

Peaceful Democrats or Pragmatic Realists?:
Revisiting the Iroquois League.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Do domestic political structures influence the propensity of groups to use violence to resolve disputes with neighbors? This question has triggered often heated debate for centuries. Machiavelli believed that republican regimes were ideal for territorial expansion. Kant found them essential for the establishment of a "perpetual peace." Modern scholars from the neo-realist school believe that domestic structures are essentially irrelevant for explaining state behavior. The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between political structure and violence within a non-traditional context: conflict and cooperation among Native American nations. Specifically, we will examine the causes behind the creation and maintenance of the Iroquois League as well as the consequences of the association for both member-nations and neighbors. The case study also serves the more general purpose of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of transplanting European inspired theoretical concepts into different historical and geographical environments.

Several recent research efforts examine the applicability of theories drawn from the international relations literature to non-Western settings. Ember, Ember, and Russett (1992) analyze how public participation in decision making influences decisions to use force in a cross-cultural study of 186 non-European societies. Midlarsky (1995) analyzes the interactive relationship between democracy and war in four ancient civilizations, as well as modern contexts. Crawford (1994) assesses the role of security regimes in regulating relations between Native American groups inhabiting the Northeastern area of the United States. This essay seeks to add to this literature by reexamining the remarkable security regime studied by Crawford: the Iroquois League. The Iroquois League succeeded in keeping the peace between its five (later six) autonomous members for almost three

hundred years. A careful examination of such an important institution can enhance our understanding of conflict and cooperation among Native American groups. Moreover, the study aids us in assessing claims by some that the mechanisms behind the "long peace" of the Iroquois League can help us better understand the behavior of modern states.

The remainder of this essay is divided into six sections. Section 2.0 describes the creation, organization, and function of the Iroquois League. Section 3.0 examines the relationship between the Iroquois long peace and the modern phenomenon known as the democratic peace. Contrary to Crawford (1994), we conclude that the causal mechanisms behind the democratic peace are not at work in the case of the Iroquois League. Section 4.0 presents four additional factors which reinforced the peace between the Five Nations. Section 5.0 describes how the creation of the League actually decreased the security of its neighbors by channeling internal conflict toward external societies. Section 6.0 explores the realist and idealist roots of Iroquois foreign policy more generally, as the League and its members attempted to balance between the Dutch, French, English, and various Native American rivals. In the concluding Section, we evaluate the overall utility of using Western inspired concepts to explain the behavior of pre-modern and/or non-European political entities.

Before commencing we should emphasize a critical challenge facing researchers interested in examining a society such as that of the Iroquois. Lacking a written history of its own, we are forced to rely on oral tradition and third party observation. The former source has inevitably evolved over the years in response to changes in Iroquois society and its external environment (Jennings 1984:22; Richter 1992:278). Oral traditions first written down in the 1700's and 1800's probably describe a society very different from that which existed in 1450 or 1550. Third party sources, such as Jesuit

Missionaries and British colonial administrators, suffer from political and cultural biases which leave us with a potentially distorted picture of Iroquois culture and political processes (Jennings 1984: chapter 2). Despite these formidable problems, we believe that examining the Iroquois is both worthwhile and feasible. By relying on diverse sources and experts across disciplines, including physical evidence from archaeological research, we have consciously sought to amass a body of evidence that minimizes the bias inherently found in the primary sources.

2.0 THE CREATION, ORGANIZATION, AND FUNCTION OF THE IROQUOIS LEAGUE

The Iroquois League was a voluntary association originally composed of five geographically contiguous independent nations or tribes which inhabited the Finger Lakes region of central New York State.¹ From roughly east to west, these tribes were the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca. All five tribes were descendants of the Owasco people who had migrated into the area around 1000 AD from the south, displacing and absorbing local Algonquin peoples in the process. Over time, the homogeneous Owasco culture splintered into the five tribes and others, each with its own language and local customs (Snow 1994:23). Anthropologists typically end the Owasco phase at about 1350, thereafter referring to the individual nations by name.

The Iroquois League, more formally known as the Great League of Peace and Power, was established sometime between 1400 and 1600 AD (Tooker 1978:420). Within this wide range, many observers believe that the founding occurred around either 1450 or 1525 (Snow 1994:60). The dates are significant because they indicate that the League was not created to balance against European encroachments on the continent. Nor was the Iroquois League an alliance directed against a particular local threat. Rather, the League was designed to halt the seemingly unending spirals of violence

between local Native American groups. Once established, the Iroquois League virtually eliminated war between the member nations until its demise during the American Revolution.²

What caused these five independent nations to create the Iroquois League? Most historians and anthropologists concur that the impetus behind the creation of the League was the desperate need to stop inter-tribal warfare. At the time of the League's creation, war was destroying the fabric of each nation's society. Evidence of the extent of the violence is found in both the story of the League's creation and the physical evidence of the area.

The oral tradition of the founding of the League has been recorded by several authors. Arthur C. Parker, drawing on the Newhouse version of the creation myth, describes the hostile environment prior to the Iroquois League.

Everywhere there was peril and everywhere mourning. Men were ragged with sacrifice and the women scarred with the flints, so everywhere there was misery. Feuds with outer nations, feuds with brother nations, feuds of sister towns and feuds of families and clans made every warrior a stealthy man who liked to kill. Then in those days there was no great law. Our founder had not yet come to create peace and give united strength to the Real Men, the Ongwe-oweh (Fenton 1968: Book 3,17).

Physical evidence of an increase in warfare can be derived from the distribution, size, and structure of villages (Snow 1994:28). The early Owasco villages were designed for economic efficiency; they were small, geographically dispersed, unfortified, and contiguous to agricultural fields. By the middle and late Owasco period, however, the pattern shifted dramatically. The small, vulnerable hamlets gave way to large fortified villages. Twelve foot high, multi-row wooden palisades and/or earth works surrounded most villages by 1350 AD. The large palisades led early European visitors to refer to the large Iroquois villages as "castles." During this period villages were also moved away from the fields to more defensible positions. The consolidation process resulted in larger towns

with much higher population densities. The larger size of the villages required more frequent relocation as trash accumulated and nearby wood fuel became scarce. Despite the high fixed costs of fortification, new palisades and earth works were constructed with each move.³

The rise in frequency and intensity of warfare was not simply the natural by-product of anarchy. Proponents of the realist school of international relations emphasize that an anarchical system composed of autonomous political units creates the opportunity for war. Unlike domestic political systems which are characterized by hierarchy, states in anarchy are free to use force to resolve political and economic disputes. Moreover, conflicting preferences and uncertainty as to the intentions of others implies that conflict is not only likely but probable. In anarchy, security becomes a relative and dynamic concept; most actions taken by one state to enhance its security undermine the security of its neighbors. This process, known as the security dilemma, implies that war is not the product of evil states or evil men, it is the natural product of the anarchical system (Waltz 1959, 1979; Jervis 1978).⁴

Native American nations in the Northeast clearly inhabited an anarchic environment; no continental government capable of resolving disputes, by force if necessary, stood above the various nations and confederacies. This system of anarchy undoubtedly contributed to conflict between native groups. However, while anarchy may create the opportunity for war among tribal groups, it cannot by itself explain the occurrence of war (Ferguson 1984:21). Scholars have identified three additional factors which appear to have contributed to the rise in violence just prior to the creation of the Iroquois League. First, archaeologists believe that the "little ice age" which began about 1300 increased competition between groups as marginal farm land became unproductive (Snow 1994). Second,

archaeological evidence suggests that the declining deer population in the Northeast led to increased conflict over hunting territory (Abler 1988). Third, a cultural institution known as the "mourning war" amplified the effects of the first two factors, leading to an unending spiral of conflict in the region. In fact, the Iroquois League was consciously created to reduce this amplifying factor.

