Securitizing the Sovereignty Stand-off: Military Efficacy and the Mohawk-Oka Crisis

Willem de Lint

"The toughest challenge for any government in the western world, in our world, is to defend democracy from those who don't believe in democracy."
– Premier Robert Bourassa

"We are not going exceed to requests from a group of Warriors some of whom are not even Canadian citizens and whose actions have been, to understate the case, illegal for some considerable period of time"
– Prime Minister Brian Mulroney

"It is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends on not understanding it."
- Upton Sinclair

"Oka is what happens when dialogue stops."
- Serge Simon, grand chief of Kanesatake

From time to time grievances bubble over into public order crises. Historically, the most troublesome category of public disorder is one in which challengers are

engaged in a sovereignty stand-off, the grievance being a dispute over the authority of the state or its dominion (Waddington 1999; de Lint and Hall 2009: 49; de Lint 2015). In bubbling over to become a matter demanding of the attention of first municipal, and then provincial and federal political and security authorities, sovereignty stand-offs challenge the resolve and patience of all parties. State authorities are sometimes slow to recognise that a sovereignty stand-off requires measures of conciliation not unlike diplomacy in international relations (Beier 2005).

If, as is argued elsewhere, irruptive security events are regularly finessed as a means to advance militarism (de Lint 2018), sovereignty impasses may be more or less fortuitous occasions to demonstrate military restraint. For the government, the military is the last port of call for domestic security crises and represents the limit of civil relations. At the same time and in the short term, the government most often does not prefer to respond to what it perceives as illegalities by dedicating its civilian authorities to an exhausting process of following up on outstanding treaty obligations. For police and then the military, every operation is fraught, but is attended by the possibility to improve civil-military relations and advance institutional standing. In this article, I consider the Mohawk-Oka crisis as a sovereignty stand-off that demonstrates the limits of support for the extraordinary retreat of the civil authority. It is an object-lesson not, as some may believe, in the proven efficacy of securitization through operational military deployment. Rather, it supports the view that, confronted with this category of crisis and its strong cultural legacy and limiter, public order militarisation is here a counter-productive overstep, neither necessary nor useful to a durable government or military position or optics.

Irruptive security events, the sovereignty impasse and the parsimony of militarism

Some disputes resulting in public disorder, disorganisation, or significant disruption to denizens' day to day lives do not permit the seemingly natural flow of executive powers to the strongest actor. Such disputes draw from a seam that reaches into the core of the sovereignty question, posing an enormous challenge for authorities *as* authorities. If a conflict consists of antagonists, in these disputes the antagonists play high stakes, as the local dispute or issue is directly connected to a recognition of

authority. Accordingly, issue antagonists become sovereignty antagonists who look past current negotiators to the illegitimacy of historical actions on which the current conflict and grievance is only the latest iteration. In this way, sovereignty or secessionist or land claim disputes are not like environmental protests or other political disputes because most other political disputes do not challenge authority so deeply.

Mohawks are Kanienkehaka (Kanien'keha:ka) or "people of the flint," the easternmost of the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy. Pertusati (1997) notes that aboriginal resistance to colonial domination over their land has taken many forms, "from the passive acts of conventional politics and legal efforts to the more aggressive acts of civil disobedience and armed uprisings" (2). She notes that land claim recognitions have only taken place after struggles, many of them violent. Dickson-Gilmore (2001) concluded that the Oka-Mohawk conflict was "always about the land." "Three hundred years of crisis" over the status of the land eventuated in "78 days of conflict." As per Lackenbauer (2008:10; 31-32) the issue was not confined to the land title claim, but to the broader issue of aboriginal self-government. The situation reflected the Warriors' overarching agenda, which could not accommodate any government or military interests without an explicit recognition of Mohawk sovereignty. Of course, the federal government could not concede on a point that could jeopardize the integrity of the entire Canadian state, and Lieutenant-Colonel Pierre Daigle's battalion was called upon to bring pressure to bear in the field.

However, as per Pertusati (1997), in her analysis of the Mohawk-Oka crisis, "access and control over a territorial and resource base" are the fundamental issue in indigenous rights issues; "maintaining and regaining a land base is paramount to the survival of the aboriginal peoples as nations" (ix). She quotes Hannah Arendt in stating that "if hypocrisy incites violence, indigenous peoples faced with continued treaty violations would be involved in uprisings continuously" (2). For Beier (2005:4) in a book that wishes to "contribute to resistance against the violences of advanced colonialism," stateless indigenous peoples were a once recognised sovereign unit "in the ostensibly 'international system' that have been "unmade" through "reproduction and reinsinuation of hegemonic cosmological commitments" (3). For him, this represents a strong example of the "culpability of International Relations in the ongoing advance of colonialism." (3)

Military Action in Liberal Democracies

Taking up Beier's point to reference the wider view, how does the necessity of resolve for military action announce itself in liberal democracies? States engage in a civilizing process (Elias 1982) and engineer political devices to avoid direct conflict. The international system or world-system establishes norms of interaction and intra-state warfare and violence has declined (Pinker 2011; Goldstein and Pinker 2011), despite occasional, sometimes catastrophic setbacks (Gladdis 1987). Even in a post-Westphalian system, where a multipolar or unipolar international order consisting of peoples (in addition to states and regional authorities) is maintained through the devices of transnational and international agreements in global bodies (including instruments of the United Nations and international law), the civilizing process holds, despite occasional setbacks. In this view, military action is the necessary preserve of state and supra-state actors who are disciplined increasingly by liberal democratic conventions against a ready reliance on authoritarian and militaristic power. Like human actors, states engage in a civilizing process and engineer political devices to avoid direct conflict.

