoRsgIsCQnOI0tJAsPQmNTJUDlyxHag0Wc-gsnmO_TzjQGNcgYQk 02.09.2019 21:33; Chapman. p.189

⁴⁶ McCall https://gamingthepast.net/2019/08/30/interactive-history-class-teachers-log/?fbclid=IwAR0ct9fVoRsgIsCQnOI0tJAsPQmNTJUDlyxHag0Wc-gsnmO_TzjQGNcgYQk 02.09.2019

is why this ecological conceptualization of an affordance (originally defined by Gibson) is so useful for Game Studies: “an affordance is ... always relative to the agent; it is not property of the environment”.⁴⁷

The agent in EUIV is, like most aspects of the game, an abstraction; the player is not a monarch or any other kind of ruler, since these keep changing throughout play and have different attributes that the player has to negotiate with, but instead, the player wields absolute power over all aspects of development and expansion of a nation in its journey through time, day by day, from November 11th of 1444 to January 1st of 1821. Furthermore, the agent has exact knowledge on, for example but not limited to, income, manpower, stability, corruption, prestige, legitimacy, power projection and so forth, of his/her nation. This is of course much unlike any historical or *contemporary* ruler could ever dream of, and the fact that all this data is readily available and functions in a formal system means that the player can make well informed decisions that will have, more or less, a definite outcome. The only depiction of the player agent is the *country icon* on the upper left corner of the user interface, an icon that is either the historical flag or symbol associated with the state to represent it.

Thus, the agent *is* the state, and consequently the possibilities for action are extremely extensive in a simulation which touches on socio-economic and cultural aspects of administering a country through the ages - this also affords many design opportunities for goals and objectives.

Goal

Since the choice of the agent (state) and simulation style (conceptual simulation) afford a multiplicity of design choices for goals, it is interesting to note the apparent lack of them. The developer defines this as some of the main features of the game:

⁴⁷ Jonas Linderöth, ‘Why Gamers Don’t Learn More: An Ecological Approach to Games as Learning Environments’, *Journal of Gaming & Virtual Worlds*, 4.1 (2012), 45–62. p.49

Make your own decisions: Nation building is completely flexible and the possibilities are endless.

Turn the world into your playground: Enjoy hundreds of years of gameplay in a lush topographical map complete with dynamic seasonal effects.⁴⁸

Affording a space for explorations into the plausible, for the player's own desires and goals, then becomes one of the main goals in the game - these external objectives can be anything from 'unite Scandinavia' to 'establish the Jolofian colonial empire' and encompass player exploration into the plausibility and creation of alternative historical narratives. The only internal, designer provided goals boil down to the bare minimum of 'survive', and into the 'missions' (fig.4.). The goals presented in these mission trees are not the same for all nations and can guide the ludonarrative of the game if followed, since the rewards offer some important affordances. These *lexia*, framing devices, are soft, however, and do not dictate the play.⁴⁹



Figure 4 – The Mission Tree

⁴⁸ https://store.steampowered.com/app/236850/Europa_Universalis_IV/ 04.09.2019 11:24

⁴⁹ *Lexia* can also be an affordance; a narrative device to direct the narrative to a certain direction through bonuses or perks of following it afford // affordances often are *lexia* from narrative's point of view.

The missions are often faction or region specific and include conditions that must be met in order to complete them and the reward for achieving that goal (in gameplay bonuses).⁵⁰

Since the goals and objectives are so loosely defined, it should be easy to construct a ‘colonial problem space’ within it. However, the difficulty becomes apparent in the definition of colonialism itself: what are the supposed goals of colonial ambitions; what is colonialism? Colonialism is notoriously difficult to define in historical scholarship as a term, but in its most simple form, one can define it as in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: “Colonialism is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another ... [a] concept that refers to the project of European political domination from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries...”. With a less euro-centric definition, one can see Ania Loomba: “colonialism can be defined as the conquest and control of other people’s land and goods.”⁵¹ Thus, with or without the political component, conquest and control, subjugation and domination seem the most defining aspects of colonialism and these can be further classified, as traditionally has been done, into four modes. According to Cristoph Mick, these are: settler colonialism, exploitation colonialism, surrogate colonialism and internal colonialism.⁵² All of these modes engage in the aforementioned practice of domination but in different ways, and this differentiation facilitates the classification of game elements as actually pertaining to *colonialism*.

Settler colonialism is the most contentious of the forms, as its defined by its desire to *terminate* the colonial. Lorenzo Veracini argues that settler colonialism indeed should not be mixed with other colonial phenomena because:

... colonial and settler colonial phenomena be analytically disentangled. They have generally been seen either as entirely separate, or as different manifestations of colonialism at large ... I suggest that colonialism and settler colonialism should be understood in their dialectical relation ... [developing

⁵⁰ *Europa Universalis IV* (vrs.1.28)

⁵¹ Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (Routledge, 2007).p.8

⁵² Róisín Healy, Enrico Dal Lago, and Enrico Dal Lago, *The Shadow of Colonialism on Europe’s Modern Past* (Springer, 2014). p.126

tools allowing] an approach to the decolonisation of settler colonial formations.⁵³

Still, for the purposes of this analysis, settler colonialism is seen as a manifestation of colonialism, taking this distinction as one of the defining features of it: the decolonization of these structures. Patrick Wolfe further makes a distinction specifically in respect to exploitation colonialism: settler colonies were not established to extract surplus from the labor of the natives, but rather engaged in displacing (or replacing) the natives from the land and repopulating it, involving massive numbers of settlers.⁵⁴ Most prominent examples of this would include the *Thirteen Colonies* or *Australia*, where the natives were exterminated to make way for settlers. Wolfe argues that settler colonialism is, in essence, a structure, not an event, which is predicated on the disappearance of the native, and later, on termination of the colonial.⁵⁵ This definition then should provide a good framework for identifying mechanics attempting to simulate this mode of colonialism.

The second mode, exploitation colonialism, is not primarily interested in the extermination of the native, but rather in the use of their labor and resources for economic gain in the interest of the metropole. Michael Sommer describes this kind of colonies as “established through conquest for the purpose of tributary exploitation; low influx of colonial immigrants.”⁵⁶ This mode of exploitation and the number of immigrants could be viewed as the main difference between these two modes. Examples include most African colonies, apart from the Dutch settled South Africa. Exploitation is then direct and does not necessarily involve displacement.

The last two modes are often assigned to more modern phenomena. Surrogate colonialism most importantly used by Scott Atran to illustrate how the metropole involves in promoting non-native, non-metropolitan group to engage in settler colonialism in a given region.⁵⁷ Atran’s example was of Palestine land being settled by Israelis, but under this category would also fall the Boer colonization of South African regions due to British policies. Sometimes called “proxy

⁵³ Lorenzo Veracini, ‘Introducing: Settler Colonial Studies’, *Settler Colonial Studies*, 1.1 (2011), 1–12.

⁵⁴ Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism* (A&C Black, 1999). p.2

⁵⁵ Wolfe, ‘Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native’. p.390

⁵⁶ Michael Sommer, ‘Colonies-colonisation-colonialism: A Typological Reappraisal’. p.187

⁵⁷ Scott Atran, ‘The Surrogate Colonization of Palestine, 1917–1939’, *American Ethnologist*, 16.4 (1989), 719–44.

colonialism”, this mode *is* settler colonialism, but the immigrants come from somewhere else than the metropole.⁵⁸ The last mode, internal colonialism, will not be further explored since Europa Universalis is mostly interested in expansion, whereas internal colonialism concerns uneven development within a state, exploitation of minorities within it.⁵⁹ This is not to say that internal colonialism is not present in the game, but since the focus is on outward colonial expansion, it is omitted for the purposes of this particular analysis.

So, having defined colonialism and its modes, a goal for the ‘colonial problem space’ can be created and it is no surprise that the ‘4x’s of the genre would fit almost perfectly: “explore, expand, exploit, and exterminate”.⁶⁰ In other words, according to the definitions above, colonialism is interested in acquiring land (explore and expand), in exploitation of the population and the resources (exploit), and in the extermination of the native (exterminate). These should encompass the aspects of colonial ambitions on the state level. Thus we have identified Europa universalis as a constructionist conceptual simulation and defined the component parts of the problem space as follows:

Problem space – Colonial expansion (between 1444 and 1821); Agent - State; Goal - Explore, expand, exploit, (and) exterminate.

