

Si:ya:m Governance, Colonial Interference and Contemporary
Challenges Facing Cheam Leadership

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A Community Governance Project Report

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN INDIGENOUS GOVERNANCE

University of Victoria

August, 2011

All societies develop under conditions of external contact with other societies at the economic, political and cultural levels. Under 'normal' circumstances, a given society is able to absorb whatever it borrows from other contacts, digest it and make it its own. But under conditions of external domination, conquest for instance, the changes are not as a result of the working out of the conflicts and tensions within, and do not arise out of the organic development of that society, but are forced upon it externally...

This may result in a society becoming deformed, changing course altogether or even dying out. Conditions of external domination and control, as much as those of internal domination and oppression, do not create the necessary climate for the cultural health of any society...

Cultures that change to reflect the ever-changing dynamics of internal relations and which maintain a balanced give-and-take with external relations are the ones that are healthy.

Ngugi, 1993, pp. xv xvi

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Acknowledgements

To begin with, I would like to thank the Nuu-chah-nulth as well as Coast and Strait Salish Peoples for allowing me to live and learn on their lands for the past 37 years.

I would like to thank my MA supervisor, Jeff Corntassel, for his guidance and advice. In addition, I would like to thank the faculty and support staff of the Indigenous Governance program at the University of Victoria for helping me navigate my way through this learning process.

My academic journey would not have been as enjoyable if it were not for my friends. I would like to thank my brother, Binesi Morriseau, for the time we spent together living and learning in Cheam. Also, I would like to thank my dear friend Crystal Easton for your energy, advice and technical support. I would also like to thank Aunty Delores and Uncle Ray for their spiritual guidance and support.

Throughout this journey, I have had to sacrifice spending time with my children, Jonathan, Shaneeka, and Samiah. Thank you for your love, humor, and numerous hugs and kisses. In addition, I thank my Uncles Andrew and Sam, and my Aunt Madeline, for supporting me through this process and sharing Onakawe history with me. All of you are my inspiration and motivation for continuing along the path I have chosen.

I am deeply indebted and can never fully repay the Quipp family for their hospitality, teachings and guidance. Thank you to June Quipp for bringing me into your family and sharing your rich life experiences with me and my family. Thank you to Freddy Quipp for the countless laughing sessions, numerous hunting and fishing trips, and spiritual guidance. Thank you to Rick and Wendy Quipp for sharing your knowledge with me and teaching me how to fish, hunt and preserve foods. I am a better person and my family is richer because of the meaningful relationships developed during this project.

Thank you to all the members of Cheam. I truly enjoyed my time in your community, from fishing on the river to having coffee in your homes. I am greatly indebted to all of you. Thank you for a wonderful experience.

Finally, thank you *Gitchie Manito* for opening doors for me, guiding me along the path and giving me the energy to continue on even when I thought I had given my all.

Executive Summary

I chose the Sto:lo community of Cheam for my final governance project because Cheam has a long history of resisting colonial domination with regards to fisheries and governance. This project is intended to contribute to Cheam's efforts of resistance and rebuilding in a way that reflects the values, beliefs and shared visions of the people of Cheam.

The community of Cheam is situated on the shore of the Fraser River twenty minutes east of Chilliwack, BC. The governance research I conducted in Cheam allows for a deeper understanding of the current political environment in Cheam and the challenges that the community faces in attempting to regenerate a contemporary form of Si:ya:m governance. The participant interviews contained in this project describe how the state-imposed Chief and Council system absolutely goes against the values and beliefs of what it means to be a Siya:m (a Sto:lo term for one who exhibits positive leadership), thus not only sustaining negative influence on the effective governance of community affairs but also on the relationships among families and the men and women of Cheam.

This project is divided into three parts. Part One provides a historical context, giving a brief background of the Sto:lo Nation and the community of Cheam. It also contains a "terms of reference" section, which briefly describe the Sto:lo concepts of Si:ya:m governance. The part concludes with my methodology and participant biographies.

Part Two contains a compilation of participant interviews concerning Si:ya:m governance and colonial interference. Four themes were identified through an analysis of the interviews; they are:

1. Disconnections between leadership and community members.

2. The distortion of Cheam governance roles and responsibilities.
3. Redefining the role and responsibility of Women.
4. Effects on Cheam Families.

