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# **SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND THE GREAT LAW OF PEACE IN AKWESASNE**

**by**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Chronicling five different social movements in Akwesasne's contemporary history, this study highlights the progression of changes and reforms associated with concepts and metaphors found in the Kaianerenkowa (Great Law of Peace). Using the theory of Segmentary-Factional-Political Systems this thesis examines how the Kaianerenkowa has been transformed from a lore espousing communal participatory democracy into a socio-political construction serving the needs of various (and sometimes opposing) Mohawk political groups in Akwesasne. In the conclusion we examine the contemporary significance of the Kaianerenkowa in Akwesasne and its possible future role in the community.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The *kanôhônnyôk* or Thanksgiving Address is a beautiful oral recital, in which the reciter gives thanks to all the wonders surrounding them. In its original format the *kaôhônnyôk* can take anywhere from 20 to 45 minutes to recite. That's about how long it would take for me to thank all those who have supported and guided me through this difficult but rewarding journey.

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**Nia:wen kowa**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

During the early 1990s, the Mohawk community of Akwesasne was torn apart by internal social conflicts. These conflicts culminated in the death of two men and numerous injuries to others. In 1993, as a direct consequence of this internal turmoil, a group of about 20 Mohawk families from Akwesasne migrated to a new Mohawk settlement called Kanatsiohareke or "the clean pot." Kanatsiohareke is located in the Mohawk Valley of upper New York State, 125 kilometres south-west of Akwesasne.

The Mohawk community of Akwesasne (also known as St.Regis) is only one of seven Mohawk communities in North America. All seven communities are members of the Mohawk Nation and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Although, the communities share similar traits this theoretical analyses deals solely with Akwesasne. Akwesasne covers an area of 8,889 square hectares, situated in two Canadian provinces and one American state (Secretary of Native Affairs in Ontario 1992: 12). Akwesasne is also divided by two borders. The first border, the international Canadian-American border, divides the community from east to west. The second border, the Ontario-Quebec border, partially divides the community from north to south. Exacerbating these logistical problems is the fact that the Mohawks are subject to the rules of two federal governments (Canadian and American), as well as three provincial/state governmental bodies (Ontario, Quebec, and New York State). Within the community, the Mohawks have three governmental bodies, the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe (recognized by New York State and the American Federal government), and the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (recognized by Quebec, Ontario, and the Canadian government). Recognized by none of the official governments is the Kanienkehaka Nation Council of Chiefs - a traditional governmental body which represents the Mohawk Nation in the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Although divided by national and international boundaries, the area is viewed by the community as one united land.

Before proceeding any further, a paper of this genre needs to address some of the key terms that will be used. The first term, "Indian", "is recognized as originating in a case of

mistaken identity, [although] it has come to be widely accepted, even by the aboriginal peoples themselves"(Dickason 1993: 16). In this thesis the terms "Amerindian" and "First Nation" refer to an individual or a group who are indigenous to the Americas. These two terms avoid the ambiguities of "Indian(s)" and "Native(s)" and are more specific than "aboriginal(s)" (Dickason 1993: 16). The Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) have also their own designation for Amerindian or First Nation; it is *Honkwéhonwe* meaning "Original People". This text will utilize Amerindian(s), First Nation(s) and *Honkwéhonwe* when discussing the original inhabitants of Turtle Island (North America).

The label of "Iroquois", a French translation of the *Innué* (Montagnais) term *imokué* denoting "a terrifying and formidable being", was imposed by Europeans, and does not represent how the people labelled themselves, at least aboriginally (Day 1970: 57-8). Members of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (People of the Longhouse) often perceived the word "Iroquois" as pejorative and Euro-centric (Dickason 1993: 16). Some prefer to refer to themselves as the Haudenosaunee and the Six Nations Confederacy. Whenever possible, the term "Iroquois" will not be used by the author in this text. The last label that we will mention is the *Anishininabeg* (Algonquin) term of "Mohawk" meaning "eater(s) of men" (York and Pindera 1991: 153-4). The terms Mohawk and *Kanienkehaka* - "the People of the Land where the Flint is found" are both commonly used today in Akwesasne and throughout the Mohawk Nation.

In the past, Mohawk communities were associational clusters founded on responsibility and unity. Social equilibrium was preserved through an active participation of the citizens and/or the relocation of dissident groups. Migration prevented local disagreements from deteriorating into social dissension. The contemporary community of Akwesasne has been described as a tribe, a village, and a reserve. All of these terms are alien and are considered derogatory designations for Akwesasne. For this thesis, Akwesasne will be considered an "associational space," where Akwesasneons continue to apply the teachings of the *Kaianerenkowa* (the good teachings of the clear minded or the Great Law of Peace) and their assertion of sovereignty, in order to one day regain their *Kashwentha* (nationhood).

In Akwesasne, Mohawk individuals usually consider themselves to be of the Mohawk Nation and of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, but not all Mohawks are aware of the nature of the Confederacy, the Mohawk Nation, or the Longhouse and its ways (Vachon 1991: 23). In the last three decades, members of Akwesasne have begun to identify themselves as Akwesasronons. This term symbolizes the emergence of a "distinct" identity for the Mohawk nation at Akwesasne. An Akwesasronon is a Mohawk individual who engages in social interactions within the community of Akwesasne.

### **1.1 Background of the study**

The post-World War II era was a time of enormous social and environmental changes in the St. Lawrence River Valley region. Rivers gave way to hydroelectric dams and canals. Many of these infrastructures encroached upon the environment of Akwesasne. The most notable of these projects was the St. Lawrence Seaway Project. The St. Lawrence Seaway became the world's largest inland navigable waterway as it provided access to the centre of the continent, 3,750 km away from the Atlantic Ocean (The State of Canada's Environment 1991: 19-4). The fact that the Mohawks were not consulted and were largely ignored during the implementation of these projects provoked resistance. For example, the Kanienkehaka resisted and delayed the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway by seeking court injunctions against the Canadian and American Governments.

While these mega-projects were being constructed, social movements were growing in importance in the U.S. and Canadian Amerindian populace (1950-1970). A prominent revitalization movement in the U.S. was the American Indian Movement (AIM). In Canada, the Indian Brotherhood (the precursor of the Assembly of First Nations during the 1970s) developed in response to the various constitutional and political changes carried out by the federal government. The common element of these social movements was a validation of Amerindian traditions and culture, as well as a revitalization of traditional socio-political systems that not

only competed with the existing band councils, but also questioned the validity of these foreign and imposed systems. A key element of these social movements for the Mohawks of Akwesasne and their Haudenosaunee allies (especially the supporters of the Longhouse<sup>1</sup>) was a return to traditional ways as stated by the Kaianerenkowa or the Great Law of Peace. The Kaianerenkowa is "the good philosophy of peace, power and righteousness". In some texts, the Kaianerenkowa is also referred to as the "Great Law" or the "Constitution of the Six Nations". To avoid confusion, this text will only utilize the terms Great Law of Peace or Kaianerenkowa.

The Great Law of Peace was and continues to be for a number of Akwesasronons the socio-political and spiritual foundation of the Confederacy and its comprising Nations. The ideas of participatory democracy, respect, responsibility, and individual/communal rights are the key elements of the Kaianerenkowa. Proponents of the Great Law of Peace justify their actions through numerous, sometimes dichotomous interpretations of the Kaianerenkowa.

In the past, the Kaianerenkowa was transmitted orally and every individual was empowered with some knowledge of it. If there were any anomalies, the deviations could be quickly rectified through annual meetings of the Confederacy and the yearly recital of the Great Law of Peace. Today, only one man can recite the Kaianerenkowa from memory. Complicating matters is the role of the *Kaiwiio* (the Good Word)<sup>2</sup>. The Confederacy is divided concerning what role the *Kaiwiio* should play in the Confederacy. Some believe it has a fundamental role in healing the hurts of the Haudenosaunee, while others feel that the *Kaiwiio* is no longer valid for today's society. A lack of knowledge pertaining to the Kaianerenkowa, and the role of the *Kaiwiio* has divided the Longhouse in Akwesasne. These divisions have in turn

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<sup>1</sup> Author's note, this paper was written prior to the construction of the new Longhouse in Akwesasne (1995). Therefore, all discussions pertaining to the Longhouse, and the Longhouse proponents, are approached from the period when only one Longhouse was present in the community.

<sup>2</sup> The "Good Word" was brought forth by the Seneca royane or chief *Skaniatari:io* ( Handsome Lake), in the early nineteenth century. This Seneca prophet established a religious code that revived many of the waning traditions of the Longhouse in combination with Christian beliefs (York and Pindeera 1991: 257).



contributed to numerous interpretations of the Great Law of Peace. For example some proponents of the Longhouse believe that the *Kaiwiio* is simply an extension of the Kaianerenkowa. While other proponents of the Longhouse openly reject the *Kaiwiio*, and utilize only the Great Law of Peace.

Since the early twentieth century, many written and sometimes radically divergent versions of the Great Law of Peace have been published. Some of these publications are used to justify controversial activities (e.g gaming activities). Proponents of both written and oral interpretations of the Kaianerenkowa openly challenge the validity of the other's renditions, since each group believes their interpretation to be "authentic".

The principal renditions of the Great Law of Peace can be divided into two categories. The first is the spiritual holistic philosophy of the Kaianerenkowa, practised by the opponents of gambling/contraband activities; the second version is the political interpretation of the Kaianerenkowa known as the "Great Law", employed by the supporters of gambling/contraband activities. Moreover, each group uses the Great Law of Peace to give a different meaning to such things as defense, nationality, and sovereignty.

This thesis examines the differences between these two principal renditions of the Great Law of Peace, and how these renditions are utilized by different groups in the Longhouse. This study will chronicle five different social movements in Akwesasne, describing the progression of changes and reforms associated with concepts and metaphors within the Great Law of Peace. The reasons why there are so many versions of the Kaianerenkowa may very well lie within the Great Law of Peace itself. The Kaianerenkowa is a complex-adaptive system with a dynamic flexibility that allows it to be open to interpretations that either emphasize or minimize the reciprocal roles of the individual's responsibility toward the nation/community and the nation/community's responsibility toward the individual.

The five social movements in Akwesasne examined in this thesis are: the Mohawk opposition to the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway (1949-1959); the Mohawk New York State confrontation at Kaniengeh (1974); the Raquette Point stand-off (1979-80); the Civil

Conflict of Akwesasne (1990), and the 1992 migration to Kanatsiohareke. These five events are particularly good examples illustrating the shifts and growing discrepancies between the two main interpretations of the Great Law of Peace. Although the Seaway has had the biggest impact on Akwesasne each social movement has had its own effect on the contemporary socio-political arena of the community.

Since the 1950s, numerous studies on society and politics and particularly on factionalism and social fragmentation have been conducted in various Haudenosaunee communities. Noon (1949) conducted research in the Grand River Territory of the Six Nations, and Torok (1970) conducted research in the Mohawk territory of Tyendinaga. In 1960, Ralph Nicholas conducted a study of political organization and factionalism in the Grand River Territory of the Six Nations. Action Theory, a theory which arose out of Political Anthropology, was used in Nicholas's study. Nicholas expanded the theory by creating Segmentary-Factional-Political Systems Theory. To date, Action Theory and Segmentary-Factional-Political Systems remain two theories in the Social Sciences that can effectively illustrate socio-political organization and social fragmentation in Haudenosaunee communities. These theories will be used in this study of the Great Law of Peace, and how it is utilized by different groups in Akwesasne. They will be supplemented by the work of Siegel and Beals (1960) and Dickson-Gilmour (1991, 1992), and Alfred (1995) who also examined political conflict and social dissension in Mohawk communities. Using these theories, this thesis seeks to make a contribution on three levels: 1) describing changes and transformations in the Great Law of Peace and its concrete and spurious effects within the socio-political arena of Akwesasne; 2) explaining these changes and transformations throughout five social events; and 3) examining the contemporary significance of the Great Law of Peace in the community. The underlying question of this thesis is: How is the Great Law of Peace related to factionalism in Akwesasne? We<sup>3</sup> believe that the Great Law of Peace is a complex-adaptive system. It's dynamic flexibility

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<sup>3</sup> In the context of this thesis "we" implies the researcher and all Akwesasronons who participated in this research.

allows the Great Law of Peace to be used as a political construction to serve the needs of various (and sometimes opposing) Mohawk political groups.

## **1.2 Methodology**

In the past, individual "Iroquoian researchers" often failed to recognize their ethnophobic or Euro-centric tendencies, thereby reinforcing stereotypes in their research. The labels of "traditionalist(s)" and "progressive(s)" are two examples. The traditionalists resisting the further deterioration of the collectivity, and promoting a return to past Mohawk values. The progressives advocating the liberal philosophies of individual choice and economic prosperity. In this paper the label of Band Council supporters incorporates the proponents of both the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe and the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and/or Christian Mohawks. The label of Longhouse proponents includes the supporters of the Longhouse (one who attends and believes in the Longhouse ceremonies) and followers of the Great Law of Peace. Throughout the twentieth century, there has been dissension within the Haudenosaunee and the Kanienkehaka of Akwesasne about those who call themselves "traditionalists". Most of these differences, in Akwesasne, have arisen at the socio-political level, "with differences of opinion existing over issues of strategies, goals, and the appropriate level of resistance to adopt" (Landsman 1988: 59). In general, the supporters of the Longhouse support the sovereignty of the Kanienkehaka and the Six Nation Confederacy and object to any foreign interference in local and national politics. They refuse to participate in band council elections, and support, instead, the traditional, clan-based system of chiefs as laid down in the Great Law of Peace (Landsman 1988: 59).

In Akwesasne, one segment of the Longhouse supporters, the proponents of the contraband trade and gambling which includes the Warriors' Society, believes that enterprises profiting from contraband (e.g., the sale of cigarettes) and gaming activities (e.g., bingo and casinos) should be protected. This safeguarding of local industry has resulted in the rise of a

militant ideology within the Warriors' Society. Any interference or stand taken by opponents of their governing philosophy is seen as an infringement upon their sovereignty (Thomas 1994: 143). Another contingent in the Longhouse, the opponents of gaming and smuggling, advocate peaceful co-existence and tolerance of difference within and outside of the community. These divergent interpretations of the Kaianerenkowa have resulted in a polarization of the Akwesasne Longhouse.

Projects involving field research can and often do influence communities. Sometimes these effects are beneficial, but much too often the consequences of these projects are overlooked by the researchers pursuing their own academic goals. Tommy Porter, a leader from Akwesasne now residing in Kanatsiohareke expressed the concerns that many Haudenosaunee have pertaining to researchers in their community. "[W]hen you say anthropologist, archaeologist or somebody who studied Iroquois, what we think right away is Oh no! Not another one!" (Porter 1988: 8). As a Euro-Canadian male who traces his roots back to France and Germany, I realize that much has been written about research conducted by non-Amerindians in Amerindian communities. Rather than contesting these past inconsistencies and injustices done to the First Nations by anthropologists and other researchers, I acknowledge them and express my desire not to repeat those mistakes (see Landsman 1988). I also concede that I could never achieve the socio-cultural insight that a Mohawk or Haudenosaunee individual could. In order to compensate for these shortcomings, I have attempted to follow *Honkwéhonwe* and Haudenosaunee protocols in every step of this research. This meant respect, equity and empowerment, three dynamic and reciprocal concepts that are in turn based upon proper communication networks between the researcher and the community.

Respect for Haudenosaunee's knowledge systems was demonstrated by my attendance at the twelve day oral recital of the Great Law of Peace at the Six Nations community in 1994. This recital was presented by Jake Tehanetorens Thomas. Equity in this research involved a two-tier system of manual and academic labour in Akwesasne in exchange for local socio-

political knowledge. For example, translations from English to French were made for the MCA's Environmental Division. In the spring of 1994, I participated in the Sheik Island repossession<sup>4</sup>. During the spring of 1995, I assisted in an Osprey Recovery project. Empowerment was realized by conducting research on a topic beneficial to both the community and the academic sectors. Furthermore, any publication resulting from this research will be subject to the approval of the community.

This cooperative effort between the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and the Sociology Department at the University of Ottawa can be best described by the Haudenosaunee symbol of "eating from the beaver bowl". This literally means all partners involved in the project will work in conjunction together, without attempting to harm one another, in the hopes of increasing and encouraging proper knowledge exchanges.

Due to the intricacies inherent in this topic, my non-Mohawk status was advantageous to this study. Seen as an external third party, unaffiliated with any socio-political group, I was successful in acquiring information that would ordinarily be withheld from members of the community. The research and thesis was conducted in English in order to facilitate the paper's accessibility throughout the community.

The project began with an examination of the literature and a review of local media sources. The literature was divided into three fields: (1) historical documents from Jesuit reports and diaries and documents of early explorers and military officials; (2) the work of historians, ethnologists, anthropologists including Morgan (1851), Fenton (1975), and historians such as Dennis (1993) and Henry (1955); and (3) Haudenosaunee and Amerindian literature, including the works of Oren Lyons (1988), Jake Thomas (1994), and Gerald Alfred (1995). All these authors are members of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and are well-versed in the

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<sup>4</sup> Following the construction of the Moses-Saunders Dam (1958), nearly sixty percent of all the islands located upriver from the dam were flooded (David: 1994). The Canadian government believing Sheik Island to be their property sold the island to Ontario Hydro. In 1994, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne re-asserted its claim to the island by repossessing Sheik Island. Over forty participants participated in the take-over activities which included planting trees and conducting an inventory of the plants species on the island.

Kaianerenkowa. An examination and critique of these literary sources will be provided in order to examine what they report on the Great Law of Peace and what they fail to mention about the Kaianerenkowa. In the historical documents, neither the Jesuit Lafiteau (1732-34), the French explorer Lahontan (1694), nor the Dutch explorer van den Bogaert (1634-35) specifically mention the Great Law of Peace. What they do describe are protocols associated with the Great Law of Peace, such as the "Welcoming At The Wood's Edge Ceremony". It was only with the "Iroquoian researchers" that the Great Law of Peace became a focus of academic interest. Most of the researchers including Fenton (1975), Wallace (1958), Dennis (1993), and Vecsey (1988) examined the transformations of the Kaianerenkowa during the era of post-European contact. Others such as Parker (1912), Goldenweiser (1914), and P. A. Wallace (1968) wrote their own narrations of the Great Law of Peace. To Haudenosaunee authors such as Oren Lyons (1988), John Mohawk (1988), and Jake Thomas (1994), the Great Law of Peace carries a different message: it is a living embodiment of a way of life. The Kaianerenkowa is a complex-adaptive system founded upon dynamic and dichotomous processes. The contributions of these and other authors can be seen in the definition section, the historical section and within the analysis of the Great Law of Peace. The information provided by the literary sources was complimented by a series of interviews conducted with key actors in the five events.

The interviews were carried out between (October 30, 1995 to December 10, 1995). They entailed a two-step process, identification of principal actors in the five events, and interviewing key figures. First, key actors had to be identified, this was done by examining the five social movements. This research included reviewing books and articles that dealt specifically with the events or key individuals. After the literature research, a list of possible candidates was drawn up. It was felt that this list should be representative of the community's principal political segments, and special effort was made in order to accomplish this objective. After presenting my initial list of possible participants and consulting with Henry Lickers, Lloyd Benedict and Richard David - three long-standing members of the community of Akwesasne, I

then began the process of participant recruitment. It should be noted that due to the limited number of interviews, all groups and principal actors could not be interviewed. I did make specific attempts to at least incorporate one representative associated with each political affiliations and present in at least two or more of the events. One goal of the interviews was to understand the actors' point of view on the events. The second goal of the interview were to examine the interviewees' ideas on the Great Law of Peace.

Two protocols played an important role during the interviews, they were the *Welcome At The Woods' Edge Ceremony*, and the offering of tobacco as a form of respect. The first step was accomplished when the research was approved by both the Ethics Committee of the University of Ottawa and the Kanienkehaka Mohawk Council of Chiefs. During the recruitment of the participants, I approached each candidate by "lighting a fire at the woods' edge", whereby I contacted the persons and asked them if they would be willing to meet me for an informal meeting. In this informal meeting I presented tobacco, introduced myself to the potential participants, and briefly informed him/her of my research. This informal meeting was necessary to answer and alleviate any preliminary concerns that the participant may have had concerning the researcher and/or the paper. The participant was given time to think about the research and was given a copy of the consent form. Two week later, the participant was contacted and asked if they were willing to participate in the research. For this research only one participant contacted declined. If he/she was willing then a meeting date of their choice was agreed to. Most of the interviews were conducted in their homes. All interviews were conducted in a semi-directed format and were tape recorded as long as this complied with the participant's wishes (during this research only one participant agreed to have the interview recorded). The participant was given as much leeway as possible, this included open ended questions which demonstrated a good knowledge of the events, and an unlimited time allocation. Interviewees were given as much time as they deem was necessary to cover a subject or an event. In many cases, the interview appeared to be a conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee. This again was not discouraged by the interviewer, for it was felt that if he failed to

answer questions directed at him, this might be interpreted as a sign of disrespect or an indication of ignorance. Thus, special efforts were made to accommodate the participants.

Immediately following the interviews, the information gathered was transcribed. During the editing process of the thesis, all the transcriptions and computer disks were stored in a safe and secure place until the completion of the thesis. After the completion of the paper, all records were returned to the participants. Participants had full access to the taped interviews throughout the editing process. In this manner, any concern, input, or retraction that the interviewee deemed necessary was respected and complied with by the researcher. The intention of information accessibility was to promote feedback between both the participant and researcher.

### **1.3 Outline Of The Thesis**

Chapter One introduces the subject matter, and it provides a description of the study's background, the aim of the study and the methodology used in this thesis. Chapter Two contains a profile of Akwesasne and the Great Law of Peace. Both subjects are examined from a chronological perspective beginning with their inception and ending with the contemporary (1990) period. Chapter Three presents a description of the methodology and theoretical framework employed. This section examines Action Theory, Segmentary Factional-Political Systems and the application of these concepts to the Great Law of Peace and the five social movements in Akwesasne. The last section of this chapter is a literature review. The review highlights the role and transformation of the Great Law of Peace in colonial North America right up to its contemporary significance within the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.



Chapters IV describes the impact of the five events upon Akwesasne's socio-political arena and the function and transformation of the Great Law of Peace throughout these events. Nicholas's theory is used to explain the socio-political movements and social fragmentation that have led to these events and their repercussions. The last section highlights the relevance of Segmentary Factional-Political Systems Theory in Akwesasne. The concluding chapter, Chapter V , examines how the Great Law of Peace was used as a political construction serving the needs of various (and sometimes opposing) Mohawk political groups in Akwesasne.

## **2. A PORTRAIT OF AKWESASNE AND THE GREAT LAW OF PEACE**

This profile of Akwesasne will examine at greater length the physical, economic, and socio-political components of the community. In the following section we will describe the history of the Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne. The last section of this chapter examines the Great Law of Peace, from its early beginnings until its transformations in the twentieth century.

### **2.1 A CONTEMPORARY PROFILE OF AKWESASNE**

The Mohawk Territory of Akwesasne contains several semi-rural districts. Those located in the province of Québec are the village of *Kanâtakon* (formerly St. Regis village), the *Tsishâihne* (Sny) marshes, and some islands. The districts considered located in the province of Ontario are *Kawenokowaneneh* - Cornwall Island, and the numerous islands located in the Saint Lawrence, including *Kawenoke* - St. Regis Island, Stanley Island, and Yellow Island (just to name a few). The districts of *Ahnawate Tsiitoniate* - Raquette Point; Roosevelttown; *Kanâ:takon niiothahî:non* - Hogansburg; and *O'tskwa'rh :hne* - Frogtown are located in the state of New York. It is very difficult to obtain any statistics from the community, since the Kanienkehaka interpret any census as an intrusion on their inherent rights as a sovereign nation. However, a series of federal, provincial, and state figures are available.<sup>5</sup> The total population of Akwesasne in 1993 was estimated at 10,600. Of this total, 5,300 residents were in Ontario and Québec and 5,300 were located in the New York portion of the community (Jourdain, Bibeault, Sarazin 1994: 14). The overwhelming majority of the population belongs to the Iroquois-Mohawk linguistic group, with 70% of Akwesasronons identifying Mohawk as their maternal language and English as their second language (Secretariat of Native Affairs in

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<sup>5</sup> Author's note - Akwesasronons refer to themselves as a sovereign people, governing a sovereign territory. Any census or questionnaire produced by external governments (federal, provincial, or state) are seen as intrusions into local politics. Most figures available to non-Akwesasronons are produced externally without the participation of the community. For this reason socio-economic figures are used sparingly, since the data is generally unreliable. Any figures used in this paper are used solely to paint a generalized portrait of the community, they cannot be quantified for economic analyses.

Ontario and the Ministry of Civil Affairs: 1992). Religious affiliation in Akwesasne is diverse and includes Catholics, members of the United Church, Methodists, Mormons, Lutherans, members of the North American Native Church and the Longhouse (Secretariat of Native Affairs in Ontario and the Ministry of Civil Affairs: 1992).

Several schools administered by the Mohawk Board of Education and the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (MCA) have incorporated the Great Law of Peace into their curriculums. The Mohawk Freedom School, located in the "American portion" of the community, administered by Longhouse supporters, receives no funding from either state or provincial governments. The teachings of the Kaianerenkowa are learned in this establishment.

Economic activities in Akwesasne include some horse and cattle ranching, small scale fishing, an aquaculture plant, trapping, a sawmill and lumberyard, and the manufacture of wooden lacrosse sticks. In addition, "traditional arts and craftwork are produced in a significant cottage industry which provides beautiful baskets, beadwork, cornhusk dolls, jewellery, quillwork, painting, and sculpture." (St. Regis Mohawk Tribe 1995: 02). Businesses consist of contractors, landscaping, a computer and "high-tech" store, the *Onokwosoa* Pharmacy, *The Burning Sky* business supply depot, the Bank of Montreal, a travel agency, and the *White Pines* shopping mall. Local enterprises include beauty salons, gas stations, smoke shops, and several small convenience stores. Akwesasne also caters to the tourist industry; one of the most popular tourist attractions in the community is the North American Indian Travelling College (NAITC). The NAITC includes a replica of a traditional Mohawk village, historical archives, and a bookstore. The college also offers guided tours of Akwesasne and detailed lessons on both Honkwéhonwe and Haudenosaunee cultures. Other tourist sites include the Stanley Island Chalets, the Frogtown International Speedway, numerous marinas, two bingo halls, a museum, and a botanical garden. Several craft shops, gas stations, and restaurants provide additional services to the tourist industry. The contraband industry in Akwesasne is a significant employer, engaging hundreds of Akwesasronons (Akwesasne Notes 1995: 75). According to Akwesasne Notes (1995), the smuggling profits at Akwesasne range anywhere

from \$150 million to \$300 million American per year (Akwesasne Notes 1995: 78). The contraband trade includes cigarettes, cocaine, alcohol, and weapons, including AK-47s and Uzis (Akwesasne Notes 1995: 78). This merchandise is sold mostly in the underground market of Canada but some products are also sold in the American black market.

The three Mohawk governments, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (MCA; formerly known as the St. Regis Iroquois Band Council), the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe (SRMT; formerly known as the St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Council), and the Kanienkehaka Nation Council of Chiefs (KNCC; formerly known as the Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs), as well as the head office for the Assembly of First Nations on Cornwall Island, are significant employers in the community.<sup>6</sup> It is important to understand the composition and funding sources of these various political structures since they became important actors in the five events. The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, representing the Canadian portion of the community, is made up of twelve chiefs plus one grand chief (elected every three years). This council operates on a annual budget of \$37 million (Canadian) and finances numerous social and economic programs in Akwesasne (Akwesasne Notes 1995: 76). The St. Regis Mohawk Tribe<sup>7</sup>, representing the American portion of the community, is made up of three chiefs and three sub-chiefs (elected every three years), who manage a yearly budget of \$11 million (American). This council replicates the MCA for the American portion of the community. It also administers a bingo hall and is leading the effort to construct a gambling casino in Akwesasne (Akwesasne Notes 1995: 76). The third form of government is the oldest political entity in Akwesasne, it is the Kanienkehaka Nation Council of Chiefs. This council is neither recognized by the American or Canadian governments. This political council continues to "elevate" the nine traditional *royane* (chiefs) with the help of clan mothers, in accordance with the Great Law of Peace. Today,

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<sup>6</sup> In this paper only the current terminology will be used to design the socio-political structures in Akwesasne.

<sup>7</sup> Author's note - This thesis was began before the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Constitution was approved in 1995. The Constitution changed the number of St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Chiefs from three to five.

there are no *royane* sitting in council for the Mohawk nation. Only three *rarontaron* (deputies) acting as sub-chiefs are present for the council meetings. This council operates on a modest budget from an office located along highway 30 (Akwesasne Notes 1995: 76).

The American and Canadian band councils administer the social services and security services that are provided within the community. Both band councils have established environmental divisions that monitor air, water, and soil quality. The SRMT, the MCA, and the Kanienkehaka Council of Chiefs also work in-conjunction in order to implement environmental by-laws in the community. Both the SRMT and the MCA offer numerous social services in Akwesasne, such as three group homes, an elder's centre, health clinics, substance abuse and rehabilitation centres, adult care facilities, and child care centres. The band councils also administer social programs including child and family services, community counselling programs, and home support programs, housing, economic development, and social assistance programs (Akwesasne Notes 1995: 76). Protective services include an ambulance service, three firehalls, rescue boats, two police forces, and a civil court based on Mohawk traditional laws (Secretariat of Native Affairs in Ontario and the Ministry of Civil Affairs: 1992).

There are numerous recreational facilities located throughout Akwesasne, including a library a cultural centre, recreation centres, playgrounds, lacrosse fields, baseball fields, skating rinks, and tennis and volleyball courts. Akwesasne also has numerous singers, drummers, and dancing groups who continue to practise the traditional songs, dances and the special ceremonies of the Haudenosaunee. Mohawk basket makers are renowned throughout North America for their fine craftsmanship on Black-Ash splints and Sweetgrass baskets (St. Regis Mohawk Tribe 1995: 2).

Akwesasronons also operate their own radio station, CKON-FM, managed by the Akwesasne Communication Society. Local media sources include the *Indian Times*, the *People's Voice*, and *Akwesasne Notes* (Secretariat of Native Affairs in Ontario and the Ministry of Civil Affairs: 1992).

## **2.2 The History Of The Mohawk Nation At Akwesasne**

According to Haudenosaunee legends, the Mohawks are descended from the fugitives who fled the turbulent Mayan empire and migrated in a north-west direction by following the Mississippi river into North America (L. Benedict: 1994). Legends further state that *Kaihonariosk* (a Mohawk woman) led them eastward from the Ohio valley to Stadocona (Québec). After some time at this location, they moved to a better climate and lands further south in the Mohawk Valley (Alfred 1995: 28). Mohawk oral accounts and archaeological research dates the Kanienkehaka presence in present-day New York and the St. Lawrence valley to around 1700 B.C. (Alfred 1995: 26).

On the eve of contact with the Europeans, the Mohawks controlled a large corridor of territory. Kanienke, the land of the flint, included the area bounded by the [*Rioatatokenti*] St. Lawrence River to the north from present-day Trois Rivières to the Oswegatchie river near Prescott, Ontario; to the east, by the Adirondacks west of the Hudson River-Lake Champlain-Lake George waterway all the way from present-day Albany N.Y. to Sorel on the south shore of the St. Lawrence and above the Mohawk River from the Hudson River to Oneida Lake in central New York. Trade and warfare with other eastern nations brought them regularly into other Iroquois territories and as far north as Lac St. Jean and the Saguenay River, sometimes even extending contacts along both shores of the St. Lawrence to the Gulf (Alfred 1995: 26).

Kanienkehaka territory is best thought of as a series of unoccupied concentric zones (Dennis 1993) where hunting, fishing, trading, and later trapping occurred (see map). These zones were considered part of Mohawk territory and were defended as such (Alfred 1995: 27-28). Two sites within the Mohawk concentric zones played a prominent role in the future of the Kanienkehaka Nation in what would later become Canada. Both locations were situated along the shores of the *Rioatatokenti* (St. Lawrence River); the first was *Kentaké* or "the prairie" near *Kawennote Tiohtia:ke* "island where the people divide" (Montréal Island); the other was Akwesasne "land where the partridge drums" upriver from Montréal. Two versions are given as to why the area was named Akwesasne. The first legend states that hunters named the site after a nearby whirlpool and rapids, whose rushing waters sounded like the drumming of male partridges in mating season. The second attributes the name to the abundance of these birds

within the vicinity (David: 1994). Oral tradition and archaeological evidence (burial mounds and artifacts) tell us that Akwesasne was utilized and inhabited by the Mohawks for many centuries (Elgenius 1992: 75).

Protocols established in the Kaianerenkowa state that the Kanienkehaka were to act as the "Well" of the Confederacy during the confederate councils of the Haudenosaunee (all representatives of the Five Nations are present), and when dealing with external affairs. This meant that all proposals brought forth in council, or by potential allies were to be presented to the Mohawk nation first. Due to their geographical location, the Mohawks, also known as the "Guardian of the Eastern Door," were the first to feel the impact of European activities along the eastern seaboard. By the seventeenth century, the Mohawks had established extensive trading networks with a number of partners including numerous First Nations (within the Confederacy as well as with other First Nations) and several European allies including the Dutch, the French and later the British.

European impacts were felt almost immediately within the Confederacy. Epidemics and alcoholism resulted in massive population losses and the expanding quest for furs resulted in warfare and conflict with colonial and other Amerindian nations. As epidemics and warfare continuously depleted the Confederacy, adoption was seen as the only recourse to replenish the depleted ranks of the Haudenosaunee. The Mohawks captured and incorporated the remnants of the *Wonderonk Confederacy* (Neutral), the *Attignawan Nation of the Wendake* (Huron) Confederacy (these later became the Mohawk Bear clan), and the *Leni Lenapes* (Delaware) (Rice: 1994). As a result of this huge influx of adopted and sometimes Christianized Kanienkehaka, internal political strife became a common occurrence within the Mohawk nation. This increased the possibilities of fragmentation, and the displacement of several Kanienkehaka villages during the next three centuries. In 1667, the Mohawks, along with the Haudenosaunee Confederacy concluded a peace accord with the French at Québec. That same year, the Jesuit Fathers Jacque Frémin and Jean Pierron travelled into Mohawk country to begin a new mission there. In the decade following the conclusion of peace with the French, a number of

Haudenosaunee, particularly Mohawks and Christian Haudenosaunee, left their homeland and settled near Kentaké (La Prairie) (Alfred 1995: 43).

These Christian Iroquois or "Kneeling Mohawks" established an alliance with other First Nations in Canada that came to be known as the Seven Fires (Seven Nations). Close allies to New-France, this new federation virtually replaced the Five Nations Confederacy with a new national-level form of power centred in Kahnawake (Alfred 1995: 47). During the ensuing "French-Indian" wars that were fought for the next 175 years, the French/Christian Haudenosaunee (mostly Mohawks) from Caughnawaga (Kahnawake), Lake of the Two Mountains (Kanasatake) and later St. Regis (Akwesasne) fought on the side of their benefactors, the French (Fenton & Tooker 1978: 569). Whether these battles were open warfare or simply prisoner raids, a fundamental transgression against the Kaianerenkowa had been committed. It is stipulated within the Great law of Peace that all weapons of war within the Confederacy shall be buried under the Great White Pine, thereby eliminating the possibility of any member to bear arms against one-another. As a result of these hostile acts, the Six Nations Confederacy ostracized all three Mohawk communities of the Seven Fires, first beginning with Kahnawake in 1684 (Frish 1970: 210). It was also during this era, that the Seven Fires played an active role in the contraband trade (between Albany and Montréal) exchanging surplus French furs for English goods (Fenton & Tooker 1978: 569).

Mohawk history supported by archaeological studies explains that when the "first settlers" came to Akwesasne during the 18th century, they were greeted by several Kanienkehaka families already using the area. These families had used the concentric unoccupied zones of the Mohawk, in and around Akwesasne, for several hundred of years prior to any written account of their presence (L. Benedict: 1995a). Throughout the next two centuries, Akwesasne would be populated by numerous migrations. The early social composition of Akwesasne was transformed by the first noted wave of the 1730-40s. This population influx was composed of an agglomeration of local Kanienkehaka, Christianized Haudenosaunee including Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, and adopted *Attignawan* (a nation



within the *Wendake* (Huron) Confederacy). It was subsequently transformed by a later arrival of Kanienkehakas from the Mohawk Valley (Fenton and Tooker 1978: 572). The third migration was the 1759 Abenaki migration. The fourth migration occurred after the end of the American Revolution (1783) and was mostly composed of Mohawk and Haudenosaunee loyalists. The last big population displacement which occurred within the Confederacy was the *Oswegatchie* migration of 1794.

Throughout the migration waves the socio-cultural composition of the community, although diversified, remained much the same:

While Mohawk became the common language, the presence of a clan system indicates that the Mohawks did not predominate. Of the five clans present at Akwesasne, three, the Turtle, Wolf and Bear, were found among the Mohawk, but the Snipe and the Deer were Onondaga clans (Hamori-Torok 1994: 261).

This composite group would subsequently be transformed by wars, epidemics, treaties, and shifting alliances giving birth to a Mohawk identity unique to Akwesasne.

In 1754, the area became known as St. Regis. It was named Saint Regis by the missionary Antony Gordon, in memory of François Régis, "a French ecclesiastic canonized in 1737 who before his death in 1640 at the age of 43 had wanted to become a missionary to the Iroquois" (Fenton & Tooker 1978: 472-73).

The 1763 defeat of the French regime in New France placed the Haudenosaunee of Akwesasne in a precarious position. Although the Royal Proclamation of 1763 recognized the Amerindian's right to the occupation of lands and hunting territories, the three Haudenosaunee settlements Kahnawake, Kanasatake and Akwesasne were omitted from the legislation because of their location in Lower Canada or what is today, Québec. Therefore, Akwesasne could only rely on the original French grants given to the Jesuits to protect their tenure (Bonvillain 1992: 76).

During the American Revolution (1775-1783) and again in the War of 1812, the Confederacy, unable to achieve unanimity, covered the Grand Confederate Council Fire. This symbolic act meant that each nation and even villages were free to determine their own course

of action (Graymont 1991: 94). A considerable portion of the Haudenosaunee at Akwesasne joined the British, while the sympathies of others were with the Americans (Fenton & Tooker 1978: 472). For the second time in a little over a hundred years, the Kanienkehaka of Akwesasne had conducted warfare against their confederate brethens, transgressing once again the fundamental law of "burying the hatchet forever".

At the Treaty of Paris, in 1783, the new international borders in North America were established. The English surrendered some of their own territory, as well as Iroquois territory to the United States, without consulting the Six Nations Confederacy (Wright 1992: 137). Britain's action not only physically divided Akwesasne with an international border, but it would permanently divide the League of Six Nations into two separate entities with one capital located at the Grand River Territory of the Six Nations in Canada and the other located at Onondaga in the State of New York.

The land area of the community of Akwesasne was established by the Seven Nations - New York State Treaty in 1796, and again in 1842, with the "Nutfield Tract Treaty" with the British Government. The Jay Treaty of 1794 (which would be re-instated in 1815 as the Treaty of Guent) guaranteed the Mohawks of Akwesasne and in fact all First Nations, the right to trade freely over the new international borders (L. Benedict: 1995a).

In 1890, the State of New York officially created the "St. Regis Tribal Council" from its earlier composite of the three elected trustees established in 1802. The British, meanwhile, continued to deal with the Twelve Life-Chiefs<sup>8</sup> as the legitimate governing body in Canada

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<sup>8</sup> The Twelve Life Chiefs system was a traditional council comprised of three chiefs from each of the four clans (bear, wolf, turtle and deer) and 12 clan mothers. Some historians associated the presence of a fourth clan (deer) in Mohawk politics with the strong appearance of Onondagas from the Oswegatchie migration. According to local historians it appears that the Twelve Life Chiefs system was matrilineal, but in many cases it was the father's son who was chosen, simply because he had the most experience in the political and diplomatic arenas. There are also some indications that there were War Chiefs in this system (Interviewee C: 1995). When Akwesasne was welcomed back into the Confederacy (1888), the Twelve Life Chiefs, proponents of communal unity, were permitted to remain in council, and keep their titles. As the individuals from this system died the title was simply buried with the individual. Thus, ending the Twelve Life Chiefs system and giving way to the nine Mohawk *rodiyane* system of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (Interviewee C: 1995).