There is another view: the "dirty birth" hypothesis. Briefly, the historical violence of states' emergence (Tilly 1985; Benjamin 2008; Agamben 1995; Brighenti 2006) is articulated in the doctrine of sovereignty, or the monopolizing of violence over a territory or population (Fanon 1663; Weber 1968). However, sovereign authority does not simply appear out of the thin air; it is brokered after conflict or a "war of each against all," as per the famous quotation from Hobbes, or stolen from ulterior peoples too savage or barbarous to muster a claim recognized by civilized colonials (Buchan and Heath 2006; Agamben 1995). Agamben (1995) refers to a process of foundational exclusion, by which the original basis for inclusion into a group and the protection of state authority is dynamic and subject to continuous re-drawing by sovereign exception. Wallerstein (2011) argues that the world-system is loaded so that an ever-changing periphery will be politically excluded sufficiently so that it serves the needs of an ever-changing center. This "dirty birth" (Brighenti 2006) narrative of civilized society in a system of states is referred to variously, and sometimes in terms of a ballast against human aspiration.

The liberal democratic nation-state is a performance of law and culture that holds that all but the core criminality, its irruption in a dirty birth, may be subject to its instruments of rule and law. According to Holmqvist (2010, 111–113) "warfare is always already interlinked with dominant legal, political and colonial discourses." According to Obeng (2014: 1135) liberalism "is based on rational means and ends deliberation that neglects how wars of "emancipation" involve radically different perspectives on life, consequently leading to depolitization and dehumanization of the Other." It is expressed "in the way the "colonial gaze" persists through exoticizing difference" (1137). Objectification and marginalisation, as per the 'dirty birth' above, is one means of setting and resetting the table in a secure order. Beier (2005) notes that IR does much to police or fix the boundaries of "security," "pronouncing upon its content and referents" which has the result of making Indigenous peoples' insecure. In his chapter on violent knowledge, he notes that "popular culture representations of Indigenous North Americans impart knowledges that, rendering them as spectacle, contribute to their consummate objectification. This, in turn, promotes confinement of Indigenous peoples to a limited range of temporal and spatial contexts in the popular imaginary" (2005: 8). This process helps aid the advance of colonialism.

Aboriginal Land Claims

Aboriginal land claims disputes periodically irrupt into acute sovereignty impasses. Aboriginal peoples may appeal to the courts under Article 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, which defines the rights of Aboriginal peoples of Canada. The constitution covers cases involving aboriginal people under federal jurisdiction. As per Larher (2014), there are over 1000 land claim disputes, of which about 600 have yet to be resolved. Some have resulted in violent stand-offs between indigenous protesters and the police, the military, members of the public, and others (Hedican 2013; King 2013; de Lint and Hall 2009). According to Larher (2014: 103), the actors of many of these crises may traverse three levels governments, particularly where claims involve contested municipal ownership or management, and where the province is responsible for enforcing security or administering policing, and where the federal government is responsible for much that encompasses treaties and aboriginal or Indian affairs. Whilst Larher (2014) speaks of the non-homogeneity of the Aboriginal camp (and in particular,

that the Band Council advocated for a peaceful resolution while the Warriors advocated and practiced an aggressive and confrontational approach to asserting claims), this charge of non-homogeneity or division of interests may also be made against those that often, but not always, collaborate against the granting of Aboriginal rights.

For example, Former Quebec Native Affairs Minister John Ciaccia placed blame for the crisis on the Bourassa and Mulroney governments. He agreed neither with the hardline approach of the SQ nor his own and the federal government and requested support for an arrangement by which the disputed territory would be bought by the federal government and then granted to the Kanesatake Mohawks. The Mulroney government did not agree with the approach or obfuscated and delayed. His colleagues called Minister Ciaccia "a traitor" and he came to need police protection during the crisis (CBC, July 11, 2010). He said that "it was wrong to put the natives in that position…. The whole crisis could have been avoided with common sense and respect for the native community" (CBC, July 11, 2010). The government side, although it looked uniform from behind the barricades, had divisions and detractors.

Nonetheless, on 6 August, a written request for assistance was made to the Chief of Staff of Canadian Armed Forces by the Minister for Public Security and the Attorney General of Quebec, Mr. Sam Elkas, as outlined under Section XI, 232 to 242, of the *National Defence Act*, entitled "Aid of the Civil Power," which provides that where a riot or violation of the peace occurs, and the Attorney General is satisfied that the civil authority cannot bring order, the Army may be called in and the Chief of Staff may judge what force is necessary to counter the threat. Under S 23.15, that they may use only as much force as necessary and that firearms may not be discharged "if less extreme measures will suffice," a wording not unlike that governing police use of force, although the latter makes reference to the threat of death or life-threatening bodily injury as the trigger.

Security Creep

"Security creep," alongside the not quite synonymous "securitization" and "militarization," is often used to denote the phenomenon by which norms and routines

associated with the military institution colonize or occupy civil society or the public sphere of liberal democratic policy and practice. The mechanism by which militarism becomes relatively more prolific in the ethos, including the routines or practices and rationalities of liberal democracies, is not easy to pinpoint. Militarism expands by awaiting and then *apparently not exceeding* the threat from the perceived encroachment of an irruptive or spectacular security event.[1] To broker a coalition in support of a militaristic agenda, actors seeking to advance at least the temporary sovereignty of the military are quick to seize upon a panic-stoked consent that follows the condition of apparent emergency. Following the shock or spectacle of the 9/11 irruption, it was possible through the Bush/Cheney Doctrine to launch what became known as pre-emptive war or pre-emptive strike. The irruptive, spectacular security event serves to crystalize or clarify a moral order according to which, as presented by GW Bush on 20 September 2001, "you are either with us, or you with the terrorists." Although almost immediately presented as an existential or national security event by opinion-makers, it is also simultaneously attached to a folk devil, the recognizable bogey giving the force of public fear a clear direction. The incursion of military sovereignty into civilian or otherwise non-militarized spaces in calls for a state of emergency is championed in the groundswell of support from establishment institutions, particularly media (eg. Colombani 2001).