The mourning war tradition, which was shared by most northern Iroquoian speaking people, served two functions.⁵ First, it allowed a society to physically and spiritually replace members lost through death. Second, the mourning war aided communities and individuals in coping with the psychological pain of losing a loved one. The mourning war was both a ritualized practice of forced adoption and an outlet for societal grief. A brief summary of the mourning war practice will highlight how it served these functions.⁶

The Iroquois believed that the death of an individual created a spiritual void which undermined the power of the entire community. Paralleling this community void was a personal void experienced by the friends and family of the deceased. If the village condolence rituals failed to assuage the grief of these individuals, the female relatives of the deceased had the right to call for a mourning war.⁷ When a mourning war was called, the village assembled a war party which was sent out in search of captives for adoption into the community. After one or more captives were taken from neighboring nations, the prospective adoptees were brought back to the village and beaten as they passed through a gauntlet composed of two rows of men, women, and children. The captives were then tortured, but not killed, by all members of the community. At this point, the torture was suspended and all the potential adoptees participated in a grand feast. At the end of the feast, the women of the family of the deceased determined the fate of the captives. If a captive was rejected, he or she was further tortured, killed, and

often eaten; if a captive was accepted, he or she was adopted into the family. The newly adopted member often took the name of the deceased individual whose death had initially triggered the mourning war. In most cases, male captives were not adopted because they represented both a flight risk and potential threat. Women and children who were adopted found themselves, according to most descriptions, genuinely welcomed into the community. In many cases, the children of female captives became village leaders, Pine Tree (war party) chiefs, and even chiefs of the Iroquois League.

Several implications of the mourning war custom need to be highlighted. First, the mourning war was not simply an act of revenge in response to the killing of a tribal member by an outsider. Revenge killings, often spiraling into blood feuds, were one of the most common causes of conflict between Native American groups (Wright 1968:455; Vayda 1968:469; Ferguson 1984:39). While a murder could trigger a mourning war, according to Iroquois tradition **any** death, whether by accident, from disease, or at the hands of another, was unnatural; it created a spiritual void in the community and therefore could lead to a mourning war.

Second, the mourning war by its very nature provoked acute spirals of hostility particularly **between groups practicing the custom**. If only one regional group practiced the mourning war custom, it facilitated that group's population maintenance or growth at the expense of its neighbors. However, if all groups in the region practiced the mourning war, then violence and warfare quickly become the norm. In a world in which a simple eye-for-an-eye revenge norm is established, Algonquin and Mohawk parties can share access to the St. Lawrence River as long as both parties know that neither side has broken the peace. However, in a world in which the mourning war tradition is the norm, an Algonquin party can never be certain of the intentions of the approaching Mohawk party. In

this latter world, the security dilemma is acute and spirals of hostility are the norm. Thus, it is clear that the five Iroquois nations had a strong incentive to halt the mourning war amongst themselves. It is no coincidence that strong confederacies developed between geographically contiguous groups practicing the mourning war, such as the Iroquois League, the Huron Confederacy, and the Neutral Confederacy.

Third, the later impact of European colonization on the Iroquois and their neighbors takes on new meaning in the context of the mourning war tradition. The epidemics that decimated 50 percent or more of the populations of each tribe in the early 1600's triggered a massive surge in mourning wars. Moreover, by making Native American warfare far more deadly than it had previously been, the gradual diffusion of guns escalated the frequency of mourning war raids as the number of deaths on both sides of each raid grew rapidly. The mourning war custom, which was presumably adopted to increase the population of the community and to enhance group cohesion, became increasingly dysfunctional after the introduction of firearms and metal arrowheads in the seventeenth century (Richter 1992).

The mourning war tradition, coupled with a changing climate and declining deer populations, contributed to the growing violence in what was to become central New York State. Some believe that the incorporation of cannibalism into the mourning war custom occurred around the twelfth or thirteenth century and was a direct result of increasing violence in the region (Snow 1994; Abler and Logan 1988).⁸ According to Iroquois tradition, into this world of violence stepped Deganawida, the Peacemaker, with his call for the creation of a Great League of Peace and Power.

The Iroquois League was composed of fifty sachem, or chiefs, drawn from the clans of the Five Nations as shown in Figure 1. The names of the fifty sachem were constant; each new sachem adopted

the name of the individual he replaced on the council. As with personal names, each sachem name belonged exclusively to a particular clan. The elder women of each clan appointed the sachem and had the right to remove them from office. The list of sachem was not altered when the Tuscarora were added as the Sixth Nation in 1722; the Tuscarora were represented through the Oneida and Cayuga clans which had formally adopted them.

Figure 1 about here

The primary decision making body of the League was the Council Meeting which always began with a Condolence Ceremony. The Condolence Ceremony had four major parts: the Roll Call of Chiefs, the Condoling Song, the Recitation of the Laws of the Confederacy, and the Requickening Address. The Ceremony was designed to "clear one's voice, mind, and heart" of the grief associated with the loss of a loved one. The Requickening Address, with its exchange of gifts, served to end the potential spirals of hostility. We surmise that the original purpose of the ceremony was to halt potential spirals of hostility which typically resulted when a member of one nation murdered a member of another nation (Witthoft and Kinsey 1959:34). The practice of compensating victims for crimes against them, even murder, was taken directly from nation-level traditions. Over time, these ad hoc adjudication procedures evolved into a more frequent and institutionalized meeting process. The Condolence Ceremony became an initiation ceremony in which new sachem were formally inducted prior to conducting new business. As the demands on the League increased following the European invasion, the reasons for calling Council Meetings expanded greatly. Eventually the Iroquois demanded that all treaty negotiations, including those with the English and French, begin with a

Condolence Ceremony.

At Council Meetings all discussion and decision making took place within a very strict institutional framework. At all meetings, the Seneca and Mohawk (referred to as the Elder Brothers) sat to the east and the Cayuga and Oneida (the Younger Brothers) sat to the west. The Onondaga, who sat to the north, were the "keepers of the fire." Only the Onondaga could raise topics for discussion. In addition, the Onondaga had a quasi-judicial role. If the four of the nations reached a consensus which violated the history and tradition of the League, the Onondaga could return the issue for further discussion.

All League decisions required unanimity. A series of consensuses were established as a topic progressed through the decision making process: consensus within a clan or committee, followed by consensus within a nation, followed by consensus between all five nations.⁹ Tooker describes the process.

As firekeepers, the Onondaga gave the topics for discussion to the Mohawk and the Seneca. The Mohawk discussed the matter first among themselves, then referred it to the Seneca, who after discussion returned it to the Mohawk. The Mohawk then announced this opinion "across the fire to the Younger Brothers, where it was discussed first by the Oneida and then by the Cayuga. The Oneida then referred the matter back across the fire to the Mohawk, who announced the combined opinion to the Onondaga (Tooker 1978:429).

The eight step process is graphically displayed in Figure 2.

Figure 2 about here

Decision making by unanimity was the cornerstone of the Iroquois League. The process was often drawn out, requiring representatives to return to their villages to ensure that local groups agreed with the policy. However, the League's lack of enforcement power over tribes and individuals made

reaching a consensus essential; if all parties prefer a policy there is minimal need for an enforcement mechanism. In many instances, the Council was unable to reach a consensus and therefore the League was unable to act as a unified body. In such instances, individual nations and villages were free to act on their own (Richter 1992:44; Snow 1994:61).¹⁰

How would a student of international relations categorize the Iroquois League? The League was a unique and constantly evolving institution which makes it difficult to classify. Some have claimed that the League was or evolved into a collective security organization. A collective security organization is designed to prevent or halt armed conflict between member states by mobilizing the resources of all members of the organization against any renegade state. The most famous modern example of a collective security organization is the League of Nations, although it was never able to resolve the collective action problem inherent in such regimes. While preserving peace between members was the goal of the Iroquois League, the League did not have any mechanisms which would compel members to balance against a defector. For example, when the Onondaga and Mohawk nearly came to blows during the 1650's, there is no indication that the Iroquois League would have formally determined which party was the aggressor, nor that it could have compelled the Seneca, Cayuga, and Oneida to attack the designated aggressor. Therefore, from the existing evidence we conclude that the Iroquois League was not a collective security organization.

Others have claimed that the League may have been a simple alliance against external threats. A modern alliance, such as the North American Treaty Organization (NATO), requires member states to assist fellow members who are attacked by an external actor. However, in the Iroquois League there was no firm expectation that the other nations would rally to the aid of a nation under attack.