(Frisch 1970: 77). The Canadian government's passage of the Indian Act in 1876 further complicated the lives of Akwesasronons. It made patrilineal descent the criterion for registering all status Amerindians in Canada. New York State, on the other hand, continued to determine lineage through matrilineal lines. In 1884, the Canadian government continued to assert its control over the First Nations by implementing the *Indian Advancement Act*, a statute promoting a municipal-style elections of chiefs. For the next twenty years, the supporters of the Great Law of Peace continued to nominate their representatives in accordance with the Kaianerenkowa. Perceiving these acts as rebellious, the government of Canada and its representative agencies - Indian Agents and the RCMP - forced the first band council election held in Akwesasne (Canadian portion) through strong arm tactics and deceit (Wright 1992: 190). The 1899 vote was marred by the murder of Jake Ice and the detainment of the Twelve-Life-Chiefs (S. Benedict 1995a). Aware of the ongoing opposition, the department did not initiate new elections once the terms of the twelve incumbents selected in 1899 expired. Only after tempers cooled and the opposition weakened did the department reintroduce the elective system (Hamori-Torok 1994: 261-62).

During this era, the American and Canadian band council systems gained prominence in the political arena of Akwesasne, by gradually displacing the traditional leaders. Yet, it was also during this same time (1880) that Akwesasne was admitted into the Confederacy at Onondaga. As a result, Akwesasne became the capital of the Mohawk Nation - the Guardians of the Well (Fenton & Tooker 1978: 477) This act also revitalized the Kaianerenkowa in Akwesasne, as the Longhouse supporters transformed the Twelve Life Chiefs into the nine Kanienkehaka *royadiyane*, nine *rarontaron*, and nine *owachira*.

Over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth century, Akwesasne was sheltered from French influence due to its location in Upper Canada, and it became increasingly under nearby Anglophone influence which included Canadian and American farmers, and the "Indian agents" of their respective governments (Bonvillain 1992: 314). During the early 1930s, Alex Clute, an Onondaga Longhouse faithkeeper, settled at Akwesasne and began to practise and teach the

*Kaiiwio.* With the introduction of the Longhouse movement, Akwesasronons secured the ideological foundations necessary to maintain "the old culture" and to justify the hereditary system of government established in the Kaianerenkowa. During this era, emotions ran high and the Longhouse supporters became one of the largest socio-political segments in the community (Hamori-Torok 1994: 262). Following the conclusion of the second World War, the community of Akwesasne was transformed by the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway which began in 1949. To some, the transformations brought about by this mega-project are perceived as the worst defeat ever endured by the Mohawk Nation (Interviewee F: 1995).

## **2.3 The Great Law Of Peace**

The Kaianerenkowa is a living-lore composed of numerous social constructions centred upon a matrix deeply rooted in the socio-political underpinning of Kanienkehaka society. The words contained within the Kaianerenkowa can be interpreted in numerous forms of polyvalent and polysomic symbols while remaining true to its original purpose - preserving Haudenosaunee and Kanienkehaka identity. According to Fenton (1986), the social constructions of the Great Law of Peace have undergone numerous transformations and adaptations:

No two versions are identical nor can they be expected to be - for they have grown to meet the cultural exigencies of modern times. Seen as a historical discourse, it is composed of three main parts: (1) the myth of [the Peacemaker] and the conversion of the cannibal; (2) the legend of the conversion of local chiefs to the cause of peace; (3) the principle of the League - its internal structures and rituals. This last, in some versions, is virtually by-law stuff. Clearly, in this versions one can detect a process of projection and response of content, structure and ritual process that is yet evolving. Some of the by-laws have a distinct nineteenth century tone; others hark back to aboriginal times (Fenton 1986: 15).

Elaborating upon his analysis of the Great Law of Peace, Fenton (1986) adds that the Kaianerenkowa is a unique oral tradition which extends far beyond religion and enters the realm of political action:

Unlike most other religious doctrines, it provides a complex combination of spiritual and political rules, with no separation of church and state. It is the rulebook for an entire way of life, containing regulation for spiritual ceremonies, political leadership, warfare against eternal enemies, justice, international relations, funerals, adoptions, and the resolution of internal disputes. The Great Law extends far beyond religion, entering realms of political action that are normally taboo for churches (Fenton 1986: 20).

The Great Law of Peace founded upon natural and spiritual laws was originally created to end the conflicts that were raging among the Five Nations. According to oral legend, the founders of the Confederacy, the Peacemaker<sup>9</sup> and Hiawatha brought the Kaianereknowa to the Haudenosaunee by promoting the importance of kinship and clanship within a framework of rights and responsibilities. The Haudenosaunee scholar, John Mohawk, defines responsibility as a multi-layered process of acknowledgment and responsibility. The maintenance of responsibility includes respecting Mother Earth and acknowledging "our responsibilities as human beings to one another, our responsibilities to be the people of the future, and our responsibilities as human beings when we create institutions to remember... the rights and sacredness of the individual" (Mohawk 1988: 17).

One of the goals of the Great Law of Peace was to unite five autonomous nations into one decentralized political unit without compromising their *Kashwentha*. *Kashwentha* encompasses much more than lands - it is the spiritual, social, political, biological, economical and physical spheres which are the sum total of a holistic environment (Lickers: 1995a). It is the self-assertion of nationhood on different axes and to differing degrees by various distinct socio-political and cultural communities (Alfred 1995: 13).

Perhaps the most important concept of the Kaianerenkowa is *Tewatatowie* - *sovereignty*. Sovereignty in the Confederacy can be understood with the help of the English motto "we help ourselves" (Alfred 1995: 102-103). Alfred elaborates:

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<sup>9</sup> Haudenosaunee protocols and the Kaianerenkowa warn against using the true name of the founder of the Confederacy. For in times of great need, should the name of the Peacemaker be whispered by the Longhouse People, the Founder of The Confederacy will return to help his people. Therefore, the name of the Peacemaker will not be utilized in this paper; rather the terms "Founder of The League" and "Peacemaker" will be used in its place.

There is a strong sense of self-sufficiency and independence in the political usage of *Tewatatowie*, particularly as it relates to group interactions with other communities. [...] Mohawk sovereignty is conceived of not only in terms of interests and boundaries, but in terms of land, relationships and spirituality. The idea of balance among people and communities is pervasive in Mohawk culture and spirituality the achievement of a balanced relationship based upon respect for differences, whether among individuals or communities is valued as the achievement of a harmonious ideal state of affairs. The essence of Mohawk sovereignty is harmony. Through its linkage to the *Kaianerenkowa*, the concept is endowed with a spiritual power which precludes the compromise of the ideal in the interest of political expediency or power calculations (Alfred 1995: 102-03).

True sovereignty in the Mohawk sense must be created from within and exercised on a daily basis. If sovereignty is given and accepted, it means it can also be taken away by outside powers (Landsman 1988: 60). The Great Law of Peace establishes a code of conduct encouraging each member to carry out his/her responsibilities as a sovereign Haudenosaunee individual. Although contemporary *Honkwehonwe* rights are guaranteed through legislation, the proponents of the Great Law of Peace believe that no human being has the power to create a right, only the Creator does. Therefore, rights are social constructions which distort the true reality of the Haudenosaunee identity. Responsibility and *Tewatatohie* are fundamental to the proper workings of the *Kaianerenkowa*. These reciprocal concepts spiral forward and backward in a ever-widening circle from the family, the clan, the community, the nation, and the Confederacy and then back to each individual. True responsibility, like sovereignty, must be exercised on a daily base in order to allow the "the good mind to shine through" and to make sure that the Seven Generations will be able to prosper.

The Haudenosaunee are united through the political institution of consensus. Complete consensus on every issue or decision brought before the community and the Confederacy secured the participatory rights of all (Alfred 1995: 42). Alfred adds:

All of the cleavages in the society were represented by some sort of mechanism; gender and clan were the two main bases upon which political roles were differentiated. Both through these special mechanisms, which usually took the form of small councils with advisory functions vis- -vis the chiefs, and through public debate of all issues concerning the nation, community members were assured of some influence of the chiefs' decisions (Alfred 1995: 78).

A complicated political process, consensus can lead to fragmentation, bringing about social destruction. The Haudenosaunee sought to minimize this negative social phenomenon by emphasizing the positive aspects of fragmentation. These political ideas were embedded in the "Philosophy Of The Corn." In this scenario, socio-political impasses do not result in social dissension for the "Philosophy of the Corn" dictates that if an individual or group is disheartened or unhappy with the community he/she is currently residing in, one simply picks up one's personal possessions including the corn seeds and withdraws from the community to establish oneself in another area, no bitterness is left behind. All clanship and kinship ties and national and confederate associations remain (L. Benedict: 1994). From this perspective the strength of the Confederacy, lies in its flexibility to fission from larger units into smaller, more homogeneous communities, usually villages united by a common belief in the Kaianerenkowa (Alfred 1995: 42).

The Kaianerenkowa's complex-adaptive system provides the Great Law of Peace with a dynamic flexibility that "leads to a constant re-evaluation of community capabilities and a periodic re-consideration of the appropriateness of the existing confederal power-sharing arrangement" (Alfred 1995: 185). The system becomes taxed when the concepts can no longer prevent social dissension that result in a chaotic fragmentation and polarization of the Confederacy at both confederate and communal levels.

The basic principles of the Great Law of Peace are founded on natural and spiritual laws which cannot be legislated. "It doesn't matter whether the letter of the thing is right, the only way it can be truly accomplished is by the living embodiment of it" (Mohawk 1988: 14). Nevertheless, some concepts and symbols have been emphasized while others have been discarded, creating distorted interpretations of the Kaianerenkowa that are evident within contemporary socio-political discourse. Three concepts have become synonymous with the Great Law of Peace. They are peace, power, and righteousness. In order to understand their contemporary expressions we must examine the historical context through which they were conveyed to the Five Nations.

In order to put an end to the bloodshed the Peacemaker brought *skennen* - peace to the land. In the Kaianerenkowa peace is not the simple absence of war or strife, it is the quest for universal peace (Akwesasne Notes 1991: 11). From a Mohawk perspective *skennen* is a verb, a creative tension that is achieved by balancing the good heart, the good mind, and the good body into one sound, rational unit (Thomas: 1994b). *Skennen* can only exist at the individual, national and confederate levels when there is respect, responsibility and stability in the land (Vecsey 1988: 114).

The concept of *Kashastensera* - power/strength is the most controversial of all the three concepts. Power is displayed by one's conviction in one's politics and ethics. The Peacemaker stressed that a healthy individual/society (physically, spiritually and politically) has the power to enact peace (Akwesasne Notes 1991: 12). But, he warned that the physical demonstration of power (even defensively) represents the failure to achieve peace and consensus within oneself or with other nations (Vecsey 1988: 114).

The third and final concept is *Ne Gaiihwiyo* - righteousness. *Ne Gaiihwiyo* demands that all thoughts of prejudice, privilege, or superiority be swept away and that recognition be given to the reality that creation is intended for the benefit of all equally (Akwesasne Notes 1991: 11). This concept recognizes the plurality of ethics, values, justice and responsibilities. It is the responsibility of the clear minded to be righteous in every activity (Vecsey 1988: 114).

## **2.4 The Founding Of The Kaianerenkowa**

The following section is a synopsis of the Great Law of Peace as told by Jake Thomas during the twelve days of the oral recital of the Great Law of Peace in the summer of 1994. Additional information concerning the Kaianerenkowa is supplemented by Woodbury's (1994) translation of the Gibson-Goldenweiser 1914 text.



To the Haudenosaunee time is cyclical and past events provide important insights into contemporary times. The legends concerning the creation of the earth and the inception of the clan system provide a socio-cultural overview of the times before the Confederacy.

The story of creation describes the beginning of time on Earth. In its original oral format the recital of the story can last from one to two days. This myth describes the creation of Turtle Island by Sky-Woman; the death of Mother Earth; and the dual for universal supremacy fought by the twins *Theharonhiawkon* (the Holder of the Heavens) and *Tawiskaron* (the devious one). The battle was eventually won by *Theharonhiawkon*. Humbled in his victory, the Holder of the Heavens provided "The Devious One" with the responsibility to oversee the nighttime skies while "The Holder of The Heavens" would control the daytime skies. During his travels across Turtle Island "The Holder of the Heavens" met a powerful being from the west. *Theharionhiawakon* was so impressed with this being's powers that he created the Medicine Societies so that the being's powers would never be forgotten. *Theharonhiawkon*'s last act was the creation of the four colours of humanity. Each colour was provided with specific responsibilities and duties. After this act *Theharionhiawakon* left this plane of existence.

Thomas also presented how the ancestors of the Haudenosaunee established the clan system. After some time on Turtle Island, the ancestors of the Haudenosaunee forgot the instructions of the Creator. As a result conflict and strife became common occurrences. A young wise man, assisted by the women of his village, addressed the issues of social dissension. Together they instituted the clan system of the Haudenosaunee which brought stability to the land.

A majority of the time spent on the oral recital deals specifically with the creation of the Great Law of Peace. This history tells us that through time the nations of the southern great lakes had once again forgotten their responsibilities and neglected their sacred ceremonies. In order to end the conflicts, the Peacemaker, a member of the *Wendake* (Huron) Confederacy, brought forth the "good message of the great peace." This message was to be the cornerstone of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. The first individuals to accept "the good message of the

great peace" were the cannibal, *Jikonsaseh*, and Hiawatha. The cannibal renounced his ways and became the living embodiment of the "good message of the great peace". The woman *Jikonsaseh* of the Neutral Nation was rewarded for her insight by becoming the first clan mother of the Haudenosaunee. *Hiawatha*, a member of the Onondaga<sup>10</sup> nation, became the translator for the Peacemaker, who, according to legends, had a speech impediment. Tradition recalls that it was the Mohawk nation who first accepted the "good word of the great peace". Thus, the *Kanienkehaka* became the founders of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. One by one, the warring nations of the southern Great Lakes region accepted the words of the good peace, but the establishment of a Confederacy was not without its difficulties. *Tatodahoe* an Onondaga sorcerer, who could manipulate the elements to his own desire, attempted to undermine the message of the Peacemaker. In fact he went as far as killing all of Hiawatha's daughters. This act sent Hiawatha mourning into the forest. After several weeks, the Peacemaker found his friend overcome with grief. The Peacemaker saddened by Hiawatha's sorrows, conducted a condolence ceremony to honour Hiawatha's departed daughters. This ceremony brought solace to Hiawatha and allowed him to resume his activities. This Condolence Ceremony would become the central axis of the Confederacy, serving the dual purpose of mourning the departed members of the confederacy, and selecting new *royane*. The Condolence Council Ceremony is now composed of six ceremonies: Journeying on the Trail; Welcome at the Wood's Edge; Reckoning Address; Six Songs of Farewell; Over the Great Forest; and Feast of the Dead (Dennis 1993: 80). The Welcome at the Woods Edge Ceremony was to become an essential political protocol for negotiations within the Confederacy and throughout North America (Dennis 1993: 80).

Accompanied by Hiawatha and representatives from the Five Nations, the Peacemaker convinced *Tatodahoe* to become part of the Confederacy, this feat was accomplished by awarding *Tatodahoe* the title of "Firekeeper" of the entire Confederacy. This title provided

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<sup>10</sup> Onondaga is the name of both the "people of the hill", and the physical setting of the Confederate Council Fire of the Confederacy - the capital of the Haudenosaunee.

*Tatodahoe* with the responsibility of moderating and conducting all the meetings of the confederate Grand Council (fifty chiefs). The warlike Seneca nation, who had steadfastly refused to join the Confederacy, were enticed to join the alliance when they were made the "Keepers of the Black Door" - the Ministers of Haudenosaunee Defence. In the end, the Confederacy consisted of five Nations: the *Kanienkehaka* (Mohawks), the *Onericet* (Oneidas), the *Onontakeha* (Onondagas), the *Kaiokwenhaka* (Cayugas), and the *Ononcetowaka* (Senecas). A sixth nation, the *Tuscaroras*, joined the Confederacy in 1724 (Thomas: 1994a).

The alliance of the Five Nations held its first council at Onondaga Lake (in what is now New York State). It was here that the Five Nations assembled to hear the Peacemaker and *Hiawatha* explain the terms of peace, power, and righteousness - the foundations of the Great Law of Peace. It was also here that the Peacemaker planted the *Sharonheseko:wa* - the Great White Pine, or the Great Tree of Peace.

In it one sees the essence of the Iroquois' political philosophy. A great tree planted on the shores of Onondaga Lake represents the federalist principles of the *Kaianerenkowa* - voluntary confederation of autonomous nations, self-determination, and peaceful co-existence - and the democratic spirit of the people themselves. Underneath the tree lies the war clubs, symbolizing the obsolescence of conflict among those who accept the Law. From the base of the tree grows the Great White Roots of Peace extending in the four cardinal directions, symbolizing peace and charity for any nation that wished to trace the root back to the Iroquois and take shelter beneath the principles of the *Kaianerenkowa*. And above the tree is an eagle, eternally "vigilant" of any danger or threat to the peace and security of the people (Alfred 1995: 82).

The base of the tree was protected by the circle of the *owachira* and the *rodiyane* (*rodiyane* is the plural term for *royane* or Confederate Headmen). The *Owachira* (clan mothers) and the women's councils were empowered to choose and impeach (if necessary) a *royane* for their respective clans. A *royane*, "he who is of the good mind", is the Haudenosaunee designation for an original Confederate Headman as determined by the Peacemaker. Each *royane* is accompanied by a *rarontaron*, who is to act as the eyes, the mouth, and the ears of the clan mothers (Thomas 1989: iii). This paper will only utilize the terms of *royane*, *rodiyane*,

*rarontaron*, and traditional chief(s) to designate chiefs or deputy-chiefs who have been elevated according to the Condolence Council Ceremony established by the Great Law of Peace. This circle of *Tehonatenent-shawâ:kon* - "hands and arms linked in peace" surround and protect the people and the tree (Vachon: 1995). Should any *royane* leave the circle, his horns and office would catch on the circle, and so his title would remain within the Confederacy (Tooker 1978: 418). The united environment (the concentric-hunting zones) of the Haudenosaunee was symbolized by the beaver bowl. "In one dish a beaver's tail shall be placed and all those present shall have a co-equal right to it" (Thomas: 1994a). Under the Confederacy, this reciprocity signified that all concentric zones were one common tract and all members have an equal right to hunt within it (Dennis 1993: 64).

The Peacemaker and Hiawatha established a process of amendments to the Great Law of Peace. A political metaphor of *Wahatinahstasonteren* - "extending the rafters of the longhouse" was used to symbolized amendments to the Kaianerenkowa. This simply meant that the Kaianerenkowa - physically represented by a Longhouse, could be amended by bringing forth new "props to strengthen the Longhouse". For example individuals, nations, and ideas could become props if the Confederacy or a nation decided through consensus that this was a valid and necessary amendment.

Thereafter, the Haudenosaunee styled themselves as "the People of the Longhouse", with five distinct fires representing each autonomous nation within the Confederacy. In this Longhouse, the Seneca, the most western of the *Haudenosaunee*, were designated the "Keepers of the Black Door" or the "Western Door" as they faced the sunset. The Onondaga were the keepers of both the central fire and the wampum belts. Onondaga was, and remains to this day, the capital and the heart of the Confederacy. The Mohawks, who faced the sunrise and were the most eastern nation, were designated the Keepers of the "Well" or "the Eastern Door" (Thomas 1994a). "The whole [resembles] the arrangement of families and their fires in the ordinary longhouse" (Tooker 1978: 418).

Through a careful elaboration of historical concepts and practices familiar to the Five Nations, the Peacemaker and Hiawatha were successful in transposing these into the design of the Great Law of Peace and a participatory democracy (Alfred 1995: 78). The Great Law of Peace established a structure where leaders became accountable and in fact merely represented the will of their community (Alfred 1995: 78-79). In this system, the councils became a place for the deliberations of ordinary men and women rather than specialized elites or military dictators (War Chiefs) (Dennis 1993: 96). Since no decision could be taken without the unanimous consent of all representatives groups, Haudenosaunee women were guaranteed a special role in the process of political consensus known as "one voice, one mind, one heart" (Dennis 1993: 96). Through numerous formal mechanisms, Haudenosaunee women, considered life-givers and preservers, were assigned political responsibilities for selecting and recalling nominal leaders (clan mothers). The authority to veto and "dehorn" unmanageable *royane* guaranteed the interests of the community as a whole (Alfred 1995: 78). The prominent role of Haudenosaunee men in this structure was not one of father but of uncle. If an individual was chosen as a leader, it was because his "overtly aggressive and egoistic psychological configuration made him more suited to oratory, debate, and military leadership" (Alfred 1995: 78-79). Throughout these leadership struggles, peace remained, for it was only during peaceful times that the "good message of the good mind" of the Kaianerenkowa could expand. The structures that had been erected in the Kaianerenkowa were the principal reasons why the Haudenosaunee were able to survive the massive transformations transpiring in North America.

Women, and men of peace, controlled Iroquois society and polity, the absence of Iroquois soldiers and their death in warfare, disrupted Iroquois life somewhat less than was the case among societies which organized themselves in a patriarchal fashion. And because the economy of the Five Nations was based on the horticulture of women, warfare outside of Iroquoia proved less damaging to Iroquois subsistence (Dennis 1993: 262).

The internal peace brought about by the Confederacy and the Kaianerenkowa provided the Mohawks with prosperity and security. This respite from local warfare in turn allowed them

and their new allies to strengthen their internal structures and establish a system of defense ready to counteract any external threats menacing the peace of the Confederacy. For the Mohawk Nation, this strength and flexibility enabled them to withstand the incursions of eastern threats coming from the Adirondacks, the Mahicans, and the French (Dennis 1993: 42). In the next section we will examine the transformation of the Kaianerenkowa from an oral recital into a codified document.

## **2.5 The Adaptations Of The Kaianerenkowa**

The Kaianerenkowa continued to be transmitted much as it had been done since the original teachings of the Peacemaker, through annual oral recitals of the Great Law of Peace. In this fashion every individual was empowered by some knowledge of it, and any anomalies could be quickly rectified. But during the 17th and 18th century, facing the Europeans, a population decline and social disintegration, the Five Nations were forced to reexamine their original goals and adapt new strategies, dedicated to the preservation of Haudenosaunee tradition (Dennis 1993: 256). This was accomplished by a creative mix of fresh and traditional approaches to new challenges. These adaptations provided them with the means to survive in a new environment while preventing the total disintegration of the Confederacy (Dennis 1993: 256). Changing dynamics in North America, forced the Haudenosaunee to amend the Kaianerenkowa so that it could withstand the pressures and transformations brought about by migration, warfare, and Christianity. In the following section we will examine some of these amendments.

Famines and epidemics decimated the Haudenosaunee population. Nevertheless, throughout these demographic crisis, the Five Nations proved remarkably capable of rebuilding their population by naturalizing Europeans and *Honkwehonwe* as full citizens of the Confederacy. These new members had a twofold effect on the Confederacy and in Mohawk villages. Some adopted Mohawks were staunch supporters of Christianity, while others were

disillusioned with the Jesuits "and their demons". Many adopted members would go on to play major roles as both the proponents and opponents of Christianity (Alfred 1995: 35). Religion in this period became a major line of cleavage among the Mohawks. Christianity literally acted as a virus within the Confederacy, and augmented the social dissension within the Kanienkehaka nation.

In order to survive the rapid transformations occurring during the 18th century, the Mohawks as well as the Confederacy amended the leadership structures of the Kaianerenkowa. The traditional socio-political structures the *owachira* (clan mothers), the *roidiyane*, and the *rarontaron* (the deputy chief) of the Confederacy were still present. But new internal rivals were appearing including the *rotiskenrake:te* - the War Chief, and the *Wa:kahneto:ten* - The Pine Tree Chief<sup>11</sup>. All of these socio-political adaptations were undermined by European military officials, Jesuits, and colonial leaders who negotiated alliances and treaties with groups and individuals "favourable" to their cause.

By the end of the 18th century, the amendments erected as counter-measures to the Christian and European threats were no longer effective, in fact many amendments intensified internal rivalries while, at same time, European presence was growing stronger. Faced by these challenges the Haudenosaunee opted to strengthen the sides and endwalls of the Longhouse by making them permanent fixtures. These new amendments in turn transformed the adoption/alliance process of *Wahatinahstasonteren* - "Extension of the Rafters" and *Tehonatenent-shawâ:kon* ("hands and arms linked in peace) into the *Gushwentha*<sup>12</sup> (Two-Row

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<sup>11</sup> The Haudenosaunee may have developed the institution of *Wa:kahneto:ten* - Pine Tree Chiefs as safety valves to control and monitor ambitious young leaders whose potential competition for the limited number of hereditary peace chieftainships might have wrecked the internal socio-political equilibrium in the Confederacy (Shimony 1984: 154). These leaders were given a voice in council but their title was not hereditary, so when they passed away, their title was buried with the individuals.

<sup>12</sup> The *Gushwentha* is a wampum belt that was first presented by the Haudenosaunee to the Dutch in 1643, over the next two hundred years, the Haudenosaunee also entered into a similar pact with Britain, France and the U.S.A (ALCNASC 1982: 55). Composed of two rows of purple wampum and a white background, the wampum belt symbolizes a river with two vessels traversing a river each staying to their own ways, their own customs. The exchange of this belt meant that both parties agreed to respect the right of national political autonomy of the other, without oppression or domination. It was diplomacy based on mutual respect and cultural temperance in North America (Alfred 1995: 140). The principles contained

Wampum (1643)), and later into the Silver Covenant Chain (1677). This silver plated chain, with its three silver links of respect, trust and peace uniting the Five Nations and Great Britain, did not signify a fundamental abandonment of Haudenosaunee tradition. It was simply a reinforcement of the ancient cords of the wampum belt with a silver metal plating (Dennis 1993: 269).

During the American War of Independence (1776), the Haudenosaunee's neutral stance was undermined as internal and external forces attempted to sway the favours of the Haudenosaunee. Three different groups actively sought the support of the Confederacy, Great Britain, and two factions within the Thirteen Colonies.

One letter, written by John Hancock - then president of the Continental Congress - instructed Morgan to take the Iroquois and their allies a great peace belt with 2,500 wampum beads - as an inducement to remain neutral - even while other American agents were secretly parleying with individual Indian nations to win their military support (Arden 1987: 385).

Britain actively sought the military support of the Confederacy in order to divide the American forces by two attack fronts. The Haudenosaunee were drawn into the American War of Independence when actions taken by some American mercenaries were interpreted as transgressions against the sovereignty of the Haudenosaunee. These acts of aggression had profound repercussions within the Confederacy. According to Haudenosaunee protocols, "when foreign aggressors enter Haudenosaunee lands it's out of our hands. The warriors take over" (Lyons cited in Arden 1987: 385). The Grand Council became virtually insignificant as charismatic war chiefs such as the Mohawk Joseph Brant or the Seneca Red Jacket rose in prominence.

The repercussions of the American War of Independence went far beyond the war. It fragmented the Confederacy into three camps, neutrals (Onondaga), allies of Britain (Mohawk, Seneca), and allies of the Thirteen Colonies (Tuscarora, Oneida). In 1779, General George

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within the *Gushwentha* was and remains the essence of all relations between the Confederacy and other sovereigns nations (ALGNASC 1982: 55).



Washington sent an expedition of 4,500 men under the command of General John Sullivan to strike at the heartland of the Haudenosaunee (Arden 1987: 385-86). "Although most of the Iroquois melted away at the Army's approach, the destruction of more than forty villages with their orchards, croplands and granaries especially those of the Seneca - forever changed the face of Iroquoia" (Arden 1987: 385-86). It is from these embers of the Confederacy that the *Kaiwiio* emerged.

Fragmented into two political units, the Confederacy was incapable at recapturing its central prominence as both an economic and political power in North America. Energy was focused internally, in-order to repair the damages that had been incurred by the American War of Independence. It was during this time that the Seneca visionary and reformed alcoholic *Skaniatari:io* also known as Handsome Lake emerged in the Confederacy. A prominent social figure from 1799 to his death in 1815, he established the *Kaiwiio*, also known as the "Good Word" and the "Code of Handsome Lake". The *Kaiwiio* revived many of the traditions of the Haudenosaunee, the sacred cyclical ceremonies, and the Great Law of Peace (York and Pindeera 1991: 257).

Although they vary in details, orators of the Code of Handsome Lake customarily begin with an account of Handsome Lake's first vision and other incidents in the prophet's life. The speaker then mentions the various messages given by the Creator to the Four Beings to communicate to Handsome Lake. The *Kaiwiio* established by the Four Spiritual Beings includes admonitions that people should not drink; witches should confess and cease their activities; witchcraft charms should not be used; women should not practice abortion; husbands and wives should not desert each other or their children; and people should help each other (Wallace 1958: 458). The Four Beings also stated that it was right to practice the traditional ceremonies of Thanksgiving, the Green Corn and Strawberry. It was also declared that medicine societies such as the False-Face Society and the Corn Husk Masks should also be held (Wallace 1958: 454-6). The *Kaiwiio* is often associated with rekindling the embers of the Confederacy and revitalizing "traditional" beliefs including the Great Law of Peace.

In contemporary times, the oral transference (in English and in the six languages of the Confederacy) of the *Kaiwiiio* continues. This annual event, spanning three days, never continues past sundown. The Good Word also exists in both wampum belt and literary forms, the latter made famous by Arthur C. Parker's (1912) work entitled *The Code Of Handsome Lake, The Seneca Prophet*, and the 1994 Chief Jacob E. Thomas (*Tiohonwé:thon*) and Terry Boyle version entitled, *Teachings From The Longhouse*.

According to Wallace (1978) the *Kaiwiiio* is responsible for creating the Longhouse Movement:

By at least 1850... the message of Handsome Lake had been codified and a religious organization formed to promulgate it as a religion. The "church", and the system of religious beliefs and rituals associated with it, [are perceived] as non-Christian alternatives to the several Protestants and Catholic denominations that have established themselves in the [communities] and as a forum for the continued assertion of the integrity of an Iroquois ethnic identity (Wallace 1978: 442).

The *Kaiwiiio* and the teachings of the Longhouse, including the Great Law of Peace became prominent during the 1930s. The *Kaiwiiio* was interpreted as a rafter added to the Longhouse, although this rafter is not fully accepted by all the Haudenosaunee who claim to belong to the Longhouse. The tendency among the Haudenosaunee has always been to tolerate their differences and even to accept such pluralism so as to continue living as one mind. Polarity and tension have thus generally been more creative and constructive than conflictual and destructive (Vachon 1993: 23).

The difficulty with the *Kaiwiiio* in the Akwesasne Longhouse is due to the fact that Handsome Lake never travelled to the Mohawk communities in Canada. In fact, the *Kaiwiiio* was brought to the Mohawks by the Onondaga. Thus, even today, members of Kahnawake, Kanienkeh, and some Akwesasronons refuse to follow the *Kaiwiiio*. In fact, most of the Confederacy is divided about the Good Word, some accepting it, some rejecting it (Gramza 1995). The impacts of this division in Akwesasne have been profound, creating internal tensions in the Longhouse, as supporters haggle over the validity of the *Kaiwiiio*, especially

pertaining to gaming activities. The Good Word prohibits gambling, drinking, dancing, and greed, while the *Kaianerenkowa* does not address these issues specifically. Interpretations over the Great Law of Peace itself have also contributed to internal dissension in the Longhouse. During the latter decades of the twentieth century, Mohawks returning to the Longhouse were dismayed when they found Christian concepts intertwined with traditional Haudenosaunee ideas.

Exposed to the mechanisms and procedures of Iroquois governance, the Mohawks found they did not share the values underpinning the contemporary Confederacy's formal structures.... The Mohawk of Kahnawake joined by most Mohawks in the nation's other communities at Akwesasne and Kanasatake began to develop an ideology which attempted to replicate the "authentic" Confederacy before it had been altered by the influence of Handsome Lake (Alfred 1995: 69).

Some of these disillusioned Mohawks turned to the literary accounts (Newhouse, Parker) of the Great Law of Peace, further increasing the rift between the supporters of the Longhouse. Many Longhouse proponents believe that the Great Law of Peace must not be distorted from its true form as an oral living document. Others interpret the written versions of the Great Law of Peace as a Constitution to be followed as the letter of the law, while acknowledging that the oral rendition of the Great Law of Peace is the original format of the *Kaianerenkowa*'s transmission. Both the Proponents of the spiritual/holistic version of the Great Law of Peace, and the Supporters of the political version of the *Kaianerenkowa* compliment their socio-political perspectives with written versions of the Great Law of Peace. In most cases, the two groups disagree on which written versions are more appropriate. The following section is an examination of the numerous written interpretations of the *Kaianerenkowa* now in print and available in Akwesasne.

## **2.6 The Written Versions Of The Great Law Of Peace**

Written versions of the Kaianerenkowa, many of them fragmentary, appear as independent works, as part of ethnographic descriptions of Iroquois culture and in collections of Iroquois folklore (Woodbury 1992: lvi). Renditions of the Great Law of Peace appear in print and in manuscript. These versions are classified into three groups, Euro-Canadian/English; Haudenosaunee/English; and in Haudenosaunee (Woodbury 1992 :lvi). In this analysis, we will only examine the Haudenosaunee/English, and Haudenosaunee versions of the Great Law of Peace, since these are the most prevalent formats in Akwesasne.

The Haudenosaunee/English versions are composed of text versions of the Kaianerenkowa that are composed in English by Haudenosaunee speakers. Most versions outlined below were produced by members of the Six Nations of the Grand River Community. One of the best known versions is the English text written by the Mohawk Seth Newhouse (1880s), edited by Albert Cusick, and later published by Arthur Parker as *The Constitution of the Five Nations* (Parker 1916). Another popular version is the Chiefs' version, prepared in 1900 by a committee of *rodiyaner* at the Six Nations of the Grand River. The chiefs' version was in part a response to Newhouse's version which contained no mention of the Condolence Council Ceremony. The chiefs' version was published by Duncan C. Scott (1912) and later by Parker in 1916 (Woodbury 1992: lvi).

Contemporary versions of the Great Law of Peace also appear in Kahnawake and Akwesasne. In the 1970s Louis *Karonniaktajeh* Hall (one of the founders of the Warriors' Society in Kahnawake) produced a written version of the Great Law of Peace. This version states that it is a compilation of six translations of the Great Law, although no references are cited. According to the title page, it was first published in 1916, which coincides with Parker's publication. In 1975-76, *Akwesasne Notes*, along with the help of John C. Mohawk, produced a contemporary version of the Constitution entitled *The Great Law of Peace of The Longhouse People* (Schaff 1994: 5). This version resembles both Parker's (1916) and Hall's (1970)

versions. In 1984, The North American Indian Travelling College transcribed and translated an oral version of the tradition by Cayuga elder John Buck (Schaff 1994: 5).

The Haudenosaunee versions are a group of texts written in one of the six languages of the Confederacy. Of relevance to this research are the Gibson-Hewitt (1892) and the Gibson-Goldenweiser version (1912). Both are complete Onondaga language versions of the tradition (Woodbury 1992: Ivii). The Gibson-Goldenweiser version of 1912 was translated, edited into English and published in 1992 by Hanni Woodbury.

Today, only a handful of orators can recite the Kaianerenkowa, and only one individual can recite the Great Law of Peace and the Condolence Ceremony in its entirety. Consequently individuals can present their own interpretations of the Great Law of Peace and remain unchallenged. These interpretations are often perceived as the "authentic" versions of the Kaianerenkowa. The principal renditions of the Great Law of Peace fall into two categories. The first is the political interpretation of the Kaianerenkowa as the "Great Law", employed by the supporters of gambling/contraband activities, the second version is the spiritual holistic philosophy of the Kaianerenkowa, practised by the opponents of gambling/contraband activities.

## **2.7 The Great Law Of Peace As A Socio-Political Construction**

During the 17 and 18th centuries, concepts such as imperialism, nationalism, power and defence found their way into a modern pro-Warrior version of the Great Law of Peace. For example "the Great Peace shall be enforced on peoples who refuse to accept it. Its enforcement shall be done by singing war songs and warring against the opposing and obstinate Nations under commanding war chiefs" (Vachon 1993: 36). Modern versions of the political interpretation of the Kaianerenkowa include the written versions of Newhouse (1897), Parker (1916) and Hall (1989).

From this perspective the Kaianerenkowa also referred to as the Great Law, is a type of political revolutionary manifesto, or a constitution supporting the creation of a Mohawk state. The political interpretation of the Great Law of Peace emphasizes the concept of *kashastensera* - power; *Kashastensera* is necessary to enforce the peace and to protect the righteousness of the law. Power is jurisdictional authority, "the authority of law and customs, backed by such force as is necessary to make justice prevail" (Alfred 1995: 85). The *Kaiwii* plays no role in the Kaianerenkowa since it is a reflection of Christian/Quaker beliefs intermingled with Haudenosaunee cultural beliefs.

This contingent of the Longhouse also refers to itself as "The Warriors' Society" which had distanced itself from the Confederacy in 1986. In Akwesasne this contingent is composed of such individuals as John Boots, Francis Boots (the War-Chief), Kakwikeron, Loran Thompson, Rowena General, Minnie Garrow, Diane Lazore, and certain Mohawk clan mothers. Many of these individuals were inspired by the civil-rights struggle of black America and the American Indian Movement (AIM). Others had participated and supported the Longhouse element in Kanienkeh and Raquette Point. According to Mike Doxtater, economic opportunities in the Confederacy have created two kinds of Warriors: the silk shirts and the freedom-fighters, "the former corrupt exploiters, the latter romantic idealists. The greedy "silk shirts exploit the freedom fighters for tobacco profits (and gun profits, in some cases)" (Doxtater cited in Moses, Globe and Mail, 6/14/1994). Doxtater regards the Warriors in the same light as all other leadership hopefuls, "the chiefs and Warriors should be together, but they are not," because of this situation the [communities] are up for grabs" (Doxtater cited in Moses, Globe and Mail 6/14/1994).

This faction is also associated to the promotion of such activities as the sale of contraband liquor and cigarettes, gas businesses and gambling. A noted spokesperson for the Warriors' Society argues that their position has "nothing to do with the issue of gambling. It has to do with people putting an economic enterprise on our sovereign territory and another nation,

the U.S. government, trying to dictate what they [can] do" (Kakwirakeron cited in Gramza 1995: 17).

The opponents of contraband/gambling activities attest to a spiritual - holistic interpretation of the Great Law of Peace, this contingent is largely composed of the Haudenosaunee Grand Council, the Kanienkeheka Nation Council of Chiefs and their supporters in the Akwesasne Longhouse. Some of the most prominent members of this group in Akwesasne include Tommy Porter, Mike McDonald, Jake Swamp, Barbara Barnes and Ron Lafrance. This segment of the Longhouse, which opposes the Warriors' Society rely heavily on the oral recitals of the Great Law of Peace and is heavily influenced by the teachings of Handsome Lake. The Good Word is explicit about alcoholism, materialism, and gambling (Gramza 1995: 3). Thus, for this segment, gaming activities are immoral (D'Ambrosio 1995: 26).

From this perspective the Great Law of Peace establishes a spiritual link, one of peace and interconnectness to all of creation. "With respect to spirituality and ceremony, it is perhaps the most vital expression of innovative application of cultural symbols" (Alfred 1995: 84-5). Peace is the key to socio-economic prosperity, economic empowerment will be brought about through land claim resolutions. Casinos erode authentic traditions and lead straight to the melting pot of American capitalism and to a loss of sovereignty.

Giving the state any jurisdiction on Indian territory compromises their sovereignty and opens the door to taxation and assimilation.... once the state legalized non-Indian gaming, the next step will be forcing the Iroquois to pay taxes on gambling profits and to forgo land claims in exchange for casinos. You might as well say, once you give up jurisdiction you give up your sovereignty (Gramza 1995: 21).

The difficulty with the two factions of the Longhouse is that opponents of gambling/contraband activities, while stressing peace, ignore the political nature of the Mohawk's relationship with non-native society. The proponents of the political version of the Kaianerenkowa strive for the achievement of power without the balancing influence of the other

principles (peace and righteousness). This micro-application of the Kaianerenkowa's process by both segments limits the quest for autonomy in Akwesasne.

The Kaianerenkowa contains values and principles which must be integrated into the practices of politics within the community for the system to function properly. For the most part, the traditionalist movement.... has focused on superficial structural aspects of the Kaianerenkowa and has neglected the importance of embedding the values undergirding the Iroquois philosophy (Alfred 1995: 85).

Complicating matters further is the validity of the Kaianerenkowa as a 20th century socio-political ideology. "Most Mohawks seek the abstraction of values from the Kaianerenkowa, not the re-implementation of an ancient social and political order in the community" (Alfred 1995: 87-88). To understand why there are various interpretations of the Great Law of Peace and how it acts as a social construction in Akwesasne we turn to Dickson-Gilmour. The author states:

[T]his is the League according to reconstruction of the XIX and XX centuries, traditions may have been created or transformed, and may have never existed in the original version. This is to say, that most of the contemporary descriptions do not reproduce the exact replica of the traditions, since they are inevitably influenced either by history, by the authors digression and knowledge, or by real modifications added to the original version. In effect, no version escapes the influence of its author, because of personal conception of the social cultural context of the traditions (Dickson-Gilmour 1991: 32).