The decision to brandish violence is in the first instance a choice to engage dynamic resources in an advance of or against a sovereign claim. The vast majority of political conflict is resolved without the resort by either side to instruments of violence. Like a display of weapons that are arrayed in the background as leaders huddle in talks, military capability in liberal democracies is rarely engaged but always already referred to and provided for in legal authorities (the Constitution, the *War Measures Act*, Aid to

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[1] Three features of current militarism may be pronounced. First, the articulation of liberal rule to military sovereignty is expedited where war is launched and continuously refreshed through a shock or spectacle. Recalling the problem of the reconciliation of established norms and emergent sovereign necessity, militarism is regularly re-announced via an irruptive and perpetual emergency. Second, militarism is refreshed or buttressed by the ideological coup or of an ordering imperative or principle. Founded upon the necessity of the exception and the exceptional authority of the pre-eminent state in an international system, it is a powerful and for some necessary mechanism of the continuous unfolding of imperialism/politics. Third, militarism continues to depend on an ongoing cultural coup. In this regard, the military ethos is always on the verge of becoming Orwellian doctrine or pastiche, an ethos of heart without heart that expresses the double-speak of the liberal project.

Civilian Authority). If it is accepted that an expansion of militaristic security may be predicated on an isolated, yet irruptive or spectacular, challenge to the sovereign order, it may also be true that many lesser challenges will not muster the maximal security follow-up. Security crises do not always live up to the standard of a sovereign challenge, and a sovereign challenge does not necessarily live up to the standard of an irruptive or paradigm event.

One way in which an event may fall short is in the attendant narrative characterising the antagonist or foe. Whilst sovereign governments will tend to exaggerate the security threat posed by challengers who prove difficult to order, there will be less solidarity behind and within government and less freedom to move with brutality against antagonists that cannot be comprehensively censured. Aboriginal land claim protests which erupt into crises, such as at Ipperwash and Oka, involve complex social and political issues and actors (Tully 2000; York and Pindera 1991; Wineguard 2008; Larher 2014). They feature a security antagonist that is also a constitutional protagonist, as per s. 96 Article 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. In this regard, they confront security agencies including the military with an additional burden to limit the exercise of discretionary violence.

The additional burden means that the prudent management of the civil-military relation by government in this context is to accommodate a limited return of sovereignty and thus avoid a violent confrontation that has weak solidarity at back of it. Far from providing a vehicle for the spectacular affirmation of sovereign authority in a strident quashing of an existential threat, the Aboriginal land claim challenge is perilous ground from which to realise an ideology (like precautionary justice) from a preference for a more expansive and penetrating security posture. So, if the prudent option for conciliation has been overtaken by events, the next best approach by an efficacious government is to, as much as possible, securitise away from the weak ideological narrative of colonialization. By casting the problem as a localised uprising, the scale of the debate may be restricted to *a conflict over operational efficiency* and *the demonstrated the parsimony of militarism* even where the military is called upon to aid the civilian authority.

From the Political to Security – and Operational Efficacy

Securitising a social or political problem serves many purposes or meets many needs. As has been noted (de Lint and Virta 2004), security arguments are made within a hierarchy of political proclamation or governmentality, also known as an ordering principle (Buzan 2000). They must provide a predetermined course to stipulate how abstract ideas may be expressed in policy and then operations. In fixing the sequence of the dominant or even inexorable narrative, securitisation, to this way of thinking, serves to close options and minimise political contingency. In other words, a political order will prefer to view security as a synonym for certainty of outcomes. It holds that the more *indeterminate* the political outcome, the less secure.

Like all policy, security is simplified in institutional discourse or from the dominant view and standpoint of the ideological order. Simplification is important if there is to be integrity in an ideological order, and to attribute capacity, solidarity and purpose in an ideological other. Taking a view of IR to internal affairs, Beier (2005: 2), coins the term "hegemonologue," to refer to how the dominating society quashes a discussion of indigenous affairs in international relations and draws upon a common, dominant view of order. Following Steve Smith (1995:2), he suggests that the omission or silence regarding indigenous affairs suggests a discipline's loudest voice.

From this vantage point, security policy seeks to present itself as exchanging indeterminate and uncertain relations for more certainty. As Balzacq (2017:231) puts it, "security discussions only happen when there are questions about the current state of a polity, that is, when there *is a form of uncertainty*." He continues (2017:232): "in trying to intuit why security [is] dealt with or not addressed in the way it [is] we need explicitly to engage the management of ambiguity … since the difficulty of 'speaking security' owes something to the ambiguity that always looms in the background of security talks."

It is quite obvious that aboriginal land claims issues threaten to produce indeterminate and uncertain relations and in particular challenge sovereign hegemony. Some would argue that the sovereign must be the primary coordinate for a group, as if to say that without a true decision-maker or guiding will a nation or other collectivity has no "soul" or definable interest. Others point to the networked or rhizomatic

character of the international system, in which most states are not capable of truly independent decision-making (Bigo 2000). The draw of the international system toward a global outlook or standpoint or hegemony is very strong, but it demands a strengthening of nation-state nodes to support the system. Still others (Öberg 2016) find operational order in a democratic rationality represented in architectures of transparency.