Part Two concludes with a discussion of the findings and some conclusions.

Part Three contains the recommendations that arose from this research project, which are meant to inspire “grassroots” conversations that could potentially lead to the development of governance alternatives that are based in Indigenous values, practices and beliefs.

Introduction

Upon meeting with my community supervisor and the five participants in this research study, and explaining my research interests in Indigenous forms of governance and leadership development, there was a consensus that leadership and governance issues would be the focus of this project. This was due to participants voicing concerns that the Chief and Council governance system was detrimental to community affairs and was contributing to the creation of factions within Cheam—factions that were distorting the roles and responsibilities of community members as understood in relation to Si:ya:m governance. In addition, the participants wanted to have a research paper that reflected their experiences and understanding of Si:ya:m governance, contemporary governance challenges, and which could be used as a resource tool for future governance initiatives.

This project is a summary of six participant interviews, including five with Cheam community members and one with a member of the Sto:lo Nation. These interviews attempted to understand community members' perspectives of Si:ya:m governance, contemporary governance challenges, and governance alternatives based on Si:ya:m values; we also explored methods for making these changes at the community level. The following interview questions were used to open and guide the discussion:

1. What does it mean to be a Siya:m? How are these people chosen and trained?
2. How do the roles and responsibilities of being a Siya:m relate to the traditional governance of the community? Are the values of Si:ya:m reflected in the current Chief and Council governance structure? Can you talk more about these values and how they relate to the current Chief and Council structure?
3. What are the roles of men and women within Si:ya:m governance? How does Si:ya:m governance unify communities and people?

4. How have the traditional roles of men and women changed with colonization and the imposition of the Chief and Council governance system? How have these changes affected the relationships between men and women within a community context?
5. Do you think that there need to be changes in terms of the way your community is governed? If so, how can these changes be made, and why are they important?

In each of the interviews, the participants were consistent in stating that the current Chief and Council governance system contributes to fragmentation within the community and that there is desire among community members to implement a contemporary form of governance based on the values and practices of the Si:ya:m. However, when this alternative is contemplated, issues arise—such as class, gender, patriarchy, rebuilding families, colonial mentality and decolonization—demonstrating the complexity and depth of the proposed changes.

Based on the analysis of the interviews (Appendix A provides the full interview transcriptions), the following six recommendations emerged and are presented here to inspire community-level conversations; conversations that could contribute to attaining unity and harmony in Cheam by establishing and maintaining a contemporary form of Si:ya:m governance.

1. Create opportunities for the regeneration of consensus decision-making at the grassroots level.
2. Move all Cheam governance business back into the longhouse and have the rules of the longhouse govern the meetings.
3. Rebuild the family unit.
4. Continue with the efforts to revive the family model of representative governance.
5. Continue to mentor and train the young people of the community using values, teachings and beliefs that define what it means to be a Cheam member.
6. Create an orientation experience for new and existing members of the Chief and Council band council that reflects the desired relationship between the people and leadership.

Part One - A Historical Context

Cheam Creation Story

The people of Cheam have a strong relationship with Mount Cheam and the mountain goats that inhabit the area. The interconnectedness between the Creator, Mt. Cheam, the mountain goats and the people of Cheam is as old as the mountain itself. “Mt. Cheam (or ‘*Lhilheqey*’ in *Halq’emeylem*) is Mt. Baker’s spouse, and the mother of the ‘*Seyowot*,’ ‘*Oyewot*,’ and ‘*Xomo:th’iya*’ (smaller mountains below her). She and her husband moved to the Fraser Valley from the south. *XeXa:ls* changed into a mountain and gave her the responsibility to look after *Sto:lo* people, the river, and the salmon” (Carlson, 1997, p.56).

The origin story of “The Mountain Goat People of Cheam,” as told by Maggie Emery and Amelia Douglas, is recounted here. It begins with a young Indian man climbing Mt. Cheam to hunt for mountain goats.