## **2.8 The Longhouse In Akwesasne**

*Skaniatari:io* and his followers created the Longhouse religion as a non-Christian alternative to the several Christian sects present in Haudenosaunee communities (Wallace 1978: 442). The Longhouse religion incorporated beliefs and rituals such as the Kaianerenkowa, the *Kaiwiio*, the medicine societies, the cyclical ceremonies, and the political aspects of the Confederacy into one encompassing holistic movement. And like the Peacemaker and Hiawatha had done before him, Handsome Lake choose the Longhouse as the ultimate symbol of Haudenosaunee unity. From the inception of the *Kaiwiio*, the physical



dwelling of the Longhouse would be perceived as a sacred<sup>13</sup> dwelling where the ceremonies of the Kaianerenkowa, the Condolence Council Ceremony, the cyclical ceremonies, and the *Kaiwiio* were to be practice. The current structure of the Longhouse in Akwesasne resembles what Durkheim (1993) labelled as a church, "a religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them" (Ritzer 1993: 198).

Brought to Akwesasne by the Onondaga, the *Kaiwiio* and the teachings of the Longhouse, including the Great Law of Peace, returned to Akwesasne in the 1930s (Interviewee G: 1995). But it was only during the 1950s and 1960s with the publication of Akwesasne Notes and Paul Wallace's *The Great White Roots of Peace*, that the popularity of the Great Law of Peace was augmented (Interviewee G: 1995). This was also a time were Christian Mohawks returned to the "traditional ways of the Longhouse", many of these converted Mohawks sought to distance themselves from Christianity or anything resembling Christianity (Interviewee G: 1995). As a result many of the beliefs in the Longhouse including the *Kaiwiio* became object of controversy. In fact, some of the new members openly rejected the *Kaiwiio*.

The contemporary Longhouse in Akwesasne is composed of orthodox and liberal elements. In the past these various ideological differences complimented one another. Today, they undermine each other. By 1990 two dialectical interpretations of the Kaianerenkowa were apparent, one supporting the *Kaiwiio*, the other contingent rejected it wholeheartedly. This division would have profound repercussions in the Longhouse at Akwesasne and throughout the Confederacy, as members haggled over the validity of the *Kaiwiio*, as well as which interpretation of the Kaianerenkowa was the most appropriate for the Kanienkehaka nation in late twentieth century.

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<sup>13</sup> "An idea or material reality (object or animal) which is set apart by the social community and imbued with social power and force not inherent in the object" (Bailey & Gayle 1993: 440).

## **2.9 Conclusion**

For a number of Akwesasronons, the Great Law of Peace was and continues to be the socio-political and spiritual foundations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. The ideas of participatory democracy, respect, responsibility, and individual/communal rights are the founding elements of the Kaianerenkowa. Today, in Akwesasne, the use of symbols and values as political ideologies transforms the holistic process of the Kaianerenkowa from a living document into a letter of the law where wampums now serve as articles, defining meaning, symbolism and values associated with the Great Law of Peace in a narrower and more restrictive fashion.

A historical overview highlights the transformations which occurred in both the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Kanienkehaka Nation. It also illustrated the various socio-political and cultural changes which occurred to the Great Law of Peace, and in the community of Akwesasne. It is important that we recognize the transformations such as wars, mass-adoption, and Christianity which continue to reverberate into twentieth century Akwesasne. These factors have had impacts on how the Great Law of Peace serves the needs of various (and sometimes opposing) Mohawk political groups in Akwesasne. In the next section we will examine the role (if any) of the Kaianerenkowa throughout five social movements in Akwesasne.

### **3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

A theoretical approach establishes an analytical framework within which issues can be studied. It serves as a guide to develop certain issues, description of phenomena, explanations of their origins, and our speculations about future possibilities. Political Anthropology is interested in the analysis of social political processes and structures in "traditional" societies. Nicholas's theory of Segmentary-Factional-Political-Systems interprets the role of political organization and factionalism within Haudenosaunee society. Nicholas's framework is relevant to our research because we are examining social movements and political events in a Haudenosaunee community and how the Great Law of Peace is related to factionalism in Akwesasne. The Great Law of Peace has undergone numerous social and political transformations during the late twentieth century. Segmentary Factional-Political-Systems theory will aid in the understanding of these transformations.

#### **3.1 Presentation Of Action Theory**

From a Political Anthropological perspective, Action Theory is the examination of societies and political systems, with an emphasis on:

[I]ndividual actors and their strategies within a given sociopolitical context. Theoretical frameworks of action theory have included those focusing on Transactions, Systems Analysis, and Game Theory. Action Theory in anthropology locates the individual within the framework of social organization and then analyze political action and interaction. Within Political Anthropology, Action Theory is distinguished by its attention to political processes and formations such as factions, interests groups and so on, and by its fieldwork method, which concentrates on face-to-face interactions, within given socio-political contexts. In part, Action Theory was a reaction to the tendency of Structural Functionalism to identify political structures and concentrates on corporate groups and the moral/jural dimension of political systems. Action Theory emphasizes dynamic modes of political behaviour such as strategy, decision making and maximization (Seymour-Smith 1986: 02-03).

Action theory encompasses the research of both post-structural functionalism and process analysis. These two ideas are important in research which involves an Amerindian

community. Past research in this field has dealt mainly with leaders and conflicts while very little was done to establish links between social constructions, cultural revitalization, and the social dissension that followed. Action Theory can help to address some of these shortcomings. In Akwesasne, the Great Law of Peace exists not only as a cultural and spiritual philosophy, but also as a socio-political construction empowering the Mohawk's quest for sovereignty. According to the proponents of the *Kaianerenkowa*, these elements (spiritualism and sovereignty) are essential components that will provide the Mohawks of Akwesasne with greater control over their future.

### **3.2 Segmentary Factional-Political Systems**

In 1960, Ralph Nicholas conducted a study of political organization and factionalism in the Haudenosaunee Community of the Grand River Territory of the Six Nations. Action Theory and Evan-Pritchard's field-research was used in the Nicholas study. However, Nicholas expanded upon Action Theory by creating Segmentary-Factional-Political Systems. Other researchers who have used Action Theory, or concepts from Action Theory include Siegel and Beals (1960) concepts of conflict and factionalism, Landsman's (1988) study of Kanienkeh, and Dickson-Gilmour (1991) Criminology study of Kahnawake; and, the most recent analysis conducted by Mohawk professor Gerald Alfred (1995). Alfred explains how a history tainted by external manipulation resulted in a revitalization of the Great Law of Peace in Kahnawake. The theoretical framework for this research study will incorporate concepts from Action Theory, Nicholas's Segmentary Factional-Political-Systems, the works of Siegel and Beals (1960), Dickson-Gilmour (1991), and Alfred (1994). We believe that these theories and concepts can be used to explain socio-political organization and fragmentation in Haudenosaunee communities.

Nicholas's work emphasized the way political organizations function to create social stability rather than political conflict or the contesting of existing socio-political systems. In this research, we will examine the Great Law of Peace and its role in political conflicts in a factional

society. Nicholas began his study by describing factionalism in the Longhouses of the Six Nations (Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Tuscarora, and Mohawk) present in the Six Nations of the Grand River; and the Band Council of the Six Nations of the Grand River community. The latter, was the only governmental body recognized and supported by the Canadian Federal government. He described these as movements operating within a political spectrum, all vying for some control over political power or management over resources. "Factions are primarily political activities translated by an organized struggle over public power and the allocation of resources" (Nicholas 1966: 23). Power is defined by Nicholas as control over human and/or material resources. These resources can in turn be categorized as private and/or public resources (Nicholas 1966: 46). The actors or participants engaged in political activity usually attempt to increase their power and subsequently expand their control over resources (Nicholas 1966: 46). "If they do not, they are not engaged in political action" (Nicholas 1966: 46). In this light, the "revival" of the Great Law of Peace in Akwesasne by its supporters could be interpreted as attempts by this segment of the society to increase their power and subsequently expand their control over resources.

When using the term "factions", Nicholas writes that:

It should also be noted that the use of "faction" does not imply a moral judgement. In many political systems, to accuse one's opponent of "factionalism" is to charge him with using unfair means in the pursuit of illegitimate goals. The view of factionalism implied in the rhetorical use of the terms has evidently influenced some recent theories about this phenomenon (Nicholas 1966: 46).

Factions are conflict groups that perform essential political functions. According to Nicholas, a factional system is not the political "state of nature" of any societies because:

[F]actions are so often found in rapidly changed or changing societies and institutions has no doubt drawn the attention of Siegel and Beals as well as other observers to the disruptive features of factional politics [. . .] If we distinguish between the social disruption brought about by almost any kind of political system, our attention will be drawn to the functions of factions (Nicholas 1966: 66).

Nicholas focused on the contributions of political organizations to social stability, while disregarding the disruptive effects of social conflict by political competition. It was from this perspective that Nicholas described the rapid socio-political changes that occurred at the Six Nations community during the mid-twentieth century, changes that were caused by rapid economic growth, external and internal political divisions, and a deteriorating environment. The similarities between the Six Nations of the Grand River and Akwesasne can not be overlooked, external economic migration, and environmental deterioration. Both "stressors" permanently and radically transformed the traditional means of subsistence (fishing, farming) that until this time, had played a prominent role in both communities. We will see that environmental transformations brought about by the St. Lawrence Seaway contributed to the cultural revitalization of the Kaianerenkowa in Akwesasne. The related socio-political changes would not only factionalize, but also polarize the community for decades to come.

### **3.3 The Application Of Segmentary Factional-Political Systems Theory To Akwesasne**

Nicholas establishes his methodology and concepts with the help of Evans-Pritchard's field work and Action Theory. In the following section we will first describe Nicholas's five characteristics of Segmentary Factional-Political Systems, then we will discuss their relevance to contemporary Akwesasne.

**a) Factions Are Conflict Groups:** Factions emerge during social conflict out of a sociologically undefined background to dominate a political arena that is usually dialectical (Nicholas 1968: 27). "Conflict explains why there is no such thing as one faction in any political arena; obviously, there must always be at least two factions" (Nicholas 1968: 27). To categorize members of Akwesasne according to their political vision overlooks the fact that many supporters of the band councils also profess to follow the traditional culture and values of the Haudenosaunee and the Kanienkehaka. For example, the 1990 conflict was characterized by

animosity between supporters of the Longhouse vs. supporters of the Longhouse and band council supporters vs. band council supporters.

Factions appear as groups (or perhaps better, as quasi-groups) only during conflict. However, there are several instances of factional co-operation or factional coalitions (or alliances). An example where factional coalitions may appear is during periods of external threat (Nicholas 1968: 44). Consequently, "factions do not lose their separate identities in an alliance . . . For alliances in one crisis may result in a polarization in the next" (Nicholas 1968: 44). This statement seems to confirm Dickson-Gilmour's observation in her study of political division at Kahnawake, where the author states that "there is communal convergence when there are external menaces" (Dickson-Gilmour 1991: 32). We will examine this further when we discuss the Mohawk's opposition to the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

**b) Factions Are Political Groups:** This proposition simply specifies the kind of conflict in which factions engage. "If we regard politics as "organized" conflict over the use of public power, then it is factions which organize this conflict in certain kinds of society and institutions" (Nicholas 1968: 28). One of the most constant factors in Akwesasne appears to be the struggle for political power and access to natural, human, and financial resources.

**c) Factions Are Not Corporate Groups:** This negative criterion expands the functionalist concept of functional undifferentiation, this factor is significant to our analysis for it indicates the differences between factional conflicts and other types of political conflict. Nicholas argues that factions seem to lack the permanence of clans or lineage and corporate political parties, since "factions are not corporate, they are basically impermanent... This does not mean that they may not persist for a long period of time" (Nicholas 1968: 28). Nicholas explains that factions rarely occurred in traditional societies because disputes or irrevocable differences were solved by the relocation or secession of a group from the main body (Nicholas 1968: 28). In Mohawk terms,

this is known as the "Philosophy Of The Corn", a philosophy embodying the ideals of consensus and fragmentation in Kanienkehaka society.

With the establishment of a fixed territory and limited resources in the 19th century, the "Philosophy Of The Corn" could no longer be applied in Akwesasne. Consequently, dialectical political affiliations became permanent fixtures in the political spectrum of Akwesasne<sup>14</sup>. These communal divisions have often escalated to the brink of internal warfare, such as in the case of Raquette Point and in the 1990 Civil Conflict.

**d) Faction Members Are Recruited By A Leader:** Nicholas explains that a factional leader is a man who may possess more political or economic power than any of his followers. These followers or factional members are "connected to a faction only through the activity of a leader, since the unit has no corporate existence or clear single principle of recruitment" (Nicholas 1968: 28) without 'him'. Displays of leadership-allegiance occur when a member is willing to conduct any act (e.g. physical confrontations) that may be regarded as appropriate "to the cause" (Nicholas 1978: 29). Causes that are often created and manipulated by these leaders.

Mohawk allegiances extend beyond leadership loyalty, even beyond resource and economic scarcity. For many Akwesasronons (especially supporters of the Longhouse, but not exclusively) a 'cause' or 'causes' include one's pride in the history, the culture, the spiritualism, the socio-political systems (collective and individual responsibilities), and the ecological

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<sup>14</sup> The reluctance of Nicholas to expand upon the idea of faction permanence and/or impermanence results in a definition that is ambiguous and somewhat Euro-centric. Many socio-political divisions, what Nicholas and others would call factions, such as the proponents of the Great Law of Peace in Akwesasne are much older than most corporate and political entities in Canada. Nicholas's examination of the Haudenosaunee at Grand River could be interpreted as Euro-centric because the author did not use the same labels to define Amerindians politics as he did to Western politics. One could be led to believe that this was an indication that Nicholas may have had only a basic understanding of the complexity of Haudenosaunee politics and/or he was unwilling to acknowledge that the system and its processes and structures could have been as advanced and complex as similar existing political systems in Western Society. This type of "Euro-centric" analysis, which has been condemned by other researchers, must be acknowledged and understood in order that it is not repeated.



attunement (sense of relationship with the land) of the Kanienkehaka. These factors contribute to factional cohesion in Mohawk societies.

Nicholas states that leadership movements can also be alliances:

Leadership may be provided not only by a politically powerful individual, but also, as Beals suggest, by a "clique" based in an influential family. Another kind of clique might be composed of several leaders, each of whom has a modest following, but none of whom is individually capable of mobilizing an effective unit (Nicholas 1968: 29).

In communities where resources are scarce, men powerful enough to be faction leaders are always potentially in conflict, for two leaders can never have identical interests. These conflicting interests often result in 'personal' competition for limited resources. (Nicholas 1968: 63). The deterioration of Akwesasne's environment resulted in a community that was seriously depleted of natural resources and economic opportunities. Therefore, many individuals were vulnerable and open to new "sources" of income such as contraband and gambling. Many proponents of these activities justify their actions according to a history which depicts contraband activities as traditional Mohawk enterprises (see Dennis 1993 and Delage 1991). Opponents of gaming and contraband activities in turn felt that the Kaianerenkowa prohibited such activities since they were not based on the fundamentalist principals of the Kaianerenkowa (peace, power, and righteousness) and the Kaiwio.

The various expressions of leadership and their roles in the functions of political organizations and political conflict in Akwesasne will be examined with the help of the Segmentary-Factional-Political Systems approach, while acknowledging the environmental degradation and limited socio-economic opportunities available in the community. In the following section we will examine the differences of Nicholas's concept of a leader and the Haudenosaunee concept of a leader.

In the Haudenosaunee Longhouse political power and prominence is distributed throughout the circle of *tehonatenent-shawâ:kon* (hands and arms linked in peace). Although a

leader is permitted to move beyond and outside the circle, his actions are closely monitored by those who remained within. If the actions taken by the *royane* are interpreted as threatening the peace and stability of the Confederacy and the nation, he can be dehorned or impeached (after the three proper warnings) by the clan mothers and deputy-chiefs. In this leadership format the loss of a leader does not undermine the structural integrity of the system. In Akwesasne, the Longhouse is represented by the Kanienkehaka Nation Council of Chiefs. The alternative to the KNCC is the band/tribal council systems. Band Council leaders or chiefs are elected through an electoral vote. The Band Council chief is usually an individual controlling local political power from a structured bureaucratic centralized hierarchy. While power and resources can be quickly mobilized in the Band Councils, these types of structures are also susceptible to coups and revolutions, which can destabilize and disassemble the socio-political system.

In his definition of a leader Nicholas asserted that a faction leader lacks charisma. An assertion unsupported by a closer examination of the literature. Noted historical figures such as Seigneur de Tracy, and Thomas Jefferson were quick to compliment the oratory skills and dignity that Haudenosaunee people carried themselves with (Vachon 1995). Even contemporary journalists such as Hornung (1991), and Johansen (1993) have been often overwhelmed by the charismatic qualities of such figures such as Jake Swamp, Tommy Porter, *Kakwirakeron*, and Loran Thompson (Vachon: 1995).

One of Nicholas's weakness is his failure to recognize the role of Mohawk women in Haudenosaunee politics. In Kanienkehaka society, "the Iroquois value system was inherently dualistic and led to a manifest dichotomy between the idealized "female" values stressing peace and health and the more often realized destructive "male" values of power and warfare" (Alfred 1994: 40). In the matrilineal<sup>15</sup> Mohawk society, women had rights and authority over the land.

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<sup>15</sup> According to Seymour-Smith, matrilineal descent is that which is traced through females. In Kanienkehaka society, children are affiliated with the group of their mother, or as it is sometimes expressed, of their mother's brother. The kinship group formed by persons linked by matrilineal descent to a known common ancestress is termed a matrilineage. In the avuncular and matrilineal Mohawk

Through their clan, and kins, and the *owachira* Kanienkehaka women maintained genealogical and political continuity in a matrilineal system in which the primary kin relationship was the one between mother and daughter (Thomas 1994: 15). Haudenosaunee women also participated in consensual politics and gave their advice on matters of diplomacy. In this system women could not only veto a declaration of war, but also free or adopt captives to rejuvenate family lines (Graymont 1991: 100). "Iroquois women in their own society enjoyed more power and higher status than did white women of the day in their society" (Graymont 1991: 101).

In contemporary Mohawk society, the women of Akwesasne (as well as those of the Longhouse supporters) and their roles have been diminished due to the Indian Act<sup>16</sup>, Eurocentrism, and patrilineal systems. Today, Mohawk women no longer own the land, yet many Haudenosaunee traditions persevere. Clan affiliations are still transferred through the mother's bloodline. Mohawk clan mothers continue to elevate the *royane* of the *Kanienkehaka* Nation according to the *Kaianerenkowa*. Mohawk women are also essential components of the Canadian and American band councils; some are elected chiefs, while others are employed by the band councils. These positions of power, past and present, have provided the women of Akwesasne with several opportunities to play prominent roles as both leaders and members in Akwesasne's socio-political arenas.

**e) Faction Members Are Recruited On Diverse Principles:** Nicholas writes that "a faction leader ordinarily has several different kinds of connection with his followers; he makes use of all

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society, political positions are generally held by men, though transmitted and supervised by the clan mothers (Seymour-Smith 1986: 185).

<sup>16</sup> The Indian Act of 1876 consolidated and revamped pre-Confederation legislation of the Canadas into a nation-wide framework that is still in place today, despite amendments that began almost as soon as it was passed. The Act's fundamental purpose - to assimilate Amerindians - has remained a constant (Dickason 1992: 284). The Act touches on virtually every aspect of Amerindians' lives. The Act establishes a definition of an Indian. It also defines the following labels a "band", "band member", and "reserve". It defines the relationship between Amerindians and the broader Canadian society (Gibbins & Ponting 1986: 19-21).

possible ties to draw supporters into his faction" (Nicholas 1968: 47). According to Nicholas, this idea resembles Firth's notion of faction recruitment:

[F]actions are usually structurally diverse, they may rest upon kin ties, patron-client relations, religious or political-economic ties or any combination of these; they are mobilized and made effective through an authority structure of leader and henchman, whose roles are broadly defined and whose rewards in many cases depend upon the leader's discretion (Nicholas 1968: 47).

Faction diversity, faction recruitment (also known as resource mobilization), and leadership functions will be examined as we look at the five events of Akwesasne. The "reasons" for uniting or mobilizing resources can range from kinship to clan affiliation and economic prosperity. We will also examine if Mohawk leaders have called upon traditions and the Great Law of Peace as a unifying and justifying force for "the greater good of the Mohawk people," and as a defensive measure against external intervention in the community.

### **3.4 Oberschall, Siegel And Beals, And Dickson-Gilmour**

The oversights of Nicholas<sup>17</sup> are the reasons why we have chosen to use Oberschall's (1993) definition of social conflict. Oberschall describes social conflict as referring to conflict in which parties are aggregates of individuals, such as groups, organizations, communities, and

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<sup>17</sup> Keeping in mind the context of Nicholas's study, which was conducted when Action Theory was in its developmental stage, the researcher may have overlooked certain phenomena or concepts that were later defined by Action Theorists. This could be partly attributable to the ambiguities of Nicholas's definitions. (e.g., faction permanence and/or impermanence). From his perspective leadership and power are permanent social anomalies resulting in dichotomous struggles. Thus, Nicholas emphasized the role of the individual-rational man and his strategies within a given socio-political and conflictual context, while failing to recognize the socio-economic and ecological stress plaguing the community. By focusing on competitive intraclass behaviour, Nicholas neglected to define the reciprocal role of women and men in Haudenosaunee participatory democracy or the similarities evident within the factions themselves (i.e., a general belief in Mohawk autonomy). Nicholas's insights will be the foundation of this theoretical analysis and his oversights will be addressed by adding new elements to Segmentary Factional-Political Systems. These elements include: the history; the role of Mohawk women in the socio-political arena; the role of emotions in social movements and conflicts; exo-social political impacts and transformations of the power structures in Akwesasne; relations and conflicts between social classes; the role of functions and conflicts; and the impacts of environmental transformation in Amerindian communities. In the case of Akwesasne, the environmental impacts of the St. Lawrence Seaway dramatically transformed Mohawk society in the twentieth century.

crowds, rather than single individuals. "Social conflict refers in common usage to interaction in which the means chosen by the parties in pursuit of their goals are likely to inflict damage, harm or injury, but not necessarily in every case" (Oberschall 1993: 39). The following definition of social conflict by Oberschall and Coser is a fitting explanation of the five events in Akwesasne:

Social conflict is a struggle over values or claims to status, power and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflict group are not only to gain the desired values, but also to neutralize, injure, or eliminate rivals. Social conflict encompasses a broad range of social phenomena: class, religious, and communal conflicts; riots, rebellions, revolutions; strikes and civil disorders; marches, demonstrations, protest gatherings and the likes (Oberschall 1993: 39-40).

To compliment the analysis of political organizations and conflict in Akwesasne, we will make use of the Mohawk analogy of conflict as a "creative-tension" by the council fire. Under this analogy conflict is the expression of disagreement, which brings into focus diverse viewpoints, and provides the opportunity to calmly, and rationally explore their strenghts and weaknesses. Under the Haudenosaunee system of governance disagreement itself is neither good nor bad. Diverse perspectives bring into focus and explore the strenghts and weaknesses of ideas, assumptions and alternatives. The task is to work together to discover which choice is most acceptable to all members (Butler & Rothstein 1991: 57). Under the Great Law of Peace a proper mode of discussion avoids accusations. Condemnations impede discussions and can led to violence. However, the clear minded can discard the "grey clouds of discontent" and stimulate a positive discussion, promoting conflict as an occasion for growth. This analogy will be incorporated into works of such Action Theorists as Siegel and Beals and Dickson-Gilmour. The ideas of these authors will provide the researcher with the appropriate tools to analyze the shifts in alliances throughout the five events and in the role of factions and conflict within Akwesasne. Siegel and Beals developed the concepts of schismatic and pervasive factionalism. According to the authors, the two terms can be interpreted in the context of a largely quantitative difference (Siegel and Beals 1960: 399).

The extreme or ideal case of pervasive factionalism would involve conflict between unorganized and transient groupings, while the ideal case of schismatic factionalism would involve conflict between two well-organized groups. Both kinds of factionalism would lead to the abandonment of community-wide cooperative activities, but only in the case of pervasive factionalism would cooperation within smaller sub-groups decline or cease to occur (Siegel & Beals 1960: 399).

Both schismatic and pervasive factionalism could be used to describe the political events that occurred in the community. Yet, over the last fifty years, the conflicts in Akwesasne have taken place within a socio-political arena which involves two dichotomous and well-organized factions, leading to a preliminary assessment that factional conflicts in Akwesasne could be schismatic. However, the shift in alliances indicate a pervasiveness in Mohawk political affiliations. According to Johansen (1993), many members of Akwesasne believe that there is social disintegration within the community. This has resulted in each individual and/or groups pursuing their own goals (Johansen 3). According to Siegel and Beals, this only compounds social problems: "In this manner, an ordinary family quarrel may be transformed into a conflict affecting most of the people in the village. The avowed purpose of such conflict is to "bring down" the members of the other group and so pave the way for a resumption of normal village function" (Siegel & Beals 1960: 396). The authors add that "such victories accomplished nothing beyond the temporary humiliation of members of the opposed faction. Victory was usually followed by betrayal and the renewal of hostilities along new alignments" (Siegel & Beals 1960: 397).

Finally, Siegel and Beals suggest that social dissension is often addressed by the community through communal motivations that recreate or recover communal spirits or actions promoting the co-operation of the members of the community as a whole - one such enterprise is the Great Law of Peace. Within the holistic framework of the Kaianerenkowa, social and communal cohesion are the foundations of the Confederacy. Communal unity in this context was never questioned for safeguards such as communal participation, and clan representation and the Great Law of Peace existed (Dickson-Gilmour 1991: 29). Problems and conflicts arose in Akwesasne when these communal interactions diminished and the safeguards were

eliminated or in fact, the system (Great Law of Peace) was replaced by the band-tribal system(s). The latters were never fully or properly implemented in the community, since a component of Akwesasronons perceive these forms of governance as foreign intrusions into local sovereign socio-political systems. As a result, the community became fragmented and polarized, with each group questioning the other's motives and objectives. This misunderstanding endangers communal unity and distorts the ultimate aim of Mohawk sovereignty (Dickason 1991: 29).

### **3.5 Literature Review**

A literature review was conducted in order to examine the role of the Great Law of Peace in the past and its transformation within contemporary Haudenosaunee society. The material was divided into three fields; (1) historical documents from Jesuit reports and diaries and documents of early explorers and military officials; (2) the work of anthropologists and historians; and (3) Haudenosaunee and Amerindian literature. The literature review is supported by an examination of local Mohawk media (*Akwesasne Notes*, *Indian Times* and *The People's Voice*) and their coverage of the five social movements. A series of interviews conducted with key actors in the five events will complement the literature research.

#### **3.5.1 Historical Documents, Jesuit Reports, Explorers And Historians**

This section examines the diary of the Dutch explorer Van den Bogaert, followed by the reports of the Jesuit Lafiteau and a review of the writings of the French explorer and military official, Lahontan.

Little is known about Harmen Meyderts Van den Bogaert (1631-1647), a Dutch explorer who lived and died in the New Netherland's colony of Fort Orange. The journal detailing his observations (1634-35) of the lands of the Haudenosaunee was published in 1895. Van den Bogaert makes two observations that would lead us to believe that the Great Law of

Peace was firmly established in the territory of the Five Nations. His first reference, noted on January 1, 1635, is the description of wampum. "In the evening the Indians hung a belt of sewant and some other strung sewant that the chief brought back from the French Indians as a token of peace... After long deliberation they concluded the peace for four years" (Van den Bogaert 1988: 15). According to Dennis (1993) and Gehring and Starna (1988) (the editors of Van den Bogaert's diary), the journal was perhaps the first literary mention of the existence of the Haudenosaunee confederacy (Dennis 1993: 81), and a Haudenosaunee alliance (Gehring & Starna 1988: 46). On January 3 1635, during his stay in Oneida territory, Van den Bogaert made the following observation:

[W]hich was to say that I should go to all these places, by naming all the castles, and I would go there freely and be free there in every place; I would have house and fire, wood and anything else. Whatever I received there would be mine.... and I was again made a present of a beaver (Van den Bogaert 1988: 16-17).

This quote hints at the existence of concentric hunting territories in the lands of the Haudenosaunee, also referred to by the "People of the Longhouse" as the common beaver bowl, to which Van den Bogaert was given access.

During his 10 year stay at Kahnawake (1724-1734), the Jesuit Lafiteau wrote two volumes describing the customs and policies of the Haudenosaunee people in Kahnawake. Although he does not specifically mention the Great Law of Peace, several of his observations allude to the existence of the Kaianerenkowa, including his description of the leadership structures and the reciprocal role of the genders.

Lafiteau concentrated most of his work on the leadership structure of the Haudenosaunee, including the symbolic role of the council fire during official meetings (Lafiteau 1983a: 85-90). It also described the role of the clan mothers, wampum and *royane* in these councils:

La dignité de chef est perpétuelle et héréditaire dans sa cabane, passant toujours aux enfants de ses tantes, de ses soeurs, ou de ses nieces du côté maternel. Des que l'arbre est tombé, il faut, disent-ils, le relever. La matrone qui est la principale autorité, apres en avoir conféré avec ceux de sa cabane, en confere de nouveau avec ceux de sa tribu, qui elle fait agréer celui qu'elle a



choisi pour succéder, ce qui lui est assez libre. Elle n'a pas toujours égard au droit d'aînesse, et d'ordinaire elle prend celui qui paraît le plus propre, pres a soutenir ce rang par ses bonnes qualités. Le choix en étant déterminé, la proposition s'en fait dans le village par des colliers de porcelaine. On y produit celui qui est élu, qu'on ne fait simplement que montrer, et il est sur-le-champ proclamé e[t] reconnu (Lafiteau 1988b: 81-82).

Lafiteau (1988) describes certain protocols that are associated with the Condolence Ceremony (see chapter 2, section 2.4 for more details). He discusses the gifts of porcelain suspended from two rods (Lafiteau 1988b: 93-94); he describes the great oratory given to the defunct and the role of the other moiety (the other clan) during funerals (Lafiteau 1988b: 133); and last, he mentions the closing of the Condolence Ceremony - the "Feast of the Dead" (Lafiteau 1988b: 142).

The French explorer and soldier Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan (1666-1716) is best known for his book the "Nouveaux Voyages de Mr. Le Baron De Lahontan Dans l'Amérique Septentrionale" This work is composed of 25 letters that describe his ten-year stay in New France from November 1683 to January 31st 1694 (Translated from Ouellet 1990a: 25). Lahontan describes the use of wampum by both the French and the Onondaga *royane* "On ne saurait faire aucune affaire, ni entrer en négociations avec les [Amérindiens] du Canada, sans l'entremi de ces coliers, qui servent de contrats et d'obligations parmi eux, l'usage de l'écriture leur étant inconnu" (Lahontan 1990a: 305). The author also mentions some of the protocols that are associated with the Condolence Ceremony - the promotion of peace and the establishment of strong kinship ties:

Écoute, Onnontio [de la Barre], ma voix est celle des cinq Cabanes Iroquoises... ils enterrent la hache Cataracouy, en présence de ton prédécesseur, dans le centre du Fort, ils planteront au meme lieu l'arbre de Paix pour y etre soigneusement conservé; qu'au lieu d'une retraite de Guerriers, ce poste ne serait plus qu'une retraite de Marchands.... Je t'assure au nom des cinq Nations, que nos Guerriers danseront sous ses feuillages la danse du Calumet; qu'ils demeurent tranquilles sur leurs nattes, et qu'ils ne déterreron la hache pour couper l'arbre de la Paix, que quand leur freres Onnontio et Corlar conjointement ou séparément se metront en devoir d'attaquer les pais dont le grand esprit a disposé en faveur de nos ancetres (Lahontan 1990a: 309).

Lahontan is also one of the first European authors to refer to the role of Haudenosaunee women in the adoption process, "Les femmes Iroquoises adoptent quelquefois les prisonniers qu'on leur donne pour s'en servir a leur gré, et alors ils sont regardez comme gens de la Nation" (Lahontan 1990a: 720-22). Last, he describes the importance of sovereignty to the Haudenosaunee:

ils se moquent des menaces de nos Rois et de nos Gouverneurs, ne connoissant en aucune maniere le terme de dépendance; ils ne peuvent pas meme supporter ce terrible mot. Ils se regardent comme des Souverains qui ne relevent d'autre Maître que de Dieu seul qu'ils nomment le Grand Esprit (Lahontan 1991a: 287).

Neither the Dutch explorer van den Bogaert, the seigneur de Tracy, the Jesuit Lafiteau, nor the French explorer Lahontan, specifically mention the Kaianerenkowa. However, they do mention the Condolence Ceremony, the existence of the Five Nations Confederacy, the use of wampum, the role of women in the adoption process, and sovereignty. Lafiteau and Lahontan also described the role of leaders in Haudenosaunee society (Lafiteau 1983(a): 80, Lahontan 1990(a): 639). What could also have been mentioned is the description of the important metaphor - the great tree of peace, by both Lafiteau (1983(a): 82) and Lahontan (1990(a): 74). Through this brief historical overview, one can conclude that many of the concepts and processes stipulated in the Kaianerenkowa were well established by the time of the first European presence in Haudenosaunee lands.

### **3.5.2 Haudenosaunee Experts And Anthropologists**

There have been several authors from various disciplines who have written about the Haudenosaunee. Yet, it has only been in the late 19th and 20th century that academia began to examine closely the Great Law of Peace and "Haudenosaunee protocols". These early works gave rise to a new field called "Iroquoian research". The founders of this field of study were such notable anthropologists as Morgan (1845), Hewitt (1893), Goldenweiser (1899), Parker (1916), Henry (1955), R. Fadden (1954), Wallace (1968), and Fenton (1975). Contemporary scholars in this field are Venables (1980), Vecsey (1988), Vachon (1991),

Bonvillain (1992), Dennis (1993), and Richter (1993). These authors describe the transformations of the Haudenosaunee and the Kaianerenkowa during the era of post-European contact. Some, like Goldenweiser, Parker, Hewitt, and Wallace wrote their own renditions of the Kaianerenkowa. This study will focus on the works of Henry Lewis Morgan and Beauchamp (1904), and modern scholars, including Vecsey and Dennis.

Morgan utilized his Haudenosaunee contacts to construct his socio-political analysis of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. His perception that the Haudenosaunee were a warlike people continues to be perpetuated within the modern interpretations and stereotypes associated to the Confederacy.

The publication of *League of the Haudenosaunee* in 1845, "made Morgan one of the foremost ethnologists of his time" (Henry 1955: 239). *League of the Haudenosaunee*, a classic in anthropological work, remains to this day an authoritative source book. It is notable, however, that throughout his study, Morgan failed to grasp several fundamental components of the Haudenosaunee social systems. Morgan, a lawyer by-training, interpreted the supposedly menial tasks of women as evidence that they were considered inferior to men, despite their political authority (Henry 1955: 75). Morgan also overlooked the extensive horticultural practices of the Haudenosaunee and the reciprocal role of men and women in these fields. Men cleared the fields and women tended and raised the crops. Although Morgan did recognize the Haudenosaunee's quest for peace, he nonetheless contributed substantially to the martial and imperial image of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Morgan is recognized for coining the term "Pax Iroquoia". Morgan defined the term as an imperial league based on conquest, warfare, and the subjugation of all who opposed the "Iroquois Empire." The "Iroquois Constitution" of the "Iroquois Empire" was an aggressive pursuit for peace in a military fashion (Dennis 1993: 97). F.C. Wallace (1966), Jennings and Trigger (1976), and Richter and Merrell (1987) are authors who adopted Morgan's idea "Pax Iroquoia" and incorporated it into their research. Not one researcher recognized the inherent contradictions of the term, for the Confederacy and the Great Law of Peace were founded upon peace and rationalization. To

conduct warfare is a failure to rationalize and achieve peace. These contradiction continue to contribute to the "stereotypical depiction" of the Confederacy as a League of War.

The historian Dennis critiques Morgan's "Pax Iroquoia" by outlining the numerous peace attempts (seventeenth century) of the Haudenosaunee with not only the Dutch, but also with the French Nation (1624, 1625, 1655, and 1684). Dennis also explains that to the Haudenosaunee, loss of life was the greatest tragedy of all. Only in peace could life be preserved. In this light, warfare was a failure in achieving peace and the good mind. War then became a drastic final solution and a failure of the Great Law of Peace. This viewpoint is confirmed by the observations of William M. Beauchamp (1904) and F.C. Wallace (1958). Beauchamp explained that peace was engrained in the leadership structure. Beauchamp states that "one of their own names for the confederacy was that of the Great Peace, and though they fought fiercely they always hailed peace as one of the greatest blessings" (cited in Dennis 1993: 97). In the words of Paul A. W Wallace, "peace was a way of life, characterized by wisdom and graciousness ... the Good expressed in action, that is, the good life" (cited in Dennis 1993: 108). The Great Law of Peace could only be practice by the Kanienkehaka as a living embodiment of the "good philosophy".

Consensus and factionalism provided the Confederacy with the means to adapt to the socio-ecological changes occurring in North America. Dennis utilizes a seventeenth century quote written by Claude C. le Roy Backqueville de la Potheri in order to illustrate this:

The Iroquois could use their divisions to great advantage, employing them to escape humiliating and disastrous defeats; when things went badly, the faction or nation not immediately involved could initiate peace discussion, even before hostilities ceased. This process need not be seen cynically as a form of treacherous manipulation, but instead it can be viewed through the perspective of Iroquois history as a means of aiding kinspeople and realizing or maintaining the larger cultural ideal - that is, peace (Dennis 1993: 252).

Contemporary analysis by both Haudenosaunee authors (Mohawk (1988), Alfred (1995) and non-Amerindian authors (Johansen (1993), Dennis (1993)) have approached the subject of factionalism from a different perspective. To these authors, the strength of the Haudenosaunee

systems may have been its capacity to fragment into numerous socio-political entities, without falling into total social chaos or anarchy. The following quote illustrates Dennis' perspective:

Although the conflicts of the Five Nations later expanded and took on new, unprecedented dimensions, we should see such a development not as a logical, inevitable result of Iroquois culture but rather as an aberration forced on the Five Nations by the deforming effects of European colonialism (Dennis 1993: 69).

Vecsey, an "Iroquoian Expert," examined the transformations of the Great Law of Peace from an oral transference to a written document. To Vecsey the written versions of the Kaianerenkowa coincides with the "codification" of the Great Law of Peace as a constitution with wampum representing articles of the law. Vecsey argues that experts in Iroquoian studies such as Hewitt, Goldenweiser, Parker, and Fenton, "have all become embroiled in the debate about the possibility of aboriginal constitutionality, and their disagreement has coloured their work" (Vecsey 1988: 97).

Morgan's impact on anthropology and "Iroquoian Studies" cannot be overlooked, for he established the notion of the "warring Iroquois League". It was only much later that non-Amerindian scholars such as Vecsey and Dennis began to explore the "other facet" of Haudenosaunee society - the concept of peace. To these authors, the Great Law of Peace was much more effective in peace than in war. Yet, even in times of tremendous social upheaval, the dynamic flexibility of the Kaianerenkowa allowed the Confederacy to survive through factionalism.

### **3.5.3 An Overview Of Amerindian And Haudesaunee Literature**

To the Haudenosaunee and many *Honkwehonwe*, the Great Law of Peace is a living embodiment of natural and spiritual laws. To Haudenosaunee authors such as Jake Thomas (1994), Oren Lyons (1988), John Mohawk (1988), and Gerald Alfred (1995) the Great Law of Peace is a complex-adaptive system founded on dynamic and dichotomous processes. *Wendake (Huron)* author George E. Sioui (1989) explains that the Confederacy was modified as a reactive adaption to the socio-cultural repercussions brought about through their contact

with the Europeans. Some of these repercussions were huge population decreases, epidemics, warfare, and alcoholism. According to Sioui, amendments to the Great Law of Peace, such as the adoption of captives, provided the Confederacy with the means to survive the European onslaught.

Alfred (1995) is particularly interested in the flexibility and the adaptability (or lack thereof) of the Kaianerenkowa. In his analysis, Alfred examines the historical transformations of the Kaianerenkowa from an all-encompassing "way of life" to a political ideology:

Crises and conflict in effect provide the impetus for the re-evaluation of history and culture essential to maintaining a salient set of political values. Political conflict became this necessary by-product of rejecting the legacy of an unjust history, the imposition of foreign systems in Kahnawake and the struggle to re-integrate traditional values by Kahnawakons. Different views on the nature and meaning of tradition lead to internal factionalism and conflict; challenging the laws and structures of a colonial regime lead to reaction by, and confrontations with, the state (Alfred 1995: 2).