Nor were there any mechanisms to compel members to provide such assistance. If the Mohawk were attacked by the Mahicans, the Seneca were under no obligation to assist the Mohawk if they did not believe it was in their self-interest to do so. Although the laws of the League vaguely refer to an alliance-like bond between the members, the historical record clearly shows that Mohawks could not automatically rely on other members for either offensive or defensive assistance (Richter 1992:102-104; Snow 1994:118).

Finally, some claim that the Iroquois League is best described as a security regime. A security regime is designed to minimize the probability of conflict between member states by developing rules, norms, and decision making procedures which reduce uncertainty surrounding the capabilities and intentions of member states (Krasner 1983).¹¹ By doing so, regimes reduce the security dilemma among members. We believe that the Iroquois League fits most comfortably within this category. Although some have stated that the Iroquois League was simply a non-aggression pact, the League was more institutionalized than are most such pacts. Regular meetings, clear decision making rules, and norms of consensus, all fostered greater cohesion than one would find between states involved in a typical non-aggression pact. If the Iroquois League began as a simple non-aggression pact, it soon evolved into a more institutionalized security regime. As with most regimes, the League could not coerce members to cooperate. Rather, the League was designed to increase the incentives for cooperation as well as the expectation of cooperation.

In summary, all evidence points to the mourning war as the primary factor behind the creation of the security regime which came to be known as the Iroquois League. This raises a second question: what mechanisms allowed the association to maintain peace for 300 years?

3.0 MAINTAINING PEACE: KANT AND THE DEMOCRATIC PEACE

According to Crawford, "the Iroquois League exemplifies Immanuel Kant's idea of a system for perpetual peace" (1994:346). Crawford states that the democratic structure of the Iroquois League, together with its peaceful ideology, produced a zone of peace which Kant would not envision until almost three hundred years later. If Crawford is correct, the Iroquois League could provide important insights into the general **mechanisms** that contribute to peace between political units in anarchy. More importantly, an examination of the Iroquois League could aid us in understanding the mechanisms behind the spread of peace among democracies today.

Numerous empirical studies have shown that while democratic states engage in war just as frequently as non-democratic states, democracies rarely if ever engage in large scale war against each other (Doyle 1986; Maoz and Abdolali 1989; Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1992; Bremer 1993; Maoz and Russett 1993; Rousseau et al. 1995). Realists such as Kenneth Waltz presumably find this result puzzling because they believe that the structure of the system drives behavior rather than unit level factors, such as the type of domestic political institutions (1979:68-69).¹² Idealists such as Woodrow Wilson should find it equally puzzling because they expect democracies to be less conflictual regardless of the opposition (Notter 1965:460).

Although there is a general consensus regarding the absence of war between democracies, the causal mechanisms underlying this outcome are not well understood. Most explanations fall into two schools: the institutional structure school and the political norms (or culture) school. Although institutions and norms inevitably interact, the distinction is a useful starting point for framework development.

The institutional structures school focuses on the relationship between political structures and the domestic political costs of using force. According to this school, decisions to use military force are **choices** based on domestic and international cost-benefit calculations (Morgan and Campbell 1991; Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1992). Foreign policy decisions can have costly domestic political repercussions. For example, the expenditure of resources and loss of human life can mobilize opposition groups or fracture a ruling coalition. Relative to decision makers in other political systems, democratic leaders must be more sensitive to these potential domestic costs, thus are more constrained in their behavior. Immanuel Kant, the first proponent of the democratic peace, used this argument to support his claim that oligarchies were more likely to initiate war than republics (Kant 1795).

Within this structural framework, Kant and proponents of economic interdependence have stressed the constraining power of economic interest groups. Trade ties create interest groups which directly benefit from peaceful relations. These groups can be expected to punish decision makers who undermine the peace. Insofar as liberal states enjoy the economic benefits of peaceful trade more than other states, liberal states will find going to war to be especially costly as affected interest groups protest decisions to use force.

The norms school, on the other hand, emphasizes the socialization of political leaders within their domestic political environment (Maoz and Russett 1993, Russett 1993, Dixon 1993, 1994). Democratic political leaders are socialized within a system that emphasizes compromise and non-violence. Leaders resolve political conflicts in democracies through negotiation and log-rolling; losing a political battle does not result in the loss of political rights or the exclusion from future battles. Moreover, coercion and violence are not seen as legitimate means of resolving political disputes. The

political norms school contends that decision makers externalize their domestic norms of dispute resolution when dealing with inter-state conflicts. In sum, the more democratic the state, the more likely its leaders will exhaust all non-coercive means to resolve a conflict before turning to the use of force.

Crawford claims that the democratic structure of the Iroquois nations and League, together with their peaceful ideology, made the Iroquois nations less conflictual (1994:378). The patterning of structure and norms could have resulted in a tendency toward peace in three different ways. First, inclusive structures and/or peaceful norms could have made the Iroquois nations less conflictual with all neighbors, both within the League and without. In the democratic peace literature, this is referred to as a purely monadic effect. According to this argument, the Iroquois nations and League would have been less conflictual with all neighbors, including Algonquin neighbors such as the Mahicans, than less democratic actors would have been.

Second, the structures and norms could have rendered the Iroquois nations less conflictual with any political entity, either within the League or outside of it, which possessed similar norms and structures. This argument, which we call a "broadly dyadic" explanation, forms the theoretical foundation of the modern peace between democracies. In this scenario two societies with similar structures and cultures, such as the Iroquois and the Huron, should have had relatively peaceful relations.

Third, the structures and norms could have made the Iroquois nations more peaceful **only** with members of the League itself. We label this argument a "narrowly dyadic" explanation. In both dyadic arguments, the interactive effect of the two adversaries is crucial because both sides must possess the

key characteristic (structures/norms or membership) for a peaceful outcome.¹³

Crawford implies, at various times, that all three processes were at work.¹⁴ Our conclusions differ from hers because we believe only the narrow dyadic model can explain both the lack of conflict within the League and the extensive conflict between members of the League and their neighbors. We draw this conclusion by evaluating the extent to which each scenario is supported by the historical record.

Can **monadic** structural or normative arguments explain relations within the League as well as between League members and non-members? The monadic structural argument implies that the general population, which bears the costs of conflict, constrains the behavior of its leaders. The Iroquois emphasis on decision making by consensus at the village, clan, tribe, and League levels would seem to support this view. The intricate decision making process was designed to ensure that the Iroquois League, as a collective body, could only act if all tribes agreed to the policy. This consensual process could in theory ensure that the League sachem, who did not lead the war parties, did not benefit disproportionately from warfare.

However, the institutional argument is also based on the implicit assumption that collective decisions are binding. If decision makers or individuals were to violate the wishes of the general population, they would have been punished. The Iroquois League had no power to compel members to act or prevent them from taking individual action. If the League could not agree on war against the Miami, the League could not prevent particular tribes or even individual warriors from initiating war on their own. Unlike modern political systems, neither the Iroquois League nor its individual members possessed a monopoly on external violence.¹⁵ If the U.S. Congress fails to pass a declaration of war,

neither the State of Louisiana nor residents of New Orleans are free to execute their own military offensive.¹⁶

Nor does the economic component of the structural explanation apply to the Iroquois. Kant and many subsequent theorists have suggested that liberal states have more to lose by going to war than other states because of the affinity between democracy and international trade, thus further encouraging populations to curb the bellicosity of their leaders. However, the Five Nations were not great trading states before the 1600's, being self-sufficient in agriculture and having similar rather than complementary economies and natural resource endowments (Richter 1992:28). Although the importance of trade grew as the exchange of European goods for North American furs increased, this had little effect on the value of intra-League trade. Instead, European trade encouraged the Iroquois to fight with their neighbors for control of the trading routes and beaver pelts without which they would have been excluded from the new economy, and ultimately rendered helpless against enemies with access to European weapons. In sum, structural constraints on decision makers do not seem to be at work in the Iroquois case. The lack of both coercive power and trade implies that neither a monadic nor dyadic structural argument can explain the long peace.

Given that structural explanations seem deficient, could peaceful political norms of conflict resolution have made the Iroquois nations more pacific with all neighbors? Again, at first glance, the answer seems to be yes. The norm of reciprocity was the single most important norm driving interpersonal and diplomatic relations (Fenton 1978:314). Leaders relied on reciprocity and persuasion to develop a consensus among villagers and League sachem. Iroquois leaders were often poor in a material sense because they gave all their possessions away. However, in giving they expected

cooperation at some future time. Reciprocity also played an important role in Iroquois diplomatic activity. The exchange of gifts was a prerequisite for beginning any negotiation. Conversely, the exchange of hostages, a very costly signal, often accompanied a treaty with a neighboring group.