In sum, securitising an indigenous land claim conflict punts the ball down the road. In order to move a problem into a call for militarism or to move militarism from shallow to deep versions (de Lint 2018), an event must be translated into a common narrative. In liberal democracies, corporate mass media is essential to such militarism. It provides anxiety frames and supports strong translations that sustain a unified response (Hall et. al 2013; Altheide 1997). Where securitising is accomplished through military actors, the matter becomes one of operational efficiency as presented in the ideology of military transparency. In military operational concerns or objects, the original political conflict is set aside; the conflict as sovereignty stand-off is verboten; something for other parties, not the immediacy of the day.

Operational Parsimony or the Optics of Efficacy

Where the military stands in for the civilian authority to force the surrender of a disputant, the question is always "where is the limit" in the means to accomplish the objective. In terrorism irruptions, as arguably during the October Crisis, the retort may be "just watch me." In Aboriginal land claims disputes, restraint is the operational motif. Given that the military remained subject to political direction and that under the section covering aid to a civilian power, the *Queen's Regulations and Orders*, Section XI of the *National Defence Act*, it could only use responsive force to the extent "necessary," and firearms were prohibited where lesser measures would suffice (quoted in Beauregard 1993: 27).

By operational parsimony we mean to say the subtle exploitation of the sovereign authority to check the explosive violence of military capabilities. As per the previous argument, once a crisis is transferred to military authority, the optics of the

event and the nature of review is focused on what the military is being confronted with and how it manages reactions operationally. As per our discussion of securitisation, this permits the political question to beat a (at least temporary) retreat. In doing so, and as per some compelling scholarship, the guiding element of governing is not so much law or sovereignty, or even security and control (Foucault 1991; Rose 2000), but the dramatization of a version of predictable order, whether through spectacular simulation (Baudrillard 1983; Bogard 1996) or competent appearances (Garland 2000; de Lint and Virta 2004). Security becomes a matter of stage-managing the actors, or operationalising a production that has been foretold in a program of events handed out by public relations officers to the press. Any uncertainty about the outcome is met by a clear, consistent operational plan, in which the ideological other is parodied to support the dramatization.

Conceptualising how transparency and governing are linked to military operations, Öberg (2016: 1133) draws on Baudrillard, who warned that transparency works as an ideology of social control: in liberalism, the modernist desire for a democratic rationality is presented in architectures of transparency. This adduces choice as an illusory value. In Baudrillard's ideology of transparency, a grid of "operational violence" fixes subjectivity in "modelling, algorithms, and the processing that occurs in networks and closed loops" (1135). It is manifested in "self-referential repetitions and modulations" that can be seen in proposed military operational codes. Consequently, as a technique of control, a military imaginary is concerned with "the political impact of the technical aspects of warfare" (1133). Öberg argues that "increased firepower, logistics and the emphasis on joint operations … in a permanent social relation that dissolves spatio/temporal limits … gives rise to a type of violence which risks replacing warfare with the processing of organizational models" (1133).

There is much to ponder here, but the key take-away for our purposes is that this military architecture is a powerful securitising force in the liberal transparency ideology. First, despite the civil-military relations caveat, it applies overwhelming dominance in its "already visible" coding of warfare wherever the political authority steps aside; its often globally networked "doctrinal organisational schedules work exactly the same at all times and make no distinction between peacetime and wartime" (1140). As Öberg notes, it codes space and time according to a "battle rhythm" in "an

operational environment that is ever expanding" (1140). Second, although others in the media may make a representation of military efficacy as involving individual courage and glory, the doctrinal architecture – this grid of operational violence – does not extend transparency to actual responsibility or agency in a campaign. In these overwhelming operational quantifications, which it makes open and accessible, it "obscures the many extremely difficult decisions … that take place in briefings, staff meetings, analysis cells and other arenas where there is no transparency at all" (1139).

Quantitative Dominance

Beauregard (1993:2) has written that the military strategy employed the Army at Oka was exemplary. A published paper by the Commmander of the Fifth Canadian Mechanized Brigade in Valcartier and the head of military operations in the field, Brigadier-General J. A. Roy, on which Beaurgard draws, suggests that Operation SALON represented a "dynamic military deployment" using regular army planning and deployment procedures involving up to 3,300 officers and soldiers, 20 helicopters, two fighter planes, Aurora reconnaissance aircraft, a signals intelligence unit, three high-tech Leopard tanks and numerous artillery. In addition, the Canadian Forces used psychological operations (psyops), such as low-level flights, spotlights, military encroachments, live broadcasts of operations "aggressive nighttime reconnaissance patrols undertaken to gather intelligence on Warrior dispositions, to make noise or intimidate them, and on one occasion to steal a warrior flag." (Lackenbauer 2008: 36-37). As Lackenbauer (38) summarizes, these were relentless psychological operations that advanced on Mohawk positions, pushing them back and "unhinge[ing]" them "psychologically."