Alfred describes how consensus and fragmentation were dichotomous yet complementary components of the Great Law of Peace:

[T]he role of consensus, the traditional pattern of Iroquois political development, revolved around the continual formation of new political units. Failure to achieve consensus had a paralysing effect on governance. Political disputes traditionally played themselves out as polarizing arguments, and the problem was resolved through the factionalization of larger units and the formation of smaller, more homogeneous communities, usually on the village level. Duality of interest was in fact common even among the pre-contact Mohawk, and it gave rise to the Iroquois system as the prototype for later decentralized federal systems (Alfred 1995: 42).

In this context, the flexibility of the Kaianerenkowa is paradoxically its strength and weakness, this factor is evident when we examine the various interpretations of the Great Law of Peace, according to Alfred, there are at least four different versions of the Kaianerenkowa in circulation today.

Originally an oral document, it was translated into written form during the 19th century by various interpreters. A version transcribed by Seth Newhouse in 1903 remains one the one most closely adhered to by most of the Iroquois Longhouses. The central core of the story remains consistent, but there is much disparity in emphasis and detail which has led to disagreement among the

Iroquois as to the specific content of the Kaianerenkowa as a law, particularly in the effort to make it a set of guiding rules for government in the contemporary era. There remains one individual, Cayuga elder, Jacob Thomas, capable of reciting the oral version from memory (Alfred 1995: 197).

### 3.6 Conclusion

The amalgamation of Segmentary Factional-Political Systems and the works of Dickson-Gilmour, Siegel and Beals will help highlight the role (if any) of the Kaianerenkowa in factional politics in Akwesasne. Through an historical perspective we see that the protocols and philosophies established within the Great Law of Peace have been noted by the earliest European explorers. We also described how Anthropologists and Historians have contributed to the modern perception of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Kaianerenkowa, as both instruments of war and an vehicles of peace. The Haudenosaunee spatial proximity to both Euro-Canadian and American governments also contributed to varying degrees of impacts within the Confederacy and to the Kaianerenkowa (i.e the concept of a leader). Some of these changes continue to reverberate in the modern Confederacy and throughout the contemporary interpretations of the Great Law of Peace.

Alterations and mutations have altered the Kaianerenkowa from a socio-cultural teaching of "the clear minded" into a political ideology. Examples of the the Kaianerenkowa's mutations are illustrated in Figure 6 "The Transformation of The Kaianerenkowa" p.174 in the Appendix. The diagram corresponds to the information provided in sections 2.6-2.8 of Chapter Two, and it illustrates how the Kaianerenkowa was transformed from an oral tradition into a written code known as the "Iroquois Constitution" known only by a handfull of orators and authors. The second mutation occured with the creation of the *Kaiwiio* in the early nineteenth century, and the role (if any) of the *Kaiwiio* within the contemporary interpretations of the Great Law of Peace.

Both the "constitution" and the *Kaiwiio* have been used to validate or refute various sanctives and mutually contradictory political ideologies. We will explore these contradictions in the next section through an examination of five social movements in Akwesasne's modern history.



## **4. FIVE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN AKWESASNE**

The next chapter is an analysis of five social movements in Akwesasne from a Segmentary-Factional-Political Systems Theory analysis. Historically, the Haudenosaunee have never wavered from their assertion of sovereignty and nationhood. Numerous peace treaties with the Dutch, French, English, and American nations testify to the Haudenosaunee's conviction that they have *Kashwentha* (nationhood) and *Tewatotahie* (sovereignty). Contemporary expressions of Haudenosaunee sovereignty are found in the rejection of the U.S. Congress "Indian Reorganization Act" of 1934, as well as resisting the Federal Liberal Government's proposed White Paper of 1968.

The post-World War II era was a time of enormous social and environmental changes in North America. Rivers became hydroelectric dams and canals, and several of these types of infrastructures encroached upon the Mohawk territory of Akwesasne. The most notable of these projects was the St. Lawrence Seaway project. The first social movement that will be examined in this chapter is the organized resistance to the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway. The next four social movements, which follow the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway will be presented in a chronological order.

### **4.1 THE ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY AND THE COMMUNITY OF AKWESASNE**

In 1959, the St. Lawrence Seaway became the world's largest inland navigable waterway, providing access to the centre of the continent, 3,750 km away from the Atlantic Ocean. Extending 1,500 km, and traversing two provinces, the St. Lawrence River became a key route for the transportation of cargo<sup>18</sup> (The State of Canada's Environment 1991: 19-4). The Mohawk Nation was largely ignored during the conception and implementation of this mega-project. In 1949, a contingent from Akwesasne, concerned with the possible destruction

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<sup>18</sup> Between 1959 and 1989, more than 1.2 billion tones of cargo were transported (The State of Canada's Environment 1991: 19-4).

of marshes and shoreline habitats, presented their concerns to the St. Lawrence Seaway Review Committee. After listening to the arguments brought forth, the panel, consisting of Americans and Canadians elected to proceed with the project (Lickers 1994). Ten years later, after the failure of several court injunctions by the Mohawks to halt the project, the St. Lawrence Seaway was completed.

Many of the Seaway's infrastructures were erected near or on the Mohawk territory of Akwesasne. In 1954, the Power Authority of the State of New York absorbed the Mohawk-owned Barnhart Island (upriver from the community) and built the Moses-Saunders Power House and the Long Sault spillway Dam (Goodman-Draper 1994: 53). In 1956, the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority (the Canadian agency) expropriated 130 acres on Cornwall Island and constructed the Cornwall-Massena International Bridge. The Mohawks of Akwesasne responded by taking legal action. After a lengthy court battle lasting nearly four years, the Authority reluctantly agreed to pay \$45,000 for three years back-rent (Smith 1993: 147-48).

For Akwesasne the Seaway 1) brought about large environmental changes; 2) transformed both traditional and local subsistence activities by stimulating new economic ventures in what had been a rural area; 3) generated political factionalization within the community; 4) and lastly, it revived socio-political Mohawk traditions such as the Great Law of Peace. These phenomenon are reviewed in the following paragraphs.

The hydro-electric dams transformed much of the landscape upriver from Akwesasne: entire islands that had belonged to the Mohawks disappeared; marshes, once productive hunting and trapping grounds, were flooded. Whirlpools and nearby rapids were drastically altered. According to local sources, much of the dredged St. Lawrence river bed was dumped on Cornwall Island (B. David: 1995). During the course of construction, the Seaway's engineers found it necessary to straighten out the channel of the river. In order to accomplish this feat, four families had to be displaced, and a portion of Raquette Point was dynamited and bulldozed (Wilson 1959: 91).

Seeking retribution for these consequences, the Mohawks of Akwesasne became quite active in the legal and judicial arenas. The first case involved the 1954 expropriation of Barnhart island by New York State. In 1959, the State of New York was fined a damage allocation of \$5,960,000 (Wilson 1959: 100). To this date, no document records that the distribution of money ever took place exist (Wilson 1959: 100). Frustrated with the standstill and allegations of the corruption of American officials, the Mohawks of Akwesasne brought their case to the U.S. Supreme Court. On January 1959, the petition was denied by the U.S. Supreme Court (Wilson 1959: 100).

The compensation package for the Raquette Point displacement totalled \$100,000, half of which was allocated to the removal and relocation of the displaced Mohawk families while the remaining amount was to be equitably divided among the people of the community. According to Wilson "only \$62,000 of the total has been forwarded to the Mohawk negotiators [elected chiefs from the band councils]" (Wilson 1959: 99).

The new economic opportunities provided by the construction phase allowed many Mohawks to become highly skilled machinists and workers in the "high steel" industry. These economic incentives separated the Mohawks benefiting from the employment opportunities from those opposing the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway. Ironically, several years later, many of the high steel workers employed during the construction phased of the St. Lawrence Seaway would become active members of the Warriors' Society, resisting further American and Canadian encroachment on Mohawk lands (Wilson 1959: 91).

The two bridges that had been constructed because of the St. Lawrence Seaway, improved local transportation routes, but also contributed to disputes over the concept of Mohawk rights and Mohawk sovereignty. Although the United States respected the freedom of free passage over the international border, Canadian authorities refused to recognized this right. In 1956, Louis Francis, an Akwesasronon decided to challenge the Canadian customs and tariff law by transporting and failing to declare a used washing machine over the Canadian border. He was charged with being in violation of Canadian law. Francis contested the

imposition of duties under article III of the Jay Treaty and took the matter up to the Supreme Court. In the 1957 case, *Francis vs. the Queen*, the Canadian courts ruled that the Jay Treaty had been abrogated by the War of 1812 (Akwasasne Notes 1995: 63). The court records read:

The Indian Rights under the Jay Treaty was never implemented or sanctioned by legislation and that the Indian Act of Canada was not applicable and could not... provide immunity from the Customs Acts of Tariff Act of Canada. The Court also implied that the Jay Treaty, despite the Treaty of Guent of 1814, had been abrogated by the War of 1812 (Hauptman 1986: 147).

Many Kanienkehaka interpreted this decision as Canada's refusal to acknowledge its responsibilities recorded in treaties between Britain and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. A new action strategy was required, one that would assert Mohawk sovereignty and revitalize ancient socio-political systems such as the Great Law of Peace. On August 1957, 200 Mohawks led by *royane* Francis Jonhson (Standing Arrow), of Akwasasne, repossessed the site of an ancient Mohawk village near Fort Hunter, N.Y., and transformed a nearby old barn into a Longhouse. The following winter (March 1958), the New York State Troopers responded by evicting the protesters. This event which became known as the Standing Arrow movement, was in stark contrast with the cooperative strategy of the band council: it was an open protest of the injustices of the Seaway's expropriation. Standing Arrow's leadership, although short-lived, offered new strategies for Mohawk survival. It illustrated the need for stronger militancy and renewed affirmations of Mohawk treaty rights and land claims. This could only be accomplished through a return to traditional values such as those espoused in the Kaianerenkowa (Hauptman 1986: 150). Moreover, during the Standing Arrow event, the Mohawks were able to express their grievances and concerns to the general public through the media. A new medium had been found that could legitimize Amerindian concerns (Hauptman 1986: 150).

Standing Arrow's actions were important on a number of levels: 1) it addressed the problems associated with the Indian Act in Canada and Treaties in the United States at a time when political correctness and Amerindians were not an important part of public awareness

(Interviewee C: 1995); 2) it "revitalized" the Great Law of Peace as a legitimate Mohawk ideology, by reaffirming the Kanienkehaka's right to *Kashwentha* and *Tewatotahie*; 3) the event also increased cultural pride, a consequence that would encourage future leaders such as Tommy Porter, Mike Mitchell and Francis Boots to assert their Mohawk sovereignty in a fashion akin to that of Standing Arrow.

The Standing Arrow movement was not without its downside. The rapid mobilization needed to accomplish this act was undertaken without the unanimous consensus of the Longhouse. Many proponents of the Longhouse who had remained in Akwesasne interpreted Standing Arrow's actions as disruptive and aggressive (Interviewee F: 1995). In fact, the event was so controversial that much of the required support by the Kanienkehaka nation and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy was simply not present (Interviewee H: 1995). By the time the activists from Schoharie Creek had returned home in 1958, division within the Longhouse was evident. The participants were informed that their departure from the community had also involved their leaving *Tehonatenent-shawâ:kon* "the circle of the Longhouse", an act that was interpreted as being a transgressions against the Great Law of Peace. In other words, their actions had resulted in a "self-impeachment" of their authority. Consequently, any title that had been held by Standing Arrow or his followers, including several clan mothers, had been left in Akwesasne (Interviewee H: 1995). Although most of the clan mothers were able to regain their authority, Standing Arrow was subsequently dehorned for his participation in the event (Interviewee C: 1995).

During the winter of 1968, bordercrossing issues arose again in Akwesasne, when Canadian Customs officials began to clamp down on Mohawks transporting groceries and other goods from the U.S. into Canada. Longhouse supporters inspired by Standing Arrow responded by blockading the U.S-Canada-Transnational Bridge, located near the Canadian Customs and Immigration office on Cornwall Island (Mohawk Territory). Spearheaded by the Longhouse, the event was a cooperative effort between Christian Mohawks, Band Council supporters, and Longhouse proponents. "The Band Councils themselves the St. Regis

Mohawk Tribe or the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne did not openly support or oppose the event" (Interviewee F: 1995).

From one perspective, the event was momentous, as it united the community in a common cause:

The International Bridge was good for the community and everyone involved, for it initiated traditionalism, encouraged the St. Regis [Mohawk Tribe] and the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne to cooperate... it was all very healthy for the community (Interviewee D: 1995).

The protesters composed mostly of women, children and such Longhouse supporters as Mike Mitchell and Tommy Porter, expressed their concerns over the Canadian government's refusal to recognize the Jay Treaty of 1794 and the Treaty of Guent (1812) (Alfred 1995: 63). As illustrated earlier in *Francis vs the Queen*, Canada forced Mohawks and all Amerindians to pay tolls and customs duties (Hauptman 1986: 147). The Cornwall police and Mohawk police responded by arresting a total of 47 protesters, including Sarah Sherry and Tommy Porter. All charges were eventually dropped, as the Canadian government was unwilling to address the issues underlying the struggle (Interviewee F: 1995).

Differing somewhat from this perspective is the belief that the Longhouse Supporters, Christian Mohawks, and the Band Councils supporters were coerced into participating in this event (Interviewee H: 1995). The victories accomplished through the protest, providing Akwesasronons with free bridge access, and some minor compensation package, were battles that had been fought and paid for by the Longhouse (Interviewee H: 1995). This claim is substantiated by stating that it was the Mohawk police, controlled by the Band Councils, who assisted in the arrest of the protesters (Interviewee H: 1995). Yet, it was the Band Councils that benefited from the activities of the Longhouse: "The compensation package is what the St. Regis Tribal Council had been especially eager to achieve from the beginning... Meanwhile the reality is that Canada still refuses to recognize the Jay Treaty" (Interviewee H: 1995).

Throughout these events (Standing Arrow, the 1968 Bridge Protest), although the tension often rose to unbearable limits, the demonstrations remained peaceful (Interviewee F:

1995). This indicates that "both the Great Law of Peace and Kanienkehaka values were very much relevant to contemporary challenges" (Interviewee F: 1995). The significance of the revitalization of Haudenosaunee and Kanienkehaka beliefs was to resonate throughout the community. In 1968, Ernie Benedict and Jerry Gambil established the North American Indian Travelling College, the White Roots of Peace Society and Akwesasne Notes, three institutions founded upon the validation of Haudenosaunee and *Honkwéhonwé* customs and beliefs (Interviewee D: 1995).

The completion of the St. Lawrence Seaway, the international bridge, locks, and two power-dams led to a general increase of industrial activity within this formerly rural area:

Concentrated in Akwesasne's immediate north and west is heavy industry, drawn to this otherwise rural region by the lure of cheap hydroelectric power and access to international shipping on the St. Lawrence Seaway. Operating here are aluminum smelters (ALCOA, Reynolds Metals), a foundry (General Motors), chemical manufacturers (Canadian Industries Limited CIL, Cornwall Chemicals, Courtaulds and British Cellophane Limited BCL) and a paper mill (Domtar Fine Papers) (Greenpeace 1988: 32).

The environmental impacts of these industries were numerous. The following section will examine both direct and indirect repercussions of industrialization in Akwesasne's environment.

#### **4.1.1 The Socio-Ecological Impacts Of The St. Lawrence Seaway In Akwesasne**

This segment of the paper will be dealing with the socio-ecological impacts brought on by unrestrained industrial activity resulting in the pollution of Akwesasne's environment. The socio-ecological transformations can also be used to trace socio-political and economical transformations in the community.

The St. Lawrence Seaway caused a myriad of impacts in Akwesasne, altering the formerly swift flowing waters of the St. Lawrence river into a series of lakes and reservoirs. In Akwesasne, all three renewable resources of land, water and fish, which were the foundations of traditional Mohawk activities, were transformed as a result of the industrial activity and

resulting air emissions and effluent in the area. The activities in Akwesasne, which at one time supported farming, bee farming, small horse and cattle ranches, and dairy herds, was by 1973 nearly eliminated (Lickers: 1995c). Fishing, another important means of subsistence in the community, was devastated, due to altered habitats and spawning grounds. Fish became contaminated by PCBs, myrex, mercury and other heavy metals present in the water. By the late seventies, the Mohawk and non-Native governments had issued restrictions on consumption of fish in the St. Lawrence. As a consequence, "where there used to be about 20 Mohawk commercial fishermen, now there are only three" (Greenpeace 1988: 24-28).

By the middle of the 18th century most of Akwesasne's forest had been cut-down, but it wasn't until the late 20th century that the Snye marshes and wetland areas of the community, that were used for hunting and trapping, were adversely affected by water and air contamination. "[T]he marshes that had sustained a trapping industry of about 22,000 to 30,000 muskrat pelts a year, along with some beaver and marten, had completely decayed" (Lickers 1995: 94).

The changes brought about in traditional subsistence activities contributed to a lack of independence and communal sustainability. According to Lickers (1994), by 1985, the pollution and the habitat changes that began with the Seaway construction were causing a breakdown in the traditional structure of the Mohawk community, with little or no time for eco-social adaption. "The Seaway is a huge socio-ecological trauma for the Mohawk Nation and its way of life" (Lickers 1994: 94). Materialism, greediness, declining spiritualism were all indicators of a society on the brink of chaos, intensifying socio-political factionalization and competition. Violent manifestations such as arson and armed confrontations became all too common in Akwesasne. Changes in consumption patterns (high carbohydrate diet) resulted in increasing cases of diabetes, obesity, hypertension and heart disease in the community. Social ailments such as chemical abuse (drugs and alcohol) and family violence illustrated a community's inability to adapt to the sudden and dramatic changes that were augmented by the construction



of the St. Lawrence Seaway. These transformations occurred at such a rapid rate and on such a large scale that the communal cohesiveness of Akwesasne was irreparably altered.

The construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway is interpreted by many as the catalyst projecting the Mohawk Nation into the international spotlight and revitalizing the Great Law of Peace in Akwesasne (Hauptman 1986: 135). Demonstrations and political protests became the hallmark of Akwesasne (Alfred 1995: 65). These protests were organized according to two different perspectives. The Band Council approach attempted to work within the structures of the Western judicial and political systems; while the Longhouse approach, embraced tactics of organized demonstration, challenging North American socio-political structures. Since neither Canada nor the U.S. had proven able to respect or enforce their own treaties, the revival of the Kaianerenkowa, a "traditional" Haudenosaunee socio-political structure, was perceived by many as the key to social and cultural survival for the Mohawk nation.

The next section will be an application of Segmentary-Factional Political Systems analysis to the social movements opposing the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

#### **4.1.2 Segmentary Factional-Political System's Analysis Of The Mohawk's Opposition To The Construction Of The St. Lawrence Seaway**

The St. Lawrence Seaway crystallized the Mohawk struggle for power and survival within the political arena of Akwesasne into two socio-political units. During the decade that it took to complete the Seaway, traditional Mohawk institutions such as the Great Law of Peace began to gain prominence.

Both the proponents of the Great Law of Peace and the Band Council supporters were engaged in political actions during the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway, whether it was in compliance with or in resistance to the project. Due to this struggle for power and resources political organizations stimulated social stability and paradoxically also contributed to instability and socio-political conflicts in Akwesasne, since each segment professed their own

interpretation of what local governance, autonomy and sovereignty was to signify for the Mohawk people.

Let us turn our attention to Nicholas's five factors of Segmentary-Factional-Political-Systems in order to analyze the opposition to the St. Lawrence Seaway as a significant social movement Akwesasne's post World War II history.

**a) Factions Are Conflict Groups:** The construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway transformed the historical pervasive factionalism (unorganized and transient political segments), apparent throughout Akwesasne's and the Confederacy's histories, into schismatic factionalism (socio-political conflict occurred between two well organized and competing groups). The conflicting groups, the Band Council supporters and the Longhouse proponents, became entrenched in Akwesasne, since relocation was an improbable strategy. Both segments founded their authority upon historical, traditional, and bureaucratic structures. For the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, the legitimizing structure was the Indian Act; for the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe it was legislation instituted by the State of New York and the U.S. Congress. For the Longhouse, it was the Great Law of Peace and treaties signed between nations (e.g. the USA and the British Crown).

Each socio-political segment attempted to mobilize resources, by approaching their political agendas from two different perspectives. The Band Councils and their supporters approached the Seaway from a conciliatory fashion. Since all efforts to cease the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway had failed, a new approach had to be taken. The new approach sought restitution for the damages done to the community. The Band Councils' approach was to consent to the legitimacy of the Seaway's agencies and their expropriation of Mohawk lands, with the help of the judicial system. The Band Councils were also convinced that the St. Lawrence Seaway could have some positive economic benefits for the community (Wilson 1959: 100).

The Longhouse proponents interpreted this position as passive and compromising Mohawk sovereignty. From their viewpoint, what was needed was a stronger assertion of a Mohawk identity. This "new" assertive identity could challenge the legitimacy of these projects and their supporters. It also was crucial for illustrating the federal agencies' inability, or unwillingness to defend Amerindian rights, and their unwillingness to recognize historical treaties such as the Jay Treaty (1794), and the Treaty of *Ganandaigua* (1794). According to Hauptman (1986) the implementation of the St. Lawrence Seaway had demonstrated a callousness and indifference by Euro-American-Canadian officials towards Kanienkehaka concerns. What was needed were Mohawk institutions such as the Great Law of Peace to protect and defend Mohawk rights. The revitalization of "traditional" Mohawk institutions also inspired a younger generation of Mohawks to learn more about their history and their culture. Many of these young activists would become prominent leaders and actors in future social movements. To summarize, both the Band Councils' and the Longhouse's approaches were somewhat successful. But it would be the "militant" confrontational tactics espoused by Standing Arrow and his followers that would be regarded as more effective, especially by the younger segment of the Longhouse in Akwesasne. It should be noted that the two groups were not diametrically opposed in open, hostile conflict, for the Seaway also unified the community. Facing a common external menace, so overwhelming, and devastating, the Mohawk community of Akwesasne elected to put aside its internal disputes and unified against a common external threat. An example of this was the communal coalition that occurred during the 1968 International Bridge Protest, where Longhouse supporters, Christian Mohawks and Band Council proponents, united to gain guaranteed free access to the bridges (they no longer had to pay toll fees).

**b) Factions Are Political Groups:** Social conflicts during the construction of the Seaway encompassed a broad range of social phenomena from individual confrontations, and national demonstrations, to land reclamation by Standing Arrow and his followers (Oberschall 1993: 39-

40). "If we regard politics as "organized" conflict over the use of public power, then it is factions which organize this conflict in certain kinds of societies and institutions" (Nicholas 1968: 28). One of the most constant factors in Akwesasne appears to be the struggle for political power, by both proponents and opponents of the Band Councils.

Both Band Council supporters and Longhouse proponents contested the use of political power by the other. The goals of the Longhouse was to preserve the natural and socio-cultural environments present in Akwesasne. The Band Councils, seeing the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway as inevitable, were determined to strengthen their power and legitimacy in the community by seeking compensation for the environmental damages. The differences in approaches were apparent: while the Band Councils demonstrated resignation in face of the projects, the Longhouse supporters on the other hand interpreted the construction of the Seaway as a breach of contract(s), illustrating the point that Euro-Americans-Canadians were not interested in preserving Amerindians rights. Longhouse supporters believed that because the Band Council's authority was derived from non-Mohawk institutions, they were tainted by Euro-centric beliefs. Thus, it was up to the Kanienkehaka to stand and defend their rights. The debate had now entered a new political realm where each faction questioned the legitimacy and validity of the other. For example, during the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway, the Band Councils, facing growing resentment and criticism from the Longhouse, often accused the latter of being "nostalgic traditionalists" with little contemporary relevance. The Longhouse replied that the Band Councils, through their passive stance, were accepting the assimilative policies of both governments.

**c) Factions Are Not Corporate Groups:** According to Nicholas, "factions are not corporate... they are basically impermanent" (Nicholas 1968: 28). However, throughout this paper we have alluded to the role and permanency of factions in both Haudenosaunee and Kanienkehaka societies. In fact, Alfred (1995), L. Benedict (1995b), and Lickers (1995b) believe that it was this ability to fragment without severing all ties that provided the Confederacy with the capacity

to survive enormous social and ecological changes. The capacity is often referred to as the "Philosophy Of The Corn". However, an attempt to implement the "Philosophy Of The Corn" by Standing Arrow and his followers failed. The failed attempt at relocation outside of Akwesasne's boundaries indicated that conflicts had become physically confined to the socio-political arena of Akwesasne. The Band Council supporters advocated the liberal philosophies of individual choice and economic prosperity espoused by American and Canadian governments and their legislation (1802 (US); 1899 (Canada); while the proponents of the Longhouse resisted the further deterioration of the collectivity and promoting a return to past Mohawk values, with the help of an ideology several centuries old. These political strategies espoused by both political groups during the Seaway indicate's some form of factional permanence in Akwesasne's socio-political arena.

**d) Faction Members Are Recruited By A Leader:** The importance of historical treaties and socio-cultural institutions would indicate that "causes" must effectively extend beyond the leader's personal aims. This is not to say that a leader's emotion, charisma, or goals play no role in faction recruitment it means that if factions are political and corporate groups, then faction recruitment in Akwesasne must extend beyond the leader's personal abilities, and "causes". A number of factors led to the Standing Arrow movement, including: the transformations of the economic-subsistence patterns in Akwesasne; the failed court attempted by Louis Francis in 1956; the environmental transformations in the community; and the socio-historical acculturation of the Mohawks. All of these factors contributed to a social environment primed for a movement such as Standing Arrow. Standing Arrow's "charismatic" attributes ("a great orator, a man of action" (Interviewee H: 1995), combined with Akwesasne's social context inspired others to support the *royane's* efforts, and his and consequently their assertions of *tewatatowie* (sovereignty). However, the communal and consensual aspect of Longhouse politics prevented the centralization of power in any one leader such as Standing Arrow. When a leader failed in his/her responsibility and accountability to the Longhouse, his/her actions

could be interpreted as a fundamental transgression against the Kaianerenkowa, the clan mothers, deputy-chiefs, the clans and the nation. As a consequence a *royane* could be "dehorned". This act occurred when Standing Arrow was impeached for his participation in the Schoharie Creek reclamation. "An act that never received the full support of the Longhouse" (Interviewee C: 1995).

Throughout the three main events of the opposition to the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway (Louis Francis and the Canadian Customs (1956); Standing Arrow and his followers (1957), and the International Bridge Protest in (1968), factions and political activities were not limited to the activities of men since they were joined by all segments of the population including women, elders, and children. This communal participation reflects the Mohawk belief in sovereignty and responsibility. The clan system allows each Kanienkehaka (no matter the age or gender) to assert her/his responsibility as a sovereign individual within the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

**e) Faction Members Are Recruited On Diverse Principles:** In Akwesasne, recruitment strategies may include kinship, religious affiliation, political or economic relations, nationality, a collective history, a common ethnicity, cultural ties to the environment, or a revitalization of the Mohawk identity, and lastly, the threat of a foreign power within internal Mohawk affairs. Nicholas argues that social factors are mobilized and made effective through the authority structure of the leader whose roles are broadly defined and whose rewards in many cases are at the leader's discretion (Nicholas 1968: 47). What became apparent during the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway was traditional beliefs such as the Kaianerenkowa was becoming a prominent and important tool for socio-political mobilization.

#### **4.1.3 The Great Law of Peace And The Construction Of The St. Lawrence Seaway**

The construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway profoundly altered the community of Akwesasne, socially, ecologically and economically. Ecological and physical transformations of the river, transformed the local, sustainable industries of farming and fishing into a dependence upon external economic stimulus (high steel construction and transfer payments). But the transformations were also indirectly associated with reviving such Mohawk institutions as the Great Law of Peace. The Kaianerenkowa although obscured in the beginning of the Seaway's construction, was clearly prominent by 1956 and 1957. It does not appear that the Great Law of Peace had a divisive impact in the community. In fact, the 1968 alliance of both Band Council members and Longhouse proponents would indicate that the Great Law of Peace may have played a role in uniting the community. Although differences in interpretations arose in the Longhouse (Standing Arrow) concerning the Great Law of Peace, the Kaianerenkowa was still a misunderstood ideology that was largely ignored by the general population of Akwesasne. In the next event we will examine shifts in alliances in the Longhouse, and the growth in prominence of the Great Law of Peace during the social movement known as Kanienkeh.

#### **4.2 KANIENKEH**

The events surrounding the establishment of the Mohawk community of Kanienkeh in 1974 transpired after the creation of the Mohawk Singing Society in Kahnawake, the 1972 Longhouse - Band Council confrontation in Kahnawake (pitting the proponents of the Longhouse against the Band Council supporters), and the 1974 Loon and Stanley Island (located in the St. Lawrence River near Akwesasne) reclamation. These events had a two-fold effect within the Mohawk Nation. It revived traditional activism, and identified the Warrior Society as the defender of the Longhouse (Landsman 1988: 26). These events also illustrated the rising tensions between Longhouse supporters and Band Council proponents, in both Akwesasne and Kahnawake. The socio-economic realities (high unemployment, substance abuse and violence) present in Haudenosaunee communities only compounded these social

dissensions. The Longhouse supporters believed that the only solution to these dilemmas was a open assertion of Haudenosaunee socio-cultural beliefs. One possibility included "The Philosophy Of The Corn". This group believed that change could be brought about through a relocation and a re-assertion of Haudenosaunee sovereignty in their former concentric hunting zones. This relocation would emphasize *tewatatotahie*, and highlight New York state's lack of responsibility (Interviewee G: 1995). According to the Everett Report (1918) the Mohawks still own the right to over 8 million acres of land in the State of New York. The Kanienkehaka maintain that most of these parcels of land had been lost through illegal expropriations, fraudulent land deals and misrepresentation by the state of New York (David R: 1995).

Late on the night of May 13, 1974, about 80 supporters of the Longhouses from Kahnawake, Akwesasne and Tyendinaga arrived at an abandoned girl's camp near Moss Lake (located within the Adirondack State Park). These people had the full support of the Confederacy which advocated the take-over of this particular site for two reasons 1) it was located within the traditional territory of the Mohawk nation, 2) it remained public land (Landsman 1991: 38-49). The morning following their arrival, the Mohawks distributed copies of the "Kanienkeh Manifesto" to the public, stating that they were reestablishing the Independent North American Indian State of Kanienkeh (land where the flint is found) on their ancient homeland. This new Mohawk settlement would be founded upon the concepts of sovereignty, power and Mohawk nationhood as stated in the Great Law of Peace. Kanienkeh was also to become the first Haudenosaunee settlement to be a self-sufficient cooperative farming community (Landsman 1991: 38-49).

The Mohawks then proceeded to establish the new community with the help of a strong militant stand, supported by a political interpretation of the Kaianerenkowa. In Kanienkeh, the Great Law of Peace is a type of political revolutionary manifesto. A constitution supporting the creation of a Mohawk state. "This legislative formulation of Mohawk sovereignty represents an abandonment of the uniquely indigenous conceptual framework to the embrace of a European perspective" (Alfred 1995: 85). Out of the three concepts of peace, power and righteousness



espoused by the Great Law of Peace, power is preminent. *Kashatensera* (power/strength) is necessary to enforce the peace and to protect the righteousness of the law. "Power means authority, the authority of law and customs, backed by such force as is necessary to make justice prevail" (Alfred 1995: 85). The *Kaiwiio* plays no role in the Kaianerenkowa or Mohawk socio-cultural beliefs since it was considered to be a reflection of Christian/Quaker beliefs intermingled with Haudenosaunee cultural beliefs. Within this perspective there is a clear acceptance of violence and warfare as legitimate methods to protect peace and social harmony within the Confederacy (York and Pindera 1991: 256-257).

Local reactions concerning the inception of this new Mohawk community were displayed in a number of ways, from support of the event, to passive resentment to open hostility. Tensions between Kanienkehaka and Americans erupted on October 28, 1974 (Interviewee E: 1995). The accounts on what took place that evening vary, but two non-Amerindians were injured by gunfire. The first, a 20 year old man was hit in the shoulder, during a drive-by shooting when residents of Kanienkeh returned fire. The second victim, a nine year old girl, was wounded when her father participated in another drive by-shooting (Interviewee E: 1995). In both cases, the victims were wounded from a defensive response by Kanienkeh residents. Their claim was that they were reacting in response to several weeks of harassment by the local town people who had fired several shots at the Mohawk camp, nearly wounding women and children (Interviewee E: 1995). The state troopers had offered to investigate and prosecute the offenders but the Kanienkehaka had refused to testify (Landsman 1988: 29). The police reacted to the gunfight by barricading and establishing check points along all the roads leading to and from Kanienkeh. Tensions continued to mount as the Mohawks asserted their sovereignty and resisted a police investigation on their territory (Landsman 1988: 29). Following this impasse the residents of Kanienkeh were given an ultimatum, "evacuate all the women and children from the settlement" (Landsman 1988: 29). The Mohawk residents in a demonstration of militant unity elected to stay put. This defiance was supported and assisted

by other Mohawk and *Honkwehonwe* individuals from nearby communities (Trudel and Chartrand 1991: 119).

On May 1977, after a long and tense stand-off, the Governor of New York and Mohawk representatives agreed to a land settlement. The state obtained a guaranteed that the Mohawks would leave the site of Moss Lake, in return for land in Clinton County. The land in question was Miner Lake, a 698 acre site located near the town of Altona in the north-eastern portion of the state, about 13 km from the Canadian border. The five year "Turtle Island Trust" (under a revokable permit) gave the Kanienkehaka the exclusive use of five thousand acres in the Macomb Reforestation Area, for the purposes of hunting, fishing, and lumbering. An additional 198 acres were set aside for the construction of houses and farms (Landsman 1988: 32).

The site of Kanienkeh or the Turtle Island Trust was established in a manner that surmounted the barriers faced by both negotiating parties. Throughout the negotiations the State of New York could not cede any land to the Mohawks. The Mohawks could not accept any land, since to do so would compromise future treaties with the state and the Federal Governments. The solution of a land trust leased to a neutral third party (partisans of the Mohawks) was approved by all three parties (Landsman 1988: 32). According to a Kanienkeh spokesperson:

This solution provided us with the ability to maintain our sovereignty, while never comprising our land claims. We enabled ourselves not to jeopardize pragmatic decisions within the Great Law of Peace (Interviewee E: 1995).

The Miner Lake site was also named Kanienkeh and continued to be a place for the strong assertion of Mohawk nationalism. Late in the summer of 1977, the Mohawks erected a barricade restricting any access to Miner Lake (a popular recreation area). After reaching a judicial impasse, the State opted for the best alternative, to close down the road indefinitely (Trudel & Chartrand 1991: 119).

Relations between the Americans and Kanienkehakas at Altona were also coloured by events at Akwesasne. In the summer of 1980, tensions escalated in both Akwesasne and Kanienkeh as a police assault seemed inevitable at Raquette-Point. *Kakwirakeron*, a leading spokesperson for the settlers at Kanienkeh, was placed under seal indictment for issuing the following press release, "Should state troopers attack their traditional brothers and sisters at Akwesasne, Kanienkeh would launch a counter-offensive at Altona to prevent state police from being able to deploy all their forces to Akwesasne" (Landsman 1988: 37). Fortunately, tensions were diffused by a peaceful resolution in Akwesasne, and Kanienkeh resumed its normal activities.

Ten years later, tensions in Akwesasne would once again reverberate in Kanienkeh. On March 29 1990, a military helicopter, flying over the community on an emergency medical mission, was hit by three rounds of AK-47 gunfire (York and Pindeera 1992: 188). One civilian doctor was wounded, and the helicopters' fuselage was damaged. The helicopter was subsequently forced to make an emergency landing near Kanienkeh. People at the settlement, apparently mistook the lone National Guard helicopter for the advance guard of a military invasion proceeding towards Akwesasne (Landsman 1988: 40). The Mohawks initially refused to allow state troopers onto the land to investigate the incident. Claiming that it was a fabrication justifying a police raid (Wright 1992: 188). New York State troopers surrounded the community, initiating a stare-down lasting several days. On April 10, 1990, the Kanienkeh standoff ended when the Mohawks permitted a limited search of the general area in and around Kanienkeh (Johansen 1993: 63). The police did search a few homes but no evidence was found, since many Mohawks had fled into the woods with their weapons (Hornung 1991: 149). Following the search, federal American authorities issued fourteen arrest warrants, all on the count of obstructing justice, by interfering with the execution of a search warrant (Hornung 1991: 149). No Mohawks were ever apprehended for these charges.

Nearly twenty years later, residents of Kanienkeh cultivate some crops (corn), raise seedlings in their barn, breed and sell rabbits, and operate a small sawmill (Landsman 1988:

39). Numerous socio-physical factors contribute to Kanienkeh's inability to become self-sufficient, including a fluctuating population - lowest during the wintertime; poor soil quality and a short growing season. Contributing to these challenges are internal social dissensions between the most prominent figures in the community. Today, most of the prominent actors present during the inception of the community no longer live in Kanienkeh. These actors include Mark Maracle, Kakwirakeron, and Paul and Alan Delesronde. In the late 1970s, two of the most prominent figures in Kanienkeh, Kakwirakeron and *Tekarontake* (Alan Delesronde) grew apart over political and personal matters (Homung 1991: 140). Kakwirakeron left the community to establish himself in Akwesasne. *Tekarontake* also withdrew from the community, and later joined the Warriors Society in Kahnawake (Homung 1991: 140). Nevertheless, the community is able to sustain some local enterprises including a small garage, a community school, a visitor centre, and a bingo hall (Vachon 1988: 39). The bingo hall is somewhat controversial since it has no support from the Confederacy or New York State. "Since the jurisdiction of New York State does not apply in Kanienkeh, the bingo hall is run as a part of our sovereign territory" (Interviewee E: 1995). Additional income is procured from external sources such as iron-working (Landsman 1988: 39).

Ties to the Confederacy, the Mohawk nation, and other Kanienkehaka communities are kept through kinship, clanship and nationhood, for the community is recognized as a Mohawk community within the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. The residents of Kanienkeh utilize a system of governance that is similar to the Great Law of Peace. There are clan mothers and even a *royane*, although the latter are somewhat controversial in the Confederacy (Interviewee E: 1995). The community receives no transfer payments from either the Federal American government or the State of New York. This is because of the widely held belief by many Longhouse proponents that transfer payments are used as a form of debit against future land claims. The following quote from a former Kanienkeh spokesperson summarizes the philosophy of the community, and warns of the possibility of other similar events:

We don't accept any government money, and we don't want any. We ask only to be left alone, to develop according to our own principles... We needed fighters to establish Kanienkeh, now we need builders teachers, farmers. That's where the challenge is today, and why we know if we can succeed and I believe we can - you may be seeing more Kanienkeh in the future (Arden 1987: 392).

#### **4.2.1 An Analysis Of The Kanienkeh Social Movement**

Kanienkeh was successful where the Standing Arrow movement was not. Numerous factors can be attributed to its success the most notable being the unanimous support by the Confederacy for the project. Other factors include a careful strategy and quick mobilization of resources; the support of the movement by local non-Amerindians individuals and groups and former New York state Governor Mario Cuomo; and last, a strong, aggressive stand by Kanienkeh residents, supported by a political interpretation of the Kaianerenkowa. The Mohawk relocation to Kanienkeh was also important on another level, it demonstrated that the "Philosophy Of The Corn" was still applicable in modern times. The close ties, and spillover between Akwesasne and Kanienkeh illustrated that events in the Mohawk Nation did not remain localized. This phenomenon will become evident as we examine the social movements of Raquette Point (1980) and the 1990 Civil Conflict. Furthermore, the ideologies generated out of Kanienkeh were not without ramification in Akwesasne. The emphasis placed upon the concept of power by the Kanienkeh residents demonstrates that Mohawks could successfully assert their sovereignty and jurisdiction through a political interpretation of the Great Law of Peace. The political version of the Great Law of Peace provided the Mohawks with a political ideology to challenge New York state's jurisdiction by asserting their own position as sovereign citizens of the Mohawk nation. This type of stance, had in the past, permitted the Confederacy to survive the European onslaught. Through Kanienkeh it proved quite capable of meeting contemporary challenges. These strengths were not without drawbacks, for these same factors that had contributed to the survival of the Haudenosaunee had also resulted in political divisions and leadership struggles in the Confederacy. These same socio-political manipulations would reappear once again in the twentieth century Mohawk nation. The justification of weapons and

violence as a means to resolve conflict "got the attention of young people here. For the level of violence soon rose afterward" (Interviewee B: 1995). Another observer believes that the growth of the Warriors' Society in Akwesasne was a result of Kanienkeh (Interviewee A: 1995).

Many Akwesasronons felt that Kanienkeh indicated a movement away from communal beliefs to narcissistic pursuits:

The project had good intentions, yet the motivation of certain individuals was questionable. Their intentions began to appear as they began to assert their own ideas. As soon as they began to do so, they forgot the participatory process espoused by the Great Law of Peace (Interviewee D: 1995).