2.2. Exploration... of Affordances and Constraints

The ecological term affordance for explaining and understanding games and how they function was introduced to the study of interactive media by Donald Norman in 1999, though, it has evolved a lot since then.⁶¹ Basically, an affordance is what can be done by an agent within a

⁵⁸ Moses E Ochonou, *Colonialism by Proxy: Hausa Imperial Agents and Middle Belt Consciousness in Nigeria* (Indiana University Press, 2014). p.60

⁵⁹ Sergio Salvi, *Le Nazioni Proibite: Guida a Dieci Colonie Interne Dell’Europa Occidentale...* (Vallecchi, 1973), x.

⁶⁰ Emrich. p.92

⁶¹ Keith S Jones, *How Shall Affordances Be Refined?: Four Perspectives: A Special Issue of Ecological Psychology* (Psychology Press, 2020). p.1

certain environment, be it temporal or spatial. As explained by Chapman in relation to historical games:

... historical games are inherently concerned with historical affordances and describe these through action, offering a kind of intrinsically ecological history ... That is to say that games, as particularly interactive media, are especially concerned with what the relationships of the past afforded (what could or could not be done) rather than simply what things or events were, at least in their gameplay.⁶²

The duality of the term is important: what the historical agent could do in a certain context, and what the player can do. The identification and analysis of these affordances then should reveal important parts of the procedural rhetoric, i.e., what the developer argues to have been possible in the context of the agent in a certain spatiotemporal space. Even though the exact mechanisms on how players learn to utilize these affordances, and whether this means that they understand the games argument, are both somewhat hazy due to the scant amount of empirical studies, one should not disregard the concepts usefulness for understanding games and their argumentation.⁶³ As McCall does not define the term in any great detail for purposes of his analysis of a problem space, a brief exploration into what is meant by *affordance* is warranted.

Basically, an affordance is an offer for action; environment with objects, nature and animals offers different possibilities for action – *affordances* - which are always relative to the agent. Linderoth derived this definition from the work of J.J. Gibson and Chapman uses this for his theoretical framework, too, which makes it a natural choice for understanding an affordance in this analysis.⁶⁴ An affordance then has multiple facets: it is the developer's interpretation of what could be done in the *past*, and by whom; represented as a possible action for the player,

⁶² Chapman, *Digital Games as History: How Videogames Represent the Past and Offer Access to Historical Practice*. p.174

⁶³ Linderoth. p.45

⁶⁴ Linderoth. p.49; Chapman, *Digital Games as History: How Videogames Represent the Past and Offer Access to Historical Practice*. p.173

i.e., what is allowed as an action *in* the game; and it is a *resource* that can open up further affordances.

Constraint is the other analytical tool by McCall, and it is simple to define: it is what inhibits the *use or identification* of the affordances in the game. In reference to a concept by Norman:

Logical constraints use reasoning to determine the alternatives ... Logical constraints are valuable in guiding behavior. It is how the user knows to scroll down and see the rest of the page ... By making the fundamental design model visible, users can readily (logically) deduce what actions are required. Logical constraints go hand in hand with a good conceptual model.⁶⁵

Even though the constraints are not always this visible, they are logical and also make arguments on history. To give a concrete example of an affordance and constraints in EUIV: 'Uncolonized Land' is an affordance that allows one to expand the state on to unclaimed territory by using a 'colonist'. Constraints of this affordance include: 'exploration national idea group' has to be unlocked in order to acquire an 'explorer' or 'conquistador', this makes possible the exploration of 'terra incognita' and unknown sea zones, consequently allowing for a colonist to be sent there for expansion (Fig.5.).

In this subchapter, the focus is on identifying the main affordances for 'explore, expand, exploit, (and) exterminate' within the game. The affordances, their evolution and discussion on these, are then further explored in the following chapter with an emphasis on the dialogue between players and/or developers in the Developer Diaries.

⁶⁵Donald A Norman, 'Affordance, Conventions, and Design', *Interactions*, 6.3 (1999), 38–43. p.40



Figure 5 – The 'Colonist'

Colonist. On the interface pop up on the left allows to send a colonist to claim this 'Uncolonized Land' as this coastal province has already been unlocked through exploration. Further inland the provinces are still 'Terra Incognita' for this state, a *constraint*.

Uncolonized Land and Terra Incognita

Terre inconnues, or *parts unknown*, is a constraint that, once removed, reveals the most important affordance for colonization in the game: empty space. It is hardly surprising that an empire building game would utilize this kind of conceptualization of land: 'Uncolonized Land' is an abstraction that seems to represent the lack of sufficient, organized resistance against the appropriation of that land. The discovery and expansion are the main themes, and Ella Shohat's "gaze of Empire" is the perfect way to describe how space is viewed in EUIV. The project of discovery as means for expansion, as means to "cover the globe".⁶⁶ To demonstrate further, *Terra Septemtrionalis Incognita*, a map from 1586, is the perfect allegory for this concept of space and exploration: a map of the known Americas, and portraits of Queen Isabel I and Cristoffa Corombo - sometimes the Ligurian name gets 'pidginized' by the Spanish as *Cristóbal Colón*, or by the English as *Cristopher Columbus* - on the left top corner, with a depiction of a sailing ship and Coromba's encounter with naked natives underneath. This is

⁶⁶ Ella Shohat, 'Imaging Terra Incognita: The Disciplinary Gaze of Empire', *Public Culture*, 3.2 (1991), 41-70. p.45

reproduced in EUIV, and it is hardly a coincidence: the description of that map could just as well be a depiction of a gameplay moment when discovering the New World and encountering natives through an ‘exploration event’; the developer utilizes this kind of common iconography to evoke ideas of exploration and colonization arguably common in the context of the *empire*.

The *gaze of Empire* is a relevant approach to understanding the way how the agent - the player - views space in the game, i.e., as potential territory to expand into, which is all that ‘Uncolonized land’ offers. This concept of space is reinforced as, later on in the game, the technological imparities between the European powers and the rest of the world mount and another spatial affordance becomes available in the form of weaker neighbors: even though the space is not *empty*, it still can be appropriated through the means of colonial conquest. In essence, this very basic affordance already tells a lot of how the game argues about history, or about colonialism or colonial ambitions.

The Colonist

The colonist is the most obvious affordance related to colonialism in the game, and indeed, the ‘EUIV WIKI’ does not address any other kind of colonization apart from what happens through colonial envoys: “In order to colonize a nation **must** have: a colonist.”⁶⁷ For the player to be able to utilize a colonist however, there has to be ‘Uncolonized Land’ within the state’s ‘colonial range’ (defined by ‘diplomatic technology level’ and choice of ‘national ideas’). These constraints can be thought of as *lexia*, guiding the emerging narrative by giving the European nations at the coast of the Atlantic an edge for colonizing certain parts of the world due to their proximity to the ‘empty’ lands in the west and due to the ‘national ideas’ countries are hardwired to choose if played by the AI, e.g., Castile and Portugal will almost always colonize Brazil and the Caribbean, whereas England and France will usually concentrate on North America. The argument here seems that, in order to colonize, political and economic power (in

⁶⁷ <https://eu4.paradoxwikis.com/Colonization> 06.09.2019 21:49 The wiki is developed and updated by the players and would retrospectively make a good place to look for attitudes and ways of understanding the game, too.

the form of monarch points, commonly called 'mana' that accrue over time, and more concretely: ships) has to be exerted to engage in exploration and consequently in colonization.

In case of the *colonist*, it would initially seem an obvious example of settler colonialism, as defined by Patrick Wolfe:

The question of genocide is never far from discussions of settler colonialism. Land is life—or, at least, land is necessary for life. Thus contests for land can be— indeed, often are—contests for life. Yet this is not to say that settler colonialism is simply a form of genocide. In some settler-colonial sites (one thinks, for instance, of Fiji), native society was able to accommodate ...⁶⁸

EUIV depicts exactly this kind of colonialism; in Fig.5. the 'natives', unless eliminated or a proper 'native policy' chosen, can damage or even destroy colonies through events that trigger in relation to the 'aggressiveness' of the natives and cause damage in relation to the 'ferociousness' of them - representing how the space is always contested and never truly empty. Furthermore, the colony, once established, keeps on growing on a yearly rate (10-125people/y) and once it reaches a threshold of 1000 it becomes a 'province'. At this point the remaining natives are incorporated into it and lose their culture and religion along with all traces of them, encompassing the 'genocidal' nature of settler colonialism.

However, like in Wolfe's example of Fiji, in EUIV some regions - namely Africa and Asia - are more tenacious against the colonial influences; the colonists never erase the original population, as they retain their native culture and religion in these regions. Thus the location where the player has established a colony dictates whether it will, through the player settling more provinces, become a 'colonial nation' or just possibilitates founding of a 'trade company'. Consequently, the *colonist* affordance becomes a representation of different modes of colonialism: not just settler colonialism as in the case of colonial nations, but also a representation of exploitation colonialism in the case of trade company regions (Fig.6.)