The strategy was one in which the military sought at all times to keep "the upper hand" in a momentum or "progression of operations" in "logical sequence," and in which the soldiers were to be "well prepared mentally and physically" and would use force that would be "immediate and military in nature" only in response to first use by the Warriors. The CF demonstrated their determination and their tactical strength by showing off their firepower and advancing half a mile from the Warrior position. The military strategy had the dual mission of to make clear to the Warriors that armed

confrontation was imminent, and the CF was visible and approachable but unyielding. "When we arrived in the Kahnawake area, tension was running extremely high," LCol Gagnon observed. "At my first meeting, I attempted to defuse the situation. I explained my mission and told them that my men would not aim their weapons at them provided that the Warriors did likewise" (in Lackenbauer 2008: 31). Major Tremblay recalled that:

"I took a calculated risk during that operation. I was not supposed to push our advance so far, but the CO had authorized me to exploit the terrain. We met resistance at the first barricades. I evaluated the situation and, despite the Warrior's threats. I decided to continue the advance. The Warriors seemed surprised and fell back." (in Lackenbauer 2018: 33)

As these quotes illustrate, the intention was to present an overwhelming and indefatigable force to the Warriors. The use of force protocol was made clear, so that there would be little ambiguity regarding how the CF saw its use of firepower. The CF would exploit superior resources and organisational routines and repetitions to encircle, encroach, and methodically starve the Warriors of resources and will. Major Tremblay exploited the ever-expanding operational environment and his reading of the battle rhythm in retaking Warrior occupied land.

The ideal is not always realised in practice. Lackenbauer (2008: 37-38) documents the schism between aid-to-civilian authority of military operations and public order policing capacity in crowd control. One of the shortcomings of Operation SALON was that troops of the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment, who were doing searches for weapons at Kahnawake after the barricades had come down, were not equipped for riot control when confronted with a mob (they used tear gas grenades) and suffered some physical abuse that they were not able to counter with unarmed tactics (they were over-weaponized with rifles and fixed bayonets).

Force Multiplier 'Openness'

> The army is winning because they have mounted a brilliant public relations campaign. *- Christopher Cushing, 22 September 1990*

The second dimension of the strategy was the means of preserving the "moral integrity" of the CF as it engaged in the operation. It was recognized that the crisis and dispute was potentially one that could transfer hostilities from the political decision-makers to the CF. The message was that the CF was not a political solution, and that the political problem was between the three levels of government and the Mohawks. In the meantime, operations were to be conducted on a principle of open communication, conveyed by a public relations campaign, the unfolding of which would be related to all in the consistent repetition of the main points. The military set up the G5 cell, responsible for civil-military relations, to communicate with the Prime Minister of Canada, the Office of the Premier of Quebec, Quebec's Public Security Minister's Office, the offices of mayors involved in this crisis, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Sûreté du Québec, as well as the media (Larher 2014: 108). The Army's communication plan author Jean-Claude Cloutier described public relations as a proactive, precise messaging that was sutured to operations division decision makers (in Beaurgard 1993: 43). Beaurgard (1993: 43) quotes Johnson of the *Ottawa Citizen*: "The Army regularly provided material for television which was filmed at the site of the hostilities, in this way allowing themselves the control of what was subsequently shown to the public"

Brigadier- General Roy:

"Strategically, certain aspects of the intervention went beyond the responsibility of tactical commanders and influenced the conflict in its entirety. *The approach taken by the media, for example, when effectively developed, increased the operational benefits* expected in the strategic plan. The presence of reporters served not only to inform the people but also to influence them to a certain point. In fact, announcing all troop and equipment movements via the press contributed to a reduction of tensions in the field and even went as far as to spark dialogue. Also, the omnipresence of cameras encouraged opposing groups to remain calm and not commit themselves to an escalation of violence. When first looking for the support of the people, the Warriors did not know how to effectively exploit the support given them by Canadians at the beginning of hostilities. Their violent and unjustified actions, once broadcast, had the effect of turning opinion against the Mohawks. A public relations plan which included an information campaign definitely aided in the understanding of our role in the crisis. In a world where information is of

capital importance, the media provides everything. In openly expressing our point of view, *the risk of ambiguity was erased*." (cited in Beaurgard, 1993: 33)

The Quebec Federation of Professional Journalists and the Canadian Association of Journalists agreed that "the Canadian Army emerged from the recent Mohawk crisis with a better public image than the Surete du Quebec in part because the Army accommodated the media better." Beaurgard (1993:19) itemises the laudatory news response to the CF from news headlines: "New Respect for Our Army," "Saluting our Soldiers," "The Army Shows Restraint." "Tribute to the Courage of the Army and Police," Give Armed Forces their Due, "Praising the Courage of the Army and the Police," "The Heroes of Oka."[2] Winter (1992:249) found that news outlets had a cozy relationship with the government and were "instrumental in accomplishing the government goal of public opinion management". Roth, Nelson and David (1995:77) found, in their analysis of newspaper headlines about the Oka events, that the news media uncritically adopted "government discourses of thuggery and terrorism," effectively associating all Mohawk people with violence. The RCAP (1996) found that media coverage did little justice to the complexity of the issues surrounding the Oka events and the long history of Aboriginal grievances over the land in question. Instead, most news reports were organized around one central image - that of "bandanna-masked, khaki-clad, gun-toting" warriors" (RCAP 1996: 6). Heald argues that the news media have great difficulty reporting the diversity of Aboriginal issues, saying that they are "too complex to be dealt with in the single issue context that reporters work in" (1992:16).[3]

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[2] Bissonnette of *Le Devoir* and Lemay of *La Press*e praised the press strategy: For Bissonette (1990): "What the Canadian Army is in the process of masterfully demonstrating, with its civilized meetings with the press and the crucial information it gives out at these meetings, is that there exists a means of acting intelligently in a time of crisis." Lemay (1990) remarked on "the strategy of transparency […] this "openness" was part of their strategy. The Army knew full well that the Warriors and their Mohawk supporters watched television like everyone else ... and that they saw lots of soldiers. The effect of the media could only have added to the dissuasive force created by the deployment of the 5th Brigade. The modern media participates in events as much as it describes them" (cited in Beauregard 1993: 43).

[3] Beauregard (1993:45) notes that there was less diversity and more sympathy with the Warriors in Anglophone newspapers, and that the francophone press represented more diversity or complexity in coverage, but was more sympathetic with the military and government (popular polls also showed this).