Decisions in Kanienkeh were made by individuals, not the community, not the nation, not the Confederacy. "If Kanienkeh was a true participatory democracy then why did the most prominent leaders in the community leave?" (Interviewee D: 1995). Another participant adds: "Although the confederacy got mileage out of this successful endeavours by Mohawks.... They later withdrew their support for Kanienkeh on the basis of personal differences" (Interviewee H: 1995). Personality conflicts at both the local and confederate level would seem to indicate that there was a breakdown within the Longhouse of Akwesasne, and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy since traditional communal representation was no longer responsive to contemporary challenges.

Following the Standing Arrow movement, differences within the Longhouse in Akwesasne had remained submerged. However, interpretative differences of the Great Law of Peace would reemerge during and after the turbulent inception of Kanienkeh. Kanienkeh was a social conflict that erupted within the Mohawk nation but soon transcended its borders.

#### **4.2.2 A Segmentary Factional-Political System's Analysis Of Kanienkeh**

Although the social conflicts transcend provincial, state and national borders, this Segmentary Factional-Political Systems' analysis will focus mostly upon the impacts of Kanienkeh in the community of Akwesasne.

**a) Factions Are Conflict Groups:** The actions of certain actors in Kanienkeh and their confederate brethren provoked social dissension in the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. These divisions in ideologies became apparent as the Mohawks in Kanienkeh asserted their sovereignty and jurisdiction through a political interpretation of the Great Law of Peace, a version of the Kaianerenkowa justifying a militant, activist position. The Haudenosaunee Confederacy largely opposed this interpretation by embracing the spiritual-holistic interpretation of the Great Law of Peace, a version that emphasized the concept of peace and passive resistance. These contradictory ideals divided the Longhouse in Akwesasne into defenders and activists, both segments utilizing their interpretations of the Kaianerenkowa to support their agendas. These differences would eventually polarize the Longhouse into two different ideological segments.

Proponents of the spiritual/holistic version of the Great Law of Peace believe that Kanienkeh was the movement that transformed the Mohawk rational from an emphasis upon peace as a strength, to one of power as strength. In the past conflict was seen as a last resort, "now violent confrontation is seen as a means to achieve one's goals" (Interviewee G: 1995). Supporters of the political interpretation of the Kaianerenkowa argue that a defensive stand was necessary at Kanienkeh to protect and counter the armed New York State troopers.

It is very important to note that Kanienkeh was originally successful due to a united stand by the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Kanienkehaka Nation. All segments involved in this coalition benefited from the land reclamation, because it addressed the land claims issues on a larger scale than the Standing Arrow movement ever had. Although support from the Confederacy and part of the Longhouse in Akwesasne waned over time, both sides were able to address an issue that had laid dormant for some time. Furthermore, Kanienkeh was interpreted as a victory over New York State, something that neither the Confederacy nor the Kanienkehaka nation had been able to claim since the American Civil War.

**b) Factions Are Political Groups:** The Mohawks who participated in the social movements known as Kanienkeh created a faction that was somewhat exclusive for those Kanienkehaka present at both Moss Lake and Kanienkeh were Longhouse proponents. Therefore, the participants present at Kanienkeh were united under similar political, economical, cultural, moral, and spiritual aspects of Mohawk politics. The initial goal of the Kanienkeh supporters was to assert the Mohawk nation's sovereignty within its former concentric hunting zones that were now part of New York State. The aim was to illustrate to North Americans that the Confederacy still existed, beyond the artificial boundaries created by Canada and the United States. Secondly, it was an attempt to demonstrate New York State's transgression against treaties that had been signed between the US federal governments and the five sovereign nations of the Confederacy.

The inception of Kanienkeh was founded upon the Kanienkeh Manifesto. A manifesto that was interpreted as a political validation of the Mohawk nation. The manifesto was in turn supported by a political interpretation of the Kaianerenkowa, or what Newhouse and Parker refer to as the Iroquois Constitution. As the movement progressed another component was added, a struggle for political and socio-cultural legitimacy within the Longhouse of the Mohawk nation, a struggle once again illustrated by two competing interpretations of the Great Law of Peace (proponents of the spiritual/holistic of the Kaianerenkowa; and the supporters of the political interpretations of the Great Law of Peace).

**c) Factions Are Not Corporate Groups:** The social conflict that resulted in Kanienkeh was a result of prior conflicts in both Akwesasne and Kahnawake. But even the philosophy behind the relocation (Philosophy Of The Corn) illustrated an age old dichotomous phenomenon within the Confederacy - the survival of the Haudenosaunee at all cost, a philosophy, apparent during the 17th and 18th centuries, as adoption, warfare, and War-Chiefs gained status within the Confederacy. Kanienkeh also reawakened ancient power struggles principally within the Longhouse proponents (proponents of the spiritual/holistic version, versus supporters of the



political version of the Great Law of Peace) within the Haudenosaunee political arena. The propensity by both segments of the Longhouse to use concepts from the ancient Great Law of Peace (peace, power, sovereignty) would seem to indicate that factions and social dissension in the Mohawk nation had some form of permanency and specialization. In addition, the reservation system imposed by both the Canadian and American government, a system internalizing and localizing factions, made any attempt at carrying out the "Philosophy Of The Corn" nearly impossible. On the other hand, the relocation that did occur with Kanienkeh did not solve the differences within the Mohawk nation or the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, in fact it enhanced them.

**d) Faction Members Are Recruited By A Leader:** As stated earlier, the relocation to Kanienkeh had essentially come about through a consensual decision by the Confederacy and the Mohawk Nation. This consensus had been achieved through traditional networks, where all Longhouse supporters young or old participated in decision making processes. The movement itself was influenced by the Great Law of Peace, since the site in question lay within Mohawk territory. Due to this fact, it became the responsibility of the Mohawk nation to initiate the land reclamation.

The site of Moss Lake was chosen after careful planning, indicating strategizing and maximization by the leaders of the Confederacy and the participants of Kanienkeh. The heavy woods surrounding the property provided an ideal site for a small number of people to defend (Interviewee E: 1995). Many of the members selected for the event had some form of field training whether it was military combat or bush experience. These qualities were deemed necessary in order to withstand any potential attack on the compound. Yet, Kanienkeh was to be first and foremost a community, therefore, Mohawk women, children, and elders were brought in, in order to establish some semblance of a communal life.

The Great Law of Peace prohibited the leadership structure of the Longhouse to coerce any individuals, therefore, it was the individual himself/herself who made the final decision to

participate or not in Kanienkeh. Thus, many participated in the event as an expression of their Mohawk solidarity, while others saw their actions as an enactment of the "Philosophy Of The Corn".

Several key actors appear in Kanienkeh's short history, although the community has no specific designated or elected leader or chief, the names of such individuals actors as *Karonniaktajeh*, *Kakwirekeron*, *Tekarontake*, Paul Delasronde and Mark Maracle appear frequently. Often quoted and interpreted as community leaders, these actors were simply wampum bearers (communication experts) carrying the "wampum" or the message of the community. A wampum bearer is usually an individual gifted in oratory skills, his/her duty is to act as a spokesperson and effectively transmit the message of the community to both Mohawks and non-Mohawks alike. The same could be said for the 'War Chiefs' in Kanienkeh, these were simply individuals chosen for their special abilities in combat, instructed to defend the compound and its habitants. Their power was not to extend beyond this parameter, if it did, it was infringing upon the informal, uncentralized and communal aspects of Longhouse politics.

Nicholas's statement that "members can be connected to a faction only through the activity of a leader, since the unit has no corporate existence or clear single principle of recruitment" (Nicholas 1968: 28) is somewhat inapplicable in the case of Kanienkeh. For if we were to label Kakwirakeron and Tekarontake as the most notable spokesperson in Kanienkeh, then their departure would have led to a collapse or a total disorganization of the community. This is not the case, when Kakwirarkeon departed the community for philosophical reasons, and later Tekarontake departed to lead the Warriors' Society in Kahnawake, the community continued to exist. This could lead us to ask the question how? It would seem that Kanienkeh was able to preserve its structural communal integrity by underpinning its socio-political institutions on the Great Law of Peace and the community itself, not individual leaders. The concept of communal governance, stipulated in the Kaianerenkowa permits Kanienkeh's socio-political institutions to be specialized to local needs.

**e) Faction Members Are Recruited On Diverse Principles:** These participants also disillusioned with the current social dissension in their communities. A number of these participants attributed the dissensions in their community to the Indian Act, and the Band Council System. For these participants, a re-implementation of the Kaianerenkowa as an alternate governing and philosophical structure, provided them with the essential foundation to re-assert their sovereignty. These factors encouraged many participants to join the movement. Each Kanienkehaka chose to accept or decline their participation in the event. Due to the numerous unforeseen consequences such as possible incarceration, a speculative victory, withdrawal of leadership support, and the possibility of violence, the event was far from a "fait accompli". The leaders, therefore, played a minor role for recruiting and maintaining members in Kanienkeh. The intense commitment in many individuals, throughout the social movement, would seem to indicate that it was a Mohawk conviction in both individual and collective rights that help establish this new Mohawk community.

#### **4.2.3 The Revitalization Of The Great Law Of Peace**

The revitalization of the Great Law of Peace united the Confederacy and Longhouse supporters against a common opponent: New York State. However, past historical divisions that had resulted in a fragmentation of the Confederacy began to reappear in a contemporary context. For example, the main actors of this event began to question the legitimacy of the others through different interpretations of the Kaianerenkowa (one segment believed that its interpretations were more appropriate to contemporary challenges than the others).

If Kanienkeh was successful in revitalizing the Great Law of Peace and the "Philosophy Of The Corn" it paradoxically revived ancient social and political divisions in the Confederacy. These divisions were expressed through a fallout of the support for Kanienkeh by the Confederacy and the Kanienkehaka Council of Chiefs at Akwesasne. As stated earlier,

Kanienkeh was not without its influences in Akwesasne, for the success of the Kaianerenkawas' concept of power would reverberate in the next two events in Akwesasne.

#### **4.3 THE CONFRONTATION AT RAQUETTE POINT**

The confrontation at *Ahnawate Tsiitoniate*, also known as the Raquette Point Stand-Off, is a social movement that began in the spring of 1979 and ended in the summer of 1980. The event is distinguished by an open and hostile confrontation pitting Longhouse proponents against Band Council supporters. The conflict between these two contingents in Akwesasne echoed the on-going struggle that had begun in the early nineteenth century:

Throughout the nineteenth century, the State of New York made numerous efforts to establish a compliant government in the [American] portion of Akwesasne [....] The primary motivation of New York was to facilitate the annexation of additional Mohawk lands (National Lawyers Guild Committee on Native American Struggles (NLGCNAS) 1982: 157).

The State of New York enforced its jurisdiction in Akwesasne by three legislative measures. The first two legislations instituted in 1948 and 1950 by the U.S Congress, basically accorded the State of New York, criminal and civil jurisdiction over all the territory, including the territories of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Mohawk Nation (NLGCNAS 1982: 157). In addition, the 1948 "Franklin County Ruling" stated that the Mohawk Nation no longer existed, that these people were simply "St. Regis Mohawks" whose lands and persons were subject to state laws (Mattiesen 1988: 137). These non-Haudenosaunee measures were interpreted as violations of the right of the Kanienkehaka Nation to self-determination (NLGCNAS 1982: 157).

The Longhouse remained adamantly opposed to these legislations and to the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe on the grounds that, "the Mohawk people were never permitted to choose this form of government, it was imposed by New York law to supplant the existing traditional government of the nation" (NLGCNAS 1982: 159). For the Longhouse proponents the concepts of *Kashwentha* and *Tewatatohie* represent the right of self-determination, "they are an absolute prerequisite for the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms"(NLGCNAS

1982: 157). New York State sought to undermine this position by enforcing its jurisdiction through the threat of force, or through the more clandestine means of federal and state transfer payments (NLGCNAS 1982: 157). These events occurred following a long history of internal colonialism and paternalism by the State of New York and formed the backdrop for the confrontation at Raquette-Point (NLGCNAS 1982: 157).

A fencing project initiated by the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe was the catalyst that precipitated the confrontation at *Ahnawate Tsiitoniate*. The aim of the fencing project was to delineate Akwesasne's boundaries with the help of physical markers, thereby, exposing the "geo-national" (American, Canadian) differences in the community. The Longhouse was strongly opposed to the fencing project, presuming that any artificial boundary would further divide the Mohawk people and weakened their claim to their traditional territory outside the community. The St. Regis Mohawk Tribe not sharing this viewpoint, proceeded with the project.

On the morning of May 22 1979, Loran *Kanasaraken* Thompson, a *rarontaron* of the Longhouse, and his friend Joe Swamp found a work gang (hired by the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe) cutting a swath eighty feet long and two hundred feet wide near Loran's property on *Ahnawate Tsiitoniate*. Loran Thompson reacted by confiscating the chainsaws and storing them on his property (Interviewee H: 1995). The St. Regis Mohawk Tribe responded by calling for Thompson's arrest, justifying their actions by virtue of the 1948 and 1950 U.S Congress legislations. The Mohawk police (controlled by the SRMT) arrived at Thompson's house with a warrant for his arrest. A brief scuffle ensued between the arresting officer Harold Cook and Loran Thompson, as the latter being of the Longhouse did not recognize the authority of the Mohawk police force (Interviewee H: 1995). "These "police officers" were simply conservation officers who had over-extended their jurisdiction" (Interviewee H: 1995). *Kanasaraken* was consequently arrested and incarcerated at the Mohawk Police Headquarters (Interviewee H: 1995). On May 28, the Longhouse supporters responded to these events by holding an emergency meeting. During this assembly it was decided by the people of the Longhouse that the actions taken by the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe and the Mohawk Police violated the

sovereignty of the Haudenosaunee (Interviewee E: 1995). Following the protocols established by the Great Law of Peace, the Longhouse proponents attempted to resolve the problem through peaceful resolution. The Kanienkehaka Nation Council of Chiefs called upon Article VII of the Treaty of Canandaigua and sent the following request to the President of the United States.

[P]olice forces, representing the state of New York, invaded our territory and imprisoned a leader of our government [we] request the total removal of the New York State Police, the Franklin County Police, and any other law enforcement agencies from our territories... further complications can occur if New York State insists upon exercising jurisdiction in our territories (NLGCNAS 1982: 156).

Despite the continuing willingness of the Haudenosaunee to peacefully resolve this dispute through negotiations consistent with the provisions of the Treaties and the Great Law of Peace, the U.S. federal government failed to respond to their demands, unwilling to get involved in matters it deemed up to the state (NLGCNAS 1982: 156). New York State, who until this event had simply supported the actions of the St. Regis Tribal Police, responded by "formally charging twenty-three citizens of the Mohawk Nation including four of the traditional chiefs with serious crimes" (NLGCNAS 1982: 156). New York State's assertion of jurisdiction was "applied in such a manner as to prevent the Mohawk nation from exercising other aspects of its right of self-government" (NLGCNAS 1982: 158). These actions were interpreted by the Longhouse as fundamental transgressions against the *Gushwentha* (1643), the Treaty of Fort Stanwix (1784), and the Treaty of Ganandaigua (1794) (NLGCNAS 1982: 156).

New York State's jurisdictional imposition forced the Longhouse to take matters into its own hands. In accordance with the Great Law of Peace, the Longhouse proponents requested (three times) that the SRMT disband and release Kanasaraken (Interviewee E: 1995). The St. Regis Mohawk Tribe and the Mohawk Police supported by the State of New York ignored these demands. After the third and final warning, the Longhouse supporters marched to the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe's headquarters, disbanded the council, and then proceeded to take over the police headquarters and free *Kanasaraken*. Fearing reprisals from the state, the proponents of

the Longhouse and their leaders opted for defensive measures at the Thompson compound. The SRMT and the State of New York reacted by issuing warrants and sealed indictments against all traditional Mohawk chiefs (Interviewee H: 1995).

Soon thereafter, a mini grand council was held at *Ahnawate Tsiitoniate*. Many representatives from the Haudenosaunee Confederacy were sent as a demonstration of support for their Mohawk brethren (Interviewee E: 1995). The council along with the popular support of the people decided that they had to take a stand against any further erosion of their rights (Interviewee E: 1995).

On August 28, 1970, a large armed force including New York State Troopers, Mohawk Police, a special weapons and tactical unit and a police helicopter entered an encampment of elders<sup>19</sup>, men, women, and children established by the Kanienkehaka Nation Council of Chiefs. Four Longhouse proponents including one *royane* were arrested and removed from the community by the combined forces of New York and Mohawk Police (NLGCNAS 1982: 157). The police force did not dare to enter the Thompson property, where a gunfight would probably have ensued (Mattiesen 1988: 144). The police then reinforced their presence in the community by establishing two roadblocks, the main roadblock was erected on Highway 37, the other on the road to Raquette Point itself. This effectively sealed all road access to the camp and placed the Thompson compound in a state of siege (Mattiesen 1988: 144). Entrenched, within the compound, the proponents of the Longhouse (ranging in numbers from 100 to 300) resisted the police and the supporters of the Band Councils (Interviewee F: 1995). The latter were mostly composed of St. Regis Mohawk Tribe's deputized officials and armed vigilantes (Mattiesen 1988: 142). While the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne as a political entity, remained neutral during the conflict, many of its supporters allied themselves with both factions (Interviewee H: 1995). "Some declared themselves loyal to the Band Council system as a whole, while others backed the Longhouse supporters at Raquette Point" (Interviewee H: 1995).

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<sup>19</sup> An elder, is an individual who is gifted with wisdom, spirituality and foresight. Although experience is highly valued amongst the Haudenosaunee, the concept of "elder" is not solely associated with age, there are numerous cases of young elders in the Confederacy.

During that winter, divisions within the Longhouse segment emerged. Individualism and different interpretations of the Kaianerenkowa, two factors that had appeared during Kanienkeh, were seeping into the Thompson compound. To some, the similarities between Kanienkeh and Raquette Point was disconcerting:

Once again the first recourse had been to weapons and violence without the consent of either the clan mothers or the *rodiyaner* [...] Keeping the peace in the compound was challenging. For many participants wanted to load their weapons and retaliate against the state (Interviewee F: 1995).

Some participants were under the impression that *Kanasaraken* had somehow manipulated the whole event in order to create this confrontation, which would in the end be of benefit to him (Interviewee F: 1995). Apparent inequities pertaining to food distribution led to internal dissension in the compound. Food shortages forced the Longhouse supporters to undertake food foraging expeditions in the surrounding area. It was during one of these expeditions that Mitch Farmer, an Onondaga, froze to death (Interviewee F: 1995).

The Band Council supporters began to vent their frustrations against the Longhouse proponents by gathering at the police blockade on Raquette Road. Early in the spring of 1980, they had gained control of the barricade (Mattiesen 1988: 130). Declaring themselves the "Concerned Citizens of St. Regis", an organization dedicated to protecting "the tax-paying and law-abiding citizens of the community" the "Concerned Citizens" became permanent fixtures in the conflict (Mattiesen 1988: 130). The police never made any effort to disarm the crowd or take down the barricade, despite its disruption of highway traffic. On June 13th, 1988, a messenger was sent into the camp with an ultimatum: "Unless, certain Mohawks under indictment were delivered to the police, and all "outsiders", [Amerindian] or otherwise, were removed from Raquette Point, action would be taken in two hours" (Mattiesen 1988: 130). Faced by this ultimatum, the members of the Thompson compound consisting of Mohawk men, women and children elected to remain united within the camp (Interviewee F: 1995). They were supported in this stance by the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the communities of Kanienkeh and Onondaga, who issued their own ultimatums to New York State. The goal of



these declarations were to divide the New York State police force and prevent an all out assault on Akwesasne (Interviewee E: 1995). Pressures were subsequently defused as spokespersons from both sides successfully negotiated a temporary peace accord (Mattiesen 1988: 130).

In the last week of July 1980, a group of thirty-five or forty "Concerned Citizens" many of them Vietnam war veterans, armed with automatic weapons, established a "beachhead" near the *Ahnawate Tsiitoniate* trailer park (owned by the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe), a mile or so upriver from the Thompson compound. This group was led by the brother of an Akwesasne policeman, "a man - according to one Band Council supporter "in no way [Amerindian] in his thinking at all" (Mattiesen 1988: 130). For several weeks, the "Concerned Citizens" patrolled the river, and shot at boats carrying supplies into the Thompson compound (Mattiesen 1988: 130).

On-going negotiations by all sides were successful in diffusing the tensions present in the community. By the end of August, the barricades were taken down. The repercussions from the event would continue well into the fall. In late October, a bomb exploded outside the house of Solomon Cook, the only chief from the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe who had lobbied for Mohawk unity in the community. A week later, the house of Tommy Porter, lacking electricity, burnt down to the ground. Arson was suspected (Mattiesen 1988: 130). In the winter of 1981, Judge Plumadore finally dismissed the controversial indictment against *Kanasaraken*, an indictment that had done much to accentuate the internal and external pressures upon Akwesasne (Mattiesen 1988: 162-63).

#### **4.3.1 Observations About The Raquette Point Social Movement**

To many Akwesasronons the confrontation at *Ahnawate Tsiitoniate* illustrated the social cleavages within the community. Cleavages that extended far beyond socio-cultural differences. Lloyd Benedict former Chief (Environment portfolio) of the MCA explains:

A lot of the people are starting to think, Hey, this isn't politics any more, it's a question of rights and wrong. That's when they choose". Like every family [in the community], the Benedict [family] was painfully split by the whole controversy. Lloyd's cousin, Brian Cole, was a security "warrior" in the defense bunkers of the traditional camp.... A lot goes through you mind out there, he told me. See it's not a fight, between political factions, it's between your uncles, your cousins, maybe even your brothers (L. Benedict cited in Mattiesen 1998: 158).

The response of St. Regis Mohawk Tribe and the "Concerned Citizens" depicted the level of acculturation of Akwesasronons. "Many of the Band Council members had no understanding of the clan system or the Great Law of Peace" (Interviewee A: 1995). The reaction of some individuals such as the Mohawk veterans illustrated that "their attitude towards the traditionalists was no different than any bigot or redneck's approach" (Interviewee C: 1995). Another observation made of Raquette Point was that "many Mohawks identified more closely with the American culture than with their own Mohawk kin" (Interviewee C: 1995)

The confrontation was not without its repercussions within the Longhouse and throughout the Confederacy. Although the concept of *skennen* (peace) was present during the early stages of the confrontation, it was soon contested by the concept of *Kashastensera* (power). By taking up arms against their own people without the consent of any Clan Mothers or any *rodiyane*, the Longhouse had, in fact, excavated the war clubs from under the Great White Pine. "It had become too easy to turn to violence, whenever we faced adversity. We were turning our backs on the Great Law of Peace" (Interviewee F: 1995). The result from these actions was an aggravation of the division present within the Longhouse (Interviewee B: 1995). "The Raquette Point Stand-Off split the [Longhouse] element right down the middle" (Interviewee C: 1995).

Other observers believed that the confrontation at *Ahnawate Tsiioniate* had positive repercussions. The "Confederacy was strong, it was united... We even had a mini grand council held here" (Interviewee E: 1995). Furthermore, the state of New York had to recognize that any action taken against Akwesasne could also be interpreted as an act of aggression against the Confederacy. New York State could no longer deny the existence of our united Confederacy (Interviewee E: 1995). The Raquette Point Stand-Off also increased the

legitimacy of the Longhouse in the community, "the Longhouse supporters had demonstrated a great deal of restraint and control over the whole affair. They had acted responsibly" (Interviewee D: 1995). Supporting this observation, another Akwesasronon adds, "even some Christian Mohawks were persuaded that it was the elected council who had acted violently and in a non-democratic way" (Interviewee B: 1995).

#### **4.3.2 A Segmentary Factional-Political System's Analysis Of Raquette Point**

Because the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne as a political entity opted to remain neutral during the conflict, while covertly supporting both segments, the application of Segmentary Factional-Political System's analysis will be limited to the Longhouse proponents and the supporters of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe.

**a) Factions Are Conflict Groups:** Prior to the social conflict at Raquette Point, dissension in Akwesasne had been partially diffused through relocation (e.g. Kanienkeh). The confrontation at *Ahnawate Tsiitoniate* was a political battle consisting of two antagonistic forces - the Band Council supporters composed of Christian Mohawks, "Concerned Citizens", and Mohawk veterans, opposing the Longhouse proponents, a coalition of Haudenosaunee Confederate kin, Amerindian and non-Amerindian supporters. At Raquette Point, the Longhouse proponents who had been somewhat divided during the Standing Arrow and Kanienkeh movements, rallied in support of their kin and clan members struggling against the Band Council supporters and New York State.

The conflict at Raquette Point illustrated that the social cleavages separating the Band Council supporters and the Longhouse proponents evident throughout the opposition to the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway and Kanienkeh had only increased throughout the years. Factors such as environmental deterioration, New York State's presence in Mohawk politics; the growing cigarette trade; and, the success of the Longhouse at Kanienkeh

intensified the confrontation at *Ahnawate Tsiitoniate*, as each segment supported its political position by means of two distinct socio-political institutions. The Longhouse proponents used the Great Law of Peace, the *Gushwentha*, and the Treaty of Ganandaigua, while the Band Council supporters maintained their position by appealing to the three trustees system of 1890 and the institution of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Council (St. Regis Mohawk Tribe) in 1948 by U.S Congress legislations.

**b) Factions Are Political Groups:** The political confrontation at Raquette Point converged around the concepts of sovereignty, jurisdiction and treaty violations. As each communal segment called upon specific socio-political constructions to justify its position of political legitimacy, the conflict intensified. The conflict erupted because many of the Band Council supporters had no idea of what the Mohawk culture was or what treaties were being violated through the actions of New York State and the SRMT. According to the SRMT, the Mohawk Police had done no wrong by arresting Thompson, in fact they had simply carried out their duties as police officers. The St. Regis Mohawk Tribe was simply asserting its jurisdiction which was given to it by New York State in 1948 and 1950. The actions taken by the Longhouse, may have been interpreted by the Band Council supporters as menacing their lifestyles, and threatening their political system (Interviewee C: 1995).

The Longhouse interpreted the action of the SRMT and the Mohawk police as an erosion of Mohawk sovereignty. Any further compromise of their *tewatatowie* through the recognition of illegitimate a foreign power (New York State) would severely hamper any possible future hopes of *Kashwentha*. On May 29, 1979, their first recourse was to notify the American president concerning New York State's infractions. When this failed, the Kanienkehaka Nation Council issued the three traditional warnings calling for the disbandment of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe. When these warnings went unheeded, the Longhouse asserted what it believed was its responsibility as a sovereign political entity. It declared its jurisdiction over the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe by disbanding this political organization and freeing Loran

Thompson. The 1979 dismantlement of the SRMT was a repetition of history, for in 1894, the Longhouse had expressed its contempt by disbanding the three trustees of the State of New York (the predecessor of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe) (NLGCNAS 1982: 157). These acts demonstrated the Longhouse's contempt for the tribal/band council system, a system of governance that "they had never willingly consented to" (NLGCNAS 1982: 157). From an Action Theory perspective it appears that both segments were striving for a decisive victory that would permanently neutralize or eliminate the threat of the rival faction in the community.

**c) Factions Are Not Corporate Groups:** The schismatic factionalism that had permeated Akwesasne's socio-political arena had escalated from civil protest marches during the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway into armed relocation at Kanienkeh. The repercussion of Kanienkeh illustrated that the "Philosophy Of The Corn" had proven to be only partially successful in neutralizing social dissension in Akwesasne, for both the Longhouse and the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe remained divided on many issues. Tensions between the Band Council supporters and the Longhouse proponents which had until this social movement remained relatively passive and controlled, exploded into an armed and confrontational stand-off between the two factions.

As the impacts from the St. Lawrence Seaway continued to deplete the natural resources in the community, struggles over resources increased, resulting in deeper socio-economic rifts, with groups competing not only for resources but for cultural survival and political prominence. Alliances which had until this event remain relatively ambiguous or pervasive became clearly distinct into two competing factions. Socio-political divisions in Akwesasne had become well organized, permanent, schismatic political entities in the community. A phenomenon that appears to contradict Nicholas's assertion that factions are basically impermanent components of socio-political systems.

**d) Faction Members Are Recruited By A Leader:** Raquette Point differed somewhat from the other previous social movements, because so much attention was focused upon Loran *Kanataken* Thompson. Consequently, the cause of the conflict, became a rallying symbol for the Longhouse proponents. Due to this fact, some Akwesasronons believed that Thompson manoeuvred himself into this central position of leadership, to increase his power and capitalize on the event. But other prominent Longhouse activists were also involved in the event including Tommy Porter, Kakwirakeron, Anne Jock, Minni Garrow, Ron LaFrance and numerous Clan Mothers, elders and *royane* (Interviewee D: 1995). Although the specific names of the Clan Mothers and *royane* rarely appeared in the press or in historical books it is not indicative of politically apathetic individuals, this factor simply demonstrates a historical trend, where the *owachira* and the *royane* usually remained outside of the public arena. Those who were noted by historians and reporters alike as "leaders" were the wampum bearers, the same spokesperson that in the past were the first to be noticed by European negotiators.

*Kanataken* like his predecessor Standing Arrow has been described as an orator, a man of action, a man who inspired others to follow him (Interviewee F: 1995). Much like Standing Arrow had done in 1957, *Kanataken* also asserted his *Tewatatohie* in 1979, Thompson went further by questioning and defying the jurisdiction of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe in Akwesasne. Through his action he was able to motivate other Longhouse proponents to assert their sovereignty. *Kanataken's* cause may have contained some form of vested interest for personal gratification, and political maximization, but other factors were also at play including the increasing environmental pressures, and the encroachment of New York State into Mohawk politics. These two important factors maximized the intensity of the event by incorporating environmental and political issues into concerns that had been formerly relegated to historical and cultural debates. Without these issues it is very difficult to ascertain if the Longhouse would have rallied behind Thompson in such a unified fashion. Although it appeared that the event was largely focused upon the key figures of the Longhouse, it was the Longhouse members who choose to assert their sovereignty not the leaders (Interviewee E: 1995). Thus,

once again the consensual aspect of the decision making process of the Longhouse, negated the centralization of power by any one person.

**e) Faction Members Are Recruited On Diverse Principles:** In Akwesasne, the leaders in both factions recruited members on various principles in order to support their visions. The Band Council supporters' vision was strongly influenced by the American culture. The Longhouse proponents' vision was distinctly Haudenosaunee and Kanienkehaka. In each faction the leaders maximized religious, cultural, political, and economic affiliations.

The greatest rallying point for the Longhouse proponents was the unification of numerous principles including a collective history, kinship, culture, and a common socio-political affiliation under the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. The arrest of *Kanataken* was a violation of the Great Law of Peace, the *Gushwentha*, and the Treaty of Ganandaigua. The Kaianerenkowa and the concepts of *Kashwentha* and *Tewatatohie* provided the structures by which the Longhouse proponents could challenge New York State and the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe's jurisdiction in the community and thereby assert their own sovereignty.

The supporters of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe regarding the American institutions of Band Councils as legitimate were prepared to call upon their socio-political institutions (U.S Congress legislation of 1948 and 1950) to enforce the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe's jurisdiction in Akwesasne. Culture, ethnicity, nationality, and a collective history although significant in the Longhouse segment was often considered irrelevant to the supporters of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe (e.g., The Concerned Citizens, and the Mohawk Veterans). The latter's close identification with the American culture, Christian sects, and a high level of acculturation created a social conflict, frequently opposing Mohawk against Mohawk.

### **4.3.3 Repercussions From The Raquette Point Social Movement**

The confrontation at *Ahnawate Tsiiotoniate* has been described as a communal nervous breakdown (S. Benedict: 1995) representing the deterioration of the Mohawk culture and the increasing cleavage between two conflicting segments of the same ethnic group. It also demonstrated that the claim of sovereignty by the Longhouse cannot ultimately secure the rights of all concerned.

Akwesasne's political systems' complexity and interdependence is neither a sign of weakness nor a sign of strength for anyone concerned. Negotiations and compromise between equals, not between sovereign and subordinate, is required. Claims of preference or precedence should be redefined so that the rights of individuals and individual groups are perceived dualistically, mutually, and simultaneously. The necessity is to achieve a composite order without which no individual can survive in peace (Venables 1990: 126).

Communal factional spirits in Akwesasne became conflictual, unsolvable, and uncontrollable when New York State refused to acknowledge the treaties of Fort Stanwix, Ganandaigua and the Jay Treaty (Dickson-Gilmour 1991: 29). In this Manifest Conflict scenario, each group openly defied the legitimacy of the other. This resulted in a misunderstanding endangering both communal unity and sovereignty (Dickason 1991: 29).

The influences of the Great Law of Peace were paradoxal, at times it served to promote the cooperation and cultural re-awakening in the community, at other times it magnified the differences within the Longhouse, especially when it pertained to which version of the Great Law of Peace was the most accurate (S. Benedict: 1995).

Some attempts at reconciliation were made after the confrontation at *Ahnawate Tsiiotoniate*. Despite the fact that both the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe and Mohawk Council of Akwesasne remained the "recognized governments", all three governing bodies, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, and Kanienkehaka Council of Chiefs agreed to become an active players in the healing process of the community. According to some Akwesasronons this was due to the strong participation of Longhouse supporters in both band council systems, and their affiliations with the Kanienkehaka Nation Council of Chiefs.



Their effort resulted in a cooperative tripartite governmental structure in Akwesasne. Internal collaboration was increased further with the following resolution:

In 1980 the traditional and their opponents agreed to a compromise and to this day each side participates in the existing elected system, far different from the past when the traditional boycotted the electoral process (Hauptman 1986: 232-33).

Although somewhat successful, the Tri-Council could not eliminate the complex and intense differences within the community. These differences would explode into another social conflict less than one decade later.

#### **4.4 THE 1990 CIVIL CONFLICT OF AKWESASNE**

In an attempt to address the despondency present in their community, Akwesasronons initiated a multi-phased healing process. The first initiative was to modify the Electoral system of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne. A feat that was accomplished in 1988. The second initiative was to create a Tri-Council government in Akwesasne, consisting of the Kanienkehaka Nation Council of Chiefs, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, and the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe. The Tri-Council was to play a fundamental role in drafting Akwesasne's Constitution, a document incorporating Haudenosaunee and Western socio-political institutions, specific to Akwesasne. The goals of the Tri-Council and the constitution continue to be the unification of Akwesasne under one jurisdictional body. Even with these attempts at reunification, the initiatives of the Tri-Council met with resistance from the American and Canadian governments "most of the communal by laws (about 99%) passed by the Tri-Council have been disallowed by the Canadian authorities" (Vachon 1991: 45).

By the end of the 1980s, traditional subsistence activities in Akwesasne had nearly disappeared (Lickers: 1990). Environmental changes brought about by the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway, and a lack of economic opportunities led many Mohawks to turn to contraband activities, such as the smuggling of alcohol and cigarettes. Two processes were used to sell cigarettes. Cigarettes were sold tax-free in Akwesasne's (throughout the American

portion) numerous smoke shops (recognized by the United States); or Canadian cigarettes were bought in the U.S. (tax free), transported back into Akwesasne, smuggled back into Canada, and sold at discount rates in the underground market. Declining economic revenues also led the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe to support casino enterprises. Although this is a simplification of the socio-economic issues plaguing Akwesasne during the eighties, it is necessary to illustrate the general social context that degenerated into the Civil Conflict of 1990.

The gaming issue entered the Longhouse in 1987. That year, Loran *Kanataken* Thompson debated that the Longhouse had already sponsored mini-bingos in Akwesasne, and he could see nothing in the Great Law of Peace prohibiting gambling. This perspective encouraged *Kanataken* to pursue a tentative gaming agreement with an external investor. Doug George, proponent of the Longhouse, then editor of *Akwesasne Notes*, and longtime critique of Loran Thompson, exposed Loran's dealing with the gambling investor. Facing resistance within the Longhouse, Thompson was asked (three times) to abort the project. Tension rose so rapidly in the Longhouse that the gaming issue quickly degenerated into fistfight between the Thompsons and the George brothers. Soon, thereafter, a meeting was called by the Kanienkehaka Council of Chiefs and the Clan Mothers. During a rapid assembly (according to Longhouse standards), the topic of gambling was addressed and a decision was taken to impeach Thompson and his clan mother (Interview H: 1995). This act meant that the two no longer had a voice in council (Vachon 1991: 88). Upon his departure from the Longhouse, Thompson took a multitude of Bear Clan members, and other supporters with him (Interviewee A: 1995). After *Kanataken's* departure, the issue of gaming was once again brought forth, this time by the women. The issue proved to be so controversial, that neither the *rodiyaner*, the *owachira*, or the Longhouse in general were able to achieve consensus. As a result when the casinos were built in Akwesasne, the Kanienkehaka Nation Council of Chiefs was unprepared as a political entity to address the issue (Interviewee G: 1995).

The Band Councils were also diametrically opposed when it came to the gambling issue. The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne publicly refused to endorse any projects that pertained to

gaming, although many of its members privately supported gaming establishments and even contraband activities (Akwesasne Notes 1994: 76). The St. Regis Mohawk Tribe maintained that gaming establishments were a much needed source of income and that they were supported by the "Indian Gaming Act" (1988). This federal legislation granted the right to the dependent sovereign nations within the territory of the US to promote gambling as an economic incentive within their communities. Even though, the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe never received approval under the Indian Gaming Act, they nevertheless established Billy's Bingo Hall (Johansens 1993: 23).

The social alliances that had been present during the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway, Kanienkeh, and Raquette Point, were about to be transformed along new political, ethical, philosophical and economic beliefs. By the end of the eighties, the issues of gambling and smuggling had divided Akwesasne into two units consisting of a Canadian and American portion. The community was further sub-divided into three national-political units consisting of the supporters of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, the supporters of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, and the proponents of the Longhouse and the Kanienkehaka Nation Council of Chiefs. Members (opponents and proponents of gambling) from these segments were ideologically divided as to the benefits and drawbacks of contraband and gaming activities.

#### **4.4.1 The Proponents And Opponents Of Gambling And Contraband Activities**

The casino operators were supported by the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, about half of the Akwesasne Longhouse members, and the Warriors' Society. This segment of the community regarded the cigarette and casinos industries as desperately needed sources of income that could also serve to revitalize the Mohawk identity in Akwesasne (Vachon 1991: 89). The most notable individuals in this group were Francis Boots (the War-Chief), Kakwirakeron, Mark Maracle, Loran Thompson Rowena General, Minnie Garrow, and Diane Lazore.

The Longhouse supporters who advocated gaming and contraband activities, utilized a political interpretation of the Great Law of Peace, based upon power, defense, and war chiefs. This version emphasized the concept of *Kashastensera*, for power is necessary to enforce the peace and to protect the righteousness of the law. The *Kaiwio* played no role in this version of the Kaianerenkowa, since it is a reflection of Christian/Quaker beliefs intermingled with Haudenosaunee cultural beliefs.

The casino owners who were also part of this group, were led by men such as Tony Laughing, Eli Tarbell, Billy Sears, and Guilford White. These were entrepreneurs who had built the bingo halls and the casinos, and sponsored selected candidates in the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe elections (Akwesasne Notes 1994: 76). They were Mohawks who claimed that their individual sovereignty provided them with the right to establish gaming establishments in the community.

The last component of this group were the chiefs of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, David Jacob and Lincoln White, and a portion of their constituents, who supported the gaming and contraband activities and contested the authority of their Head Chief, Harold Tarbell.

Numerous Longhouse and Band Council supporters opposed gaming and the contraband industries, believing that the current structures of these industries, were benefitting specific individuals and not the community. According to this segment, casinos were eroding Mohawk traditions and leading Akwesasronons straight into the melting pot of American capitalism. The Longhouse segment opposed contraband and gaming activities from a spiritual/holistic interpretation of the Great Law of Peace and the *Kaiwio*. According to them, the Great Law of Peace is centred around peace and cooperation. Furthermore, the Good Word prohibits alcoholism, materialism, and gambling (Gramza 1995: 03). This contingent of the Longhouse was largely composed of the Kanienkehaka Nation Council of Chiefs and their supporters. The most prominent actors being Tommy Porter, Jake Swamp, Barbara Barnes, and Doug George.

Joining the Longhouse supporters in their opposition was the Grand Chief of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, Mike Mitchell. Mitchell had been a leading advocate for the creation of the Tri-Council and the Akwesasne Constitution (Vachon 1991: 45). Mitchell was also firmly opposed to gambling in the community, and he was supported in this stance by a number of MCA Band Council supporters. Other notable actors included Head Chief of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, Harold Tarbell, and supporters from the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe. However, both the Grand Chief of the MCA and the Head Chief of the SRMT were also opposed by their own councils and employees.