⁶⁸ Wolfe, 'Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native'. p.387

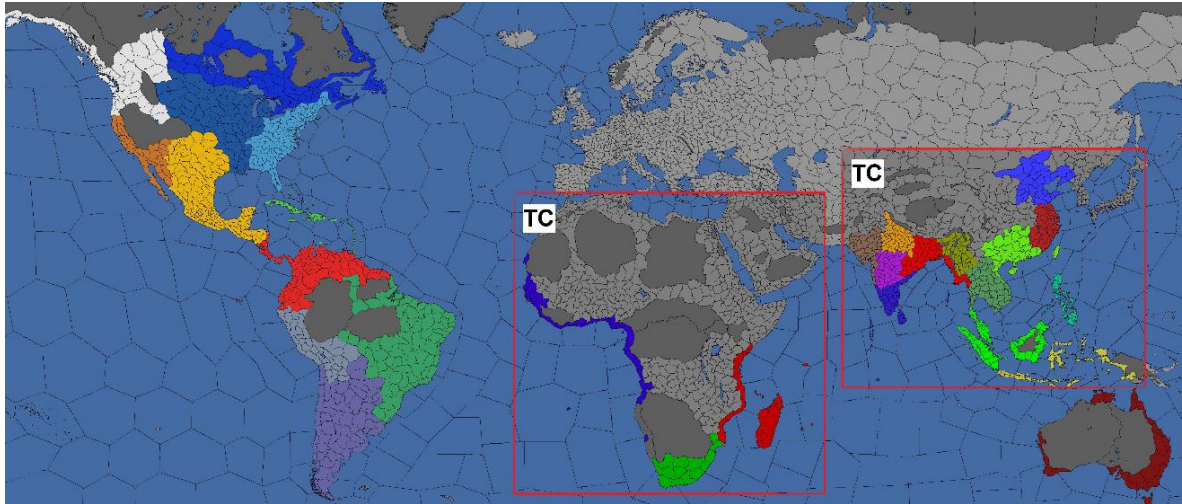


Figure 6 – The 'Colonial' and 'Trade Company' regions

The different 'Colonial regions' and 'Trade company regions'(TC), e.g., Colonial Cascadia (white), Louisiana (ultramarine), or Eastern America (cyan).

Colonial Nations - Conquest of Paradise, Patch 1.4. (14.01.2014)

By appropriation or claiming of the earlier *terra incognita* and the revealed uncolonized land, another affordance becomes available that possibilitates a more rapid colonial expansion: 'colonial nation':

Colonial nations form when a nation controls 5 cored overseas provinces in the same colonial region ... The overlord gets trade power and tariffs from them while they have to be aware of the colonial nation's liberty desire that can cause the colony to declare a war of independence ... They use their own, republican form of government.⁶⁹

This description of a colonial nation reveals that they basically function like any other subject state in the game and thus can engage in their own diplomacy and expansion; player can add colonies to the existing colonial nation, but the nation itself also seeks to expand into 'uncolonized land'. Apart from the additional colonist these entities provide, they also develop their own infrastructure and engage in local trade. These then afford faster expansion and

⁶⁹ https://eu4.paradoxwikis.com/Conquest_of_Paradise 24.09.2019 19:45

greater economic wealth directly in form of 'tariffs' and 'trade power', and indirectly by possibly feeding more trade goods into the trade 'end nodes' in Europe (trade flows always end up in Europe in this game – Europa Universalis...). Furthermore, in case of expansion, these entities can engage in 'Colonial Wars', which allow them to annex other nations' colonial possessions without provoking an all-out war with the metropolis. The same mechanic goes for conquering neighboring native land.

The constraints consist of the minimal limit of five provinces in a single 'colonial region' to form a colonial nation, and in the case of Catholic nations, there is a mechanic called the 'Treaty of Tordesillas', which limits the possibilities to expand without severely damaging relations with the *rightful* ruler of that 'uncolonized land' and the Papal State itself (El Dorado 25.01.2015).⁷⁰ Sometimes the earlier mentioned 'Colonial War' is also a constraint, and not just an affordance, as other colonial nations or native states can easily destroy a weak colony without provoking any response from the colonial overlord.

Colonial nations appear to simulate the very complicated relationship between the colonies, their overlords and natives in simplified terms. Much like the Thirteen Colonies or Spanish American possessions, the procedural rhetoric, after an initial state investment, produces settler colonial expansion in form of the emergence of *colonial nations*. The possibility for these states to also gain independence is certainly a settler colonial concept, i.e., *colonial* requires continuation, and is ongoing, whereas *settler colonial* "wants itself terminated".⁷¹ This is to say, that these colonial regions have as a plausible end state, a *complete* arch from empty land to a totally settled, *postcolonial* state. That is another constraint implemented, the 'Liberty Desire' as these entities try to end their *colonial* status.

Trade Company - Wealth of Nations, Patch 1.6 (29.05.2014)

In direct comparison with the affordance of 'Colonial Nation' simulating a settler colonial project, this affordance is something else entirely. Colonial holdings in Trade Company regions (Fig.6.) never convert into colonial nations, but function in many ways as normally conquered

⁷⁰ https://eu4.paradoxwikis.com/El_Dorado 25.09.2019 15:39

⁷¹ Veracini. p.4

provinces: the initial culture and religion is preserved. This seems to reference the 'rigidity' of these native societies to European influence, clearly encompassing a different mode of colonial ambition, *exploitation*. The player is not forced to grant these provinces for a Trade Company, in which case they will function as normal territory, but can do so for a number of benefits: usually the population is of 'non-accepted culture' and of different religion, which means there is negative modifiers on 'tax', 'production', 'manpower/sailors' and 'unrest'. This lower economic value is a constraint that the player has to negotiate with by either cultural and religious conversion by the use of 'monarch points' – in effect, engaging in a form of settler colonial policy –, or by assigning the province to a Trade Company, which gives the following boons: increases trade power; ignores penalties on religious difference and culture; reduces unrest; and stops institution spread.⁷² The price is lost tax revenue and the lack of contribution in manpower and sailors. Trade company regions then task the player to choose what kind of colonialism to engage in: extermination or exploitation.

The constraints for colonial expansion into Trade company regions are basically the same as for 'colonial regions': natives' aggressiveness, ferocity and numbers are just generally higher especially in the 'African Charter' and also, the distance is much greater for eastwards expansion, requiring higher level of technology (greater colonial range) to reach. Some affordances allow the player to surpass some of these constraints, like the general hostility of settling the 'uncolonized land' in these regions, or the further distance, by the 'Charter Company'(Dharma 06.09.2018) diplomatic tool, overriding constraints like 'colonial range' through use of cold cash. These constraints still ensure that these regions usually become colonized much later on in the game than the Americas, enforcing some level of historicity.

Religious and Culture Conversion

As noted in the earlier instances, 'non-accepted culture' as well as religious difference cause problems in provinces in the form of negative modifiers. For forming colonial nations by colonizing 'uncolonized land' this is not a problem initially, but through expansion and

⁷² https://eu4.paradoxwikis.com/Trade_company 30.09.2019 Institution spread negation means that the neighboring nations do not

appropriation of native land in Colonial wars, problematic provinces will be incorporated into the player nation. The way to remove the negative modifiers is the same as for provinces in Trade company regions: missionaries can convert the religion, and culture conversion can remove the non-accepted culture from the province. The constraints for the use of these affordances are economic and political, i.e., in order to convert a province, it has to be a 'core province', which means 'administrative monarch points' have to be exerted to make it into one; the missionary will have an upkeep in monthly ducats; and culture conversion requires a payment in 'diplomatic power'.

These affordances make it possible to engage in a kind of settler colonial processes in regions which the game makers have designed to be somehow better attuned to resist settler colonial ambitions. However, unlike in 'colonial regions', the colonies, even when converted to metropolitan culture and religion, will never engage in the defining decolonization processes; only in 'colonial regions' the revolts in the colonies can result in independence of emergent states, e.g., Canada, Colombia or Peru.⁷³

These affordances might also be the only example of surrogate colonialism in EUIV: a culture of a province can be changed to metropolitan one or to one of *neighboring* cultures. In order to engage in this activity, the province cannot be assigned to a trade company, nor can it be part of a colonial nation. There are instances in which this approach is the only feasible one, as for example African non-coastal provinces which cannot be assigned to a Trade company (Fig.6.).