It is well known that using adept public relations instruments media sources like the CF are capable of instrumentalising media to, as Brigadier-general Roy noted, increase operational benefits in a psyops force multiplication. At least with respect to the print media the strategy was viewed as effective, and the efficacy of the military was celebrated in news headlines and stories. As per the ideology of transparency, the CF made available to the media copious copy of strategic and operational materials. The CF repeated its messaging in order to set the narrative, or to, as Brigadier-general Roy put it, *erase the risk of ambiguity*. The newspapers gave credit to the strategy employed by Lieutenant-Colonel Gagnon. *The Toronto Star* wrote, "Lt.-Col. Robin Gagnon was able to accomplish a feat which had eluded the provincial police and three levels of government for 50 days."

That said, the media strategy involved not simply the delivery of a consistent message and video content, but also the attempt to access and then restrict access to the alternative view behind the lines, so a counter-narrative on the control of the media emerged, and this was not favourable to the CF's transparency message. In addition to scaffolds supporting search lights directed into the Mohawk encampments, the CF cut off external communication lines (Lackenbauer 2008: 40). An *Ottawa Citizen* editor, Robert Fisher, appealed a court order based on the SQ affidavit (that alleged a widespread Mohawk conspiracy) which allowed the army to cut off the phone lines that journalists reporting from behind the lines used to file their stories: "democracy is aided by our reporting from behind the lines and we are being hampered in those efforts." Julian Sher, president of the Canadian Association of Journalists said that he thought it was "scandalous that the government is openly saying that journalists don't have rights, which journalists can't communicate with other journalists." Geoffrey York of the Globe and Mail told journalists upon leaving the Treatment Centre, "there's no broadcast reporters at all [left][…] I think the thing that's most unbelievable is that in a country like Canada we're allowing the army to tell us what can be published in our newspapers and what can be put on our nightly news" (in Obomsawin 1993). Journalists who tried to toss their film to other journalists who were temporarily allowed close to the barricade had the film intercepted by the army (Obomsawin 1993).

It Depends on Where You Stand

> "Lasagna dead meat" – words on a banner placed by the army in the woods just outside the barricades, facing the Warriors, on orders from Major Tremblay.[4]

> "How it's going to be written in history? If I was a soldier I'd be ashamed to say I was in Oka/Kanehsatake." – Randy Horne (Obamsawin 1993)

The certainty that the military wishes to project depends upon a point of view. That viewpoint intends to demean, discount or eliminate alternative voices and positions. Suffused in its own institutional discourse of preferred sources and authorities, it is unsurprising that a compelling narrative of efficacy emerges in an account of the CF engagement at Kanehsatà:ke. The resolution of the Mohawk-Oka crisis is reviewed according to the hegemonologue as a striking success, worthy of study and re-application should a similar crisis arise.

However, a wider view of media and longer view of the event may not permit the erasure of ambiguity and the fixing of the narrative in favour of the efficacy of the military operation along this reading of transparent operational efficacy. It is quite true that the hegemologue is evident in the above cited works of print media and that the operational plan was largely successful in avoiding a worst-case scenario legitimacy crisis. However, even a perfunctory scan of the vast literature on Oka suggests that its reputational legacy on the CF is uncertain.[5] There are at least three reasons for this.

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[4] As Lonnie Cross ("Lasagna") tells a reporter, Major Tremblay told him that he had some of his men put up the banner "just to intimidate me" (Obomsawin 1993). I did not find a contrary view.

[5] The literature includes: Michael Baxendale and Craig Maclaine. *This Land is Our Land: the Mohawk Revolt at Oka* (Montreal: Optimum Publishing, 1990); Gilles Boileau, *Silience des messieurs: Oka, terre indienne* (Montréal: Méridien, 1991); Francois Dallaire, *Oka: la hache de guerre* (Ste-Foy, QB: Editions de la Liberté, 1991); Canada, Parliament, House of Commons. Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, *The Summer of 1990: Fifth Report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs* (Ottawa, 1991); John Ciaccia, *Oka Crisis: A Mirror of the Soul* (Dorval, QB: Maren Publications, 2000); Donna Goodleaf, *Entering the War Zone: A Mohawk Perspective on Resisting Invasions* (Penticton, BC: Theytus Books, 1995); Rick Hornung, *One Nation Under the Gun: Inside the Mohawk Civil War* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1991); Linda Pertusati, *In Defense of Mohawk Land: Ethnopolitical Conflict in Native North America* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997); David Swain, *Oka: A Political Crisis and Its Legacy* (Toronto: D and M Publishers, 2010); Geoffrey York and Loreen Pindera. *People of the Pines: The Warriors and the Legacy of Oka* (Toronto: MacArthur and Company, 1991). *Kanehsatake: 270 years of resistance* (Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 1993); *Spudwrench:*

First, operational plans do not make stories so well as pithy anecdotes, and pithy anecdotes may not support the narrative of the operational plan. Second, a narrative that features a military operation to force an aboriginal surrender remains a powerful coercive operation against a vastly inferior foe, no matter how efficiency carried out. This brings the story back to the realm of the sovereignty claim, and cultural and political decision-making. The military may indeed have inherited poor choices to arrive at the more coercive option; but its operational transparency is built upon the governments' rigidity on native land claims and sovereignty, and this does not play well culturally.