It is said that “the meat of the mountain goat is delicious and the Upper Sto:lo people liked it very much. The hair of the mountain goat is also used by the people to make warm and beautiful blankets.”(p.1)

The young man soon picked up the tracks of a pair of the animals and followed them high into the mountains. He eventually came upon two women laughing and enjoying the sun, and discovered that they were, in fact, the two mountain goats he had been tracking.

After putting their hides back on, the two women took the young man deep inside Mt. Cheam, where he lived with the goat people for many years. The young man fell in love with a woman from the goat people and the couple had two children.

After many years had passed, the man missed his own village. With support from the Elder goat people, the man and his family left Mt. Cheam; he knew they would never return.

When he arrived at his village site, his mother did not believe that her long-lost son had returned. So much time had passed that she was now a grandmother and had lost her vision. Although the young man was not from the goat people, he had powers as a result of living with them. He used his powers and gave a glove of dried meat to his mother. She “took the glove and began shaking the meat out of it. Dried meat spilled out onto the floor of the pithouse, but the glove still seemed full, so she continued to shake it. She shook it and shook it, until finally the glove was empty; there on the floor was a huge pile of dried meat.” (p.13) His family believed that he was the long-lost son and welcomed him and his new family back to the community.

The wife and children of the young man died when they entered the pithouse, though, because they were not used to the warm environment. “The young man bent over his two children, and he blew on them. Life returned to their bodies, and they got up. He did the same to his wife, and she too, came to life again. Then the young man looked at his mother and saw that she was blind. He went over to her and touched her eyes. Then he blew on her eyes. His power worked and his mother could see again. In this way, the young man also worked on his father until he too could see again.” (p. 15)

From that day on, the young man and his family stayed in the community. “It is said that the young man, his wife, and their children are the ancestors of the people who live on the Cheam Indian reserve today.” (p. 15)

Before we look at the Cheam community today, it is important to first examine the relationship between the people of Cheam and settler society from a historical perspective. According to Scow (2010), the relationship began with Simon Fraser meeting the Sto:lo people on his journey westward by water. Over the years, the fur trade was established in the area and resulted in the construction of Fort Langley in 1827. Although the fur trade brought settlers into Sto:lo territories, their numbers were still somewhat insignificant. However, in 1858, the development of the Gold Rush and the resulting economic boom attracted a large population of settlers who were chasing dreams of wealth and prosperity. These settlers started to build permanent structures in Sto:lo territories and drew upon local resources for sustenance (Scow, 2010) without permission from the Sto:lo people who inhabited and governed these lands; in fact, the settlers were endorsed and encouraged by Canadian authorities to squat on Sto:lo territories. The Canadian state continued to proceed with removing Indigenous peoples from their homelands and in large part, this was accomplished by using the Indian Act, which works to legitimize the genocidal actions of the Canadian state.

The newly formed Canadian government legislated and began enforcement of the Indian Act in 1867. The Act claimed sole authority and jurisdiction over the lives of Indigenous people north of the “Medicine Line,” and it was amended in the early 1920s to outlaw Indigenous forms of governance and replace them with colonial systems of governance. These colonial forms of governance took the form of “Band Councils.” As Tomkins (2008) asserts:

band councils were, from their inception, structured to divide and disempower Indigenous communities. Within Cheam, this conflict manifests itself through palpable factionalism, between those that favor the protection of territories, and those that place greater value on the pursuit of economic development initiatives, as well as between those that have chosen to work within the system and those who reject it outright. (p. 6)

As Tomkins suggests, the imposed governance system still contributes to fracturing the community as families compete for political power in Cheam. Furthermore, the Indian Act provides the genocidal underpinnings meant to weaken and corrupt Indigenous communities so they can be easily controlled and manipulated by the state. This agenda is carried out mainly by installing the Band Council system in Indigenous communities. Tomkins sums this up nicely, saying:

Essentially, the band council system works to make ongoing colonialism invisible by allowing the manipulation of band governance through levers embedded within a system created by the colonizers themselves. Provincial and federal governments appear distant from the functioning of band politics when in reality they continue to play a fundamental role in the governance of Indigenous communities. (p. 6)

The forced interaction with colonial ideologies and governance models can lead to distortion and corruption of Indigenous worldviews, commonly leading to the development of a mentality that reinforces the colonized worldview as the only way of being. Alfred (1999) speaks to this subject, saying:

The ‘colonial mentality’ is the intellectual dimension in a group of emotional and psychological pathologies associated with internalized oppression. Just as harmful to the society as self-hate and hostility are to individuals, the ‘colonial mentality’ can be thought of as a mental state that blocks recognition of the existence or viability of traditional perspectives: it prevents people from seeing beyond the conditions created by the white society to serve its own interests. (p. 70)

In other words, the colonial mentality “occurs when oppressed groups take on dominant group thinking and ideas uncritically and as ‘common sense,’ even though those ideas may in fact be contributing to forming their own oppression.” (Wesley-Esquimaux, 2009, p. 15) Rooting out this form of colonial control over Indigenous communities has proven to be a difficult task due to the serious financial, political and social consequences for Indigenous communities that do not adhere the genocidal laws of the Indian Act. Alfred (1999) argues that “the structural integration and professionalization of Native politics within the bureaucratic framework controlled,

financially and politically, by the state is the main reason for the persistence of the colonial mentality.” (p. 70) It would seem that this problem continues to exist and manifest itself in Indigenous communities for several reasons, including rewards of status, prestige, power, control and monetary compensation that make adoption of the colonial mentality all the more enticing, and often more so for contemporary Indigenous leaders. Based on the findings of my interviews, Cheam leadership is contending with many of these common challenges.

The Concept of Siya:m (singular) and Si:ya:m (plural)

To provide some context regarding this project, the community of Cheam is located 20 minutes east of Chilliwack at the base of Mount Cheam. In the 2006 census, the community of Cheam (Cheam Reserve #1), which has a land base of 305.1 hectares, had 487 registered members, with 297 of them (60.98%) living outside the main community (Statistics Canada). Currently, the Indian Act Sections 2(3), 74–79, and 80–86 govern the community. Section 2(3) defines the governance system to be used in the community (Electoral system), while the latter sections deal with the election process and the limited authority of the band council (Department of Justice). Based on the Indian and Northern Affairs (INAC) governance formula, the Chief and Council structure consists of four Councillors and one Chief Councillor; three Councillors are required at a meeting to make quorum.

My first meeting with June Quipp took place in the Cheam longhouse at the defense proceedings of Indigenous Governance students Mick Scow and Erin Tomkins in the spring of 2010. I was impressed by the students’ presentations, and by the leadership role that June was playing in her community. People respected June and went to her for direction throughout the proceedings. I thought that it would be a great opportunity to work in a community that not only had a

reputation for opposing the government with direct action, but that also had strong leaders who were grounded in their community. After the proceedings, I approached June and expressed my interest in working in the community of Cheam as part of my IGOV 598 project and she asked, “What are your research interests?” I responded, “Traditional governance and leadership development.” After a few moments and few more questions, June responded, “Yes, I think there is room in our community for that type of research.”

In the proceeding weeks, June and I discussed the project in more detail and it was through these conversations that I was introduced to the concept of Si:ya:m, which is the traditional form of Indigenous governance used by the Sto:lo people.

Learning about traditional forms of Indigenous governance continues to be a theme of my educational journey. I am interested in traditional forms of governance because I believe that the values, beliefs, relationships and practices encased in these governance structures can provide the foundational groundwork for contemporary governance alternatives for Indigenous people. Moreover, the current governance arrangement between Indigenous peoples and the state is not only detrimental to relations between these two parties, but it also has numerous negative impacts on the Indigenous communities that are forced to operate under state-sanctioned forms of governance. This is largely due to the fact that colonial forms of governance are based in power consolidation, control, oppression and violence, which run counter to Indigenous forms of governance as I have come to understand them. For example, Sto:lo scholar Lee Maracle (1988) comments on colonial governance and practices, saying:

Conquest and continued domination requires force, an organized force of occupation. The persecution and destruction of all forms of resistance; physical, cultural and political, is the duty of that army. Uphold the law. They make laws against us for these armed thugs to uphold. Whether resistance takes the form of individual or social rebellion, it must be

suppressed. Laws are constructed by the occupying force to facilitate the suppression of any resistance from the dominated people. Such things as justice and other nebulous concepts have naught to do with maintaining power. Such concepts stop at violating unequal laws. The laws of this country are unequal, force upholds them and justice is foreign to the very formulation. (p. 119)