2.3 History Afforded for Exploration in This (Hi)story-play-space

The analysis of the (hi)story-play-space and the construction of the colonial problem space allow for Europa Universalis to be described as a conceptual simulation, affording the player a chance for exploration into what *could* have been through the emerging ludonarratives. The developer argues on the level of processes, and thus the player agent and the world are in part abstractions and conceptual representations rather than concrete things (like national ideas or

⁷³ https://eu4.paradoxwikis.com/Colonial_nation 30.09.2019 19:12

technological level) as has become evident through the exploration of the affordances. This would, according to Chapman, allow for the player to engage in some real *historying*:

games that allow large levels of narrative agency ... allow audiences to actually write historical narratives ... [and] provide a structure that ensures the coherency of these narratives and that subsidises our potential inexperience or lack of expertise ... [as] tools that extend our affordances by supplementing some of the exploratory challenges of writing history and thus granting us some of the affordances normally associated with historians or others with expertise in writing history ... much of the groundwork for the history is already present within the structures of the (hi)story-play-space. As such, the player is equipped with the knowledge tools of underlying theory work, methodology, pre-selected evidence, ideology, epistemology and a theory and network of causal relationships.⁷⁴

Thus, the navigation of affordances becomes the main way into acting on the diegetic level of a historian; using the tools provided by the developer to experiment in this particular story-space.

The affordances in EUIV have revealed how space itself is argued to be an affordance – *gaze of the empire* - and that there are opportunities to engage in at least three kinds of colonialism by definition: settler colonialism, exploitation colonialism and surrogate colonialism. However, these affordances and constraints (Fig.7.) are not fixed and are in constant motion: though updates, many core mechanics change slightly over time, and through DLC, new mechanics are introduced.

⁷⁴ Chapman, *Digital Games as History: How Videogames Represent the Past and Offer Access to Historical Practice*.p.189-190

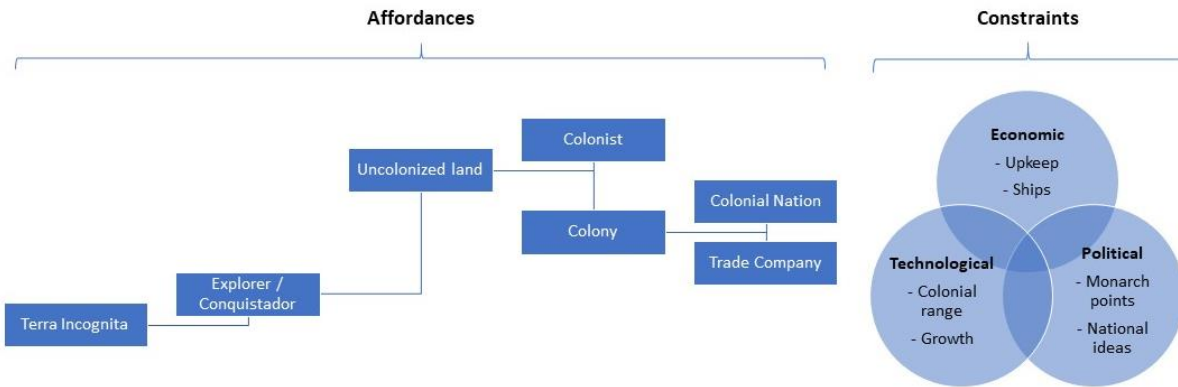


Figure 7 – Affordances and constraints

Affordances and constraints as identified in the analysis of the ‘colonial problem space’. The progression of these affordances can be seen as a logical constraint on the process of *colonialism* itself.

In this chapter, the analysis was done on the game’s most recent form (1.29.1) with all the DLC. The affordances identified were marked with the expansion in which they were introduced, e.g., ‘*Trade Company - Wealth of Nations, Patch 1.6 (29.05.2014)*’. Thus, *Europa Universalis IV* has seen major changes; the type of exploitation colonialism and settler colonialism before the introduction of ‘colonial nations’ and ‘trade companies’ was very different from what it is now. In the next chapter, this process of *adding* things, is reviewed from a point of view of history(ing).

As a side note:

>>> The affordances in *EUIV* are not modelled after the defined modes of colonialism, rather, here we have identified what kind of colonialism the game attempts to simulate, the kind of colonial realities that player’s are aware of are reproduced – not necessarily because of their historicity, but because of what the players expect, or both.

>>> These identified affordances were the ones available to all countries – nation specific ones have been omitted.

3. Engaging in Fairly Radical History(ing)

3.1. The Premises for Developer- and Player-Historian

Through an analysis of the EUIV as a ‘colonial problem space’ we identified the affordances granted to the acting agent by the developer; in other words, what the developers argue was possible historically. Additionally, the kind of history afforded to the player for exploration, was defined by the constructed (hi)story-play-space of the game. In this chapter the emphasis is on how the developer adjusts the ‘colonial problem space’ by addition and alteration of the affordances and constraints, as well as on how the players react to these changes, using community forums as the primary source, and more precisely, a selection of *Developer Diaries*.

The content is analyzed qualitatively, focusing on the level of the discourse:

Developer-historian: to what extent do the developer engage in *historying*, i.e., how is change explained by the developers?

Player-historian: how does the player engage in *historying*, i.e., how does the player base comment on the proposed changes, or addition, of affordances/constraints?

Before delving into the analysis, let us clarify what is meant by a *developer-historian* and a *player-historian* in relation to games *as* history here. The following quote from Chapman crystallizes the concept of games and history, as well as what the involvement in them means as it is understood in this thesis:

[The] assumption of the potential of digital games to be history means that I will also assume to use the term developer-historian, because, as Rosenstone writes in relation to film, “to accept film makers as historians ... is to accept a new sort of history” (2006, 159). This is not to claim that there are no differences between the developer-historian and professional historian ... instead by this term I simply mean to refer to those that make meaning about the past through the form of digital games.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Chapman, *Digital Games as History: How Videogames Represent the Past and Offer Access to Historical Practice*. p.15

The premises for this kind of conceptualization do not, coincidentally, even consider the main issues with the game form as a simulation, i.e., the notion that games as simulations attempt to reproduce something historically accurate is not debated; ‘historically accurate’ is not a concern for ‘making sense of the past’. Or from another vantage point one could argue that a simulation is necessarily a flawed representation of anything it tries to copy, no matter by whom it was authored.

However, the issue of *intent* of the simulation developer, is one of the main concerns Andrew Elliott brought up on viewing games as historical simulations in his piece *Simulation and Simulacra: History in Videogames*.⁷⁶ In a very basic level, Elliott argues that the term ‘simulation’ is not often adequate to define historical games due to them being commercial products, and catering for an audience with predetermined ideas of the history they are producing; the *history* in these games then often becomes a combination of popular beliefs and historical fact, a ‘simulacra’ – a representation of the hyperreal.⁷⁷ This is, even though iterated in a slightly different fashion, the same argument as Dawn Spring presented in her piece on a *Scholarly Videogame* by arguing for the primacy of history over catering to the public (to the players’ notions of what the reality of the game should be like).⁷⁸ This kind of concern, if one is to apply them, are much more prominent with ‘realist simulations’⁷⁹ than conceptual simulations like EUIV; the meaning making does not rely on accurately depicting certain uniforms, weapons or locales, but rather through encoding of processes. In other words, it could be hypothesized that players are much more likely to have predetermined and incorrect conceptions of how things should look and sound like – due to the prevalence of popular historical film and other media in western culture – than they would on how historical processes work, as seems to be the case in Elliot’s exploration into Assassin’s Creed for example.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Elliott.

⁷⁷ Elliott. p.11, 24

⁷⁸ Spring. p.208

⁷⁹ A realist simulation is the other genre of simulation contrasting with conceptual simulation in Chapman’s theoretical framework; the former argues mainly through graphics, music and narrative, whereas the latter focuses on the procedural rhetoric as the main mode of argument.

⁸⁰ The reproduction of Paris in the game is not really what the city would have looked as in the past temporality, but rather what players would expect it to have looked like. Elliott. p.22

Even if games are to some extent ahistorical, the idea that they are ‘making sense of the past’ encompasses the conceptualizations of them as simulacra as well: they tell history in a form intelligible to their audience and still make arguments about the past. This, in Chapman’s framework, is something that would already constitute as *historying*, a term Greg Dening used in reference to what writing history means.⁸¹ In this framework:

“‘History’ – the past transformed into words or paint or dance or music or play – is our noun. ‘Historying’ is our verb-noun. Historying is the unclosed action of making histories ... Historying is process, never done, dialectical and dialogic” (Dening 2007, 102). By these definitions, digital games can offer both history and *historying* to their audiences ... It is also this capacity to offer opportunities for *historying* to players that leads me to add to the notion of the developer-historian that of the potential for player-historians.⁸²

Thus, games as history – as a finished piece – are a product of the developer-historian’s *historying* and consequently, the updates and DLC are the history and the *historying* of the same. The possibility for the player to engage in this allows for the idea of player-historian, i.e., player can engage in *historying* through playing the game in a dialectical, and in the sense of modding, in a dialogic, manner; especially in changing the rhetoric through mods, the gamers really engage in quite extensive, dialectical and dialogic *historying*.⁸³ It does not seem unreasonable to accept these notions of how players and developers engage in *historying*, as in ‘making sense of the past’.