There were also those Mohawks who professed no alliances to any political or religious affiliations. These were individuals including Christian and Great Law of Peace supporters who opted to distance themselves from the controversy transpiring in their community.

#### **4.4.2 The Repercussions From Gambling In Akwesasne**

By 1987, the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe had lost control over gambling activities in the community, as individual entrepreneurs began to interpret their Mohawk sovereignty as the right to operate casinos. Despite opposition from the three governmental bodies in Akwesasne "slot-machine gambling at Akwesasne... was providing \$7 million a year in tax-free profits to the owners of six establishments" (Johansen 1993: 25). In order to reestablish its jurisdiction in the community the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe approved a casino raid by New York State troopers. On December 17, 1987, in a predawn raid, state troopers seized 77 slot machines in Akwesasne. The casino operators placed orders for new slot machines the next day (Johansen 1993: 26).

Shortly after the raids of 1987, the supporters of gaming and contraband activities held a meeting at the Bear's Den restaurant and casino. Francis Boots, the *rotiskenrake:te* (War-Chief) for the Warriors' Society issued the following statement:

Any attempt taken by outside police forces will be considered as a military expedition against a people at peace with the United States. [...] Any attempt by

the [St. Regis Mohawk Tribe] to request state police aid to enforce its ban on slot machines would be unauthorized and unsanctioned by the Mohawk people (Johansen 1993: 25).

This press release contained two elements of the Warriors' Society ideology, "an identification of gambling with Mohawk sovereignty and a penchant for identifying the Warriors' interest with those of the Mohawk people" (Johansen 1993: 25).

On March 22 1988, Mike Mitchell escorted by numerous supporters, attempted to re-address the border crossing issues, that had been brought forth by Mike Francis in 1956. When asked by Canadian customs officials to declare the content of his cargo, Mitchell refused to do so, contending that his status as *Honkwehonwe*, the Jay Treaty of 1794, and the Treaty of Guent of 1815, did not force him to do so. Mitchell was subsequently charged with violating the Canadian Customs Act (Akwesasne Notes 1995: 66). This act demonstrates the Mohawk's commitment to their *Tewatatohie* and *Kashwentha*, and their unwillingness to ignore the treaties that had acknowledge and attested to these concepts.

Meanwhile, in response to the growing problem of cigarette smuggling in Canada, the Ontario Provincial Police, the Cornwall City Police, the New York State Police and 250 officers from the RCMP invaded Akwesasne in a pre-dawn raid (October 13, 1988). With the help of 75 vehicles, a helicopter, and patrol boats, they sealed off Cornwall Island, for the next four hours they searched twelve locations (Mitchell 1991: 127-29).

They found \$50,000 in cigarettes and \$150,000 in cash, some guns and 30 grams of cocaine. Yet, throughout their search, the RCMP deliberately avoided the known cigarette, drugs, liquor, and weapons traffickers (Mitchell 1991:127-129).

After the raid, members of the Mohawk Social Security Force (the Warriors' Society) claimed that they were the legal police force in the community, even though they held no charter from either the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, or the Kanienkehaka Nation Council of Chiefs. The Warriors' Society labelled the Kanienkehaka Nation Council of Chiefs "traitors" and "agents" of foreign governments, "who were using the

cloak of illegal gambling to invade Akwesasne with the complicity of the Tri-Council" (Johansen 1993: 38).

On July 20 1989, another casino raid occurred. Two hundred state troopers and FBI agents attempted to execute a search warrant at Tony's Vegas International. The Warriors armed with semi-automatic weapon defied the troopers. Outgunned the police battalion withdrew (Akwesasne Notes 1995: 78). Kakwirakeron, one of the main spokesperson for the Warriors' Society, was consequently arrested for his participation at this stand-off.

Following this event, an appeal was made to President Bush by the Kanienkehaka Nation Council of Chiefs (in accordance with the Treaty of Canandaigua) to restore peace in the community. Reminiscent of 1979, the appeal went unheeded by the federal government (Akwesasne Notes 1995: 78). The Warriors' Society interpreted this act as another compromise of Mohawk sovereignty (Hornung 1991: 15).

On November 13 1989, the Kanienkehaka Nation Council of Chiefs issued a press release stating that gambling proponents were no longer citizens of the Mohawk Nation. The Haudenosaunee Confederacy supported this position by issuing their own release:

Be it known to all courts of law in Canada and the U.S. and their respective governments that these businesses, or enterprises of gas and oil sales, casinos, high stakes bingo and gambling enterprises are illegal, gone have the consent or support of the Nations. Therefore, individuals and all such businesses are without the sovereign protection of the Confederate Nations of the Haudenosaunee (Vachon 1991: 46).

These political disagreements illustrated the growing rift in the Longhouse and in the community, by 1990 social dissension in the community had descended into numerous acts of violence including physical beatings, gunfire, drive-by-shootings, money laundering, organized-crime, and drug smuggling. Of all these activities none were more devastating than arson. Arson destroyed many private homes and public buildings in Akwesasne, the most notable of these buildings were the home of gaming proponent Diane Lazore; the Lucky Knight Casino (August 1989); and the North American Indian Travelling College that also served as the

headquarters for *Akwesasne Notes* (April 1990) (Akwesasne Notes 1995: 78). These activities created a "near state of siege in the community" (Gramza 1995: 06).

During the winter of 1989-90 blockades began to play a significant role in Akwesasne. The very first blockade had been erected by the New York State police on July 20 1989, through to July 31 1989, when they withdrew their roadblock (Hornung 1991: Glossary). After their departure, Akwesasnonons opposing casinos erected their own barricade. During the initial stages there where only 10 people, all from various denominations and political affiliations (Interviewee A: 1995). "The barricades were not there for financial gains, they were there to voice the people's opinions peacefully" (Interviewee A: 1995). On March 23, 1990, two noted opponents of gambling, Head Chief Harold Tarbell (SRMT) and Grand Chief Mike Mitchell (MCA) erected two barricade on Highway 37. The Eastern barricade was located at the eastern edge of the community near Bombay New York, the Western barricade was located just before the Twin Bridges (passing over the Raquette River). The aims of these two barricades, unlike the blockades erected earlier, were to discourage gamblers by physically diverting them away from the casinos (Hornung 1991: Glossary). Over the length of the Civil Conflict the women elders played a significant role in preserving the peace and unity at the barricades, "all forms of spirituality were accepted, there was no disrespect since they were all there for the same cause" (Interviewee A: 1995).

The blockades often became the focus of violence as both opponents and proponents of gambling confronted each other near the barricades. On April 23 1990, violence flared at the blockades, as the two segments squared off, the two barricades were eventually firebombed with moloktov cocktails and burnt to the ground. The opponents of gambling responded by attacking several casinos, smashing slot machines, and firing gunshots into the walls (York & Pindera 1991:183).

Increasing violence in the community forced the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne to declare a general state of emergency, it was requested that all women, children, and elderly people under the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's jurisdiction evacuate the community. By



April 26, over one hundred and fifty residents were removed by boat from the village of *Kanasatakon* (St. Regis) to Cornwall Ontario. Residents on the U.S. side also began to leave their homes without an evacuation order from the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe (Johansen 1993: 83).

In the last days of April a shoot-out occurred at David George's house. The events surrounding the shoot-out are unclear. What is known is that the Mohawk police had been present earlier in *Snye* (district of Akwesasne), since David George had erected a roadblock on the road to *Snye* (Interviewee E: 1995). Although details vary about the night of April 30th, some consistencies do remain. Held up in the house of David George, the George brothers and some supporters faced-off against gaming proponents. Gunfire was exchanged by both sides throughout the night. This lasted until the early dawn of May 1st, when Edward Pyke and Matthew Jr, were shot and died from the resulting wounds. Within a few hours, hundreds of New York State troopers and Canadian police officers took control of the community, and martial law was declared. "Gunfire subsided, and a tense calm descended upon the community" (Johansen 1993: 96). The police effectively ended the Mohawk Society Security Force's security patrols, but the Warriors' Society endured (Wright 1992:187-188). Allegations of cover-ups are bandied about by both segments, for no murderer(s) of either men has ever been found or convicted.

The Civil Conflict of 1990 demonstrates the social repercussions of a society marred by rapid ecological changes, and an inability of the social systems to adapt to these transformations. This social movement illustrates that the numerous acts of violence (shootings, beatings, lose of human life) committed by individuals from both factions, were all fundamental transgressions against the Great Law of Peace. In this type of social chaos, the possibility for peace, consensus or rationality were nearly impossible.

#### **4.4.3 A Segmentary Factional-Political System's Analysis Of The 1990 Civil Conflict In Akwesasne**

The Civil Conflict although disastrous as a social movement, did create new alliances that would not have been possible forty years earlier. The protest that had began as a drift away from traditional values, had, in fact, united formerly opposed groups (the proponents of gaming and contraband activities, and the opponents of gaming and contraband activities) with two ideologies both supporting Mohawk sovereignty and autonomy.

**a) Factions Are Conflict Groups:** The schismatic factionalism that had characterized the socio-political arena of Akwesasne since the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway was transformed by the Civil Conflict of 1990. New alliances were made along new matrixes, uniting former opponents under new philosophical, economical and political beliefs. Albeit that three factions were evident during the Civil Conflict, only two factions competed within Akwesasne's political arena. The third segment, the Neutrals, had relatively little socio-political influence in Akwesasne, since it had never organized members or mobilized resources in order to compete in the socio-political arena. Throughout the Civil Conflict, the Neutrals, remained nonpartisan and impartial. According to one observer, "the Neutrals could have played a significant role in bringing about peace and reestablishing order in the community" (Interviewee A: 1995), instead of recognizing this possible contribution, the Neutrals were relegated to a position of virtual insignificance by the two competing powers. Internal and external differences between the two competing factions (opponents and proponents of gaming and contraband activities) polarized former allies and created new coalitions based upon economical, philosophical, and political lines. The shifts in alliances created segments so polarized, that they eventually became diametrically opposed in hostile conflict.

Socio-political associations were somewhat indistinct as Christian Mohawks and Longhouse supporters united under a common moral ideology opposing gambling in Akwesasne, while the Warriors' Society allied itself with Band Council supporters (some former

adversaries in 1979) and casino owners. But to categorize members of Akwesasne according to their political and economical visions overlooks the fact that many supporters of the Band Councils also professed to follow the traditional culture and values of the Kanienkehaka. Grand Chief of the MCA, Mike Mitchell was one such individual. Mitchell, a former Longhouse Faithkeeper, had been directed by the Longhouse to join the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne. Some Longhouse members believed that he enjoyed this position so much that he never went back to the Longhouse (Interviewee B: 1995). Thus, throughout the event, Mitchell represented both the interests of the Longhouse and the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne as Grand Chief of the MCA. This is not to say to Mitchell had the full support of the MCA, for some members and employees of his council were not convinced that gaming and contraband activities were deleterious activities. "In fact numerous chiefs from the MCA has been at one time runners in the gaming industry" (Akwesasne Notes 1994: 76). Head Chief of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, Harold Tarbell, was another prominent figure during the conflict, although his council was the organization that had instituted gaming in Akwesasne, the lost of control over gambling activities led him to change his opinion, ally himself with the gaming opponents, and resist gambling in Akwesasne, even while his own council (David Jacob and Lincoln White) called for his impeachment.

**b) Factions Are Political Groups:** The issues in the Civil Conflict became political as both factions utilized economical, political and socio-cultural arguments to mobilize resources, justify their actions, and forged new alliances with former adversaries. Geographical and national differences that had begun to appear at Raquette Point reemerged during 1990. The ideologies of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe were again one of the catalysts in this event, for it was their goal to introduce the gaming industry into Akwesasne that precipitated the events. Like in 1979, the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe supported their activities with the help of non-Mohawk legislation, in this case it was the *American Indian Gaming Act* of 1988. Gambling in Canada was a still a contentious issue, only small-scale endeavors such as bingos were permitted in most

Amerindian communities. Hence, the philosophies of both band councils and their members reflected their political and national context (s).

The St. Regis Mohawk Tribe was also willing to enforce its jurisdiction in Akwesasne by means of the U.S. Congressional legislation of 1948 and 1950. After 1987, when the SRMT had lost control over gambling activities in Akwesasne, they approved two large casino raids the first being on December 17, 1987, and the second on July 20, 1989. The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne used the federal Indian Act (1876) and the Tri-Council to legitimize their authority in the community.

The Longhouse proponents were philosophically divided, those supporting gaming activities explained that the Great Law of Peace did not prohibit gaming activities. They validated their position by the Kanienkehaka Nation Council's sponsorship of past bingos. To this segment gambling and contraband activities were one possible avenue for economic autonomy since "sovereignty means nothing without economic self-sufficiency" (Gramza 1995: 21),.

The Longhouse supporters, using a spiritual holistic interpretation of the Kaianerenkowa, opposed gambling on the grounds that it was immoral and it promoted greed and materialism. They recognized that the Great Law Peace was silent concerning the issues of gambling and greed because these were not issues during the inception of the Kaianerenkowa. The *Kaiwiio* on the other hand did address these issues, because it had been instituted at a time when gambling, drinking and greed were destroying the Confederacy (Interviewee B: 1995). Furthermore, the Longhouse supporters cemented their legitimacy within the community with the help of the Grand Council of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Tri-Council and the Treaty of Canandaigua. The Treaty of *Canandaigua*, an instrument that had been used to unite the Longhouse supporters at Raquette Point, was by 1990 perceived by some Longhouse supporters as compromising the sovereignty of the Mohawk nation. According to gambling advocates, by requesting the assistance of an external power, the Kanienkehaka Nation Council of Chiefs were inviting a former nemesis into a matter that the Warriors' Society

deemed internal. The Kanienkehaka Nation Council of Chiefs responded to these allegations by extraditing the supporters of gaming activities.

The concepts of *Tewataohie* and *Kashwentha*, concepts that had been used exclusively by the Longhouse proponents in the previous events, were now used by all Akwesasne as ideals embodying economic empowerment, and political autonomy, justifying their legitimacy in Akwesasne.

**c) Factions Are Not Corporate Groups:** The competing factions within Akwesasne's political arena were looking to achieve economic prosperity and political autonomy in the community, these actions could be interpreted as means of interest articulation. The new alignments of the factions would also seem to indicate that factionalism in Akwesasne tended to sway between pervasive and schismatic factionalism. Loran Thompson's departure from the Longhouse, and the exodus of many members of the Bear Clan also indicates that contemporary factions in Akwesasne could also be founded on clan-lineages. Furthermore, the exodus of the Bear Clan from the Longhouse also replicated the historical phenomenon of villages created around clan affiliations noted by Alfred (1995). Although none of the previous three events contained a large social fragmentation based upon clan-lineages, it is important to note this "new/ancient" phenomenon of membership recruitment, since Nicholas did state that clan, lineages and corporate political parties tend to be more permanent than factions (Nicholas 1968: 28).

**d) Faction Members Are Recruited By A Leader:** The new alliances uniting former antagonists in the Civil Conflict of 1990 could be interpreted as "cliques", political alliances where "several leaders each of whom has a modest following, but none of whom is individually capable of mobilizing an effective unit" (Nicholas 1968: 29). Cliques occurred as new alliances were created under common philosophical, political and economic agendas. The proponents of gambling are an example of this type of alliance, where former rivals such as the Warriors'

Society united with the casino owners and some members of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe under the banner of Mohawk sovereignty and economic prosperity.

The social movement of 1990 was highlighted by spokespersons and specific actors who began to dominate the centre stage of Akwesasne's political arena. This perspective is supported by the appearance of individualism within the Longhouse leadership structure, "even before 1990, one of the problems was that the Kanienkehaka Nation Council of Chiefs was associated with individuals [....] In fact the council was breaking up" (Interviewee B: 1995). At the forefront of the Civil Conflict for the opponents of gaming and contraband activities were former Grand Chief of the MCA, and Longhouse proponent, Mike Mitchell. His American counterpart, Head Chief Harold Tarbell, although not directly associated with the Longhouse, was nevertheless sympathetic to their cause. As editor of *Akwesasne Notes*, Doug George continued to play a prominent role in the stance against gaming in Akwesasne, he was eventually implicated in the shoot-out at David George's house. Other actors within the Longhouse included Jake Swamp, Tommy Porter and Barbara Barnes. Members were drawn to this segment for various reasons, including economic and political factors, encapsulating sovereignty, cultural integrity, morality and the Kaianerenkowa.

Tactics and ideologies within the segment advocating gaming and contraband activities, reflected the leadership structure. Mark Maracle (of Six Nations Ontario) and War Chief Francis Boot, both present during the Mosse Lake occupation, opted for a militant confrontational approach, stating that it would be better if the Mohawk Society Security Force (Warriors' Society) and their allies stabilized their positions, force a standoff with New York State, and then, open negotiations (Hornung 1991: 41). Kakwirakeron, a leading spokesperson during Kanienkeh, advocated a strategy of non-violence, a war of attrition aimed at neutralizing the New York State troopers, thereby forcing the politicians to bargain (Hornung 1991: 41). Although, Loran Thompson played a minor role in the political arena of the Civil Conflict, he was nevertheless influential for his support of the Warriors' Society and his outlook on the viability of

the contraband industry in Akwesasne. Because of this position, many of Loran's supporter's allied themselves with the proponents of gambling.

Women became much more prominent figures during the Civil Conflict, this factor was due more to the media attention paid to certain individuals than a rise in activism. Nevertheless, Mohawk women from both segments played an integral role during the Civil Conflict. Rowena General, Diane Lazore and Minnie Garrow were crucial in voicing their support for the Warriors' Society. Minnie Garrow was often identified as a spokesperson and leader of the Warriors' Society.

For the opponents of gaming and contraband activities it was Mohawk women who initially voiced their concern over gaming machines, "they were the one's who called the traditional council to action" (Interviewee G: 1995). Unable to stimulate the KNCC to action they asserted their own sovereignty by erecting barricades protesting gaming activities in Akwesasne. They were supported in this endeavour by Mohawk women of diverse backgrounds (band council supporters, Christian Mohawks) who were also unsuccessful at acquiring support from their political organizations. Displeased Mohawk women from diverse backgrounds united under the common theme of "gambling a harmful activity". They presented their concerns to the community by erecting a peaceful road-side blockade. As tensions roles weapons were picked-up against their counsel. When this occurred many of these women became victims of the confrontations at the barricades. In addition many children and elders were voluntary and involuntary participants in the conflict. "Many women, children and elders were unfortunate victims of the violence" (Interviewee A: 1995).

The same non-Mohawk media which had "noted" the role of Mohawk women throughout the 1990 social movement were often overwhelmed by the charisma of such leaders and orators as Jake Swamp, Tommy Porter, Kakwirakeron, Minnie Garrow, and Loran Thompson (Vachon: 1995). This observation seems to question Nicholas's assertion that "faction leaders" are not bestowed with charismatic qualities. In fact, this same charisma was used to persuade individuals to join certain ranks, and it was also utilized to solidify existing allegiances. The

actions of certain leaders and spokespersons (men and women) could be construed as containing elements of animosity, competition, strategizing for vested interest, and maximizing one's potential for political prominence in Akwesasne. These personal and emotional factors often influenced the segment's ideologies and swayed Akwesasronons to these factions. The Civil Conflict of 1990 illustrated that certain aims extended far beyond the "rational-man" pursuing "rational goals".

**e) Faction Members Are Recruited On Diverse Principles:** Nowhere was resource mobilization more evident by the leadership structure than in the Civil Conflict of 1990. The calls for uniting members ranged from the philosophical, political, ethical, moral, national to the economic. Political tools that were used to mobilize resources and members opposing gaming, included the U.S Congress legislations of 1948 and 1950, the Indian Act of 1876, and the Tri-Council. The most important tool for resource mobilization by both segments was the Great Law of Peace of which certain concepts were emphasized while others were conveniently discarded. Concepts such as *Kashwentha* and *Tewatohie* were used to legitimize the actions of certain factions under the guise of defending the interest of the Mohawk nation. Throughout the Civil Conflict several factors contributed to the distortion of concepts and philosophies contained within the Kaianerenkowa. These factors included a minimal understanding of the Great Law of Peace by a majority of the community, contributing to a distortion of the fundamental values of the Kaianerenkowa.

According to some Akwesasronons, members were swayed to join the proponents of gambling and contraband activities by "the promise of a social and economic revolution, a revolution that never occurred" (Akwesasne Notes 1994: 76), this phenomenon supports Doxtater's concept of the dual Warrior type - the silk shirts and the freedom-fighters, "the former corrupt exploiters, the latter romantic idealists" (Doxtater cited in Moses, Globe and Mail 6/14/1994). Because of Akwesasne's unique political, economic and cultural context the freedom fighters or "Mohawk nationalists" were convinced by the "silk shirts" that preserving



Mohawk sovereignty meant defending Mohawk casinos (Doxtater cited in Moses, *Globe and Mail* 6/14/1994).

The Great Law of Peace became a crucial component of the economic equation for sovereignty in Akwesasne. Numerous individuals, including casino owners, and Band Council Chiefs utilized their interpretations of the Great Law of Peace, largely centred upon *Tewatatohie* to justify their actions in the community. In this dialectic environment, the Great Law of Peace, became a convenient political and economic message, facilitating the mobilisation of individuals and resources. While such concepts as sovereignty, nationhood, and power gained in significance, other's such as peace, solidarity, sharing, rationality, and unity were uprooted. An observer noted that "it's easy to use the words of the Kaianerenkowa" (Interviewee D: 1995), for the words are only one facet of the Great Law of Peace, there are also ceremonies and the "good mind" which were not evident throughout the conflict (Interviewee D: 1995).

Nicholas's concept of "cause" bolstering membership recruitment during the Civil Conflict of 1990 was a complex equation of Mohawk pride and enters the realm of culture, ethics, ecology, economics, and politics. To others, the common "cause" or bond of culture, ethnicity, nationality, and collective history proved virtually irrelevant. Thus, the 'causes' that arose during the Civil Conflict of 1990 were complex and flexible.

The issue was not about gambling, it was about sovereignty and jurisdiction. If they could shut down business, that happened to be casinos, convenience stores could be next, the repercussions were too numerous, not to take action (Interviewee E: 1995).

This application of Segmentary Factional-Political Systems to the Civil Conflict illustrates the deep socio-political divisions in the community. Using Nicholas's theory we can see how ideologies such as the Kaianerenkowa were transformed to accommodate certain political, economic, ethical, and cultural agendas, thereby distorting the Kaianerenkowa from its true purpose of unification by means of the "good mind", or what Siegel and Beals termed communal mobilization. Yet, Segmentary Factional-Political Systems is limited especially when dealing with the impacts of environmental damage and the subsequent socio-economic

transformations in Akwesasne. It is important to understand the rapid socio-economic transformations of the community which had little, if any time, for the social systems to accommodate the changes. On the other hand, Segmentary Factional-Political Systems does reveal how segments of the population have capitalized on the environmental changes that had been brought about by the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

#### **4.4.4 Repercussions From The 1990 Civil Conflict**

By the late 80s, the contraband and gaming industries had become specialized corporations, for example the contraband industry employed wholesalers, runners, guards, bookkeepers, computer operators and electronic technicians (Akwesasne Notes 1994: 77). The income generated by these industries began to ripple across Akwesasne, as the community was slowly transformed from an historically egalitarian society into a stratified society (Akwesasne Notes 1994: 78). The community began to look like a cross between a ghetto and a thriving suburban tract with shacks, and modest band houses standing next to enormous affluent mansions with swimming pools and five-car garages (Akwesasne Notes 1994: 78). Accompanying the prosperity were social ailments such as substance abuse (especially crack cocaine), and an escalation in drug-related suicides (Akwesasne Notes 1994: 78).

After the closure of the gaming establishments in Akwesasne, the cigarette contraband industry became a leading employer for many Akwesasneons. An overwhelming dependence on this single industry made Akwesasne vulnerable to the classic cycles of economic boom-and-bust. When cigarette taxes plummeted, the contraband industries downsized and diversified into new markets of liquor, arms and drugs. These markets were much smaller requiring less labour power. Former staff from the cigarette industry found themselves unemployed, some turned to social assistance, others turned to more illicit activities of crime

such as drug trafficking and theft (Akwesasne Notes 1994: 79). By the end of 1992, Akwesasne was a community in a economic recession (Akwesasne Notes 1994: 79)

Akwesasronons agree that the Civil Conflict of 1990 "set back Mohawk demands" (Interviewee H: 1995).

1990 didn't help anybody, it split the community. Furthermore it assisted the divide and conquer tactics of New York State.[...] If we could have stood united, we would be in control of our jurisdiction today, not the tribal police (Interviewee E: 1995).

Reflecting this position is the following comment, "the Civil Conflict weakened, confused, and polarized the traditional ranks" (Interviewee B: 1995).

From the inception of the Great Law of Peace, the Peacemaker and Hiawatha had re-established order and rationality in the land of the Haudenosaunee. They had also warned the Haudenosaunee of the consequences of intolerance, narcissism, and antagonism. Emotions that would eventually culminate to an inability to rationalize and achieve the one mind of consensus. In order to avoid these shortcomings, the Great Law of Peace was balanced by a careful combination of peace, power and righteousness and the sacred ceremonies. During the Civil Conflict individual perceptions of inequality were further compounded by a physical and cultural environment under stress. During this period of time, the Kaianerenkowa, a philosophy and a practical political ideology which had survived and adapted to colonialism and warfare was on the verge of collapse or irrevocable transformation. For, if the Civil Conflict of 1990 demonstrated anything it was that the Great Law of Peace could no longer bring peace to the land of the Kanienkehaka, in fact it aggravated socio-political dissensions. This of course was due to individuals focusing on specific aspects of the Kaianerenkowa, thereby, removing the Great Law of Peace from its original teachings. In this environment communal interactions of the past, symbolized by the 'beaver bowl' were transformed from cooperative sharing endeavours into the individual's pursuit of the American dream. By the late eighties, the Kaianerenkowa, a philosophy that had been principally used by proponents of the Longhouse was moulded, and altered to suit various philosophical, economic, moral and political agendas.

In cases where its flexibility could not accommodate certain perspectives, it was simply replaced by non-Mohawk institutions such as the Indian Act or the American Indian Gaming Act.

During the Civil Conflict most Mohawks were expressing their "Mohawk rights" to conduct themselves as they wished in their territory, these "rights" were apparently granted by the Creator, the Great Law of Peace and numerous treaties. But throughout these events two concepts of the Great Law of Peace remained conspicuously absent - rationality (clear minded) and responsibility. Different from rights (which are often static social constructions), rationality and responsibility are patented after natural, social and spiritual elements. From this perspective, rationality and responsibility are founded upon wisdom, foresight and accountability. These values allowed the Confederacy to adapt to changes, while remaining true to peace, power and righteousness.

As the political debates and the rifts in the factions increased, the segments had become so polarized that each side was accusing the other of undermining the *Tewatotohie* and *Kashwentha* of the Mohawk Nation. Instead of applying the teachings of the unity of the good mind embodied in the Kaianerenkowa, the Great Law of Peace became an ideology justifying dissension and new political agendas. In this scenario, complementary dualistic forces of nature that in the past had been able to strengthen the Confederacy and the Mohawk Nation were no longer evident. In this type of environment, the Kaianerenkowa became an ideology justifying factions that were diametrically opposed in open, hostile conflict. To many Akwesasronons the Civil Conflict was an embodiment of the Peacemaker's warnings concerning the inability to have the "good mind". "1990 was a wake-up call. We need to address the social dissensions present in the community. Or else the next conflict could seriously threaten the integrity and sovereignty of the Mohawk nation at Akwesasne" (Lickers: 1996).

## **4.5 KANATSIOHAREKE**

In the spring of 1992, several Mohawk families migrated to a new Mohawk settlement called *Kanatsiohareke*. Led by uncondoled *rarontaron* Tommy Sakakwenionkwas Porter, the group consisted of about 8 families (including Porter's family) from Akwesasne. Ecological deterioration, economic problems and social ailments in Akwesasne were factors that drove the settlers from the community and inspired them to set in motion the "Philosophy Of The Corn", as mentioned earlier, a philosophy of relocation enacted to resolve political impasses. According to one informant "Kanatsiohareke is nothing out of the ordinary, for in the past when Mohawk communities got too big, they simply divided into new communities" (Interviewee H: 1995). Adding that in the past, "starting new communities was good for the Confederacy and the Mohawk nation, this process is still good today" (Interviewee H: 1995).

In 1992, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy reached a unanimous decision to support the establishment of a new Mohawk settlement in the Mohawk Valley. Located upstream from Schorarie Creek, where Standing Arrow and his followers had established their settlement in 1957, Kanatsiohareke was to be different from both the Standing Arrow relocation and Kanienkeh. Instead of utilizing a militant confrontational approach, the Confederacy and the Kanienkehaka nation opted for peaceful negotiations that would, in the end, be beneficial to all parties involved. The Mohawk nation eventually negotiated a financial agreement with the Mennonite church for \$1 million dollars in credit. The loans were then used to buy the Montgomery County Retirement Estate in upper New York State (Johansen 1993: 167). The Montgomery Estate was to become the site of the new Mohawk community known as Kanatsiohareke.

Located in mid-New York State, about 175 kilometres south-west of Akwesasne, near the villages of Canajoharie and Fonda, Kanatsiohareke is nestled in the hills of the Mohawk Valley, surrounded by ancient floodplains, wooded hills and the Mohawk River. The name Kanatsiohareke is given two definitions: the locality is named after the natural pot holes that are found in the river's bed (Fenton & Tooker 1978: 474); and it is also interpreted as "the clean

pot" (Akwasasne Notes 1995). Formerly a retirement community of over 300 acres, Kanatsiohareke now encompasses over three-hundred and fifty acres of houses, barns, wooded hills and farmland. The site is also of historical and archaeological significance for it is located near an original Mohawk village called *Canajoharie*. A settlement that had been destroyed during the American War of Independence (Fenton & Tooker 1978: 474). According to a local archaeologist "Kanatsiohareke abounds in evidence of centuries of Mohawk occupation of the territory. There are over six sites of Longhouse dwellings and two hundred more sites that have yet to be properly identified" (Smith: 1995).

The goals of the settlers at Kanatsiohareke are to establish a sustainable community, combining conventional Mohawk practices with modern conservation technology and spiritual teachings. The community is to be a haven where the Kanienkehaka are free to practise the Great Law of Peace and all their sacred ceremonies in the original teachings of the Mohawk language. The settlers comply with the ideologies found in the spiritual/holistic version of the Great Law of Peace and the *Kaiwio*, since all gaming activities are prohibited in the community (Akwasasne Notes 1994: 76).

During the spring of 1994, the Mohawks of Kanatsiohareke initiated the first phase of a sustainable agriculture plan. They planted more than 10,000 strawberry and potato plants; pruned fruit trees; sowed fields of hay and corn, and planted several gardens (Sakakwenionkwas: 1995). They also began renovation of a barn which now houses chickens, geese, pigs and horses. The settlers also diversified their economic base by constructing a Haudenosaunee/*Honkhonhwe* craft and book shop (Sakakwenionkwas: 1995).

The goals for 1996 are to diversify their agriculture crops with speciality/cash crops, to establish a *Honkhonhwe* Spiritual Centre, and possibly to participate in a cooperative aquaculture project with the University of New York (Sakakwenionkwas: 1995).

Kanatsiohareke is an attempt by Mohawks to empower themselves by fulfilling their responsibilities as members of the Kanienkehaka nation. Unfortunately this expression of sovereignty and responsibility "come at a price, these aren't concepts you can just talk about, in

order for sovereignty and responsibility to be successful, you have to become a living expression of them" (Lickers: 1995e). Kanatsiohareke is symptomatic of how difficult empowerment can be, "many of the families and supporters who had fought for so long for the establishment of this community, have either left or never came" (Interviewee F: 1995). Shortages of labour power complicate life in the community, "any attempt to go beyond simple renovations and the daily maintenances of a farm are nearly impossible" (Interviewee F: 1995). Overall, the relocation has been very good for the Mohawk nation. The settlers at Kanatsiohareke have received an enormous amount of national and international support, the challenge ahead appears to be convincing the Mohawks themselves about the validity of Kanatsiohareke:

With all these offers of assistance, one can't help put ask, are we worthy? In the past we never heard people's cheers, we were never encouraged to pursue our dreams, we were told to conform. Today things are different there's support from all over, unfortunately, this is something we aren't use to, we are not supposed be happy, we are supposed to self destruct (Interviewee F: 1995).

Replacing dependency and acculturation with empowerment and cultural awareness is a long and arduous task for "it takes time to heal social wounds" (Interviewee F: 1995).

#### **4.5.1 A Segmentary Factional-Political System's Analysis Of Kanatsiohareke**

In the next section Nicholas's five characteristics of Segmentary Factional-Political Systems will be utilized in order to examine the Kanatsiohareke social movement.

**a) Factions Are Conflict Groups:** Since there was no resistance to Kanatsiohareke in Akwesasne, and the social movement did not involve any political mobilization, social dissensions, dialectism, or fractional shifts, the event can not be considered a social conflict. However, it was noted that the migration to Kanatsiohareke was composed of members of the Longhouse who supported a spiritual/holistic interpretation of the Great Law of Peace.

However, no Mohawk is prohibited from the community as long as she/he is willing to accept the group's interpretation of the Great Law of Peace.

**b) Factions Are Political Groups:** Kanatsiohareke could be interpreted as a political movement by the fact that it was a reaction to the Civil Conflict of 1990. The rifts created by 1990 ran so deep, that many of the settlers perceived the social dissensions as permanent. This delusion with the reality at Akwesasne unified the participants under a similar belief, which encouraged them to contemplate the viability of Kanatsiohareke. The similarities with Kanienkeh and Kanatsiohareke begin and end with the fact that they were both applications of the "Philosophy Of The Corn". Unlike Kanienkeh, the "Philosophy Of The Corn", and the Great Law of Peace provided the settlers of Kanatsiohareke with philosophies and political systems exemplifying *skennen*. From this perspective the Kaianerenkowa provided the Mohawk nation and the settlers of Kanatsiohareke with a structure permitting them to recognize, acknowledge and achieve a settlement equitable to all parties involved. In this environment, there was no organized conflict over the use of public power since there was an acknowledgment of both Mohawk and non-Mohawk political and judicial systems.

**c) Factions Are Not Corporate Groups:** Nicholas stated earlier that verbal or physical confrontations "rarely occurred in traditional societies because disputes or irrevocable differences were solved by the relocation or secession of a group from the main body" (Nicholas 1968: 28). This is exactly what occurred at Kanatsiohareke, as one segment of the population, conscious of the dissensions and social rifts in the community, sought to alleviate these tensions by enacting the "Philosophy Of The Corn". In this scenario, the settlers of Kanatsiohareke, were attempting to alleviate political duress and return the political process to consensus. Therefore, the "Philosophy Of The Corn", and the Great Law of Peace emphasized the positive aspects of diversity by encouraging fragmentation and relocation. The "Philosophy Of The Corn" is an age old-ideology addressing specific issues as social dissension and



consensus, thus it can be interpreted as a functionally differentiated socio-political construction. However, upon closer examination the implementation of the "Philosophy Of The Corn" indicates that factionalism was still very much present in Akwesasne, even during times of relative peace. Composed entirely of supporters of the holistic/spiritual interpretation of the Great Law of Peace, the settlement of Kanatsiohareke indicates that factionalism in Akwesasne was permanent, and only temporarily alleviated by emigration.

**d) Faction Members Are Recruited By A Leader:** The most prominent actor associated with Kanatsiohareke was Tommy *Sakakwenionkwas* Porter. *Sakakwenionkwas* is described as "a man of peace exuding a quiet charisma" (Vachon: 1995). Porter was throughout the five events a leading advocate for the spiritual/holistic version of the Great Law of Peace. This position along with his personal disillusionment with Akwesasne, contributed to the selection of Porter as *Kanatsiohareke's* leader. Ironically, Porter himself stated that he never wanted to lead the movement for he felt that he was not ready (*Sakakwenionkwas*: 1995). Again, Mohawk politics put a unique twist on this event. As an uncondoled *raron* of twenty years, Porter was considered a leader in the community, as a Haudenosaunee leader he is first and foremost a servant of the people. Thus, when the people (women, elders, and children) requested that *Sakakwenionkwas* lead the move to Kanatsiohareke, Porter complied with the wishes of the people and facilitated the migration.

During the recruitment process *Sakakwenionkwas* was only partially responsible for recruiting personnel, although his status as uncondoled *raron* did provide him with some political prominence in the community, the structures of the Great Law of Peace prevented him from mobilizing political power in order to attract more settlers. In fact Porter's own son and daughter never participated in the migration, choosing to remain behind in Akwesasne. Those who chose to join the movement did so on their own accord, perhaps disillusioned like Porter was with the current state of Akwesasne and encouraged by the prospect of a better future somewhere within their ancestral lands.

**e) Faction Members Are Recruited On Diverse Principles:** The establishment of Kanatsiohareke was founded upon two principles, the persisting social dissension in Akwesasne; and, a vision of a better, cleaner future for Mohawks somewhere in their ancestral lands. The persisting social dissensions that had been present throughout the Civil Conflict of 1990, were only displaced or submerged following the end of the movement. One observer noted that even after 1990, "there was still much distrust in the community" (Interviewee G: 1995). Many of the social problems evident throughout the Civil Conflict, such as the contraband industry, the substance abuse and the violence "have become a way of life for many Akwesasronons" (Akwesasne Notes 1994: 75). The persistence of this type of environment encouraged some Akwesasronons to look elsewhere, when Kanatsiohareke became a reality, many Longhouse supporters perceived this chance as an "opportunity to live the way we want to" (Interviewee B: 1995). By returning to their homeland the Mohawks could make Kanatsiohareke a cultural stronghold, "it was an opportunity to renew and revitalize the Mohawk culture" (Interviewee G: 1995), without any of the physical or social pollution that was occurring in Akwesasne.

#### **4.5.2 Sustainability**

The interesting phenomenon about Kanatsiohareke is the fact that notwithstanding its association with the proponents of the spiritual/holistic interpretation of the Great Law of Peace, the movement did not create any immediate social dissension in Akwesasne, for example:

Personal feelings aside, I have no problem with the resettlement of our ancestral Mohawk lands. We are Mohawks, and we have the right to do so, just as we did at Moss Lake. If they can reestablish a valuable community it can only be valuable to us as a Mohawk people. They are exercising their rights, their Kaianerenkowa. It doesn't hurt, there are no negative effects (Interviewee E: 1995).

This is not to say that there are no concerns over Kanatsiohareke, one member raised the following question concerning the viability and sustainability of the community, "Do they

really want to be successful? How dependent are they upon external loans?" (Interviewee H: 1995). While the loans have been repaid, the goal of a sustainable Mohawk community remains elusive. Kanatsiohareke will never be sustainable until a large infusion of permanent labour power and capital is invested in the community. Without a permanent and able bodied work force, the community can do very little else than meet the needs of everyday farm chores. Projects such as renovations, clearing and sowing fields require human labour, time, and machinery, resources that Kanatsiohareke is sorely lacking. One can not help but note the irony of Kanatsiohareke versus Akwesasne. The first with an abundance of natural resources and spiritual significance, and a shortage of labour power, and the latter, with an excess in labour power, and a lack (or polluted source) of natural resources.

The founding principle of the "Philosophy Of The Corn" and the Kaianerenkowa are clearly evident at Kanatsiohareke, but they are once again different from the other social movements such as Kanienkeh. Unable to achieve consensus at Akwesasne the settlers departed from the community to establish *tewatohie* and *kashwentha* in another area. Four years later, the close ties between Kanatsiohareke, other Mohawk communities, the Confederacy, and even the international community are evident. Indicating that Kanatsiohareke is indeed a success.

Last, the settlers at Kanatsiohareke are not advocating a return to their ancestral technologies, they recognize the inroads, and the possible contributions that contemporary technology can bring to the community. According to the settlers a proper balance of culture, spiritualism, economy, politics, technology and hard work can preserve and revitalize the Kanienkehaka way of life, as a suitable alternative for the late twentieth century and the twenty first century.

## **4.6 CONCLUSIONS**

In this the last section of this chapter, we will highlight the correlation between Nicholas's five characteristics of Segmentary Factional-Political Systems and the post World-War II arena of Akwesasne, and the role of the Great Law of Peace in and the five social movements.

### **4.6.1 Nicholas's Five Characteristics Of Segmentary Factional-Political Systems' Theory In Akwesasne**

In the following five characteristics we will determine what purposes (if any) social fragmentation played in Haudenosaunee communities, and if the Great Law of Peace had any role in the factional politics of Akwesasne.