With respect to the first point, there were memorable events for the counter-narrative. A reconnaissance patrol of several soldiers on the Warrior side of the wire or barricade came across the sleeping Randy "Spudwrench" Horne, a Mohawk steelworker, and beat him up very badly (Swain 2010: 144), "beyond recognition" or to "near death."[6] Depending on the viewpoint taken, he "pulled a knife" on his assailants and two soldiers also received minor injuries (Lakenbauer 2008: 65). He was given over to receive medical attention the next day after commander Tremblay made a promise not to question and return injured man, but that promise was broken; it took several hours before a doctor was let in to see him; Horne was charged with several offences after release from hospital. In another event, soldiers were criticised by a member of the International Federation of Human Rights when they and police did nothing when non-native community protesters wielding baseball bats attacked their car as they tried to make a delivery of food medicine (Lakenbauer 2008: 34).

In another public spectacle, a group of townspeople sets upon a convoy of cars carrying mostly children and the elderly (who leave the Kahnawake reserve fearing an army assault), by pelting the cars with large rocks from an overpass, smashing the windscreens and resulting in the death of one elderly man while the SQ stands by. Possibly the most devastating event was the final act, in which the surrender of the Mohawks featured several injuries as it descended into a physical altercation between

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Kahnawake Man (Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 1997); and *My name is Kahentiiosta* (Montreal: National Film Board, 1995).

[6] As stated by Dr. Gordon, who examined him stated for the documentary, "his head was about one and half times the size of an ordinary head, one eye was fully closed" (Obomsawin 1993).

the soldiers and Mohawk militants and a 14-year-old, Waneek Horn Miller, was wounded by a stab in the chest by a soldier's bayonet while holding her 4 year-old sister (CBC 2017). An already handcuffed Cross was beaten by provincial officers in front of witnesses in what the Quebec Police Ethics Committee determined was "excessive, humiliating and degrading." By the time SQ officers involved with the beating were suspended they had already left the force.

With respect to the second point, there were media behind the barricades, and the characterization of a worthy foe against military dominance looked weak when the humanity of the Mohawks was presented against the well-resourced adversary. Two journalists (Albert Nerenberg and Robert Galbraith) were able to use a tarp and, evading the CF in broad daylight, made their way to the Treatment Centre, in part, to witness the massacre, should it have occurred (Obomsawin 1993). Against the reference to operational efficiency, simple declarative observations by Mohawks were a powerful counterpoint, as illustrated by David's observation reproduced in a Mohawk website and by an account from the Mohawk Nation News:

> "My memories of that summer at Kanehsatake are so different from the stories told by the media. Their attention was focused on the barricades. To most of them, this was just a cop story; the police & soldiers were there to "restore law & order," to put things back the way they were. But most of the people behind the barricades were my family, friends, & relatives. And they didn't want things to go back to the way they were. They knew that would mean a certain steady ride down a one-way street to an oblivion called assimilation" (David, 2014).

> "In 1990 our burial grounds and ceremonial site at Kanehsatake were going to become part of the Oka Golf Course in Quebec without our knowledge or consent. Two Mohawk communities, Kahnawake and Akwesasne, stood up immediately to support the resistance of our brothers and sisters. [….] International pressure forced the military to pull back. On September 26th we came out to go home. The soldiers and cops beat us up. One child was bayoneted in the chest. We were arrested and charged. In the end three of our men served sentences. Afterwards we were hunted down like criminals. We were called "terrorists" and insurgents for defending ourselves. The Canadian government

bombarded us with pacification brainwashing programs to help us get over or forget their brutality" (Mohawk Nation News).

With respect to the third point, the military operation was predicated on a lack of a negotiated agreement on the land claim with the municipality, and provincial and then federal governments, which had ignored or redrafted historical land claims. It had been proposed to Minister Tom Siddon to buy back the ground to prevent the expansion of the golf course but he refused, claiming that he did not have credible Mohawk spokespeople with which to make the agreement (Larher 2004: 51).

The indigenous voice is politically and socially subordinated but emerges clearly and strongly in many alternative and mainstream cultural vehicles, including film, visual art, documentary. Whilst the military public relations effort to dominate the Oka narrative had initial success in print media, it has had no lasting success in this and other venues. For example, the 1993 feature length documentary film by Alanis Obomsawin, *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*, won eighteen domestic and international awards, and was ultimately successful in promulgating into the mainstream media the indigenous narrative, drawing upon Oka to redress a longstanding subordination and invisibility. The filmmaker, Obomsawin, says that despite its hostile reception in Quebec and with the CBC initially, in her subsequent travels across Canada she says First Nations people express gratitude for the stand the Mohawks took, saying that governments have treated them differently since (Braun 2015). The Royal Commission Report on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) made more than 400 recommendations and criticised the media's handling of the "Oka Crisis," on the basis that it was couched in stereotypical imagery of Aboriginal people including that they are Pathetic Victims, 2) Angry Warriors and 3) Noble Environmentalists (1996: 5).

The danger in developing a view of a real world event on the basis of concepts intending to generalise from macrosocial ideology is that real world events are often a collage of distinct and competing ideologies and respond both to billiard-ball play of ground level actors and actions and to the variety of ideological and macrosocial forces seeking to produce a connection between or to discipline the often chaotic and ambiguous forces in a hegemonologue or ordering principle. In addition to the hegemonologue, there is a subordinate narrative that takes the standpoint of the Mohawks.

Security and Ambiguity

Security and ambiguity are perceived as contradictory or oppositional. Where there is political ambiguity, there is insecurity; where there is insecurity, the 'sovereign' monopoly of coercive violence is challenged. In the military deployment is the means to exchange ontological ambiguity for a transparently, ordered, operational control. In operational control, there is an apparently natural re-assertion of a dominant or hegemonic discourse (transparent consistent with the material resolution. Authoritarian or disciplining liberalism is supported by the presumptive first order privilege of the executive prerogative and national security over the dependent values of liberalism and democracy, a presumptive ordering that permits martial engagements under a host of circumstances (or circumlocutions).