However, reciprocity alone does not drive the monadic normative explanation. We expect most states to reciprocate: a state that attacks an authoritarian state can expect armed resistance and hostility. What distinguishes democracies from other states is the coupling of reciprocity with "niceness": not only reciprocating the other player's action in an iterated interaction, but cooperating at the beginning of the game in order to try to establish a pattern of mutually beneficial cooperation (what Axelrod (1984) calls a tit-for-tat strategy). The central feature of the monadic normative explanation is the initial reliance of democracies on negotiation, mediation, arbitration and other non-violent means of conflict resolution. If domestic norms of dispute resolution also drive external relations, we should find that democratic states rarely **initiate** armed conflict.

Were the Iroquois "nice"? Did they use bargaining strategies which were analogous to a tit-for-tat strategy? Certainly, the Iroquois pursued negotiation at times in their relations with other nations. The very existence of the Covenant Chain, a series of treaties between the Iroquois, English colonists, and other Native American groups, attests to the important role that negotiation played in Iroquois society (Jennings 1984). Moreover, in their relations with each other the Five Nations often appeared to cooperate and rely on negotiation and compromise. However, there are several indications that the Iroquois did not as a rule pursue tit-for-tat strategies with non-members.

First, the mourning war itself is not an example of cooperating on the first move. As described above, for the Iroquois the mourning war was not simply an act of revenge or a blood feud. No

Mahican or Susquehannock violence was necessary to trigger an Iroquois mourning war. Given that the mourning war was, next to the League, the single most important factor in the external relations of the Five Nations, we cannot conclude that the Iroquois generally followed a tit-for-tat strategy.

Second, historical evidence suggests that the Iroquois initiated and escalated conflict at least as often as they were the target of aggression. During the Beaver Wars of the 1640's and 1680's, the Iroquois initiated conflict in order to muscle in on the lucrative fur trade. The Iroquois, who by the 1630's lacked the quantity and quality of beavers required to participate in the trade, had three options: (1) act as intermediaries between native groups and the Europeans; (2) expand control over territory inhabited by beavers; (3) or steal beaver pelts on their way to trading posts. According to Richter, "most evidence points to the third alternative" (1992:57). Unlike the Huron, for whom trade had always played a vital role in economic life, the Iroquois chose to enter the market as warriors rather than traders. Although the French clearly provoked the Iroquois at times, the two great phases of Beaver Wars were primarily motivated by internal motives: economic gain and the mourning war tradition (Richter 1992:50).¹⁷

Finally, the messianic quality of the Iroquois League sharply conflicts with the normative explanation of the modern democratic peace. The Great Law of the League asserted "the principle that alien peoples must bow before the Iroquois" (Jennings 1984:93) If outsiders refused to join the League upon demand, they were to be militarily defeated and absorbed. "This is the doctrine of a Chosen People" (Jennings 1984:94).

The power of the Iroquois cannot be understood without an attempt to see the League from the Iroquois point of view. Other Indian Confederacies had risen and taken in nations by conquest. The Iroquois had more in mind than that. They believed themselves destined to conquer because they had a mission to take all nations. They were nothing less than **agents** of

universal peace.¹⁸

The spread of the democratic peace as envisioned by Kant and modern scholars does not incorporate this messianic and coercive feature.¹⁹ The democratic peace spreads as states evolve into democracies; it is an unintended consequence of domestic political development. In summary, the existence of the mourning war, the frequent initiation of war, and the messianic quality of the Iroquois League all imply that the Iroquois nations only used a tit-for-tat strategy when dealing with members of the League: monadic normative arguments cannot explain the Iroquois long peace.

Can a **broadly dyadic** argument explain relations within the League as well as between League members and non-members? The answer is clearly no because the tit-for-tat strategy was not even applied in cases in which the adversaries of the Iroquois were culturally and structurally similar to themselves. The democratic peace literature argues that conflict is reduced when both parties in a relationship have democratic political structures and norms of peaceful conflict resolution. This is a broadly dyadic argument. Yet, many of the Iroquois' most important long term conflicts were with contiguous states that shared similar political structures, cultures, and histories. The Huron political structure was virtually identical to that of the Iroquois (Trigger 1990:80). Nations were composed of a small number of villages; cross-cutting clan ties existed between nations; the Confederacy was composed of four autonomous nations (Attignawantan, Ataronchronon, Arendahronon, and Attigneenongnahac). The nations also shared many social practices and norms. Despite these similarities, the Huron and Iroquois were continually at war for at least 100 years. In 1649 the cycle of war was finally broken when the more heavily armed Iroquois dispersed the Huron after sacking all of their major villages. The delicate balance in this century-old conflict was finally tipped because French

restrictions on gun sales to the Huron were much more strictly enforced than Dutch restrictions on gun sales to the Iroquois. The Iroquois then went on to eliminate a number of other structurally and culturally similar confederacies, including the Petun (1650), the Neutral (1651), and the Erie (1657).²⁰ Finally, the Iroquois were almost continually at war with their most culturally similar neighbor: the Susquehannock.²¹ The Susquehannock were fellow descendants of the Owasco people, possibly a splinter group of the Cayuga nation. The Susquehannock, who elected not to join the Iroquois League at its founding, found themselves continually at war with members of the Iroquois League (Snow 1994:67; Witthoft and Kinsey 1959:35,39). Similarity in political structure and culture did not inhibit the initiation of violence as predicted by the broadly dyadic arguments of the democratic peace literature.

Can a **narrowly dyadic** argument explain relations within the League as well as between League members and non-members? The answer is yes; the narrowly dyadic argument can simultaneously explain the long peace between members and the extensive conflict between members and non-members. The Iroquois League created and perpetuated norms of peaceful conflict resolution among members. The use of force by one member against another was viewed as completely illegitimate; the use of force would have violated the spiritual foundations of the Great League of Peace and Power. The institutional structure facilitated multilateral discussion and mediation of disputes. In addition, the consensus-oriented decision making mechanisms ensured that the internal affairs of each nation would not be violated. The need for consensus encouraged log rolling and fostered a long term perspective because actors recognized concessions today would be repaid by rewards in the future. Overall, the security regime highlighted areas of mutual interest, such as halting the mourning war, and

created the expectation of cooperation among members.

The preceding discussion touches upon a more general question: were the decision making structures of the Iroquois League and/or the individual nations democratic? An examination of the requirements for a fully democratic institution identified by Dahl (1956, 1971) indicates that many of the elements essential for democratic institutions could be found in the Iroquois political system: freedom to form and join organizations; freedom of expression; right of political leaders to compete for support; access to alternative sources of information; and widespread eligibility for public office.

However, the decision making structure of the League also contained elements which conflict with several of Dahl's requirements. First, the fifty sachem positions were hereditary. Each position was the property of a clan within a particular nation. Any vacancy was filled by a member of that clan. For example, as shown in Figure 1, the Turtle Clan of the Cayuga always supplied three sachem to the Council (Snow 1994:63). In addition, several clans did not have any seats on the Council (such as the Seneca Deer, Beaver, and Heron clans). Given the hereditary nature of seats, these clans would never be represented on the Council. Second, the sachem were selected by the most senior women within each clan. Although these women consulted with members of the community, only this narrow portion of the population actually selected the individual. Tooker aptly summarizes the entire selection process: "The position of sachem chief was, then, partly hereditary, partly elective, and partly appointive" (Tooker 1988:318).

Perhaps the most important requirement on Dahl's list missing from the Iroquois political systems was the practice of voting. The concept of voting was alien to the Iroquois. Voting implies that the preferences of the majority will determine the outcome of a political debate. While this

majority may be qualified in various ways, the concept of democracy revolves around voting and majority rule. For the Iroquois, the idea of compelling an individual or faction to abide by a policy was a foreign concept.²² Consensus implied veto power for individuals, clans, and tribes. Given that the western notion of democracy implies voting and majority rule, we find that the term "democracy" obscures rather than clarifies the nature of the Iroquois political system.