As part of the earlier chapter we discussed games as history and explored the kind of history Europa Universalis affords to the player to explore. It might be meaningful to just reiterate some aspects of it, mainly concerning how one could expect the players to react and interact with the history simulated by the game, or to the changes proposed by the developer in the Developer Diaries. As counterfactual history, the *historying* mainly has to do with looking at

⁸¹ Sue Morgan, Keith Jenkins, and Alun Munslow, *Manifestos for History* (Routledge, 2007). p.102

⁸² Chapman, *Digital Games as History: How Videogames Represent the Past and Offer Access to Historical Practice*. p.22

⁸³ ‘Mods’ are player made alterations to the game’s actual code that may concern any aspect of the game, e.g., graphical representation, procedural aspects, or audio.

the subjunctive tense of the *plausible*. The kind of simulation EUIV provides has to do with single moments in the past that, once the game begins, deviate to ahistorical trajectories. In essence, these encoded moments allow for the player to explore *past conditional temporalities* i.e., to revisit historical contingency and review alternative scenarios that could be unthought of at the time of the event, or in contemporary setting.⁸⁴ Mostly, when the merely historically *plausible* becomes the norm within the game - when the contingency is disrupted in a grave manner -, there should be some sort of a reaction. In other words, as hypothesized in the first chapter, when the procedural rhetoric seems to produce too fantastical a narrative, there probably will be a player response. It should also be noted that games as a form, specifically in the case of conceptual simulations can be seen to afford history(ing) also in the form of historiography, or acting on *historians diegetic level*; De Groot argues that the multiplicity of emerging ludonarratives and the resignation from overly deterministic histories, allows that games' "historiography ... is therefore made complex by their very format."⁸⁵ This is however, another discussion.

Apart from past conditional temporalities Lisa Lowe devised to describe this kind of 'space' where 'what could have been' can be explored, it should be noted that games like EUIV would allow for acting out the unthought by actually realizing it. Kevin Bruyneel would define this kind of exploration into the past specifically in relation to colonial structures as: "with attention to the unthought, in those times and in ours, that I seek to creolize collective memory through deconstructing the work of what I call settler memory."⁸⁶ Demonstrating yet another vantage point into what kind of history(ing) EUIV could be seen to afford and also why Chapman claims that these games afford "fairly radical history(ing)".⁸⁷ In this chapter, exactly the existence and the level of this history(ing) is explored.

⁸⁴ Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Duke University Press, 2015). p.175,179

⁸⁵ N C Fleming, 'Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture. By Jerome de Groot.' (Oxford University Press, 2009). p.143

⁸⁶ Kevin Bruyneel, 'Creolizing Collective Memory: Refusing the Settler Memory of the Reconstruction Era', *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy*, 25.2 (2017), 36–44. p.38

⁸⁷ Chapman, *Digital Games as History: How Videogames Represent the Past and Offer Access to Historical Practice*. p.251

3.2. Wealth of the Expansions – the Discussion

For the analysis, the Developer Diaries chosen were ones having to do with the most important affordances and constraints on colonialism that were added to the base game: ‘colonial nations’ and ‘trade companies’. Most important in the sense that both of these affordances were part of an actual DLC focused entirely on them. As there are multiple entries for both these DLC, only the ones concerning the aforementioned mechanics are analyzed. It is worth to mention that these diaries are updated during the process of development of the DLC, so they mostly consist on promotional material given by the developer and the player-base commenting and hypothesizing what these changes mean and what is good, or more likely, what it wrong with them.

Conquest of Paradise – 14.01.2014 Patch 1.4

In conquest of Paradise the developers introduced the ‘colonial nations’ and some affordances to the native American tribes, also functioning as constraints to expansion for colonial nations. The way these changes are introduced by the developer is based on more immersive and more interesting experience rather than founded on any historical material. This seems to be the case in most of the entries (all four explored in relation to this DLC); it is as if the historicity of the game is a given, or that the immersion is reached through more historically accurate experience:

It’s time to explore a more interesting America. In Europa Universalis IV: Conquest of Paradise, managing your overseas colonies is going to get a bit more interesting ... controlling them might not be the easiest thing in the world. With this expansion, your colonies in the Americas will take on a new form; the larger ones will actually become free nations that serve as your colonies. They will have a limited independence ... colonizing, fighting Native Americans and maybe even rebelling and striving for liberty from their motherland. You can squeeze them hard if you want, but then you might get into trouble down the line (or you can just change sides and play as a colony).⁸⁸

⁸⁸ <https://forum.paradoxplaza.com/forum/index.php?threads/europa-universalis-iv-conquest-of-paradise-expansion%E2%80%93-developer-diary-1.733017/> 18.10.2019 12:30

Whatever the case, it is clear that there are multiple claims made here: colonies in the Americas will act somewhat independent and will strive for post-colonial situation, as was determined to be the most defining feature of settler colonialism.⁸⁹ Importantly, in this first introduction into the DLC features, the constraints for European colonization like stronger native factions, form a huge part of the player-discussion.

The matter-of-fact style of the developers is not in any way mirrored by the players who exhibit much greater opinionated messaging and is interestingly backed, albeit very rarely, by actual literature on the topic.⁹⁰ It should be noted here that most of the discussion is lacking in any kind of meaningful content, and in the case of this entry, just 46 of 581 messages had any reference to anything historical – mostly the commenting is congratulatory, enthusiastic or commenting on something entirely unrelated.⁹¹

For a great example of how players do engage in discussing the contents of this pack is in the discussion on constraints of colonial expansion or the affordances given to the native Americans:

In any game which models, however tenuously, the actual historical conditions of the age of Exploration and discovery, the New World Natives had no chance, because their populations immediately began dying of horrific epidemics when the Spaniards arrived. In game terms this is reflected in the fact that they are terribly weak and easy to conquer. (You'd be easy to conquer too if you were suffering from Smallpox).⁹²

The discussion on the deterministic nature of this comment became a hot topic on itself; there was a reference to *L'Histoire*⁹³ trying to enforce the point of inevitability, as well as to popular works like *Guns, Germs and Steel* and references to Wikipedia article on Latin American Native populations in the 16th and 17th centuries.⁹⁴ The deterministic utterances got challenged by

⁸⁹ Wolfe, 'Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native'. p.387

⁹⁰ Finding Paradise, messages: 4, 8, 41

⁹¹ Finding Paradise

⁹² <https://forum.paradoxplaza.com/forum/index.php?threads/europa-universalis-iv-conquest-of-paradise-expansion%E2%80%93developer-diary-1.733017/ 18.10.2019 12:55>

⁹³ Y Saint-Geours, 'L'Amérique Latine Est Le Laboratoire Du Monde', *L'Histoire*, 332 (2007), 6–11.

⁹⁴ Finding Paradise: 8, 14

multiple other commentators as *outdated* or – the only example of a developer actually commenting anything with content – by referring to the shortcoming of this kind of thinking: “I think Gars [Developer] was saying that appealing to harshly reductive, unitary explanations of complex, emergent phenomena betrays a lack of critical thinking.”⁹⁵ It seems that the plausibility of native factions surviving the European invasion and their colonial ambitions was the most contentious point and evoked an extensive discourse back and forth. Certainly evident was that there was a real interest in exploring the ‘unthought’ as in the native Americans beating back the Europeans; in a sense, playing with those *past conditional temporalities*.

The works cited in reference to natives and why they should not be a ‘viable option’ to play, were mainly argued upon with the population loss due to disease in the focus. The aforementioned *Guns, Germs and Steel* by Jared diamond certainly is one of those works deterministic, with very little focus on any human agency.⁹⁶ This “out-dated” nature of the work was duly pointed out in the comments as shown and C. Mann’s *1491: The Americas before Columbus* was used to back up a claim for the “adding lots of new and interesting things for the Native Americans”, as promised by the developers.⁹⁷ In essence, the consensus seemed to veer in the direction that the arrival of the Europeans caused a huge upheaval in the form of disease and collapse of local administration, albeit temporally; it was also pointed out how diverse the area is, and how differently native societies were affected by the European arrival:

“There's more to the Americas than the Incans and Aztecs. The Iroquois remained independent until after the American revolution, as did many of the other groups in North America - and we're not taking groups in wasteland [Uncolonized land] here.”