However, securitising, and securitising through military intervention in particular, does not distribute goods in equal measure among parties. Not even the most ambitious *political* interventions do this, though some may try. On the contrary, it is an effort to realise the claim of sovereignty. Sovereignty may be certain or ambiguous depending on its expression, particularly at moments of challenge. If sovereignty is defined as the ability to carve out ground or dominion out from under a rule, or rule of law (Schmitt 1985), securitising is here meant to repel or extinguish the Mohawk sovereignty claim at the site of the conflict in favour of the competing claim of the Canadian government.

Whatever its many antecedents, militarization is advanced by a confluence or elective affinity between a set of normative views about the proper unfolding of individual and national identities and a set of strong, aligned interests.[7] At moments of

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[7] Ideas do not flourish in the absence of common interests and ideological supports, and there will tend to be a saturation or intersection of interests and ideological support in institutional forces (sport, state-corporate media, public education) to nurture and project national cultural beliefs (Althusser 1971). The cultivation of excessive devotion to rigidly nationalistic identifications or divisions among peoples often spurs and is spurred by a narrative of noble cause belligerence or militarism. Militarism is bolstered and fostered by government actors and interested parties who implicate the besieged authority of the sovereign state in matters of cultural preference, dogma and terror (Fanon 1963). In this regard, a national security panic may be compared to a moral panic and involves much the same features, namely, that a

crisis the military forces that are arrayed to secure a sovereign claim, are pitted against strong narrative and ideological forces. Since material, military forces ultimately depend upon narrative or ideological forces, the crisis plays out as a drama in which the military cannot hope to quash the cultural without reinvigorating the political question of what belongs to whom. In the case of the sovereignty claim crisis, the cultural is far more tenacious than military securitisation.

Not so fast: The tempting Tonic of Securitisation

> *"We never learn from history, do we?" John Ciaccia, former Minister of Native Affairs*
> *(CBC, July 11, 2010)*

Surges in militarism – and its sister concept, authoritarianism – may appear almost anywhere, arising and overtaking public and private space, sometimes as if by magic, mostly only briefly, as a perceived necessity arises and then falls away. It is often associated with a surge in xenophobic sentiment and anxiety that swells and wanes with the relative specificity and perceived proximity of an arguably existential sovereign or anti-national crisis. In liberal democracies military sovereignty or rule is potentially destabilising of the political status quo.

When the civilian authority calls in the military to resolve public order crisis, it suggests that the limit of the capacity of civil authorities have been reached beyond a political resolution and must be addressed as a sovereign security crisis. As has been demonstrated elsewhere, and as Minister Caccia has noted, the capacity of the civilian authorities to address the Oka-Mohawk crisis was far from exhausted and negotiations were ongoing during the part of the duration of the military occupation; it was the political will to bring the matter to a conclusion that was intermittent or wanting. This is proven in the aftermath of the event. The 1990 events led to the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples, which helped usher in new agreements between indigenous and non-indigenous people such as the resource-sharing deal in 2002 called the Paix des

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flashpoint is already prepared by an anticipatory social and political narrative (cf. Hall et al. 2013). In sum, there is a flashpoint, a ready narrative and a suitable ideological terrain.

Braves (Peace of the Braves) between the Quebec government and the Grand Council of the Crees.

Our analysis leads to the conclusion that militarism, even when well-aimed by the political authority, certainly does come up against a cultural legitimacy limit. The advance of militarism in liberal democracies may be dependent, in the first instance, upon an irruptive event and an interested political ideology (de Lint 2018) and may even benefit from a suitable ideological alignment or hegemonologue (Beier 2005) and strong public relations strategy. However, the Oka sovereignty stand off demonstrates that without a compelling counter to the dirty birth progeny, narrative certainty in militarization or securitization will be short-lived and the limit of securitisation quickly exceeded. An operational approach that supports a motif of operational transparency (Öberg 2016) in the projection of quantitative dominance and a competent public relations strategy may well briefly extend the window of opportunity, but time is no friend to the absence of a strong political counterpoint to the sovereignty challenge.

Military might is a rhetorical and material resource that is used by established states and by emergent and non-state actors to force and enforce preferred resource distributions according to an ordering principle against a challenge. Where that challenge is not met by the civilian authority despite its multiple political representations, it threatens to open a fissure into the hegemonic narrative and also the military deployment.

This is not, then, a rehash of the idealist versus realist debate of international relations, but a further interpretation of the presumptive association of realism (as in line with the way things really are) and militarism. Thus, the emergence and legitimacy problem for armed force that is covered by idealism and realism: a normative regulatory preference (legitimacy) is reconciled with the more or less constant possibility (some say, necessity) of violent division or belligerent possession or occupation (emergence).[8]

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[8] Huntington (1981) argued that an extended military engagement such as the Cold War (currently the War on Terrorism) would weaken U.S. security (civilianization of the military) or the societal imperative of liberalism (militarization of society). However, for Janowitz (1961), the permanent bases of a military readiness during a long war (Cold War) requires that the professional ethos mimic that of a police force that would be always be in readiness.

The "dirty birth" of a sovereign nation is also a place of cultural sensitivity that compromises national hegemony and the coercive instruments of solidarity. The utility, efficacy and even validity of this interpretation of the security spectacle as a means or device of militarization is not uncontested, and the effort to utilize such devices is far from always successful. In this, there is the potential to reaffirm the connection between militarism and the liberal limit (to government) that may help explain why it is that militarism is not the quite the juggernaut that many analysts claim.

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