However, just because the Iroquois were not democratic in the modern western sense of the word does not exclude the possibility that the peace between the Iroquois nations was caused by factors which were closely related to those driving the democratic peace. We have, hopefully, demonstrated that this was not the case. The mechanisms which form the foundations of the democratic peace were not operative in the Iroquois case.

4.0 MAINTAINING PEACE: FOUR REINFORCING FACTORS

Was the existence of a security regime the sole or dominant cause of the long peace among the Iroquois nations? In order to evaluate the relative importance of the security regime explanation, we must explore alternative causes of peace. We have identified four additional factors which contributed to the long peace: (1) the danger of the mourning war; (2) a matrilineal and matrilocal culture; (3) cross-cutting clan ties; and (4) societal norms emphasizing community and conformity. Each of these four factors strongly reinforced the pacifying effect of the Iroquois League.

Perhaps the most important factor in the endurance of the long peace was also the impetus behind the creation of the League: the destructiveness of the mourning war. Fading memories of the death and destruction of a costly war are often said to contribute to the collapse of security regimes and peace. Jervis (1982:184) argues that the Concert of Europe broke down as leaders unfamiliar with

the costs of the Napoleonic wars came to power. However, the mourning war was unlikely to fade from memory. The mourning war was not a single great event like World War I, but a living tradition that influenced life on a regular basis. The creation of the League did not stop the mourning war practice; it just diverted it to non-league members. Personally participating in mourning wars as well as observing other League members embarking on and returning from mourning wars kept the destructive potential of the mourning war fresh. Moreover, the introduction of firearms at the mid-point of the League's existence reinforced the widely accepted belief that spiraling feuds were very costly.

The second factor behind the long peace was the existence of matrilineal descent and matrilocal residence within Iroquoian societies. According to matrilineal descent, group affiliation is determined by the mother's bloodline. In the Seneca nation, if a man from the Bear clan married a woman from the Wolf clan, their children became members of the Wolf clan. This descent pattern was important because sachem positions in the Iroquois League were hereditary with respect to the clan. If the man from the Bear clan was a sachem, then his son could not inherit his position because he would be a member of the Wolf clan. The sachem's position would pass to one of his brothers or his sisters' sons. Matrilocal residence means that upon marriage men move to live with the family of their wives. Marriages forced Iroquois men to begin life again in either a new section of the village, an entirely new village, or even a new nation.

Matrilineal and matrilocal societies are not inherently peaceful. Rather, once political boundaries are established, conflict within the boundaries should decline. There are two reasons for this decline. First, in the most extreme case, decision making authority becomes dispersed throughout the political community. Building upon the Seneca Bear clan sachem example, we see that a decision

by the Bear clan to attack the Wolf clan would require approval by a Bear man currently living with members of the Wolf clan. The dispersion of decision making authority would be important for any group in which intermarriage was common. Marriage outside one's clan was mandatory; marriage outside one's nation appears to have been very common. The less extreme form of this same argument implies that Mohawk decisions to use force against the Oneida were influenced by the existence of Mohawks living with the Oneida.²³ Second, matrilineal and matrilocal societies weaken fraternal interest groups within society, which in turn reduces internal conflict (Otterbien and Otterbien 1965; Otterbien 1968a and 1968b, 1970). The dispersion of men throughout the community upon marriage reduces the bonds of allegiance between groups of men. Once married, Iroquois men had obligations to two longhouses and two clans. They were no longer surrounded by a narrow set of childhood friends; the distinction between in-group and out-group became blurred both physically and psychologically. In societies in which men make decisions about engaging in war, such as the Iroquois, matrilineal and matrilocal political structures inhibit the creation of tightly woven and competing fraternal groups which often trigger internal war.

The dispersion of political authority and the limited influence of fraternal interest groups in matrilineal and matrilocal societies forms the basis of two new hypotheses: patrilineal/patrilocal societies will engage in both external and internal war while matrilineal and matrilocal societies will restrict themselves to external war. These two predictions have been strongly supported by cross-cultural research (Otterbien and Otterbien 1965; Otterbien 1968a and 1968b, 1970; Ember and Ember 1971; M. Ember 1973; C. Ember 1974; Divale et al. 1976). In his review of warfare among pre-modern groups, Ferguson states that "the interrelation of forms of social structure with frequency and

form of warfare remains a cornerstone of current anthropological research on war" (Ferguson 1984:17).²⁴

These societal level variables, therefore, provide an alternative explanation for the long peace between the members of the Iroquois League. They also provide insight as to why the Iroquois nations were not peaceful with structurally and normatively similar neighbors like the Huron. The explanation also leads us to question whether or not the perceived uniqueness of the Iroquois League is the product of myth making and modern romanticism.²⁵ For example, the Huron Confederacy, an Iroquoian society with both matrilineal and matrilocal structures, was just as successful at maintaining peace between its members as the Iroquois League. Richter argues that the Iroquois were in fact no different from their Iroquoian neighbors and that their relative diplomatic and military success was due to historical accident, such as the greater willingness of the Dutch than the French to sell arms to native groups in the early 17th Century.

A third factor reinforcing the peace between the Five Nations was the existence of a cross-cutting clan structure. As Figure 1 demonstrates, each nation was composed of a number of clans and clan affiliation cut across nations. The Turtle, Bear, and Wolf clans included members from all five nations. Although clan members were probably not literally descendants of the same individual, members shared a number of rights and obligations which helped link the five nations together. For example, a member of the Bear clan from the Mohawk nation could expect to be fed and housed by clan members without charge as he passed through Seneca country. Politically, clan leaders played an important role in resolving within village disputes, between village disputes, and between nation disputes. The cross-cutting clan ties destroyed the "us" versus "them" perspective which has

contributed to many conflicts.

A fourth contributor to peace was the existence of strong societal norms emphasizing community and conformity. The greatest individual honor in any Iroquoian society was respect and admiration by one's peers. Unlike western society, individual achievement which did not result in the redistribution of the fruits of success to the community at large was looked down upon. In fact, miserliness was associated with the practice of witchcraft, which was punishable by a community sanctioned death sentence (Trigger 1990). Ablner and Logan (1988) argue that cannibalism is only adopted in societies with extremely strong norms of conformity. In fact, the mourning war ceremony itself had many features clearly designed to socialize the young and ensure conformity. For example, woman and children played a central role in the ritualistic torture of captives as the men watched from the perimeter of the structure.

Societal norms are difficult to enforce in a society without a government capable of coercing individuals. In Iroquoian societies this potential power void is filled by the clan (Trigger 1990). Individuals violating rules were never punished as individuals. Rather, the entire household or clan was held accountable for any individual violation of norms. In the case of a within-clan violation, the household was responsible for the actions of its members. If a member of a household stole from another longhouse, the entire household was responsible for providing compensation. Similarly, in an inter-clan case, the entire clan was responsible for providing gifts such as beaver skins to the victims. Over time, compensation became standardized according to the seriousness of the crime. By punishing the entire clan rather than the individual, the system encouraged clans to both socialize the young and pressure potential deviants into conformity. Families and clans could, and did, resort to capital

punishment for repeated serious offenses. We surmise that one factor behind an Onondaga's decision not to initiate violence on an individual level against a Mohawk was the expectation of community scorn and the impoverishment of his/her clan and longhouse.

If this argument is true, it is remarkable that these norms prevailed and persisted in virtually the most hostile environment imaginable. Epidemics swept through Iroquoia repeatedly after the initial small pox outbreak in the 1630's. Conservative estimates put the death toll of this initial outbreak alone at 50 percent of the population (Snow 1994:100). Given that the elderly were particularly at risk, the epidemics robbed the Iroquois nations of their collective wisdom, institutional memory, and primary socializing agents. In addition, the mass epidemic created the need for massive adoptions to replace the lost power of the community. "[By] the mid-1660's several missionaries estimated that two-thirds or more of the people in many villages were adoptees" (Richter 1983:541). These adoptees, not socialized in the norms of the Iroquois society, were more likely to break long established rules. Richter provides an excellent example of how adoption undermined social norms.