... Most notably, Indians in Patagonia held out until the 1870s and would repeatedly massacre Spanish campaigns which attempted to subdue them. It took until an industrialised, genocidal war by the Argentines to finally conquer them.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Finding Paradise: 14

⁹⁶ Jared M Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel: A Short History of Everybody for the Last 13,000 Years* (Random House, 1998).

⁹⁷ Finding Paradise: 1, 41

⁹⁸ Finding Paradise: 13

It was suggested that there be some kind of mechanic to constrain native resistance in the form of reduced 'manpower' or lower 'tax' rates in order to simulate the disease outbreaks.⁹⁹ However, the quote above is quite good in demonstrating the general idea that the fate of the natives should not be dictated by deterministic notions of history, but that there was a chance that they could have overcome the settler colonial projects of the Europeans.

On the actual affordance of 'colonial nations' the discussion centered on how they would actually function and whether they would be able to reflect different colonial realities, e.g.,: "I just hope the independent colonies system includes the possibility to decide how close you want to keep them. French assimilation policy vs. British indirect rule policy."¹⁰⁰ There seems to be quite a lot of claimed knowledge on the settler colonial states, and they do, arguably, form a part of quite exhaustively projected histories, like those on *western film* and literature; Mann's work cited in the discussion was the main counter-argument to the teleological or deterministic history portrayed in the kind of popular works in, e.g., 'historical' film.¹⁰¹ Specific emphasis was also given to how the settler colonial projects advanced, as in, how the *colonial* becomes *postcolonial*. Mostly the concern was that these 'colonial states' would be called with postcolonial titles like "México" or "USA", rather than given the more appropriate "Thirteen Colonies" or "Nueva España" colonial titles; the importance between the stages of the settler colonial structures were deemed important, even though these were not discussed in the vocabulary used here.¹⁰²

The discussion also veered on towards how these "autonomous" or "semi-independent" entities should work and what they should cost as upkeep. However, there were considerably less contention on this topic than on the native factions in the first Developer Diary entry, as there was a promise to look more closely into this in the forthcoming ones. It should already be noted here that there is clearly "fairly radical history(ing)" going on in these diaries: the players question the changes made by the developer and also engage in a dialogue backed up, albeit seldomly, by actual sources. Even though there is no real dialogue between the

⁹⁹ Finding Paradise: 16

¹⁰⁰ Finding Paradise: 19; Colonial Nations: 22

¹⁰¹ Sally J Morgan, 'The Ghost in the Luggage: Wallace and Braveheart: Post-Colonial' pioneer' identities', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 2.3 (1999), 375–92.; Ulrich Schermaul, 'Mainstream Movies and the Reimagination of History in *The Patriot* (2000)', *Zeitschrift Für Anglistik Und Amerikanistik*, 53.3 (2005), 225–38.

¹⁰² Finding Paradise: 27,28

developer and the players in the comments, there certainly is commenting by players on the 'announced changes'.

As discussed in the first chapter, the use of 'explorers and conquistadors' is necessary to unlock 'Uncolonized land' for colonization. Even though the developers did not address this affordance directly, the commentators picked up on it, as it is an integral mechanic of the colonial problem space; if the colonies themselves are being worked on to reflect the past more accurately, the general feeling was that also the affordances related to exploration should be revisited also.¹⁰³ The system employed in the game does not seem to reflect the expectations, as one comment reads: "You commission an explorer, and tell him to go explore. Some of them might find interesting stuff, others might come back empty-handed and.. some others just never coming back."¹⁰⁴ This contradicts the system employed by the developer, as the affordance gives full control and knowledge to the player on these exploratory voyages. The lack of risk was seen as the biggest problem and some also pointed out that the *motivation* for explorations should be included in the affordance to make it more adequate:

The exploration process should be uncontrollable and costly for the nation, with general options like choosing between the African route or American route to reach India.¹⁰⁵

The Developer Diary entry that concentrated just the affordance of a 'colonial nation' argued for change explicitly due to historical accuracy, or how colonies historically functioned in the New World:

Historically, the huge distance between the New World and Europe meant that the American possessions of the European nations had quite a bit of independence. Not to mention the fact that English North America was largely the product of freelance corporations as much as it was the crown. In Europa Universalis IV, however, you could run them just anyway you wanted, only with

¹⁰³ Finding Paradise: 23, 38, 43, 45

¹⁰⁴ Finding Paradise: 23

¹⁰⁵ Finding Paradise: 43

slightly less income from them. They were, in effect, distant provinces. In the expansion Conquest of Paradise, we have created a new type of dependency called Colonial Nations.¹⁰⁶

Much like the argument for more interesting natives in the introductory Diary – as the native Americans were not very interesting to play due to the game having a “pacing ... optimized for the old world powers”¹⁰⁷ – the argument for the inclusion of a new affordance in the form of colonial nations is argued for based on added *flavor*, i.e., the earlier mechanics did not adequately capture the past realities. The constraints for colonial expansion into the Americas (or added affordances for native factions) enabled explorations into postcolonial kind of histories, into *creolization of settler memory* as Bruyneel called it, and this mechanic gives more depth to the rhetoric of this nature.¹⁰⁸ I.e., the changes allow for ludonarratives, player generated histories, that do not necessarily replay the settler colonial past. In other words, as the ‘colonial nation’ affordance is great for faster expansion, it does fragment the power player worlds - wars between colonies and natives can be devastating, and do not necessarily follow the real past – and the constraints to this expansion, as well as the viability of native gameplay, all allow for a more nuanced histories, for more nuanced explorations into past conditional temporalities. The DLC could be seen as a step from Europa *Universalis* into Europa *Provincialis*, at least in some level.¹⁰⁹

‘Liberty Desire’ was a constraint on colonial nations that the developers applied to replace ‘events’ that simulated the ambitions towards *post*-colonial by the New World colonies. In its own Developer Diary entry ‘Liberty Desire’, the mechanic is accompanied with another affordance (or constraint): ‘support independence’ diplomatic option. The developers argue that because colonial independence war would be quite a “one sided struggle ... To help even things out a bit, we took inspiration from history where French aid was essential in helping the

¹⁰⁶ Colonial Nations: 1

¹⁰⁷ Finding Paradise: 1

¹⁰⁸ Bruyneel.

¹⁰⁹ The irony of this statement is not lost: all the world would still follow the one way progress towards Revolutionary France in the early 19th century... The point is that at least in some way, there is multipolarity in focus for the developers – be it still from a European ‘point of view’.

USA become independent.”¹¹⁰ The main factors affecting liberty desire are ‘tariffs’ and any metropolitan interference in colonial matters through events, e.g., ‘replacing a viceroy’. There is clear historical inspiration for these mechanics, but some commentators questioned them based on how historically most of American colonies were dismantled in the late 18th century.¹¹¹

The main issue for the commentators on the topic was the possibility to keep these colonies loyal by keeping their liberty desire low, which was not seen as historically accurate. In essence, the actual mechanic ‘liberty desire’ was deemed functional, but the fact that colonies would not necessarily reach independence was seen problematic, as this is arguably the main goal of settler colonialism: to reach a post-colonial status.¹¹² The reasons why the independence of settler colonies was inevitable or at least highly likely were heavily contested: enlightenment, taxation, population growth and growing cultural deviance from the metropolis were argued to have been the main factors for the emergence of independence movements of the New World.¹¹³ Multiple analogies were made especially to different tax revolts in Europe (all the way to Rome actually) but the discussion did seem to conclude that without enlightenment it was unlikely that the revolts in the colonies would have resulted in independence. Only one actual source was cited in reference to these issues: Winston S. Churchill, *History of the English Speaking Peoples* – of quite questionable academic value, but nonetheless an actual source.¹¹⁴

The discussion on the topic of ‘liberty desire’ brought up another integral issue regarding the form of the particular (hi)story-play-space and the histories it allows the players to create:

... the problem with counter-factual history. Anything that didn't happen is always theoretically possible. Some of it was actually possible. Other things weren't given the realities of the era. A lot is tied up in people's widespread cultural beliefs -- what they found thinkable and compelling and what they didn't.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ Liberty Desire: 1

¹¹¹ Liberty Desire: 9, 10

¹¹² Wolfe, ‘Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native’.