Beyond stating that factions are conflict groups performing, "essential political functions such as stimulating social change" (Nicholas 1966: 51); and, "in situations of rapid social change, factions frequently arise-or become more clearly defined because factional organization is better adapted to competition in changing situations than are the political groups than are characteristic of stable societies" (Nicholas 1966: 54). Nicholas was unable, or unwilling to recognize the possible benefits of factionalism. For he perceived factions as social anomalies disrupting 'social norms' or 'social equilibriums'. Hence, factions could not contribute to social stability. Nicholas's perspective created inconsistencies and ambiguities in his definitions (e.g., charisma, factional permanence), especially as fragmentation applies to Haudenosaunee communities. In our examination of the five characteristics of Segmentary Factional-Political Systems' Theory we will attempt to address these inconsistencies.

**a) Factions Are Conflict Groups:** During the mid to late twentieth century an increasing presence of external governments (New York State and Canada) in Mohawk politics, associated with an improbability of relocation, resulted in a dualistic response to the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway. Interpreting any resistance to the construction of the

St. Lawrence Seaway as futile, the Band Councils sought financial restitution for the environmental damages brought about by the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway. This conciliatory strategy was to challenge the agencies of the St. Lawrence Seaway in the judicial systems of their respective countries. The Longhouse proponents interpreted this position as passive and jeopardizing Mohawk sovereignty. From this perspective, the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway by its officials demonstrated a Euro-American-Canadian indifference towards Kanienkehaka concerns. Thus, the Longhouse proposed an alternative strategy to the Band Council's. Supported with traditionalist concepts, this pro-assertion of the Mohawk identity was espoused by Standing Arrow, and the 1968 bridge protesters. Out of the two events, it would be the Standing Arrow movement that would be regarded as most effective, especially by the younger segment of the Longhouse in Akwesasne. Standing Arrow's movement would lead to a re-application of the "Philosophy Of The Corn" at both Kanienkeh and Kanatsiohareke.

**b) Factions Are Political Groups:** Throughout the four social movements (Kanatsiohareke is excluded since there was no organized opposition to the relocation), the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe and the Longhouse at Akwesasne (KNCC) were the principal political organizations involved in the political arena of Akwesasne. Although many members of the MCA participated in the five social movements, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne emerged as a distinct political organization only during the Civil Conflict.

The Longhouse which had been a leading critique of the Band Council system, was able to remain a cohesive unit until the 1980s, when the internal divisions (apparent throughout the five social movements) exploded into two competing groups. The Longhouse contingent promoting gambling and contraband enterprises in Akwesasne explained that the Great Law of Peace did not specifically prohibit gaming activities. From this perspective gambling and contraband activities were one possible avenue towards economic self-sufficiency (Gramza 1995: 21). The Longhouse supporters opposing gambling activities declared that these acts

were inherently immoral and materialistic. They supported their positions on the grounds that both the spiritual/holistic version of the Kaianerenkowa and the *Kaiwiio* prohibited these types of activities. By 1990, the rift between the two groups had grown so great that former strategies of unification, for example, the use of the Treaty of Canandaigua at Raquette Point, was ten years later perceived by the gaming proponents of the Longhouse, as a treasonous act undermining Mohawk sovereignty. Political polarization was not limited to the Longhouse. By 1990, the two Band Councils in Akwesasne, openly opposed one another on the issue of gambling in the community. As noted earlier, the "Neutrals" can not be considered a faction since there was no attempt by any of these members to mobilize resources or select a leader.

**c) Factions Are Not Corporate Groups:** Nicholas also observed that factional coalitions often occurred between leaders of modest influence, he called these cliques. Cliques and factional coalitions were apparent throughout the five social movements. These coalitions in Akwesasne appeared to be most effective when uniting against a perceived external threat such as the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

The 1968 bridge protest coalition could be interpreted as a clique of several leaders, because it was only through this alliance, consisting of rival factions, that the Mohawks were able to present a united front, and achieve a victory over the St. Lawrence Seaway organizations. The unity displayed during the opposition to the construction of the Seaway demonstrated the unifying force of the Great Law of Peace, "in any confrontation the Mohawks unite, and the full force of the Kaianerenkowa's message and the energy of all Mohawks is brought together" (Alfred 1995: 87).

Cliques also occurred during the Civil Conflict of 1990 as new leadership alliances were created along similar economic views. One example of this type of clique was the 1990 alliance between the proponents of gambling, including the Warriors' Society, the casino owners and some members of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe. Ongoing shifts in alliances, and temporary coalitions created political factions so polarized, that they eventually became diametrically

opposed in hostile conflict in 1990. Nowhere was factional impermanence more evident than during the Civil Conflict, where the Longhouse's unification at Raquette Point resulted in a polarization of the Longhouse in the next event. During the Civil Conflict alliances were made along new matrixes, uniting former opponents under similar philosophical, economical and political beliefs. Therefore, one could assume that the presence of dichotomous factions was a permanent component of Mohawk political systems, while the factions internal components/constituents shifted and responded to various forms of external and internal stressors (perceptions, environment, economics).

**d) Faction Members Are Recruited By A Leader:** Nicholas's assumption in factional allegiances and leadership structures is illustrated by the following quote, "members can be connected to a faction only through the activity of a leader, since the unit has no corporate existence or clear single principle of recruitment" (Nicholas 1968: 28). An assumption that is somewhat inapplicable to the social movements of Kanienkeh and Kanatsiohareke. If we were to label *Kakwirakeron* and *Tekarontake* as the most notable spokesperson/leader(s) in Kanienkeh, then their departure would have resulted in a collapse or a total disintegration of the community. A phenomenon that never occurred, because Kanienkeh was founded upon communal governance, and the *Kaianerenkowa*. This decentralized participatory democracy and power allocation permitted the residents of Kanienkeh to maintained their socio-political system, even when certain key figures departed from their community. The social movement of Kanatsiohareke also highlight's the leadership structure of the Longhouse. For example, when requested by members of the Longhouse to lead the relocation at Kanatsiohareke, Tommy *Sakakwenionkwas* Porter acquiesced, knowing full well that his status as an uncondoled *rarontaron* did not permit him to recruit any members. What Kanienkeh, and Kanatsiohareke demonstrate is that leadership "causes" in the Akwesasne Longhouse were monitored by safeguards established in the Great Law of Peace. These safeguards included transparency, responsibility and accountability.

The presence of the Longhouse women throughout the five social movements was unmistakable, from the Clan Mother's impeachment of Standing Arrow during the resistance to the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway, to their active opposition to gambling activities in 1990. In the latter event, a group of Longhouse women, including Mohawk Clan Mother's unable to motivate the Kanienkeheka Nation Council of Chiefs, took matters into their own hands and opted to voice their concerns over the gambling enterprises in Akwesasne by erecting roadside protest blockades. Their assertion of sovereignty, in turn, promoted the unification of numerous Mohawk women, of several different denominations, under a general banner of gambling opposition. Although it appears that the women of the Longhouse were often at the vanguard of political mobilization in Akwesasne, by 1990, Mohawk women of all denominations were involved in the community's socio-political arena.

**e) Faction Members Are Recruited On Diverse Principles:** During the first three social movements, the leaders of the Longhouse mobilized a series of ideas and concepts along the lines of kinship, clanship, a collective history, a common ethnicity, cultural ties to the environment, spiritualism, a revitalization of the Mohawk identity, emotions, and the role of external manipulants(New York State and Canada) in Mohawk politics. Nicholas argues that these social factors are mobilized and emphasized and made effective through the authority structure of the leader (Nicholas 1968: 47). Therefore, "since a faction leader draws support from any and all available sources, his/her following may cross-cut normal party, class, or castes lines" (Lewellen 1983: 109). One example of membership encroachment was the factional coalitions of the 1990 Civil Conflict.

The multi-jurisdictions in Akwesasne may have contributed to the lack or poorly structured safeguards apparent in both the Longhouse structure and the Band Council systems. However, the safeguard of *Tewatatowie* (sovereignty) prevented Mohawk leaders from consolidating resources and centralising political power. The actions of Standing Arrow, and Loran Thompson, occurred without the consent of the Longhouse, but they were nevertheless



tolerated because they were sovereign Kanienkehaka individuals. In Akwesasne, individual and collective responsibilities/rights are the founding components of Akwesasronons.

#### **4.6.2 The Great Law of Peace, Social Fragmentation, And Five Social Movements in Akwesasne**

By 1980, many of the unifying ideals in the Longhouse (e.g. culture, ethnicity) proved irrelevant when pertaining to the Band Council supporters. The latter's identification with Christian sects, American culture and a high level of acculturation (recognizing that this did not apply to all Christian Mohawks) rekindled factions and social conflicts in Akwesasne. While such concepts as sovereignty, nationhood, and power gained in significance, concepts such as solidarity, sharing, and rationality, were uprooted or discarded. Therefore, it appears that a distorted and fragmented Great Law of Peace exacerbated social dissension in Akwesasne in lieu of alleviating it.

## **5. CONCLUSION THE GREAT LAW OF PEACE AND FACTIONALISM IN AKWESASNE**

### **5.1 Reviewing Our Goals And Objectives**

In the first chapter we stated that the aim of this thesis was to make a contribution on three different levels: 1) describing changes and transformations in the Great Law of Peace; 2) explaining the concrete and spurious effects of the Kaianenerenkowa within the socio-political arena of Akwesasne throughout five social events; and 3) examining the contemporary significance of the Great Law of Peace in the community. In order to answer these three transformations we developed the following working question and hypothesis. How is Great Law of Peace related to factionalism in Akwesasne? We believe that the Great Law of Peace is a complex-adaptive system. Its dynamic flexibility allows the Kaianenerenkowa to be used as a political construction to serve the needs of various (and sometimes opposing) Mohawk political groups. The goal of this chapter is to examine whether we have been able to achieve our objectives.

### **5.2 Factionalism and the Great Law of Peace in Akwesasne**

Through his studies on Amerindian society, Nicholas became aware of the pattern of factionalism in Amerindian communities.

Among [Amerindians] the pattern of factions is certainly deep-seated. In some cases two factions have survived for generations, [...] Opposition seems to be the main reason for their existence, their policies and declared grounds for opposition shifting with the circumstances. In some cases any cause which is espoused by one will immediately be resisted by the other (Nicholas 1968: 54).

From this observation we could also note that the Kaianenerenkowa in Akwesasne was itself a factional philosophy centred upon the core values of peace, power, righteousness, accountability and responsibility. However, beyond noting these "fragmentational tendencies" which could in some social context perform, "essential political functions such as stimulating social change" (Nicholas 1966: 51), Nicholas never expanded upon the idea of factions as

contributing to social stability. However, the political-anthropologist Lewellen (1983) observed that factions can be more adaptive than conventional politics in organizing and channelling political conflict, especially during periods of rapid social change (Lewellen 1983: 109). A specialized version of Segmentary Factional-Political Systems combined with a historical and contemporary analysis of Akwesasne and the Great Law of Peace demonstrates that factions and conflicts have become a constant part of Akwesasne's socio-political arena. It appears that factions within Akwesasne's political arena have continued to exist over such an extended period of time with neither side winning a decisive victory. This characteristic has created an environment where conflicts became increasingly ritualized, gamelike, and somewhat institutionalized (Lewellen 1983: 109-110). The following quote by Richter (1992) compliments Lewellen's observation and illustrates how fragments are perceived as natural and integral components of the Haudenosaunee system.

What kept the universe of political particles generally in orbit around a common nucleus was a shared belief in the ideal of consensus and in the spiritual power that comes from alliance with others [...] With no accepted coercion in this democratic near-anarchy, nonstate society, civility and respect was a unifying bond. (Richter 1992: 44)

Richter's quote highlights the strength of the Kaianerenkowa; the strength is demonstrated by a flexibility, a capacity to adapt and overcome tremendous odds without leading the community into total social dissension.

The Great Law of Peace is a political and philosophical tool recognizing pluralistic and complex interactions with and in-between natural and social worlds. From this perspective there are two principal levels of factionalism. The first level of factionalism occurs when a community is no longer able to achieve consensus, thus, the relocation of a disgruntled contingent often contributed to re-stabilizing the social system. The second level of factionalism occurs when two different perspectives are able to mutually co-habit the same arena, without sharing the same outlooks. In this type of environment, factions can serve as a monitoring agents, questioning the existing power structures and even providing alternative(s) to the status quo

(e.g., the role of the Longhouse in Akwesasne's politics). As illustrated in the historical section (Chapter II) these options have provided the Haudenosaunee with various political strategies capable of adapting to changing social and natural environments. Despite the presence of any condoled *royane* and/or *rarontaron*, the Kanienkehaka Nation Council of Chiefs continues to represent the Longhouse supporters in Akwesasne in 1996. Many Akwesasronons believe that the system's persistence is indicative of the Kaianerenkowa's adaptability.

The Kaianerenkowa's ultimate goal was and remains the prevention of war and bloodshed. For war is a violent resolution to conflict. Peace, on the other hand, is not the absence of conflict, or political disaccord, but rather the ability to resolve these conflicts and challenges without violence (e.g., with consensus). The ever-present social dissension in each movement in Akwesasne is an indication that the resolutions to conflicts in the community have become predominantly violent. However, peaceful solutions to conflict do exist, the 1968 bridge protest, and the relocation to Kanatsiohareke, are two examples of a successful application of peace as a means to resolve conflict without violence. Facing overwhelming odds the Haudenosaunee Confederacy often amended the Kaianerenkowa in order to preserve the integrity of the system of governance. These changes would appear to indicate that the Great Law of Peace is dynamic and flexible enough to address the contemporary challenges facing the Kanienkehaka Nation at Akwesasne. However, beyond the sphere of a defense weapon against external threat, "the full force of the Kaianerenkowa's message and the energy of all Mohawks [were] brought together" (Alfred 1995: 87), the Great Law of Peace never became a unifying socio-political ideal in Akwesasne. During times of relative socio-political stability the communal aspects of the Great Law of Peace were disregarded as people pursued their own goals, thereby negating all attempts at achieving some form of consensus in the community.

It appears that the Haudenosaunee Confederacy guided by the Great Law of Peace, responded relatively well in the face of external threats, such as the American Revolution. But the Longhouse and the Great Law of Peace did not respond as well when threatened by internal dissension, such as Raquette Point and the Civil Conflict. Fundamental transgressions

against the Kaianerenkowa such as the raising of arms and the incapacity to achieve the "good mind", divided the Longhouse into proponents and opponents of militancy and an aggressive assertion of the Mohawk identity. These philosophical differences also gave way to two different interpretations of the Great Law of Peace; the holistic/spiritual version, and the political version. The greatest point of contention within the contemporary Longhouse of Akwesasne, apart from the role (if any) of the War-Chief(s) appears to be the concepts of *Kashastensera* in the Great Law of Peace. This characteristic would indicate that there is some historical continuance in Haudenosaunee politics since these issues were also present during the American War of Independence.

The modern debate pertaining to the Great Law of Peace has now become a socio-political and economic argument over which interpretation is the most appropriate mode of empowerment and autonomy for Akwesasronons. The fact that the Great Law of Peace can be used to address these issues indicates both its strengths and weaknesses. Unfortunately, the Great Law of Peace is compromised because its complex-adaptive system can only function in a holistic and dynamic environment, something which isn't apparent in Akwesasne or in the Longhouse in Akwesasne. For the two competing Longhouse contingents appear to be stretching the Kaianerenkowa to its limits. Divested of its flexibility, and slowly transformed into a static entity by some, the complex-adaptability of the Kaianerenkowa no longer demonstrates a capacity to handle modern-day problems.

The implementation of the Band Council system by both the American and Canadian governments has only contributed to increasing social rifts and political tensions in Akwesasne. The installation of the elective band council systems could be interpreted as a form of foreign intervention in Mohawk affairs. From their inception the Band Council systems increased the political divisions present in Akwesasne. Two different but similar Band Councils in Akwesasne contributed to a rise in autocratic, bureaucratic and centralized power structures in the community. It was also noted that implementation of these "foreign" systems in Akwesasne compromised the communal interactions and socio-political safeguards that were still in

existence in the community. Furthermore, the presence of the Band Council systems encouraged those in opposition, the Longhouse supporters, to mobilize against the community's central power and create a coalition challenging the existing allocation of power. A phenomenon evident from 1950 until the late 1980s when the groups allied themselves along similar ideological and economical philosophies. In the early eighties cooperative strategies emerged between the three forms of government in Akwesasne. However upon closer examination, the creation of the Tri-Council was successful because many individuals in key positions within the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe and the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne were favourable to the Longhouse.

The failures of both governments (Band Council, Longhouse) were compounded by cultural, economic and political environmental stressors. These stressors became prominent during the Mohawk resistance to the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway. During this social movement two types of political organization were evident in Akwesasne: the Band Council system(s) supporting the electoral, democratic process espoused by the surrounding Euro-American/Canadian governments; and the Kanienkeheka Nations Council of Chiefs supporting the participatory process espoused in the Great Law of Peace and by the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Both systems appear to be dedicated to empowering Akwesasronons and overcoming the challenges facing their community. However, their different political strategies contributed to the tension and social dissension evident throughout the five events. Neither process is "wrong"; they are simply indicative of the pluralistic decision-making-processes permitted and recognized by the Great Law of Peace.

From a Haudenosaunee perspective, the removal of the "heart - the way of being good" from the Kaianerenkowa distorts its ultimate achievement of *tewatohie* through *skennen* (the active process of sovereignty through peace). Therefore, it appears that it is the proponents of the Kaianerenkowa who contributed to social fragmentation in Akwesasne, by highlighting or adapting certain elements of the Great Law of Peace to correspond to their own interpretations while neglecting its holistic approach. However, by the late eighties, the Kaianerenkowa, a

socio-political tool that had been overwhelmingly used by proponents of the Longhouse, was moulded, altered, and amalgamated to suit various philosophical, economic, moral and political agendas in Akwesasne. This division of the Kaianerenkowa compromises its holistic, communal aspects, and jeopardizes its complex-adaptive system. For example, past safeguards (communal responsibility and accountability) were established in the Great Law of Peace, in order to address the social realities of fragmentation and social dissension. When new situations arose amendments were made by the community, nation and Confederacy. It appears that within the contemporary Mohawk society of Akwesasne, these safeguards or amendment processes are either no longer existent, or lack contemporary validity.

### **5.3 The Philosophy Of The Corn**

In Akwesasne, the crisis of faith in the Catholic church; the implementation of an elected system of government; economic transformations; the perpetual presence of non-Mohawk governments in Kanienkehaka affairs; and the environmental transformations brought about by the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway, contributed to another shift in political strategy (Alfred 1995:). The construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway constituted a transgression against the legislative rights and territorial integrity of the Mohawk nation, thereby displacing the former relationship of 'relative confidence' in the American and Canadian governments, "back to a much older alternative ideology predicated on basic and consistent assertions of independent nationhood" (Alfred 1995: 67). The Longhouse adopted two solutions to these contemporary challenges; the Kaianerenkowa and the "Philosophy Of The Corn". A declining quality of life within Akwesasne persuaded some of the Longhouse followers to initiate the "Philosophy Of The Corn". The first attempt was made was by Standing Arrow and his followers. Although Standing Arrow and his followers were successful at establishing a temporary settlement near Schoharie Creek, their eventual removal from the site, and a return to a disgruntled Longhouse in Akwesasne illustrated the challenges associated with this type of movement. Alfred explains:

This was the mid-20th century, and the former concentric hunting zones of Kanienke was limited to small, fully occupied reservations within the vast expanse of their former lands. Rather than being able to relieve the pressure of political conflict by out-migrating to new villages, Mohawk leaders were forced to choose sides within their community, and to live with the divisions (Alfred 1994: 195).

Although short lived, Standing Arrow's protest did establish the groundwork for future migrations such as Kanienkeh, and Kanatsiohareke. These social movements ranged in ideology, from the success of a forceful assertion of Mohawk sovereignty at Kanienkeh, to the establishment of a peaceful, cooperative assertion of the Kanienkehaka identity at Kanatsiohareke. While highly successful as a physical relocation in both Kanienkeh, and Kanatsiohareke the "Philosophy Of The Corn" only temporarily alleviated the social dissensions, and political rifts present in Akwesasne.

Benightedness and rival political systems have contributed to the contemporary dichotomous versions of the Kaianerenkowa in Akwesasne. These contradictory interpretations of the Great Law of Peace are used to invalidate the competing Longhouse factions and their supporters in the community. However, neither version of the Great Law of Peace can reproduce an exact replica of the lore and traditions, since they were inevitably influenced by their context - colonialism, warfare, epidemics, amendments (or lack of), American-Canadian politics, Amerindian influences, and individual renditions. "Individual contributions to the Kaianerenkowa contributed to digression, or modifications to the rendition of the Great Law of Peace. In effect, no version escapes the influence of its author" (Dickson-Gilmour: 1993). In the late twentieth century, only one man, Jake *Tehanetorens* Thomas can recite the Great Law of Peace (including the Condolence Council Ceremony) in its entirety and in four of the five languages (including English) of the Confederacy (Gramza 1995: 20). Therefore, the Haudenosaunee themselves:

Are not entirely sure what the Kaianerenkowa is, or what traditional laws are [...] Even when you have the law, then you have to interpret it. The interpreter of the Great Law, everyone wants to be that guy. They'd become the Supreme Court of the Iroquois Confederacy (Leo Henry cited in Gramza 1995: 20).



Consequently, one of the greatest challenges facing Akwesasronons is the distortion of the Great Law of Peace, from a living, adapting document into a encoded legislative document: "the Kaianerenkowa is discredited by individuals who capitalize on the words not the ways" (Interviewee H: 1995). These individuals, in turn, utilize the Great Law of Peace to mobilize constituents and further their own personal aims at the price of Mohawk unity or communal cohesion. A lack of knowledge concerning the Kaianerenkowa and a recent failure to amend the Kaianerenkowa has in turn promoted, "contrasting versions of the Great Law of Peace and diminishes its flexibility"(Interviewee G: 1995). When, the amendments stopped the Mohawks became reticent to alternatives (Interviewee H: 1995). The indoctrination of the Great Law of Peace with its various features compromises the complex adaptive-system of the Kaianerenkowa:

In recent years the wampums have become the sacred rules. They are complete as they are, they are the law. Nobody is willing to weigh the law, no one is willing to question this religious conviction that now overbears the Great Law of Peace (Interviewee H: 1995).

This development affected the interpretation of certain symbols and concepts of the Kaianerenkowa. For example the present forms of *Kashwentha* and *Tewatatohie* can only be attained with power. Without peace, righteousness, and responsibility to balance them out, *Kashwentha* and *Tewatatohie* have demonstrated, "an inability to exist without a resort to force such as economic sanction or massive armed intervention" (Venables 1989: 126). Therefore, *Kashwentha* and *Tewatatohie* do not carry the same connotations as they once did in the Kaianerenkowa (perhaps this is a reflection of modern times in Akwesasne). But the fact remains that the Great Law of Peace is unable to unite the Kanienkehaka. Distorted from a delicate but dynamic equilibrium the Kaianerenkowa can now only contribute to social dissension in Akwesasne. Ironically the question for an "authentic version of the Great Law of Peace", and unity in the land of the Haudenosaunee, will require cooperation and consensus between all members of the Confederacy.

Some chiefs might have to ask themselves whether they're willing to give up their own titles to restore the Confederacy, just as the pro-gambling people might have to ask whether they can live without casinos for the sake of tradition [or vice-versa whether gambling opponents are ready to live with casinos in their community to preserve the economic integrity of the community] " (Leo Henry cited in Gramza 1995: 20).

At the dawn of the twentieth century this outcome seems unlikely (but not impossible) for a community still healing from a civil conflict.

#### **5.4 Governance In Akwesasne**

We have seen that in the past, the Great Law of Peace proved quite resilient and remarkably adaptable, to times of tremendous social duress. Amendments such as mass adoptions, Pine Tree Chiefs, and the *Kaiwiio* were made to the Great Law of Peace without transforming its inherent core values, preserving the peace and the territorial integrity of the Haudenosaunee. Likewise, political processes such as the "Philosophy Of The Corn" and the *Gushwentha* recognized that both nature and society were diverse and complex. Both these systems attempted to recognize and deal with external and internal differences by respecting and accepting these variations. A failure by both Longhouse contingents to recognize the transformations of the past has contributed to a fragmentary interpretation of the Great Law of Peace.

Mohawk politics were once governed by the belief that a society that governed less governs best. Consensus in this type of political system implied a "delicate" socio-political equilibrium. In Akwesasne a resort to power indicates social turbulence and may be symptomatic of a failure to achieve peace and consensus. Nowhere was this more evident than in 1990, when the Great Law of Peace became a social construction validating individual and group agendas but was unable to bring an end to the conflict. Numerous breaches of the Great Law of Peace were apparent throughout the five social movements, but the greatest travesty occurred in 1990 when Akwesasronons used the weapons of war against their own kin and eventually killed two Akwesasronons.

Without safeguards (or compromised safeguards) the Great Law of Peace is no longer able to address the needs of the various factions and political elements present within Akwesasne. The challenge for the Haudenosaunee is to recognize that their political tradition(s) contain key elements that are crucial to the integrity of the system, such as a differentiation of gender roles, clan representation, direct participation, pluralism, and consensus-based decision-making. Furthermore, the Kaianerenkowa contains values and principles which must be integrated into every-day practices and politics, in order that the system may function properly. For the most part, the Longhouse supporters have focused on superficial structural aspects of the Kaianerenkowa and have neglected the importance of the inherent values - the heart of the Kaianerenkowa. Consequently, the social web that use to link Akwesasronons to their clans, their kin, their nation, their spirituality, their culture, their language have been severely weakened. The challenges for the Mohawks of Akwesasne appears to be to find a way to convert the positive energy that is created when they come together against a common external threat and somehow transfer this unifying energy internally to times of peace as in times of change.

In the past, a flexible and comprehensive Kaianerenkowa contributed to a strong, dynamic Confederacy, able to withstand numerous changes. The modern Great Law of Peace with its codification and specializations, is fragmented and distorted from its true goal. Overtaxed distorted, and misinterpreted, the Great Law of Peace can no longer contribute to consensus and peace in the community. In fact, some Akwesasronons believed that a general lack of knowledge pertaining to the Kaianerenkowa contributes to factionalism in the community, and the social duress still evident today (Interviewee C: 1995).

The political challenge at hand for the Mohawk nation at Akwesasne is to construct a system of governance that will give a voice to those who are now silent. This system will have to rekindle such concepts as connectivity, cohesion, empowerment, participation, responsibility and accountability. The present structures in both systems lack proper safeguards or a social web of accountability and responsibility. Thus, without these safeguards they fail to represent

the common interest of the community. The challenge is to develop a complex-adaptive system protecting the *skennen*, *tewatatotahie* and *kashwentha* of the Kanienkehaka nation as a whole, yet, flexible enough to address contemporary issues, such as economic empowerment and the existence of the Mohawk nation in the global village. One possible alternative mentioned by several Akwesasronons is the amalgamation of all three governing bodies in Akwesasne into one unit. In this system the Kanienkehaka Nation Council of Chiefs would deal with foreign affairs, much like the Kanienkehaka council had previously done in the Confederacy. The KNCC new responsibilities would include external diplomacy with all nations Amerindian and non-Amerindian alike. The two band councils would unite, thereby eliminating overlapping services and administer social, environmental, and economical services. This governing body would resemble a state/province-municipal like government.

Perhaps the Great Law of Peace carries the solution(s) to new forms of governance in Akwesasne. After all it was the Mohawk Nation who initially accepted the words of the Peacemaker. It was the Peacemaker's message of the "Great Law of Peace which made us great in the past... I don't think anyone has introduced anything superior to the Great Law of Peace" (Interviewee E: 1995). And perhaps the Kaianerenkowa is not the appropriate socio-political solution for Akwesasne for the twenty first century. However, before either solution is implemented Akwesasronons should not overlook the "heart" of the Kaianerenkowa - "goodness of the mind, goodness of the heart, goodness of the soul results in peace". This modest philosophy may be enough to reconnect Akwesasronons and their Haudenosaunee brethen, to their social web - their kin, their clans, their nation, their culture, their land, their spirituality, to Turtle Island, and to the global village.

**NIA:WEN**

## GLOSSARY

**Akwesasne:** Land where the drumming (mating) partridge is found. Place of the rushing waters.

**Ahnawate Tsilotoniate:** Raquette-Point, a peninsula located near the GM foundry in Akwesasne, and administered by the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe.

**Amerindian:** The historian Dickason explains how foreign labels have resulted in a general name for New World peoples. "Although the term "Indian" is recognized as originating in a case of mistaken identity, it has come to be widely accepted, particularly by the aboriginal peoples themselves. The trouble with that term of course, is that it is also used for the people of India, who with some justification claim prior rights. In Canada, with its substantial population from India, this ambiguity is particularly obvious. Francophones have solved the problem by using "amérindien", which is specific to the Americas, or "autochtone", which translates as aboriginal. Anglophones have not yet reached such an accord; in Canada, "Native" has come to be widely used, but it is not accepted in the United States (and in some parts of Canada) on the grounds that anyone born in (a) country is a native, regardless of racial origin. "Aboriginal" is less used but has been accepted to some extent by Indians as well as non-Indians. "Amerindian" avoids the ambiguities of "Indian" and "Native" and more specific than "aboriginal" (Dickason 1993: 16).

**Arena:** In Political Anthropology, arena refers to the domain-area within which competition or conflict for socio-political power takes place. Such arenas may be small-scale (the village, the tribe), or large-scale (e.g. the state) (Lewellen 1983: 16). Arenas can also be geo-national boundaries organized around certain landscapes, or they can be political constructions, such as villages or tribes. Often confused with arena is the concept of "field" (see Bailey (1969); Lewellen (1983), in order to avoid this confusion we will only use the concept of arena (Lewellen 1983: 91-92).

**Attignawan:** A Nation-member of the *Wendake* (Huron) Confederacy. Members from the Attignawan Nation were largely adopted into the Mohawk Bear clan (Rice: 1994).

**Community:** The Mohawk community of Akwesasne is an "associational space", where Akwesasronons continue to apply the teachings of the Kaianerenkowa, and assert their sovereignty, in order to one day regain their *Kashwentha*.

**Complex-adaptive systems:** The Kaianerenkowa's complex-adaptive system provides the Great Law of Peace with a dynamic flexibility that "leads to a constant re-evaluation of community capabilities and a periodic re-consideration of the appropriateness of the existing confederal power-sharing arrangement" (Alfred 1995: 185). The system becomes taxed when the concepts can no longer prevent social dissension that result in a chaotic fragmentation and polarization of the Confederacy at both confederate and communal levels. From this perspective the strengths of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, lies in its flexibility to fission from larger units into smaller, more homogeneous communities, usually villages united by a common belief in the Kaianerenkowa (Alfred 1995: 42).

**Concentric Hunting-Zones:** These are the large unoccupied hunting zones, surrounding both Kanienkehaka and Haudenosaunee territory. These zones where hunting and fishing, trading, and later trapping occurred, were considered part of the Mohawk territory and were defended as such (Alfred 1995: 27-28). Two prominent concentric hunting-zones for the Mohawk were *Kentaké* (la prairie) near *Kawennote Tiohtia:ke* (island where the people divide - near present Montreal); and Akwesasne. The unoccupied concentric-hunting zones of the Haudenosaunee was symbolized by the "beaver bowl". "In one dish a beaver's tail shall be placed and all those present shall have a co-equal right to it" (Thomas: 1994a). Under the Confederacy, this reciprocity

signified that all concentric zones were one common tract, and all members have an equal right to hunt and fish within it (Dennis 1993: 64).

**Condolence Council Ceremony:** The central ceremonial axis of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, serving the dual purpose of mourning the departed members of the Confederacy, and selecting new *royane* and *rarontaron*. The Condolence Council Ceremony is composed of six ceremonies: Journeying on the Trail; Welcome at the Wood's Edge; Reckoning Address; Six Songs of Farewell; Over the Great Forest; and Feast of the Dead (Dennis 1993: 80).

**Confederacy:** The Haudenosaunee Confederacy is a unification of Nations and their people, associated in an environment of respect and mutual obligations under the auspices of the Great Law of Peace. The Confederation principles of the Kaianerenkowa are a voluntary confederation of autonomous nations, self-determination, peaceful co-existence, and the democratic spirit of the people themselves. Each Nation and each community within each Nation enjoys a great deal of autonomy in its relationship to other communities, to the Nation, to other individual Nations, and to the Confederacy as a whole. In fact, there is a well respected protocol that the Confederacy does not intervene in a Nation or a Nation in a local community, unless asked to do so by the local "royane" in the latter case, or the Nation's "rodiyane" in the former case.

**Conflict:** A Mohawk analogy which closely resembles conflict is "creative-tension" by the council fire. Under this analogy conflict is the expression of disagreement, which brings into focus diverse viewpoints, and provides the opportunity to calmly, and rationally explore their strengths and weaknesses. Under the Haudenosaunee system of governance disagreement itself is neither good nor bad. Diverse perspectives bring into focus and explore the strengths and weaknesses of ideas, assumptions and alternatives. The task is to work together to discover which choice is most acceptable to all members (Butler & Rothstein 1991: 57). Under the Great Law of Peace a proper mode of discussion avoids accusations. Condemnations impede discussions and can lead to violence. However, the clear minded can discard the "grey clouds of discontent" and stimulate a positive discussion, promoting conflict as an occasion for growth.

**Consensus:** A decision-making process whereby decisions are reached when all members present consent to a proposal. This process does not assume everyone must be in complete agreement. Individuals can agree to disagree, that is, give their consent by standing aside, and allow the proposal to be accepted by the group (Butler & Rothstein 1991: 57-58). Standing aside occurs when an individual consents to a proposal, despite his/her unresolved concerns. Concerns can either be demonstrated through silence or voiced. Under the Haudenosaunee system the individual's sacrifice for the group or the community is noted. When disagreements become so controversial, and when standing aside is no longer an option, the next option is to enact the "Philosophy Of The Corn". For under the Great Law of Peace the ability to rationalize and reach a consensus must be preserved.

**Dialectics:** Dialectics involves conflicting positions - a two-way interactive relationship rather than a one-way determinism. Dialectical thinkers are in general interested in the structures of society and the actors within society, conflicts and contradictions among various levels of social reality, as well as with the dialectical relationships between actors and social structures (Bailey & Gayle 1993: 435).

**Dichotomy:** Within the context of this research dichotomy may take several different forms; that of an overall conceptual division into two great classes (such as the Chinese Yin or Yang), that of binary opposition or codes, or in social systems that of moieties or so-called dual organization. Despite this apparent universality of human dichotomy, Bailey & Gayle (1993) caution that a generalized dichotomy cannot be directly translated into a general principle of social organization (Bailey & Gayle 1993: 435).

**Gushwentha:** The *Gushwentha* is a wampum belt that was first presented by the Haudenosaunee to the Dutch in 1643, over the next two hundred years, the Haudenosaunee also entered into a similar pact with Britain, France and the U.S.A (ALCNASC 1982: 55). The *Gushwentha* would later become known as the Silver Covenant Belt. Composed of two rows of purple wampum and a white background, the wampum belt symbolizes a river with two vessels traversing a river each staying to their own ways, their own customs. The exchange of this belt meant that both parties agreed to respect the right of national political autonomy of the other, without oppression or domination. It was diplomacy based on mutual respect and cultural temperance in North America (Alfred 1995: 140). The principles contained within the *Gushwentha* was and remains the essence of all relations between the Confederacy and other sovereign Nations (ALGNASC 1982: 55).

**Haudenosaunee:** The "people of the Longhouse", in contemporary times, Haudenosaunee incorporates the Six Nations Confederacy, and the Iroquois Confederacy. The reason why the Longhouse supporters utilized Haudenosaunee instead of Iroquois can be best described by the historian Olivia-Patricia Dickason: "Labels such as "Cree," and "Iroquois" were imposed by Europeans and do not represent how the people termed themselves, as least aboriginally... While many of the Europeanized labels have come to be accepted by the aboriginal peoples, some have not"(Dickason 1993: 16). For many First Nations the terms that have been utilized are perceived as pejorative (Dickason 1993: 16). In the case of "Iroquois" the name is a French translation of the *Innu* (Montagnais) terms *imokué* or *irohue* which denote "a man to be feared" or "a terrifying and formidable being" (Day 1970: 57-8).

**Hiawatha:** Co-founder of the Confederacy, an Onondaga by birth Hiawatha was adopted by the Mohawks. His name is now associated with the Mohawk turtle clan.

**Honkwéhonwe:** Interpreted as the "Original People", *Honkwéhonwe* is the Haudenosaunee-Mohawk term for the First Nations or Amerindians.

**Indian Act:** The Indian Act of 1876 consolidated and revamped pre-Confederation legislation of the Canadas into a nation-wide framework that is still in place today, despite amendments that began almost as soon as it was passed. The Act's fundamental purpose - to assimilate Amerindians - has remained a constant (Dickason 1992: 284). The Act touches on virtually every aspects of Amerindians' lives. The Act establishes a definition of an Indian. It also defines the following labels a "band," "band member," and "reserve." It defines the relationship between Amerindians and the broader Canadian society (Gibbins & Ponting 1986: 19-21).

**Jikonsaseh:** The first individual to accept "the good message of the great peace" from the Peacemaker was *Jikonsaseh* a woman from the *Wonderonk* Confederacy (Neutral). She was rewarded for her insight and desire for peace, by becoming the first Clan Mother of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

**Kaianerenkowa:** The Kanienkehaka term for Great Law of Peace is *Kaianerenkowa*, the *Kaianerenkowa* is the good lore of peace, power and righteousness. English text refer to the *Kaianerenkowa* as the Great Law of Peace, the Great Law and the "Constitution of the Six Nations". Figure Six "The Transformation Of The *Kaianerenkowa*" located in the appendix outlines with the help of a diagram the transformations of the *Kaianerenkowa* from its inception until the late twentieth century. Originally the Great Law of Peace was transferred orally with wampum belts and ceremonial staffs assisting the orators. Annual recitals were not uncommon and every member of the Confederacy understood the basic elements of the *Kaianerenkowa*. However, this communal possession of the Great Law of Peace literally disappeared during the late 19th and 20th century. A trend that became more apparent as certain individuals were called upon time and time again to recite the *Kaianerenkowa*. Individuals concerned with the decline of the Great Law of Peace have recorded versions of the Great Law of Peace in manuscript

(published and unpublished formats). The *Kawio* (1815) which contributed to the revival of the Great Law of Peace, also incorporated Christian elements into its teachings, thereby dividing the proponents of the Great Law of Peace into supporters and opponents of the *Kawio*. A process that was compounded with the various written interpretations of the *Kaianerenkowa*. The arrows demonstrate the transformation of the Great Law of Peace (and the *Kawio*) from a communal, oral ideology into an individual and documented ideology. The arrows also illustrate the influences of various versions upon one another. Both written and oral versions exist today in Akwesasne.

**Kanatsiohareke:** Place of the many pot holes in the river. The clean pot. It is now a small Mohawk community located near the village of Canajoharie in the Mohawk Valley of New York State.

**Kanienkeh:** Land where the flint is found. *Kanienkeh* is also the term signifying the traditional territory of the Mohawk people in the Mohawk Valley. *Kanienkeh* is also the name of the Mohawk community located in the concentric hunting-zone of the Mohawk territory, the Adirondack Mountains.

**Kanienkehaka:** The name Mohawk is an Algonquin term meaning "eaters of men". The other name that appears in lieu of Mohawk is *Agnier*, which was used principally by the French. Later the French, along with the English and the Dutch adopted the term Mohawk. The name itself was also utilized by the "Mohawks" because of its association with a fierce reputation and its usefulness as a psychological advantage in warfare (York and Pindera 1991: 153-4). The members of the Mohawk nation prefer to call themselves the Kanienkehaka - the People of the Land where the Flint is found. Many Mohawks today freely utilized the terms of Kanienkehaka and Mohawk. This text will also employ both terms.

**Kanienkehaka Nation Council of Chiefs:** Formerly known as the Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs, the KNCC is the oldest political entity in Akwesasne. The KNCC continues to elevate the nine traditional *royane*, and *rarontaron* (from the three Mohawk clans) with the help of Clan Mothers in accordance with the Great Law of Peace. Today the KNCC is composed of no *royane* and three "uncondoled" *rarontaron*, acting as sub-chiefs until new *rodiyane* are elevated. This council is neither recognized by the American or Canadian governments, but is supported by the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and many of the Longhouse proponents in Akwesasne.

**Kashastensera:** The concept of *Kashastensera* - power/strength is one of the most controversial of all three concepts found within the Great Law of Peace. Power is the internal conviction of one's strength in political and spiritual beliefs. The Peacemaker stressed that a healthy society (spiritually and politically) has the power to enact peace (Akwesasne Notes 1991: 12). But he warned that the physical demonstration of power (even defensively) represents the failure to achieve peace and consensus within oneself or with other nations (Vecsey 1988: 114).