Based on Maracle's analysis, it is hard to imagine a form of governance being forged out of this structure that would be of any benefit to Indigenous people and their cause of being free of colonial rule and domination. By not actively resisting the oppressive power of the state, Indigenous people reinforce and contribute to their own oppression. I, for one, do not want to take an active role in oppressing Indigenous people. While I realize that is nearly impossible to avoid the current colonial reality on some level, the indigenization of our lives and contemporary governance structures continue to be a goal of mine. Therefore, I am focusing my energy on supporting communities that are interested in regenerating contemporary forms of governance that are based on Indigenous values, practices and beliefs.

There is no past or present form of Indigenous governance that can be drawn upon to provide an Indigenous governance template. Rather, each community tailors their governance structure to meet the needs of the people (women, men, children and elders), animals, spirits, plant life and Mother Earth. The governance structures thus retain a flexibility that ensures the needs of the people are met, while also being able to handle ever-changing environmental challenges. It is a relationship that was, and continues to be, steeped in a deep spiritual understanding of the world, the universe and our place in it. However, there are common themes found in Indigenous forms of governance and leadership development. Alfred (1999) speaks to this commonality, saying:

The indigenous tradition sees government as the collective power of the individual members of the nation; there is no separation between society and state. Leadership is exercised by persuading individuals to pool their self-power in the interest of the collective good. By contrast, in the European tradition power is surrendered to the representatives of

the majority, whose decisions on what they think is the collective good are then imposed on all citizens. (p. 25)

Alfred's analysis provides insight into how power has been held and shared by Indigenous people, in contrast to European governance practices. His analysis is similar to the teachings of my family. My Uncle Andrew believes that no one has the right to tell another human being what to do, or how to live his or her life. Rather, my uncle suggests that knowledge and teachings can be shared with another human being, but it is up to that individual whether or not they choose to pick them up and use them in his or her life. Quite often the teachings and knowledge speak to the roles and responsibilities an individual has to his or her people and to the creator. This teaching is similar to the relationship described by Deloria (1998), who comments:

Most tribes had never defined power in authoritarian terms. A man consistently successful at war or hunting was likely to attract a following in direct proportion to his continuing successes. Eventually the man with the greatest following composed an informal Council, which made important decisions for the group. Anyone is free to follow or not, depending upon his own best judgment. The people only followed a course of action if they were convinced it was best for them. (p. 205)

Deloria's analysis is consistent with Alfred's, as both Indigenous scholars demonstrate that individual members of tribes had the freedom to follow leadership that was proven, and in the best interest of the tribe. The interests of the majority were not forced onto the minority as in European forms of governance. Each member made decisions for himself or herself based on their personal experiences and judgment, and this arrangement was extended to the women and men of the tribe.

Métis scholar Kim Anderson (2000) asserts that settler society weakened Indigenous communities by undermining the roles and responsibilities that the women held in their respective communities. In many Indigenous cultures, including Sto:lo, women once held vital roles and exercised a vast amount of political power and influence in their communities. For

example, Cheam member Rick Quipp (2010) asserts, “the women [of Cheam] are the keepers of all the things that we own.” But this relationship between the men and women of the community has changed drastically due to colonization.

As a potential measure to strengthen Indigenous communities and resist colonial interference, a return to traditional forms of governance provides the best alternative. Although it is true that the forms of governance used by our ancestors required discipline, physical stamina and spiritual development, and cannot be simply transplanted into contemporary times because we are not the same people as our ancestors (Alfred, 2005), the values that make up the foundation of these forms of governance can be. In traditional forms of governance, every member of the community had roles and responsibilities, and they contributed to the wellbeing of the group. These roles and responsibilities extended outwards to encompass the animal people, plant life, Mother Earth and creation, and were governed by ceremony. Moreover, the political relationships between members did not require individuals to surrender his or her political power in the best interest of the majority for an extended period of time. In other words, people were free to follow proven leadership and could change their minds at any time. In many cases, leaders were groomed and mentored for positions of leadership. The leaders had a genuine concern for the people and were guided by teachings that were thousands of years old and proven reliable for the survival of the people. However, the political power of the community resided with its members, and they ultimately decided whom they would follow. The people held leaders accountable and there were governance mechanisms built into the traditional system that allowed for the removal of leadership that did not reflect the will of the people. Many of these characteristics can also be found in the Sto:lo form of traditional governance.

