



Federal Indian Law v. **Tribal Law**

Federal Indian Law

■ The law that defines the rights, responsibilities, and relationships between Tribes, states, and the federal government.

Tribal Law

■ The laws of individual Tribes including constitutions, codes, case law, and customary law

COHEN'S HANDBOOK OF FEDERAL INDIAN LAW (Nell Jessup Newton et al. eds., 2012).

Tribal Sovereignty

- Tribes have inherent authority as sovereign nations to protect and promote the health and welfare of their citizens using the methods most relevant for their communities
- Tribal inherent authority is a "plenary and exclusive power over their members and their territory, subject only to limitations imposed by federal law," and includes the power to determine the form of tribal government and the power to legislate and tax, among others

COHEN'S HANDBOOK OF FEDERAL INDIAN LAW, § 4.01[1][b]; § 4.01[2].



5

TRIBAL CIVIL REGULATION TESTS

- CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIPS
 - Tribes may exercise jurisdiction over non-Indians when the non-Indians enter consensual relationships
- DIRECT EFFECTS/THREATS TO TRIBAL WELFARE
 - Tribes may exercise jurisdiction over non-Indian when non-Indian's conduct "threatens or has some direct effect on the political integrity, the economic security, or the health or welfare of the tribe"
- Montana v. United States, 450 U.S. 544 (1981)

Criminal Jurisdiction

Where?

• Is it Indian country? Or not?

Who?

- is the suspect Indian or non-Indian?
- Is the victim Indian or non-Indian?

What?

Is it a crime under the Major Crimes Act?

7

STATES

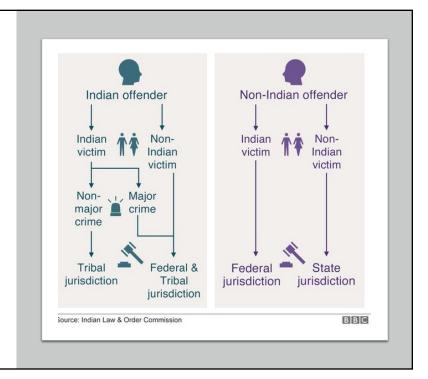
 States generally lack jurisdiction in Indian Country*

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

 Major crimes committed by Indians and all crimes by non-Indians against an Indian

TRIBES

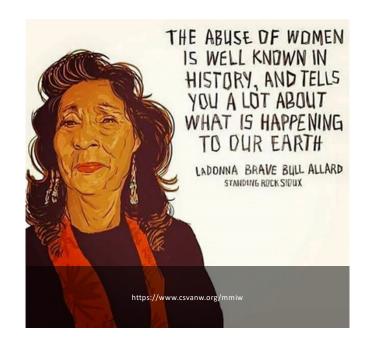
- Tribes generally lack criminal jurisdiction over non-Indian defendants*
- Concurrent and exclusive jurisdiction over Crimes committed by Indians



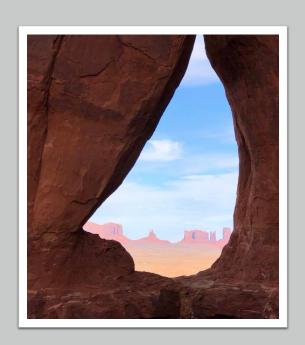




Need for Creative Solutions Driven by Tribal Leaders and Community Members



11



Ahé hee'- Thank you

Heather Tanana

S.J. Quinney College of Law –
University of Utah
heather.tanana@law.utah.edu