A gauntlet ceremony at the main Onondaga village turned into a deadly attack, forcing the headmen to struggle to protect the lives of the captives. A few hours later, drunken young men "who observed no usages or customs" broke into longhouses and tried to kill the prisoners whom the headmen had rescued. In vain the leaders pleaded with their people to remember "that it was contrary to custom..." (Richter 1983:544).²⁶

Despite the massive epidemics and large scale adoptions, the long peace among the Five Nations did not break down. The maintenance of social norms despite these upheavals can be explained in part by the fact that those surviving the epidemics were already socialized. In addition, the almost exclusive adoption of women and children assured that any "future" warriors would be gradually socialized before they could begin contemplating attacking members of another tribe.

Moreover, all adoptees faced a long probation period in which serious violations of community standards were punishable by death.

In summary, we believe that the long peace was reinforced by the danger of the mourning war, a matrilineal and matrilocal culture, cross-cutting clan ties, and societal norms emphasizing community and conformity. All these explanations point to a narrowly dyadic peace restricted to members of the security regime. Although this is not the most parsimonious explanation, we believe each component played an important part in preventing and diffusing conflict between the Five Nations.

5.0 THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE LEAGUE FOR SURROUNDING STATES

According to Crawford, the creation of the Iroquois League did not have any negative implications for non-member nations (1994:372). Yet, mechanisms designed to ensure peace between two states often free these states to pursue conflicts with other neighbors. The 1939 non-aggression pact between Stalin and Hitler secured Germany's Eastern flank as it consumed most of Western Europe. More complex institutions, such as security regimes, can also channel conflict toward external neighbors. The Concert of Europe, which is credited with generally keeping the peace among the European great powers from 1815 to 1914, clearly channeled military conflict and competition into the periphery. The race for colonies was in large part the by-product of the peace in Europe.

Did the Iroquois League channel conflict toward outsiders? The answer must be related to the fundamental cause of the League: the mourning war. The condolence ceremony was a mechanism designed to end spirals of hostility should the agreement of non-aggression be violated. If a Mohawk killed an Onondaga, the condolence ceremony could be used to prevent acts of revenge and potential blood feuds. However, the creation of the League did not end the practice of the mourning war nor

the need to fill a spiritual void caused by death. If the practice of the mourning war continued **after** the creation of the League, and if the League prohibited taking captives from member nations, then by definition aggression must be channeled toward outside members. Captives and adoptees must come from somewhere.

Is there any evidence that the mourning war custom drastically declined after the creation of the League? The answer appears to be no. First, there is nothing in the Iroquois oral tradition which indicates a halting of the mourning war or the practice of adoption following the creation of the League. Second, there is no physical evidence suggesting a suspension of mourning war practices. For example, clear evidence of the mourning war including the practice of cannibalism can be found at archeological sites. Cannibalism leaves many physical traces such as cut and crushed human bones discarded in the common waste areas of villages. The practice of cannibalism appears to have been adopted by the Owasco peoples after 1100 AD (Abler and Logan 1988). Excavations of sites inhabited before that period do not contain the tell tale cut bones. However, the physical evidence indicates that the practice of cannibalism, and by association the mourning war, continually increased from this early period through the 1600's (Abler and Logan 1988:10). After 1600, eyewitness accounts describe the practices of adoption and cannibalism among the Huron and Iroquois.²⁷ Third, anthropologists and historians generally support the claims concerning the continuing practice of the mourning war and the channeling of violence toward external societies. Jennings emphasizes the channeling effect: "Their backs protected, the Iroquois tribes were hostile with all others" (1984:40).

In any situation in which a state is compelled to go to war, a displacement effect from the formation of security regimes is inevitable. Rarely will the result be as striking as in the case of the

Iroquoian nations of North America. However, the redirection of conflict against non-members is a common consequence of many security regimes, alliances, and non-aggression pacts. This is important because it indicates why the process behind the democratic peace is probably superior to a formal security regime. Neither the normative nor the structural explanation of the democratic peace triggers a channelling of conflict toward external groups. From a total conflict or systemic perspective, the democratic peace should result in less conflict than a security regime which either channels conflict toward external actors or simply increases the security dilemma for external actors. Therefore, contrary to the conclusions of Crawford (1994:383), we argue that despite its lack of institutionalization the democratic peace may be superior to a security regime in terms of reducing total conflict.²⁸

6.0 THE NATURE OF IROQUOIS FOREIGN POLICY

If the Five Nations and the Iroquois League did not behave like modern democrats, did they instead act like realists? While realism is very underdetermining in its predictions about state behavior, it is reasonable to say that Iroquois behavior was for the most part consistent with the basic tenets of realism.

Certainly the most fundamental principle of realism, the primacy of security among state interests, was reflected in Iroquois foreign policy, arguably even more so than it was in the behavior of some colonial powers.²⁹ Throughout the history of the League, the Five Nations sought to maximize their sovereignty and security in an increasingly hostile environment. The Beaver Wars of the 1600's were fought in part to replace Iroquois who were dying and in part for economic reasons: the need for furs and for the opportunity to trade them with the Europeans.

However, insofar as it is possible to distinguish the pursuit of wealth and power, and the pursuit of absolute and relative gains, it was not poverty but the threat of powerlessness which motivated the Iroquois to fight in order to trade (Richter 1992:74; Grieco 1988). Surrounded by nations within easy reach of European trade, and who could prevent Iroquois access to the Hudson, St. Lawrence, Ohio, and Susquehanna rivers, and the upper Great Lakes, the Five Nations faced the prospect of being denied the firearms and other new weapons which were transforming warfare in North America. In response, they waged both aggressive and defensive wars against many neighbors, regardless of regime type and with varying degrees of success, in order to preserve and enhance their power.

In the arena of alliance politics, realist theories predict a tendency towards balancing against strategic threats (Waltz 1979; Walt 1985). Iroquois alliance policy with both Native Americans and Europeans largely conformed to this expectation. The Mohawk signed a separate peace with the Huron when conflict with the more proximate Mahican nation erupted in the late 1640's. From the 1620's until the English conquest of New Netherland in 1664, the Iroquois were for the most part aligned with the Dutch as they waged wars against the Huron and other neighboring nations allied with the French or, in some cases, the English or Swedes. After the defeat of the Dutch and expanding European colonial populations produced a regional bipolarization between the French and English, the Iroquois increasingly tried to play a more neutralist, balancing role between the two great powers, as Anglophile, Francophile, and neutralist factions competed for influence within the Five Nations (Richter 1992). Eventually the Iroquois became British satellites in many respects as their power relative to that of the Europeans continued to decline, much as realist bandwagoning theories would

predict (Walt 1985:16-18).

Similar dynamics occurred in intra-League alliance behavior among the Five Nations, for like states in most confederations, Iroquois alliance politics was a multi-level game, as the nations competed for power and influence with each other as well as with non-League members. Moreover, because of their geographic locations, the League members often faced differing security problems, producing divergent foreign policies among the Five Nations. For example, the Mohawk, and to a lesser extent the Seneca, who faced the most direct security threats from New France's Indian allies, were generally the most anti-French nations among the Iroquois (Richter 1992:102). League members even occasionally called on colonial powers for support and, if necessary defense, against intra-League rivals (Jennings 1984:108-9). Iroquois alliance politics were additionally complicated by the presence of cross-cutting transnational cleavages within the League. This was especially true after French Jesuit missionaries began to win significant numbers of Iroquois converts in the mid-1600's, as support for and opposition to French political and religious influence produced Francophile and Anglophile factions which transcended the boundaries among the Five Nations (Richter 1992).³⁰ However, in the end foreign penetration was not decisive in determining Iroquois alliance policy, as the growing threat of subordination to New France led to the demise of the Francophiles in the late 1600's.

The longevity of the League of the Iroquois was remarkable. During an era when alliances among European states' were highly mercurial, the Iroquois confederation maintained peace among its member nations for some 300 years until the fall of the League during the American Revolution. Surviving for three centuries, half of them in direct contact with European colonies, also makes the Iroquois unique among Native American confederacies in durability. Crawford places great emphasis

on the significance of the League's longevity, arguing that it indicates that the institutional characteristics of the Iroquois security regime were superior to those of the much shorter-lived Concert of Europe in the 1800's (1994:379-81, 384). Why did the Iroquois League endure as long as it did -- and no longer?