By no means do I have a complete understanding of the concept of Si:ya:m, nor am I claiming that the descriptions provided in this paper capture the concept in its fullest form; however, this project report begins to construct a contemporary definition of Si:ya:m leadership using literature and input from several Cheam community members. To a large extent, I draw on the writings of historian Keith Carlson in my literature review of the concept of Si:ya:m. This is due to the fact that Carlson has extensive experience in researching and writing about Sto:lo culture—in particular, the concept of Si:ya:m. In addition, many of the community members to whom I talked about my research project consistently referred to his work as being reflective of the community’s understanding of Si:ya:m, and advised me to review his work titled *You Are Asked to Witness: The Sto:lo in Canada’s Pacific Coast History* prior to commencing the project.

Prior to the European invasion, the Sto:lo people used a form of governance that has been compared to a caste system. There were three general classes of people: the Si:ya:m, the ordinary people, and the slaves. In an interview with Heather Myles, Chief Frank Malloway comments of this form of governance, saying:

My father used to talk about the different classes: si:ya:m and slaves. And the ordinary regular people that didn’t have any title. And in a way he was glad that all that disappeared. If you knew my father, he wanted to be friends with everybody. It didn’t matter what class you belonged to. He said, “Maybe classes served a purpose, but I’m glad that we don’t have those things today.” And he said, “I’m glad the old people who really used to use the caste system strictly are mostly all gone now. (Carlson, 1997, p. 11)

For the purposes of this discussion, the focal point is not on the similarities between the Si:ya:m form of governance and caste systems, but rather what it means to be a Siya:m, contemporary roles of Siya:m, and how they exercise authority. The term “Siya:m” implies “unblemished ancestry,” “good manners,” “extra-human support” and “wealth” (Carlson, 1997, pp. 90–91). Traditionally, these people more often than not came from the upper-class segment of Sto:lo

communities; to be a Siya:m, an individual needed to have “unblemished ancestry” in order to claim hereditary status. “Good manners were an outward expression of a quality education and healthy home life. Extra-human support refers to spirit power. The Sto:lo believe the spirits of their ancestors and spirits of certain animals play important interactive roles in people’s day-to-day lives.” (Carlson, 1997, p .91)

Unlike European forms of governance that have titles with prescribed offices and scopes of authority, the concept of Si:ya:m is quite different. Carlson (1997) says,

The word ‘*Siya:m*’ was not an official title, nor was being [part of the] Si:ya:m a specific political or economic office with prescribed rights and responsibilities . The Si:ya:m were neither appointed nor elected officials, and they had no means of enforcing their will or decisions upon others. (p. 91)

The role of a Siya:m was to bring harmony to the community by using superior skills of achieving consensus of opinion through persuasion. “If agreement cannot be reached easily, discussions might continue for days. If consensus ultimately proved unattainable, the matter was typically set aside and left unresolved.” (Carlson, 1997, p. 92) The behavior of the people was “regulated by customs, not laws. People listened to the Si:ya:m and typically followed the leadership because they respected their wise opinions, conflict resolution skills, and proven good judgment” (Carlson, 1997, p. 93). It is important to note, however, that the people always had the choice as to whether or not to follow the Si:ya:m. If the judgment or personal behavior of a Siya:m ever came into question, the people could take away his/her authority and responsibilities by not inviting him/her to speak at important events, which would eventually diminish his/her role to the point that they would not be called upon at all.

Research Methods

My qualitative research reflects the views of five Cheam members and one member from a neighboring Sto:lo community. In collaboration with my community supervisor, I selected members from Cheam and the surrounding Sto:lo community who possessed the required cultural knowledge and leadership experience, and who came from differing political perspectives. Among them, the three men and three women have leadership roles, Elder roles and working-class roles and they are between the ages of 36 and 67. The interview process was conducted over a period of two and a half months, from June 21, 2010 to August 31, 2010, and took place at Cheam Beach, the band office or in the interviewees' homes.