¹¹³ Liberty Desire: 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18

¹¹⁴ Liberty Desire: 16 S Churchill Winston, ‘A History of the English-Speaking Peoples’, *The Age of Revolution*, 1956.

¹¹⁵ Liberty Desire: 13

This just merely expresses the awareness some players have of the medium and what they are doing. However, it also demonstrates, albeit unknowingly per chance, how the game allows to explore the Lowe's 'unthought', i.e., what could have been a past conditional temporality – the theoretically possible.

Another important question brought up in the comments on colonial affordances and constraints in both *Finding Paradise* and *Colonial Nations* Diary entries, were the calls to introduce some new colonial mechanics for Africa and Asia as well in order to accommodate for the different colonial realities: “Trade Companies” or “... the East India Company and for instance Dutch South Africa ... sort of Dependency than directly controlled by the crown” were suggested.¹¹⁶ The awareness of the different kind of colonial realities, be it in the type of colonialism, as settler or exploitation colonialism, or the knowledge that expansion into these areas resulted in very different colonies, the discussion does reveal pretty good understanding on how colonialism is a multifaceted phenomenon. In the following DLC the developers addressed this issue by the implementation of ‘Trade Companies’, which is the second big DLC on colonial mechanisms chosen for analysis.

In the *Post Mortem* entry for Conquest the Paradise, the developers addressed some issues regarding the gameplay, with very little on the historical accuracy or authenticity. Mostly, the content was on how “We[Paradox] introduced dynamic colonial countries which represents a break from things PDS games have not done in the past (and also something that could open up interesting possibilities for the future)” and the issues brought about by it.¹¹⁷ The main concern was that too much control had been taken away from the player by trying to enrich the game world by the addition of this mechanic, a concern that was also voiced by some commentators in earlier entries. Thus, the discussion is much more about the gameplay than actual history. Still, the addition of affordances for the natives was seen as a clear success, giving flavor for playing those nations.¹¹⁸ There was no further discussion on any of the new affordances or mechanics at this point however.

¹¹⁶ *Finding Paradise*: 18, 25, 33; *Colonial Nations*: 3, 8, 10, 11

¹¹⁷ *Post Mortem*: 1

¹¹⁸ *Post Mortem*: 1

Wealth of Nations – 29.05.2014 Patch 1.6

These Developer Diaries proved to be entirely different in comparison to *Conquest of Paradise*: there was certainly discussion on the history the game attempts to simulate and whether things should be possible or not, but no sources were cited in any of them. Also, these Diaries were not nearly as interesting to the players as the earlier DLC *Conquest of Paradise* – the introductory entry for *Wealth of Nations* contains a total of some 104 messages, when for *Conquest of Paradise* it was 581.¹¹⁹ Also the amount of comments that in any way referenced the history the game was attempting to simulate or commenting on an affordance from a historical point of view was much lower: 3% compared to 8% in the earlier DLC introductory entry.¹²⁰ The reason for this seems that there were fewer claims on historical processes – in the earlier expansion, there were arguments to the functioning of settler colonial structures, as well as to the native societies both in north and south America – which makes the contents of this DLC much less contentious a topic. The developers also recognize this:

The previous expansion had a few really visible game altering things ... a new type of dynamic nations which changed how you controlled your American colonies and completely new mechanics for the native americans, perhaps a bit disrespectful to call it 'fluff', but bear with me ... For *Wealth of Nations* you can look forward to towards more features but perhaps less headline grabbing features, in other words more interesting gameplay changes but perhaps not so many features that force you to completely rethink your priorities.¹²¹

In essence, the mechanics introduced in the earlier DLC were much more impactful both to the claims the game makes about history and to how one plays the game than the ones introduced in *Wealth of Nations*.

¹¹⁹ <https://forum.paradoxplaza.com/forum/index.php?threads/europa-universalis-iv-conquest-of-paradise-expansion%E2%80%93-developer-diary-1.733017/page-30> ;
<https://forum.paradoxplaza.com/forum/index.php?threads/europa-universalis-iv-wealth-of-nations-expansion%E2%80%93-developer-diary-1.763319/page-6> 27.10.2019 20:07

¹²⁰ Finding Paradise; General Information

¹²¹ General Information: 1

The addition of 'Trade Companies' was not really discussed in any real depth in the first Diary entry, stating merely: "We are going to add Trading Companies that allow for more specialized trading empires, we are going to add new diplomatic actions and types of peace treaties, privateers and things like that."¹²² This does not really give much in relation to what this new affordance would give to the player and what it claims about the period. Specifically, there was just one comment on this entry pondering exactly what these 'Trade companies' are and how they function with very little reference to anything historical.¹²³ Perchance the lack of interest is exactly in the vagueness from the part of the developer, or in the relatively less serious claims about history.

The discussion only picked up in the entry dedicated to the affordance of 'Trade Companies', even though there was another really contentious issue that challenged the players' sense of historical accuracy much more than anything about the kind of colonialism that happened in Africa and the East: canals.¹²⁴ For this reason most of the discussion veered into an argument whether they were theoretically plausible or totally anachronistic, eclipsing the discussion on the 'Trade Companies'. Still, the nature of the game as flagrantly "ahistoric", playing with the concept of whether ahistoricity in general, or just anachronisms, are the main cause for people to dislike the proposed changes in this DLC became a highly discussed topic.¹²⁵

The discussion, overshadowed by the canals, was based on whether 'Trade Companies' would have their own armies and fleets, or engage in their own wars.¹²⁶ Basically grilling the developers for the actual mechanics of the affordance, i.e., what it *affords*. However, it is, as exclaimed earlier, very little we see discussion on this. Maybe as a side note, the idea of colonial and trade company regions was contested slightly when one commentator asked whether the Russian American company would be included in the game, but there was no developer response and no further conversation.¹²⁷ As there is no *Post Mortem* entry for this expansion, it is hard to say how the developers felt after release. However, it is clear that the colonial

¹²² General Information: 1

¹²³ General Information: 2

¹²⁴ Companies and Canals

¹²⁵ Companies and Canals: 2, 6

¹²⁶ Companies and Canals: 3, 5

¹²⁷ Companies and Canals: 8

affordance ‘trade company’ did not cause the same kind of discussion as ‘colonial nation’; the reasons are of course varied, but it would not perhaps be too bold to hypothesize that – apart from the more cautious claims – the form of colonialism exercised in this part of the world is far less well-known than settler colonialism, at least in the western consciousness.

As defined in the first chapter, trade colonies present functions that could be described as exploitation colonialism and it seems that this *mode* of colonialism in this context is less contested than the affordances simulating settler colonialism.

3.3. The Extent of Involvement

It seems that players do engage in some quite serious debates on historical facts and how/what the game should simulate and how. Still, the level of discourse and the number of players actually engaging in this kind of history on the forums both seem, in a way, quite limited, and not all topics receive the same attention:

Conquest of Paradise: 1006 messages in three Developer Diary entries, of which 88 touched upon history of ‘Colonial nation’ or ‘natives’; four actual sources were cited, as well as Wikipedia once.¹²⁸

Wealth of Nations: 296 messages in two Developer Diary entries, of which 11 touched upon actual history on ‘Trade Companies’; one citation to Wikipedia only.¹²⁹

Furthermore - on the data –, most of the comments that touched upon the historical aspect, and the debates in which they engaged in, involved the same commentators multiple times; the number of comments thus does not reflect number of individual players. For understanding the scale, or rather the proportions of this engagement, here is the average number of players *in-game* at any given time of the day between January and May of 2014 when these DLC were released: 4 395.¹³⁰ This demonstrates how big the player base is and consequently how few of the players actually engage in the discussion in Developer Diaries. One should however remember that these Forums in *Paradox Plaza* contain a huge amount of discussion in addition to the very limited sample analyzed here, but it still would make sense

¹²⁸ Finding Paradise; Colonial Nation; Liberty Desire

¹²⁹ General Information; Companies and Canals

¹³⁰ <https://steamcharts.com/app/236850> 28:10.2019 01:38

that it would be a small percentage of the players who engage in discussion within these forums, nonetheless.

The numbers non-withstanding, the activity does seem to qualify as quite radical historying, as being dialectical and dialogic in nature, even though it is much more historying between the players rather than between the developers and players, even though, obviously, the players are discussing the history *of* the developers. It is clear that these individuals command quite a good knowledge of the issues they comment upon and even though the basis is not always academic, it does demonstrate the ability to distinguish nuanced differences in different colonial modes, but maybe more importantly, in the game itself as a *historical form*. The idea of the game as inherently ahistorical or anachronistic was something that came up quite often in reference to how the mechanics in the game should function. The perceived ahistoricity of the game is an interesting point and one worth of further study: why is the game seen by some players as incapable of accurate historical representation? Whatever the case, there is clear awareness onto the limitations of the game to simulate the past, when at the same time allowing that many things could have been theoretically possible.