Crawford suggests that the norms of the League, the Five Nations' regime types, and the League's high degree of institutionalization may all have played roles in causing the remarkable persistence of the Iroquois League. However, while they probably did contribute to the League's longevity, these variables do not seem to account for the end of the League; neither the norms of the League, its institutional structures and procedures, nor the internal political characteristics of its members had changed dramatically in the years prior to the American Revolution. Yet in the 1770's, the members of the League, unable to agree whether to support the British or the rebel colonies in the Revolutionary War, put out the League fire and went to war with each other on opposite sides of the conflict.

An alternative, realist perspective helps explain why this crisis triggered the collapse of a security regime that had weathered many dire crises in the preceding years; the League dissolved because of fundamental changes in the distribution of power in northeast North America. Since the 1620's, the Iroquois had been located between the colonies of major European powers, first primarily the French and the Dutch, and later the French and the English. While there were many changes in the Iroquois security environment during these years, the Five Nations always remained in the middle of bipolar geopolitical rivalry, and in spite of their losses, they always carried substantial weight in the balance. However, both of these circumstances had changed after the Seven Years' War. The

conquest of New France in 1760 established British regional hegemony in northeast North America, greatly reducing Iroquois military-political leverage, while continuing expansion of the European colonies had progressively reduced the power of the Iroquois relative to that of their colonial neighbors. After 1760, the Iroquois League could no longer provide its members with the security they needed.

According to this perspective, the longevity of the League of the Iroquois was due more than anything to its flexibility and minimalism. For all its impressive success, at its core the League of the Iroquois had only one, limited purpose, albeit a toweringly important one: to keep the peace among the previously fratricidal Five Nations. This stands in stark contrast to the objectives of less successful security regimes such as the Concert of Europe and the League of Nations, which sought to manage entire international systems. Unlike these entities, which were intended to do many things but did few of them very well or for very long, the Iroquois League accomplished its more modest ends effectively for three centuries. The fact that the League was limited in its objectives and placed few other constraints on its members' behavior gave it great durability because it depended upon no external conditions except that the members, encouraged by the institution they had established, continued to value not fighting with each other. Therefore, as the security environment of eastern North America changed and changed again, the League was able to continue its basic function while it adapted and evolved, for example from the loose association of the seventeenth century to the more alliance-like Iroquois Confederation of the eighteenth.

Beside this characteristic of the Iroquois League --which resembles in many ways the minimalism of the democratic peace-- the fact that the League was more institutionalized than was the Concert of

Europe appears to be relatively insignificant. This impression is reinforced by considering other security communities. The League of Nations, after all, was more institutionalized than either the Iroquois League or the Concert of Europe, but like the Concert, it fell when key states no longer wished to adhere to its rules. On the other hand, the relatively successful Fenno-Scandinavian security community, which became known as the Nordic balance during the Cold War, has very little formal institutionalization, but shares with the Iroquois League the flexibility flowing from having limited objectives and few constraints upon its members (see K. Mueller 1995). Insofar as the League of the Iroquois tells us anything about the democratic Pacific Union, it is encouraging, for both regimes share this minimalist characteristic.

If the Iroquois were indeed realists, does it then follow that realism explains the shape of international politics in colonial North America? In some important respects, realism does appear to come up somewhat short in illuminating this case, at least on the surface. The mourning war certainly falls outside of the usual world of realist motives for foreign policy making. While standard realist motives --fear and greed-- played a large role in causing the Beaver Wars, they were shaped in decisive ways by the largely spiritual institution of the mourning war. Even so, the mourning war, which focused on expanding the size of a society, together with the belief that **relative** population size was the best measure of power, implies a closer fit to the realist view than one might expect at first glance. In contrast, the mourning war is totally alien to a liberal institutionalist model of international politics.

On the other hand, genuinely un-realist forces also played important roles in the Iroquois case. For example, the alliance behavior of the Iroquois and other parties in this region illustrates how alignments can be "sticky" --while states may not have permanent friends, nimble realignment can still be inhibited

by policy inertia, foreign economic and ideological penetration, domestic political and economic investment in cooperation, and psychic investment in longstanding international friendships. This is not a consideration which is unique to the pre-modern era; it may be as present in the Anglo-American "special relationship" as in the Anglo-Iroquois one.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

Our examination of the Iroquois League has answered several important questions about the causes and consequences of the Iroquois League. The Iroquois League was a product of war which was driven in part by domestic religious beliefs. Although the League maintained the peace among member nations for over 300 years, the causal mechanisms behind the peace differ greatly from those driving the democratic peace of the modern era. The causes of the long peace among the Iroquois included the narrowly dyadic security regime, the destructiveness of the mourning war, a matrilineal and matrilocal culture, cross-cutting clan ties, and societal norms. Overall, the League's violent origins, narrowly dyadic focus, and externalization of conflict clash with the dynamics behind the modern democratic peace.

In addition to these specific aspects, the Iroquois case provides some insight into several broader questions of international relations. First, the Iroquois case reinforces the need to view the security dilemma as a continuum. As previous research has shown, many factors can influence the "harshness" or "mildness" of anarchy: the nature of military technology, the stage of economic development, and the content of domestic belief systems. Jervis has demonstrated how the nature of weapon technology can affect the harshness of anarchy (1978). When offensive weapons can cost-effectively dominate defensive systems, security is a scarce commodity. Similarly, Liberman (1993) has

shown that the security dilemma becomes acute in eras in which wealth is easily extracted and removed from conquered territory because the incentive for conquest increases. The Iroquois case demonstrates how domestic beliefs can have profound effects on the expectation of conflict between political units existing in anarchy. The mourning war exacerbated the security dilemma by making spirals of hostility not only possible, but likely. Just as the prevalence of cult of the offensive beliefs in the necessity of warfare prior to World War I greatly increased the probability of war in Europe, the mourning war tradition made the Northeastern American woodlands a very precarious place to inhabit (Van Evera 1984).

Second, the case generally supports the applicability of realism to non-western and pre-modern contexts such as Native American nations in the Eastern woodlands. For a realist, the existence of individual units in anarchy creates an opportunity for conflict. The fact that the individual units have conflicting preferences makes conflict even more likely. Given this structural situation, realists expect relations between units to be characterized by a struggle for security, and therefore power. Power is used to pursue self-interest, to deter potential aggression, and to defeat armed opposition. Idealists, on the other hand, see anarchy as far less problematic because there is in general a harmony of interests. Moreover, idealists believe that achieving these interests often requires a collective effort. In such a world cooperation is far easier to achieve and power is far less important as the medium of exchange.

What sort of world did the Iroquois inhabit? We believe the Iroquois themselves as well as their neighbors would point to the realist vision. Conflict between political units in the region was the norm rather than the exception. As Snow states, "To [the Iroquois] war was the natural state of affairs, and peace was the exception to be declared. The League of the Iroquois was a declaration of

peace between Five Nations. It was assiduously maintained lest it devolve into conflict, as it surely would do without constant renewal" (Snow 1994:109). Obviously, neo-realists who deny the importance of domestic political structure and societal beliefs would be missing a great deal of the story behind conflict and cooperation in the Northeastern woodlands. However, in terms of characterizing the structure of the system and its consequences, the realist perspective of Morgenthau and Waltz seems to paint a more accurate picture of life in the Northeast than does the idealist view of Grotius and Wilson.

Third, the Iroquois case reinforces the belief of many institutionalists that regimes can facilitate cooperation in anarchy. Traditional realists are too pessimistic on this point. Although the security regime designed by the Iroquois channeled conflict toward external agents, the virtual elimination of conflict between members for such an extended period of time attests to the strength of the institution. The challenge for modern institutionalists is to design robust security regimes which are effective at minimizing conflict between members without exacerbating the security dilemma for outsiders. This point is particularly salient today given recent calls for the expansion of NATO and the hostile Russian reactions to such proposals.