**Kashwentha:** Interpreted as nationhood or statehood *Kashwentha* incorporates much more than the physical representation of territory. *Kashwentha* includes the spiritual, social, political, biological, economic, and physical spheres which are the sum total of a holistic environment. Furthermore, this environment is protected by treaties, signed Nation to Nation (Lickers 1995(b)). During the twentieth century, Kanienkehaka politics have become the self-assertion of *Kashwentha* on different axes and to differing degrees by various distinct socio-political and cultural communities (Alfred 1995: 13). Mohawk ethno-nationalism (autonomy) is a form of self-determination created not through the development of a new state, but through the achievement of a new cultural sovereignty and a political relationship based on group autonomy reflected in formal self-government arrangements in cooperation with existing state institutions (Alfred 1995: 14-19).



**Kawennote Tiohtia:ke:** The island where the people divide, present-day Montreal Island.

**Kaiwiio:** *Skaniatari:io*, or Handsome Lake established the *Kaiwiio*, also known as the "Good Word" and the "Code of Handsome Lake", in the 19th century. The *Kaiwiio* revived many Haudenosaunee traditions including, the sacred cyclical ceremonies, the medicine societies, and the Great Law of Peace (York and Pindeera 1991: 257). The *Kaiwiio* is found in both written and oral formats.

**Kentaké:** (la prairie) near present day Montreal.

**Leader:** The Great Law of Peace established a socio-political structure where leaders became accountable and in fact merely represented the will of their community (Alfred 1995: 78-79). In this system, the councils became a place for the deliberations of ordinary men and women rather than specialized elites or military dictators (War Chiefs) (Dennis 1993: 96). Since no decision could be taken without the unanimous consent of all representatives groups, Haudenosaunee women were guaranteed a special role in the process of political consensus known as "one voice, one mind, one heart" (Dennis 1993: 96). The authority to veto and "dehorn" unmanageable *royane* guaranteed the interests of the community as a whole (Alfred 1995: 78).

**Leni Lenapes:** Delaware Nation, an invited member of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, they were taken into the Confederacy under the "Mohawk's wings" (under the protection of the Mohawk Nation) (Rice: 1994).

**Longhouse:** The traditional physical dwelling of the Haudenosaunee, the Longhouse now represents for many Mohawks a spiritual, political, socio-cultural centre. In Akwesasne, the Longhouse is the physical building where Longhouse proponents gather to conduct their ceremonies, as well as where the traditional leaders meet in council (Torok 1970: 31). The Longhouse proponents are often interpreted as traditionalists. However, as stated earlier they are "traditionalist" who do not ascribed to the ways of the Longhouse, but may nevertheless incorporate many of the criteria associated to the Longhouse proponents. In Akwesasne, the characteristics of the Longhouse proponents can be described as the following:

1. Longhouse proponents tend to use the Mohawk language in ceremonial and familial contexts (Torok 1970: 31).
2. Longhouse proponents participate in the activities of Longhouse congregations.
3. Longhouse proponents have some retention of clan affiliation, this retention being a function of religious, spiritual and/or political affiliation, or a combination of all three (Torok 1970: 31).
4. Longhouse proponents support the traditional *rodiyane/owachira* political system.
5. Longhouse proponents deny the rights of any foreign governments to impose their socio-political structures in Haudenosaunee society. For according to the Longhouse proponents in Akwesasne, the Mohawk Nation is sovereign, and should be govern by it's own rules, i.e the Great Law of Peace, the *Gushwentha* (Gilmour-Dickson 1991: 31).

**Matrilineal:** According to the author Seymour-Smith matrilineal descent is that which is traced through females, thus children are affiliated to the group of their mother, or as it is sometimes expressed, of their mother's brother, since in matrilineal societies power and position are generally held by men, though transmitted through women. The kinship group formed by persons linked by matrilineal descent to a known common ancestress is termed a matrilineage (Seymour-Smith 1986: 185).

**Mohawk Council of Akwesasne:** The MCA a creation of the Indian Act and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) was transformed to suit Akwesasne's needs during the mid-eighties. The MCA now represents the portion of the community located in Canada (Corwall Island, St. Regis Village, portions of Snye). Composed of twelve chiefs and one grand chief (elected every three years), the MCA administers an annual budget of \$37 million (Canadian).

**Nation:** The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) has proposed a list of seven criteria to define a "people" who possess the right to self-determination. The criteria include: a common history, racial or ethnic ties, cultural or linguistic ties, religious or ideological ties, a common territory or geographical location, a common economic base, and a sufficient number of people. By this definition the Mohawks and their Haudenosaunee allies satisfy the ICJ's criteria for status as a "people" with the right to self-determination (York & Pindera 1992: 409).

**Ne Gaihiwyo:** Loosely interpreted in English as righteousness, *Ne Gaihiwyo* demands that all thoughts of prejudice, privilege, or superiority be swept away and that recognition be given to the reality that creation is intended for the benefit of all equally (Akwesasne Notes 1991: 11). This concept recognizes the plurality of ethics, values, justice and responsibilities. It is the responsibility of the clear minded to be righteous in every activity (Vecsey 1988: 114).

**Onondaga:** Onondaga is both the name of the capital of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, located near present-day Syracuse New York, and the name of the people "the people of the hills" who inhabit this area.

**Owachira:** The Haudenosaunee matrons (Clan Mothers) who act as trustees for the titles that pass in lineages within clans. The Clan Mothers' political duty is to select, elevate, monitor and impeach (if necessary) a defiant *royane*. During the founding of the Confederacy, Clan Mothers were given a single string of white wampum by the Peacemaker. Representing the title to lineage from the Confederacy's inception, the white wampum strings continue to represent the Clan Mothers claim to a *royane* lineage. Under the Confederate system of the Haudenosaunee, there are nine *owachira* and *rodiyane* in the Mohawk Nation. Each community in the Mohawk Nation has their own *owachira* and *rodiyane*.

**Peacemaker:** Haudenosaunee protocols and the Kaianerenkowa warn against using the true name of the founder of the Confederacy. For in times of great need, should the name of the Peacemaker be whispered by the Longhouse People, the Founder of The Confederacy will return to help his people (Thomas 1994).

**Philosophy Of The Corn:** This philosophy dictates that if an individual or group is disheartened or unhappy with the community he/she is currently residing in, one simply picks up one's personal possession including the corn seeds and withdraws from the community to establish oneself in another area, no bitterness is left behind. All clanship, kinship, communal, national and confederate associations remain (L. Benedict: 1995).

**Rarontaron:** The English translations for *rarontaron* are "guardian of the tree", "prop", and more recently "deputy-chief". The role of the *rarontaron* is to act as the eyes, ears, and mouth of the Clan Mothers. His principal responsibility is to monitor the actions of the *rodiyane*, and report to the Clan Mothers. In certain cases a *rarontaron* may assist the Clan Mother in dehorning a *royane* who has failed to perform his duties. All *rarontaron* are elevated in the "Condolence Council Ceremony" by a Clan Mother.

**Roiatatokenti:** St. Lawrence River.

**Rotiskerake:te:** The contemporary Mohawk translation for this term is War Chief. According to Johansen the English translation of *Hodiskengehdah* is warrior "all the men who carry the bones, the burden of their ancestors on their back". Fenton states that there are several terms for warriors, which have changed over time. The generic term is *rhtihskerrakehte*. The term generally applies to men at maturity, carrying rolled up rushes mats for sleeping; weapons, and possibly messages (Fenton 1986: 28). According to Thomas (1994). and Fenton (1986) in some interpretations of the Great Law of Peace the term has become synonymous with *rarontaron*.

Fenton explains: "A warrior acts as a deputy, a subchief, or a messenger to particular civil chief, a warrior is often referred to as "guardian of the tree"; "the cane"; to the "prop" to the chief" (Fenton 1986: 28). Today, the role or even existence of a "War Chief is a contested matter in the Confederacy. However, the reality remains that the two Seneca chiefs *Kanokeidawi* and *Tyoninhokawe* as "Keepers of the Black Door" or the "Ministers or Secretaries" in charge of Defense for the Confederacy. Both these two Chiefs continue to sit on the Grand Council of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Complicating the issue of "War Chiefs" are noted historical figures such as the Mohawk Joseph Brant and the Seneca Red, who are often referred to as War Chiefs. Furthermore, Seth Newhouse's 1889, and Parker (1916) versions of the Great Law of Peace outline the roles of the five "War Chiefs" (one for each Nation in addition to the two Seneca War Chiefs). According to these versions the War Chief is elevated by a Clan Mother. Their duties include the preservation of the peace in the Confederacy, and monitoring the conduct of the *rodiyane*. The *rotiskenrake:te* is the holder of the black wampum which can signify the death of a defiant *royane*.

**Royane/rodiyane:** A *royane*, *rodiyane* (plural) is "he who is of the good mind", it has also been translated as "he who is a chief". *Royane* is the Haudenosaunee designation of an original Confederate Headman as determined by the Peacemaker and Hiawatha. A *royane* is accountable to his *rarontaron*, his *owachira*, his kins, his clan, his community, his nation, the Confederacy, and to the Seven Nations. Being a *royane* is a permanent responsibility. In the Haudenosaunee Confederacy there are fifty *rodiyane* in the Grand Council. In the Mohawk Nation there are nine *rodiyane*, three from each Mohawk clan (bear, wolf, turtle). A *royane* is elevated in the "Condolence Council Ceremony" by his Clan Mother. Consequently, he can be "dehorned" (the antlers of the deer are the *royane*'s symbol of authority) by his Clan Mother, for failing to properly carry-out his duties.

**Sharonheseko:wa:** The Great White Pine, or the Great Tree of Peace. In the *sharonheseko:wa* one sees the essence of the Iroquois' political philosophy. A great tree planted on the shores of Onondaga Lake represents the federalist principles of the Kaianerenkowa - voluntary confederation of autonomous nations, self-determination, and peaceful co-existence - and the democratic spirit of the people themselves. Underneath the tree lies the war clubs, symbolizing the obsolescence of conflict among those who accept the Law. From the base of the tree grows the Great White Roots of Peace extending in the four cardinal directions, symbolizing peace and charity for any nation that wished to trace the root back to the Iroquois and take shelter beneath the principles of the Kaianerenkowa. And above the tree is an eagle, eternally "vigilant" of any danger or threat to the peace and security of the people (Alfred 1995: 82). The base of the tree is protected by the *Tehonatenent-shawakon*, the circle of the Confederacy and all its leaders.

**Skennen:** *Skennen* is the Mohawk "action-verb" for "peace". *Skennen* is a concrete expression of the "good mind" expounded by the Kaianerenkowa. The Peacemaker established peace in the Confederacy by cementing group consanguinity through common sense of moral order. More than the absence of war, peace is a practical and respectful way of living and interacting with other people (Confederate and others) (Dennis 1995: 08).

**St. Regis Mohawk Tribe:** Formerly known as the St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Council, the SRMT administers the American portion of Akwesasne's territory. Created by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and New York State in the early nineteenth century, the SRMT is currently composed of five elected chiefs (elected every two years). The SRMT's budget totals \$11 million (American).

**Tatodahoe:** An Onondaga sorcerer, who attempted to undermine the message of the Peacemaker. *Tatodahoe* was swayed by the Peacemaker to join the Confederacy when he was

given the title of "Firekeeper" of the Grand Confederate Council. This title provided *Tatodahoe* with the responsibility to moderate and chair all the meetings of the Confederate Grand Council.

**Tawiskaron:** The "Devious One", and ruler of the nighttime skies. Twin brother of *Theharonhiawakon* (Holder of the Heaven), son of Mother Earth (daughter of Sky Woman) and grand-son of the Moon (Sky-Woman). *Tawiskaron's* creations rival and oppose the creations of *Theharonhiawakon*.

**Tehonatenent-shaw :kon:** Symbolizing the circle of "hands and arms linked in peace", of the fifty Confederate chiefs, the Clan Mothers, and the deputy-chiefs, the aim of this circle is to surround and protect the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Tree of Peace (Vachon: 1995). Furthermore, should any *royane* leave the circle, his horns and office would catch on the circle, and so his title would remain within the Confederacy (Tooker 1978: 418).

**Tewatatowie:** *Tewatatowie* is the Mohawk term often associated with sovereignty. However, it can be understood with the help of the English motto "we help ourselves" (Alfred 1995: 102-103). According to Haudenosaunee oral traditions, *tewatatowie* is the autonomy and self-determination over spiritual, cultural, territorial, social and economic means. It is also the rights and responsibility of all beings to self-determination, identity, fulfilment, and self-perpetuation, in the mutual respect of this right and responsibility as given to all. Sovereignty is a freedom, a responsibility that extends to the seven generations of all beings (inanimate and animate) (Sylvestre and Lemelin: 1995). Thus Mohawk sovereignty is conceived of not only in terms of interests and boundaries, but in terms of land, relationships and spirituality. The essence of Mohawk sovereignty is harmony, but there is also a strong sense of self-sufficiency and independence, particularly as it relates to group interactions with other communities. *Tewatatowie* is used in Mohawk philosophical rhetoric and is linked to concepts contained in the *Kaianerenkowa*. Through its linkage to the *Kaianerenkowa*, the concept is endowed with a spiritual power which precludes the compromise of the ideal in the interest of political expediency or power calculations (Alfred 1995: 102-03).

**Theharonhiawakon:** The Holder of the Heavens, and the ruler of the daytime skies. His twin brother was *Tawiskaron* (the devious one), his mother was the daughter of Sky-Woman (Mother Earth) and his grand-mother was Sky-Woman (the Moon). *Theharonhiawakon* created all that is good and bountiful on Earth.

**Traditionalist:** see Longhouse.

**Twelve Life Chiefs:** The Twelve Life Chiefs system was a traditional council comprised of three chiefs from each of the four clans (bear, wolf, turtle and deer) and 12 clan mothers. Some historians associated the presence of a fourth clan (deer) in Mohawk politics with the strong appearance of Onondagas from the Oswegatchie migration. According to local historians it appears that the Twelve Life Chiefs system was matrilineal, but in many cases it was the father's son who was chosen, simply because he had the most experience in the political and diplomatic arenas. There are also some indications that there were War Chiefs in this system (Interviewee C: 1995). When Akwesasne was welcomed back into the Confederacy (1888), the Twelve Life Chief system, a proponent of communal unity were permitted to remain in council, and keep their titles. As the individuals from this system died the title was simply buried with the individual. Thus, ending the Twelve Life Chiefs system in the early nineteenth century, and giving way to the nine Mohawk *rodiyane* system of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (Interviewee C: 1995).

**Wahatinahstasonteren:** A political metaphor of *Wahatinahstasonteren* - "extending the rafters of the longhouse" was used to symbolized amendments to the *Kaianerenkowa*. This simply meant that the *Kaianerenkowa* - physically represented by a Longhouse, could be amended by bringing forth new "props to strengthen the Longhouse". For example individuals, nations, and ideas could

become props if the Confederacy or a nation in particular decided through consensus that this was a valid and necessary amendment.

**Wa:kahneto:ten:** Also known as "Peace Chiefs" or "Pine Tree Chiefs" the Haudenosaunee may have developed the institution of *wa:kahneto:tenas* safety valves to control and monitor ambitious young leaders whose potential competition for the limited number of hereditary peace chieftainships might have wrecked the internal socio-political equilibrium in the Confederacy (Shimony 1984: 154). The leaders were given a voice in council but their title was not hereditary, so when they passed away, their title was buried with the individuals.

**Warriors' Society:** The creation of the Warriors Society is largely due to the philosophies of Louis *Karonniaktajeh* Hall. His two books *Constitution Of The Iroquois* (1989), and *Warrior's Handbook* embody his ideology of Mohawk nationalism. The Warrior's philosophy incorporates the activist ideologies of such civil right groups such as the "Black Panthers" and the American Indian Movement (AIM). The Warrior's Society appeared in Akwesasne in the early eighties. The symbol of the Warrior's Society (the Mohawk Warrior with the yellow sun, and red background) was immortalized during the Oka Crisis.

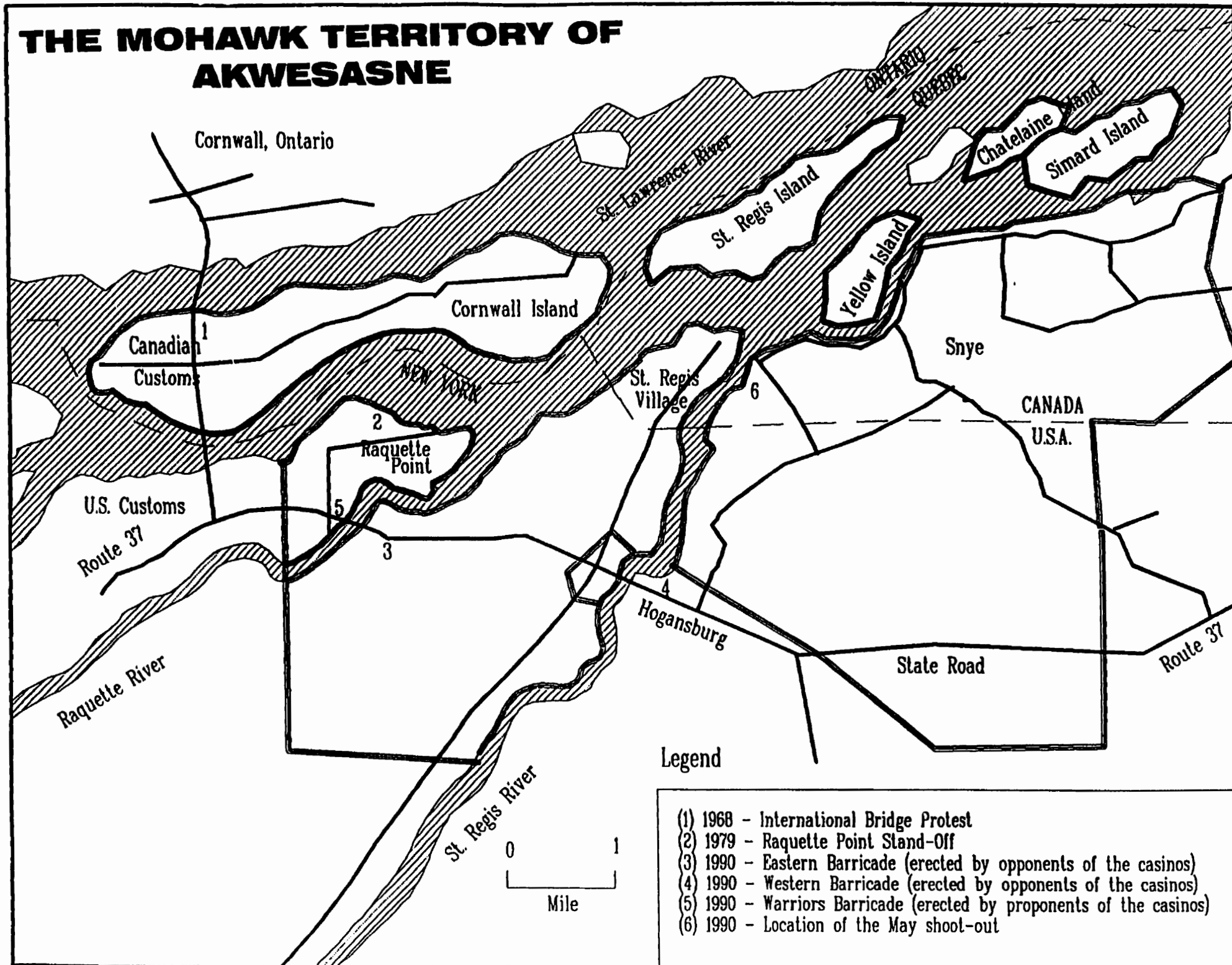
**Wendake:** The Huron Confederacy. The *Attignawan* Nation were one composing member-nation of this Confederacy.

**Wonderonk:** The Neutral Confederacy.

# **APPENDICES**

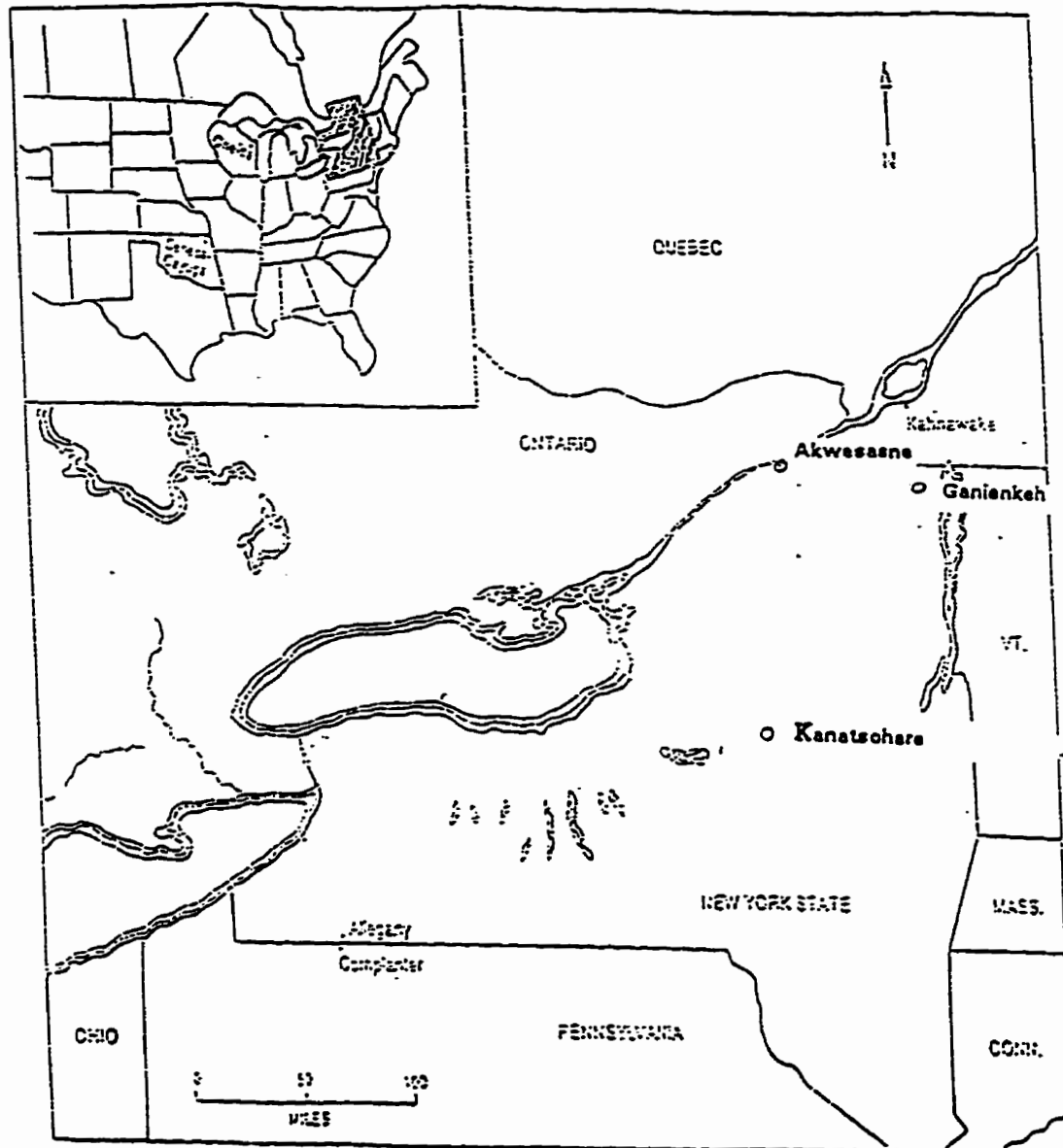
**FIGURE 1**

**THE MOHAWK TERRITORY OF  
AKWESASNE**



# **FIGURE 2**

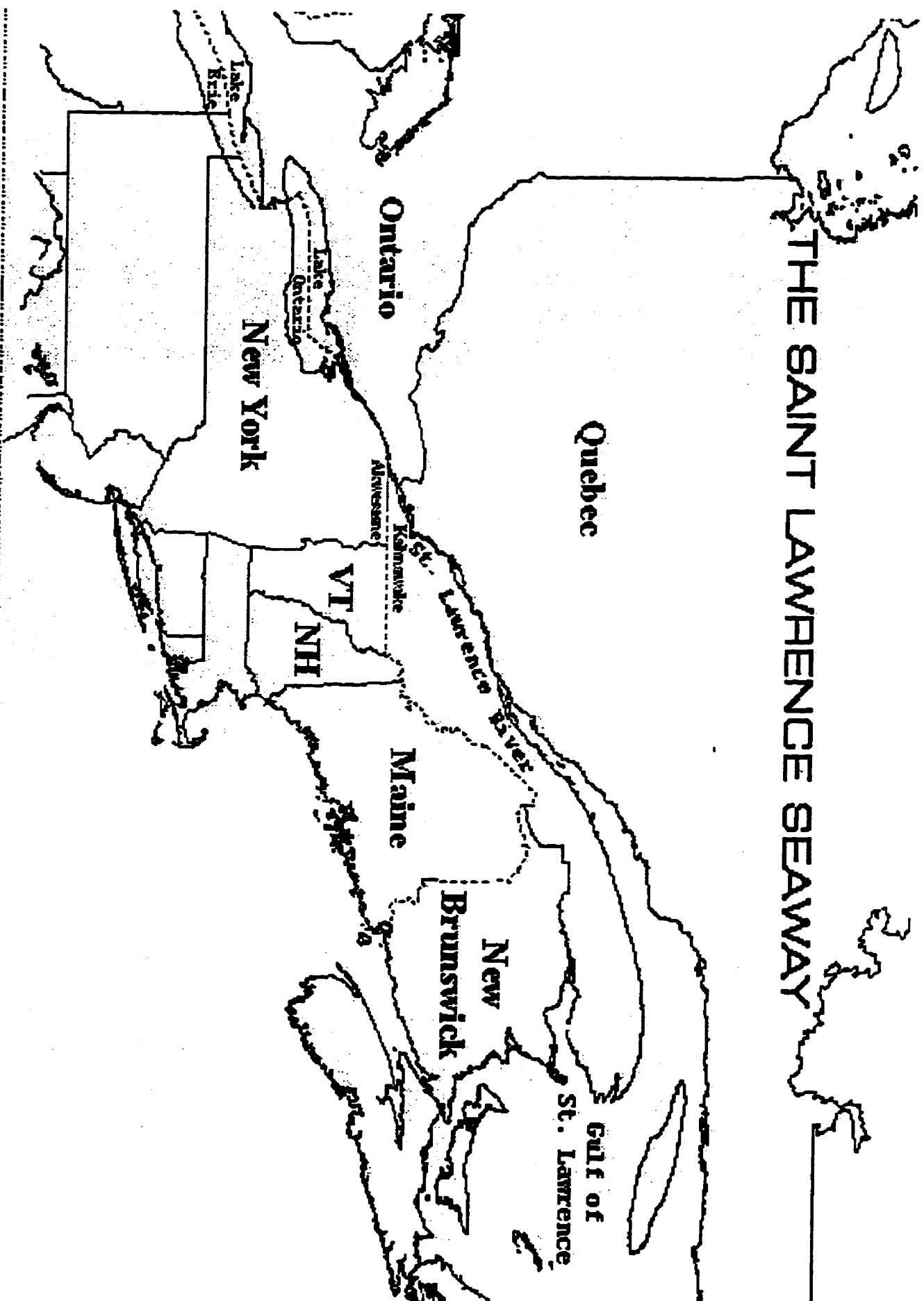
## **THE MOHAWK COMMUNITIES IN NEW YORK STATE**



**Source: Bruce Johansen, *Life And Death in Mohawk Country*, 1993, page xxv.**



**FIGURE 3**



**Source: *Geographical Information Systems (GIS), The St. Lawrence Seaway.***

# **FIGURE 4**

## **THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF AKWESASNE**

**CANADIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**  
**INDIAN AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS**  
**RCPM AND MILITARY**

**US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**  
**BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS**  
**FBI - MILITARY**

**QUEBEC PROVINCIAL**  
**GOVERNMENT**  
**SURETE DU QUEBEC**

**ONTARIO PROVINCIAL**  
**GOVERNMENT**  
**O.P.R.**

**NEW YORK STATE**  
**GOVERNMENT**  
**STATE TROOPERS**

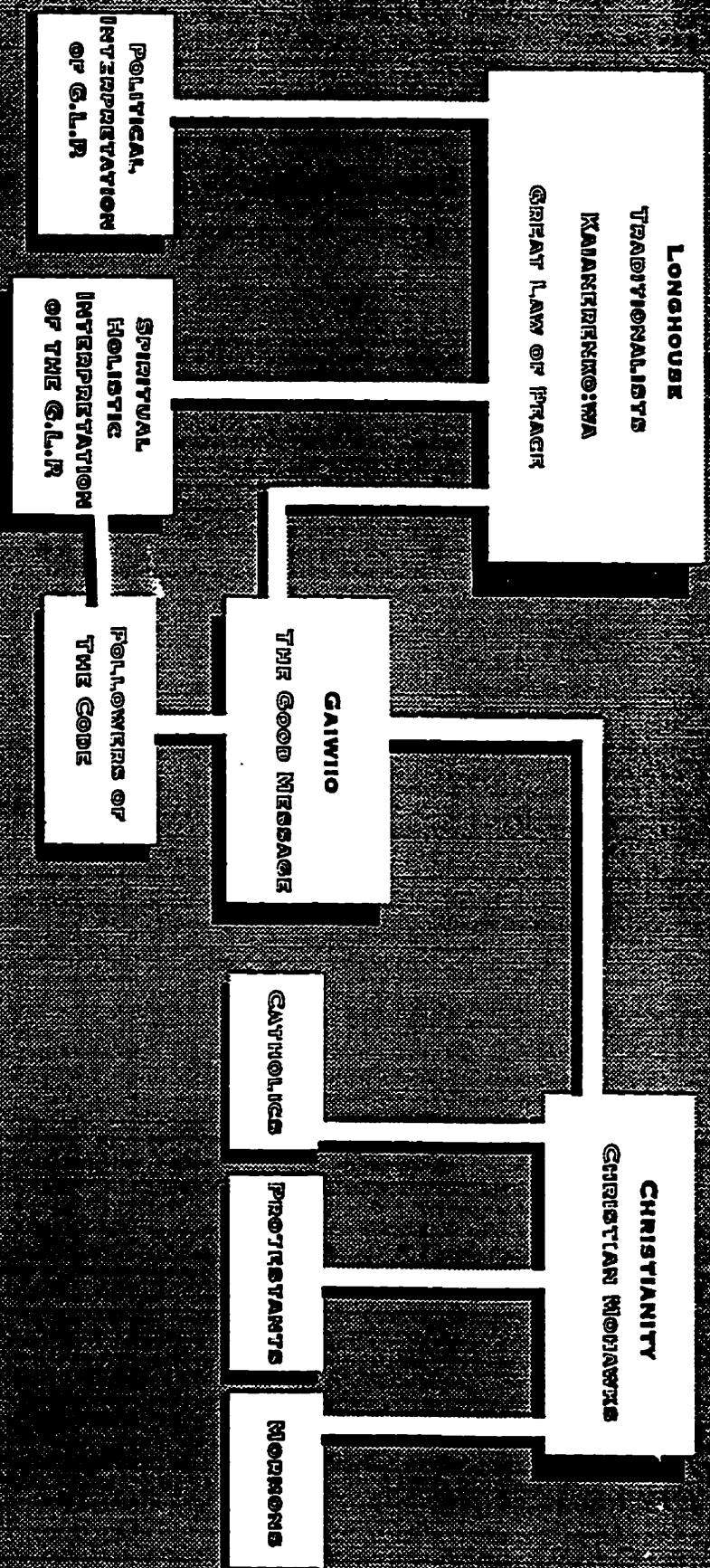
**MCHAWK COUNCIL OF AKWESASNE**  
**ELECTED COUNCIL**  
**( 12 COUNCILLORS )**  
**LOCAL POLICE**

**ST. REGIS TRIBAL COUNCIL**  
**ELECTED COUNCIL (3 COUNCILLORS)**  
**LOCAL POLICE**

**MCHAWK NATION COUNCIL OF CHIEFS**  
**TRADITIONAL COUNCIL**  
**( 9 CLAN-MOTHERS & RODIYANER )**

# FIGURE 5

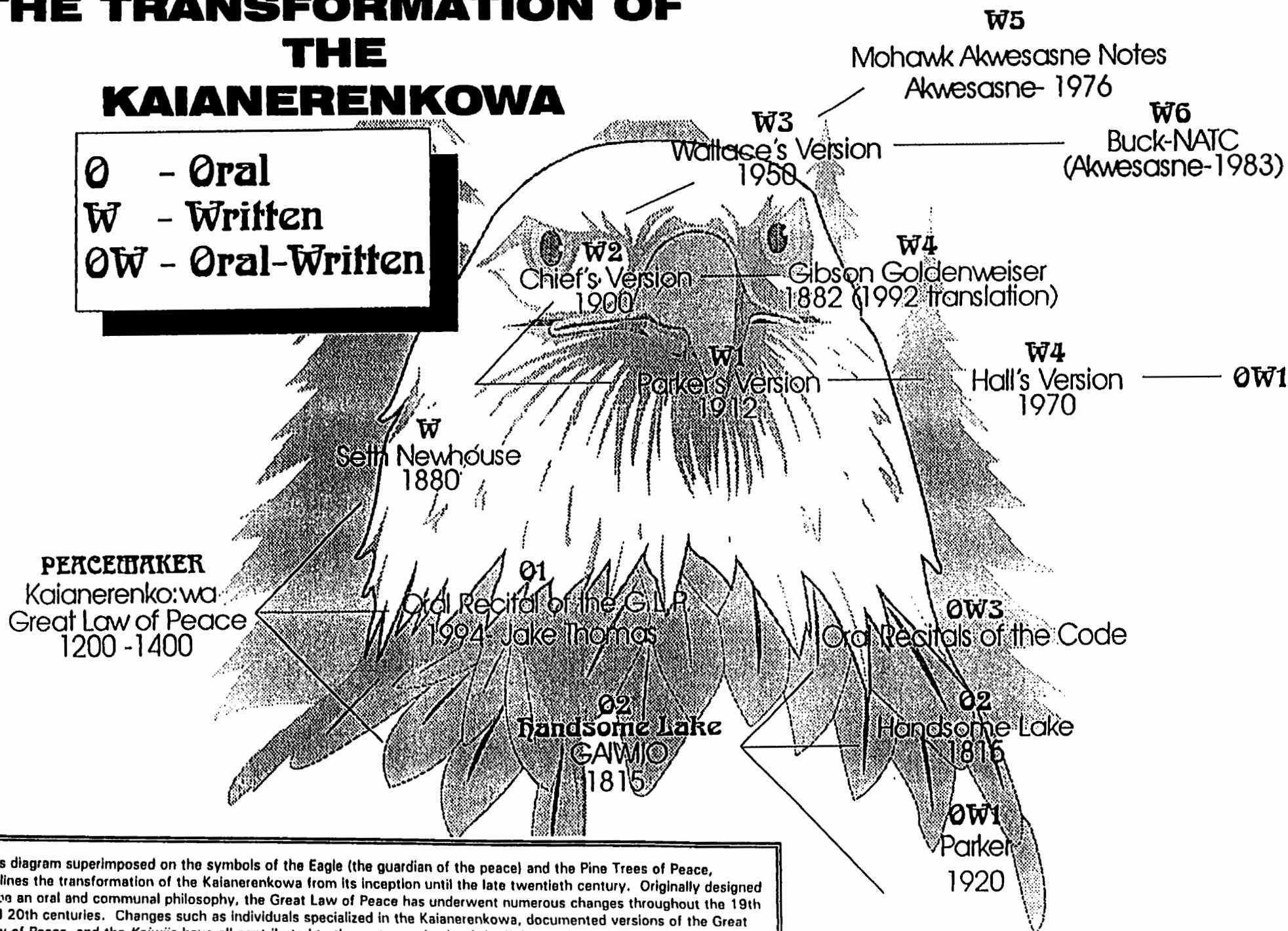
## THE SOCIO-CULTURAL STRUCTURES IN AKWESASNE



# FIGURE 6

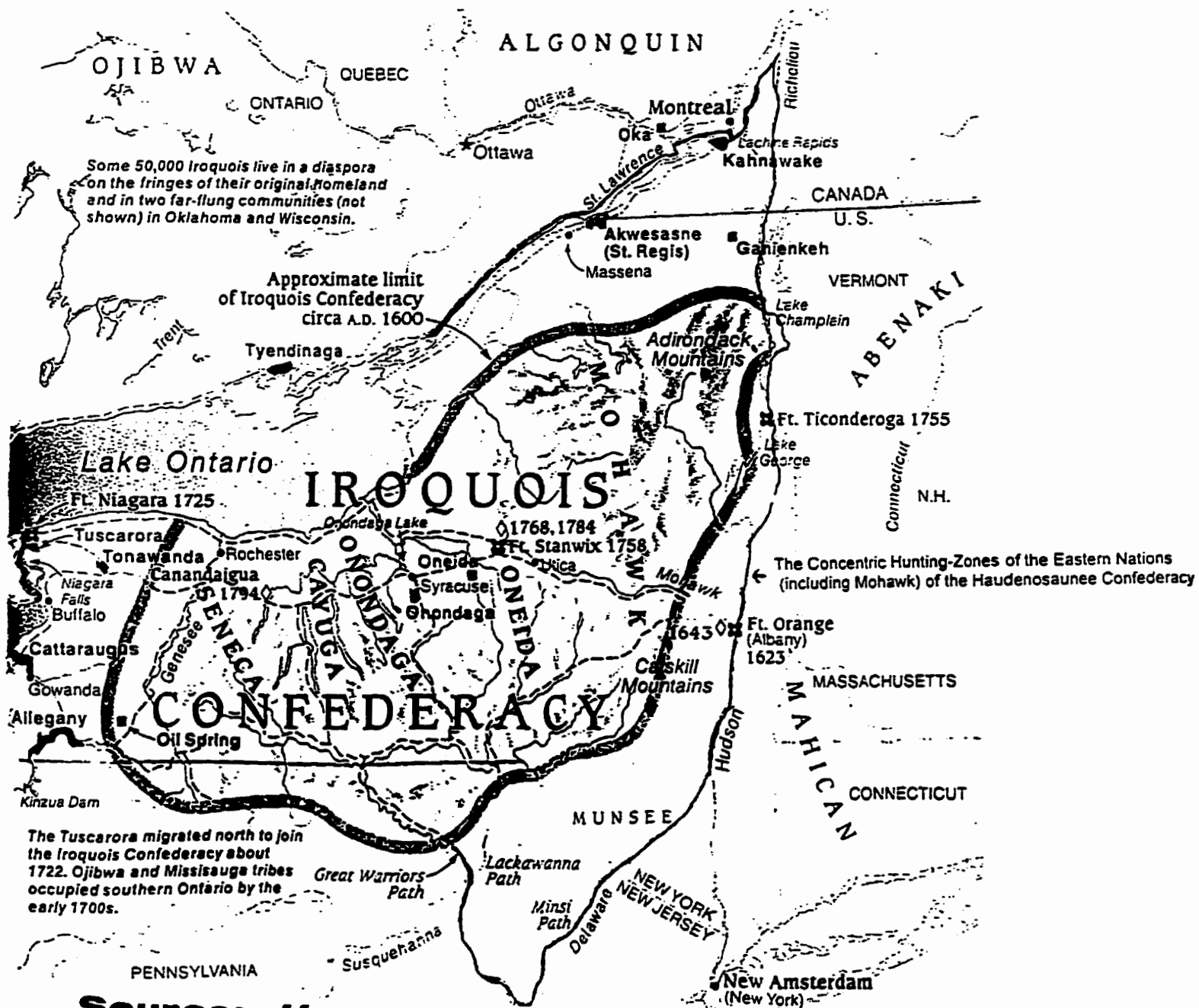
## THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE KAIANERENKOWA

**O** - Oral  
**W** - Written  
**OW** - Oral-Written



This diagram superimposed on the symbols of the Eagle (the guardian of the peace) and the Pine Trees of Peace, outlines the transformation of the Kaianerenkowa from its inception until the late twentieth century. Originally designed to be an oral and communal philosophy, the Great Law of Peace has underwent numerous changes throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Changes such as individuals specialized in the Kaianerenkowa, documented versions of the Great Law of Peace, and the Kaiwio have all contributed to the metamorphosis of the Kaianerenkowa. The arrow/lines depict these transformations throughout the last millennium, and illustrate the contributions of various versions upon one another. Today, all three version oral, written, and oral-written of both the Kaianerenkowa and the Kaiwio can be found in Akwesasne.

**FIGURE 7**  
**THE**  
**CONCENTRIC**  
**HUNTING ZONES**  
**OF THE**  
**HAUDENOSAUNEE**



**Source:** *Harvey Arden*, "The Fire That Never Dies", National Geographic, Vol 172, No.3 page 670 (New York)

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### INTERVIEWEE G



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**INTERVIEWEE H**

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