On the actual discussion on the affordances and constraints concerning the colonial problem space, the argumentation, as mentioned, demonstrates quite a good knowledge especially on settler colonial structures, as well as on native American history. However, the argumentation was mainly backed by popular works such as Mann's *1491: The Americas before Columbus* or Diamond's *Guns, Germs and Steel: A Short History of Everybody for the Last 13,000 Years*. To demonstrate the nature of these works, it should be noted that they are what one would describe as popular histories, in that they are not necessarily aimed for an academic audience and make really broad claims of the world history. In the latter case, Jared Diamond's work has been criticized by James Blaut for being too generalizing, deterministic and Eurocentric, giving little space for cultural autonomy or human agency.¹³¹ Some historians, like Tonio Andrade and John McNeill even though acknowledging the shortcomings of Diamond's work do claim it does

¹³¹ James M Blaut, *The Colonizer's Model of the World. Vol. 2, Eight Eurocentric Historians* (Guilford, 2000).

make a compelling case for different developments on a global scale.¹³² Mann's work on the other hand, although popular in nature, is more fitting with the postcolonial sensitivities, but it is very rarely commented upon by professional historians, since it is more a journalist survey on the field than a thesis on its own.¹³³ Even though the cited sources are not the most academically sound ones, this fact was duly noted by some of the commentators and the developers alike, i.e., that overly deterministic history denies the complexity of the events portrayed in the game; the contested nature of these cited titles was discussed in length, demonstrating perchance some above average knowledge on historical scholarship.

It seems fair to say that there certainly emerges a certain kind of player-historian in these Developer Diaries. In a way, the players review the developer-historian claims and contest them whenever they conflict with their understanding of the plausible. In short: the developer-historian in the source material presents the history to be scrutinized; (even though the number of players engaging in quite radical historying is quite low) the player-historians engage in a nuanced discussion on history and additionally on the game as historical form.

¹³² Tonio Andrade, 'Beyond Guns, Germs, and Steel: European Expansion and Maritime Asia, 1400-1750', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 14.1-2 (2010), 165-86.; John R McNeill, 'The World According to Jared Diamond', *The History Teacher*, 34.2 (2001), 165-74.

¹³³ Robert Costanza, '1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus', *BioScience*, 56.10 (2006), 846-47. p.846

4. Conclusions

The aim of this research was to address the ‘fairly radical history(ing)’ from the part of the developer, and, as Chapman hypothesized, by the part of the players who would engage in it within the kind of context like the Europa Universalis Community Forums. The nature of this historical engagement was explored through representations of colonialism, as it is a central concept for expansion in the game and the period – the game attempts to simulate a variety of historical phenomena, so delimiting the research was necessary. The first chapter focused on the *developer-historian* and the history afforded through constructing the ‘colonial problem space’ and defining the particular (hi)story-play-space. The second chapter, looking at the discussions in Developer Diaries ended up concentrating almost entirely on the *player-historian*, as there was unexpectedly quite limited input from the developer.

The question for the first chapter revolved around the game as a historical form, and addressed the following question:

What kind of *affordances* and *constraints* comprise the *procedural rhetoric* on colonialism, i.e., what kind of history can players explore through the game?

The method and theoretical background were synthesized from McCall’s ‘problem space’ by supplementing it with Chapman’s ‘(hi)story-play-space’. The choice to not only look at EUIV as a problem space, but also as a (hi)story-play-space allowed for much greater complexity in describing the kind of history the developer is trying to simulate and more importantly, in what form.

From this theoretical vantage point, Europa Universalis IV was defined as a conceptual simulation with highly diverse and organic emerging ludonarratives, affording explorations into constructionist histories through contrafactual excursions within conditional past temporalities, i.e., what theoretically *could have been* given the initial past conditions. In yet other words, the game affords history(ing) in the “subjunctive realm of plausibility”, much like any a history does - or what any a historian does when writing a history. In essence, this conceptualization allowed that the game be seen as developer-historian’s framework – (hi)story-play-space – in which players can write their own histories, or put simply, engage in history(ing) within a prebuilt theoretical framework; some of the challenges, like the lack of

expertise of the player, is supplemented by the developer so, that the player can engage in history(ing) on *historian's* diegetic level with prebuilt framework and selected primary sources. This approach seemed reasonable as the procedural rhetoric in the game regarding colonial processes is complex and reflects at least three traditionally distinguished modes of colonial realities: settler, exploitation and surrogate colonialism.

The representations of the colonial modes were identified through construction of the 'colonial problem space' and by exploring the affordances and constraints regarding colonial expansion, as in, what the developer-historian argues to have been possible/plausible for the acting agent in the time period. This allowed an actual in depth look into the claims made - the procedural rhetoric employed - to argue about historical processes and past realities. The results allowed to define how colonialism were represented in the game in relation to academic definitions, which consequently could have also been used to explore the ideological and theoretical approach to the phenomenon by the developers. In our case however, the exploration into the *colonial* in EUIV was in order to understand the discussion and the evolution of the rhetoric, or for understanding the issues the developer, as well as the player's had with the game as a simulation. The navigation of affordances is the main way of engaging into history(ing), i.e., the affordances are the tools for the exploration of the provided story-space. The change in the procedural rhetoric was arguably quite radical in nature as it totally changed the mechanics of how colonialism functioned, demonstrating the level of history(ing) by the developer-historian and how the *history* produced was altered to better encompass those different colonial realities present in the academic literature.

The second research question:

How has the *procedural rhetoric* changed over time due to DLC and updates and how is change commented on by the player community; on what level do the players engage in history(ing)?

Here the material consisted of Developer Diary entries for the two big DLC which both introduced new affordances related to colonialism defined in the earlier chapter: *Conquest of Paradise* and *Wealth of Nations*. The method was qualitative textual analysis, in which relevant

material was siphoned from the general discussion to explore the ways players engage in this history(ing) and how the developers explained the changes made into the procedural rhetoric of the game.

The first part of the question was already answered in the first chapter, as the exploration into the affordances revealed the time of their introduction into the game and did demonstrate how the rhetoric had changed. However, the actual argumentation for the changes was almost nonexistent, as these Diaries seemed to take a form of commercial material over anything else; 'historical accuracy' as motivation for change was quite implicit apart from just a few instances. On the other hand, the *player-historians* engaged in various historical topics, backed occasionally with actual academic sources. The affordances introduced were scrutinized for their accuracy, as well as actual historical topics were discussed, even though the amount of interest towards the different affordances was very disparate. Apart from discussing the game's representation, the player's discussed the game as historical form, more precisely, whether EUIV is by nature anachronistic and whether counterfactual history can ever be nothing but ahistorical. Thus, epistemological questions sneaked occasionally in on the discussion.

It should be noted that the sample size probably does not give a very accurate picture on the discussion overall on these forums, since it only looked into the Developer Diaries on these two very limited instances. However, even this small sample did demonstrate "fairly radical history(ing)" Chapman hypothesized to emerge on the discussion forums. Still, even this sample consisted of more than thousand messages, which only represented not even a 1% of all that is going on in the Forums. In retrospect, trying to understand the *player-historian* and the engagement in history(ing), further research could concentrate specifically on the AAR's, or *After Action Reports*; these player written contrafactual histories could demonstrate much greater level of engagement than the Developer Diaries which were chosen for this study simply as it was believed that this way the dialogue between the developers and players could be studied, which turned out not to be the case (apart from one instance).

The main result from the analysis of these diaries was that a small number of players engage in arguably fairly radical history(ing), demonstrating clear understanding on the simulated processes and events and being able to argue meaningfully about them. Furthermore, the

discussion on the form of *history* the game offers was an interesting aspect that came up. The *history* of the developer was discussed and debated between the players, demonstrating clearly the existence of that developer-historian and player-historian hypothesized in Chapman's theoretical framework.

The initial theoretical framework had to be supplemented throughout the work in order to describe the activity especially by the players on the community forums. The tools for analysis of this kind of historical game on the other hand, were clearly optimal for exploring the kind of history - the use of history - in EUIV. However, if more time and care would have been put into the choice of material for the textual analysis the results could have given a much more comprehensive picture of how players engage in history(ing) on the forums. The results still demonstrate how history is engaged and used both by the developer and the player in the context of EUIV, and how deep this engagement is.

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