1. This group of Five Nations was joined by the Tuscarora in about 1722 after their defeat at hands of the colonists allied with other Native American groups. Despite the addition, we will refer to the Iroquois as the Five Nations throughout.
2. Although modern versions of the League continue to exist on reservations in Canada and the U.S., we will refer to the Iroquois League in the past tense to distinguish the autonomous territorial entity from its modern counterpart.
3. Although the wooden palisades have long since rotted away, the incorporation of palisades and growth in square footage of villages is clearly evident from an examination of the surviving palisade post-holes uncovered at excavations sites. The emergence of palisades and the increase in the size of the villages within the palisades is easily surmised from examining village sites from different time periods.
4. Anthropologists studying war also focus on the implications of anarchy (Koch 1974).
5. The term Iroquois refers to members of the Five Nations while the term Iroquoian refers to any nation speaking a language falling within the northern Iroquoian family. The northern Iroquoian nations practicing the mourning war included, among others, the Huron and the Petun.
6. For a detailed discussion of the Iroquois mourning war see Richter (1983, 1992). For early comparative studies of variants of the mourning war custom across the eastern United States, see Smith (1951) and Knowles (1940). The adoption-torture-cannibalism practice described below was used for captives of both mourning wars and ordinary battles. However, the two were inextricably connected because the mourning war was typically a central reason for battle in the first place.
7. Unfortunately, we lack information on the percentage of deaths triggering a mourning war as well as information on any changes in frequency across time. While Richter implies that the mourning war became common in the 17th Century due to epidemics, guns, and trade, he does not speculate about its frequency during earlier periods. However, we do know that the Mohawk were referred to as "man eaters" by their Native American neighbors. This implies that the ritual, which included a cannibalism component, was practiced with some frequency during the earlier period.
8. Extreme external violence is one of six factors cited by Abler and Logan for the adoption of cannibalism.
9. Committees, which were also referred to as classes, were sub-groups within nations. The number of committees varied across Nations: Mohawk (3), Oneida (3), Onondaga (5), Cayuga (4), and Seneca (4). In the cases of the Mohawk, Oneida, and Cayuga, a committee consensus was identical to a clan consensus. For the Seneca and Onondaga, the committees were often composed of multiple clans.

10. Within nations, the failure to reach a consensus often resulted in the splitting of villages or the migration of dissident groups to areas outside the Five Nations such as the Ohio Valley and, later, New France.

11. The category of "security regimes" is very broad, and includes most alliances, concerts, and collective security organizations, in addition to entities such as the Iroquois League which do not fall into these more restrictive categories. This inclusive breadth is both the strength and the weakness of the security regime concept, since it permits comparisons to be drawn between very different types of regimes, but limits the extent to which it is possible to generalize about the entire class of institutions. We agree with Crawford's basic claim that the Iroquois League was a security regime which did not fall into one of the more restrictive categories (1994:346). We disagree with her contention that the League evolved into a collective security organization (1994:355).

12. Not all realists accept the empirical findings of the democratic peace literature. For a realist critique see Layne (1994), Spiro (1994), and Cohen (1994). For a critique of their arguments and methods see Russett et al. (1995) and Russett and Ray (1995).

13. For a theoretical and empirical test of monadic versus dyadic explanations of the modern democratic peace see Rousseau et al. (1995). Dyadic explanations can be derived from both the normative and structural explanations. In both variations, a state's behavior is dependent upon how it expects its rival to behave. This expectation is based on an assessment of the rival's domestic norms and/or structures. For example, democratic states are only peaceful with other democratic states because they expect these states to resolve conflicts without resorting to force.

14. A "peace-oriented belief system and ideology" appears to be a purely monadic explanation. The application of Kant's democratic peace theory is a broadly dyadic explanation. The discussion of the Iroquois League as a security regime is a narrowly dyadic argument.

15. Crawford states that the "Iroquois governments had a monopoly on the use of force"(1994:350). However, the League and individual nations lacked the power to coerce individuals in their societies on any issue (Jennings 1984:7; Richter 1992:44). Although Jennings is referring to the League explicitly, the League is simply the recreation of the national structural at a higher level. Trigger, in his discussion of the virtually structurally identical Huron Confederacy, states that neither nations nor the confederacy could coerce members (1990:84-85).

16. Some readers may argue that the lack of a monopoly on external violence indicates that the individual nations and Iroquois League are not equivalent to modern states, so any discussion of the democratic peace is totally irrelevant. We reject this line of reasoning. Although modern states have centralized and monopolized control of the use of force against external states, this process has only recently been completed. Thomson (1994) argues that until the 19th Century many actors within states had the capacity to initiate conflict against other states and non-state actors. States only slowly

developed the power necessary to restrain these autonomous actors. Throughout the 1800's, the U.S. government lacked the power to stop private military expeditions launched from its soil. Moreover, the public overwhelmingly supported the right of individuals to raise armies for foreign interventions (Thomson 1994:142). We should stress that popular support for these interventions was not limited to the spreading democracy; leaders of many of the military expeditions dreamed of personal empires. Overall, in most modern states, the monopolization of external violence tended to only slowly follow the monopolization of internal violence. One can only speculate if this monopolization process would have occurred within the Iroquois League had no European conquest and occupation of North America taken place.

17. While the diseases triggering the massive epidemics were clearly "external" in origin, without the internal mourning war mechanism these losses would not have resulted in external conflict.

18. Jones (1982), emphasis added, cited in Jennings (1984:113).

19. Similarly, Stephen Walt (1985:18-24) explicitly identifies the non-messianic character of democracy as the key explanation for the fact that alliances among democracies tend to be more enduring than those among ideologically similar communist or fascist states.

20. Previously, the Iroquois had dispersed the Wenro Confederacy (1638) located near present day Buffalo, NY. All dates are taken from Richter (1992).

21. At some point just prior to 1600 the Iroquois drove the Susquehannock from their location near the Pennsylvania-New York border southward toward Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The Iroquois and Susquehannock remained in almost constant conflict until the demise of the Susquehannock at the hands of colonial forces in the 1670's. Jennings (1984:140) argues that contrary to oral tradition the Iroquois were not responsible for the decisive defeat of the Susquehannock.

22. This rejection of voting is still held by many Iroquois living on reservations. When a referendum was suggested to settle the dispute over proposals for gambling on the Akwesasne reservation, "The antigambling faction was determined not to vote at all, a rejection not just of gambling but of the whole Euro-American notion of voting and majority rule" (Snow 1994:206).

23. Some have argued that Iroquoian societies may not represent "pure" matrilineal cultures because there is some evidence that not all chiefs moved upon marriage (Trigger 1978:58). However, the evidence is far from conclusive and the less extreme form of the argument would still encourage peace.

24. While anthropologists generally agree that descent/residence patterns and war are correlated, the direction of the causal arrow is hotly disputed. Ember and Ember argue that the existence of frequent internal war triggers the adoption of patrilineal/patrilineal structures (Ember and Ember 1971; Melvin Ember 1973; Carol Ember 1974). In an internally hostile environment, societies want to keep their

sons home to protect it. Conversely, both Divale and Otterbien believe the existence of a matrilineal/matrilocal society **causes** the amount of internal war to decline (Divale et al. 1976; Otterbien and Otterbien 1965; Keith Otterbien 1968, 1970). We find the second school of thought to be more convincing because while there are several logical non-warfare explanations for the emergence of matrilineal/matrilocal structures (migration, agriculture, etc), no one has persuasively explained why some societies suffer from external war while other societies suffer from internal war. For a critique of this position see Carol Ember 1974.

25. Many myths about the Iroquois remain today. Jennings (1976) argues that the myth of the Iroquois Empire was consciously created by the British during colonial times to support their claims of political authority over other Native American tribes via their authority over the Iroquois. Another myth claims that the Iroquois Confederacy was a model for the US constitution (Johansen 1990). Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, this latter myth persists (Tooker 1988, 1990; Snow 1994:154).

26. Abler and Logan (1988:10) argue that Richter overemphasizes the control of village leaders. While we agree with the observation that political leaders of the Iroquois had few mechanism to constrain individuals, we believe the story correctly indicates a breakdown of societal norms.

27. See Ruben Thwaites (1896-1901).

28. Security regimes with universal membership do not suffer from this problem because there are no outsiders towards whom to channel conflict. A pacific union between democracies could have an indirect channeling influence by reducing demands on the war-making resources of democratic states.

29. For example, while security concerns seem to have driven French policy, Dutch actions appear to privilege economic considerations over security considerations.

30. This is a common phenomenon in buffer states between great powers when it is not clear which neighbor poses the greatest threat (K. Mueller 1995).

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