The research process undertaken in Cheam is consistent with the 2001 University of Victoria's "Protocols and Principles For Conducting Research in an Indigenous Context." Under the direction of my community supervisor, June Quipp, this project also adheres to the protocols of the community. Under her direction, the participants were not presented with gifts for their voluntary participation. Rather, she advised me to meet with the individuals several times before conducting the interview. I met with each participant a minimum of three times before the formal interview. During these initial meetings, we would discuss the project, community affairs and share personal life stories. This process took the entire summer, and the interviews were completed in the final two weeks of August 2010. The interviews ranged from one hour to two hours in length. The six interviews were all guided by six structured questions, which are listed in my introduction and each interview was digitally recorded. The interviewees have approved the interview transcriptions and have given me their consent to use the interviews as presented herein. Each participant will receive a copy of this completed report, and copies will also be made available to Cheam's resource library and the Coqualeetza archives. All digital recordings

and research notes have been stored in a locked filing cabinet and will be returned to the community following the completion of this project on the proposed date of August 31, 2011.

Biographies of Interviewees

In this section, I provide a biography of four of the participants and the reasons why Kasey and Justice requested anonymity. Each biography covers the participant's family origins, work history, community involvement and my personal reflections after my first meeting with him or her.

After I explained the project to each participant, and how the research would be used, each participant was given the option of remaining anonymous if they so chose. Of the six participants, two requested that their names and identity be protected. Kasey did not want readers to be able to identify his/her family for undisclosed reasons, while Justice did not want his/her name disclosed because the information provided in the interview might provoke certain community members to retaliate against his/her family.

Darwin Douglas is the son of the late Mary Anne and Darwin Douglas. Darwin and his wife, Francine, have four children (Shale, Kia, Darwin and Ava) and live in the Chilliwack area. For a number of years, Darwin was the manager of the Coqualeetza Elders group; he had also worked for Cheam Title and Rights. Currently, Darwin is involved in mixed martial arts (MMA) as a trainer and competitor. In the summer, Darwin and his family can be found on the Cheam beach fishing for spring and sockeye salmon.

In the community of Cheam, Darwin plays an vital role in the longhouse. He is steeped in cultural knowledge and uses the teachings for the betterment of the community. Darwin also

coordinates a small dance group that performs traditional songs and dances at events in the area.

His Aunt June describes Darwin by saying, “His biggest strength is his ability to listen and learn,” adding, “He knows the history because he takes the time to research it and, more importantly, he shares it.”

Upon meeting Darwin, I soon came to the conclusion that he took his role and responsibility in the longhouse seriously. His depth of cultural knowledge and ability to articulate it was impressive and our interview lasted well over the hour we had set aside for it. Darwin and I conducted the interview in the comfort of his family’s home.

June Quipp is the daughter of the late Edna and Albert Douglas of Cheam. Her people gave her the name of Sioliya, which means Great Spirit Protector. June is married to Freddy Quipp and they have two children, Rick Quipp and Leanne Quipp. The family has resided in Cheam for the last 15 years. Their home is a hub in the community and is always full of grandchildren and visitors from near and far.

Over the years, June has dedicated herself to the health and wellness of the community of Cheam and the larger Sto:lo community. She has been the Title and Rights coordinator for Cheam, served as the Cheam Chief Councillor for five years and continues as a Councillor, and has served as the Band Administrator for two Sto:lo Nations. In addition, June has extensive experience working for the Federal Government.

To complement her work experience, June plays an active and vital role in the cultural life of her community and is a sought-after resource in the larger Sto:lo community. June volunteers her time to attend court sessions with community members and is the head cook at celebrations and

funerals in the Sto:lo territories. June told me that her motivation comes from her late father, Albert Douglas. Albert had a strong commitment to the people and is described as a true Siya:m by many, which is a tradition that June believes is important and is committed to continuing.

Upon meeting June, I realized that I had my work cut out for me. In one of the first conversations I had with her, she stopped me by telling me a story about a man she had met in the past. The man was talking in intellectual jargon and was throwing around academic terminology. She said, “I told him I didn’t have time for the intellectual bullshit and jargon, and if he wanted to talk to me, then he would have to talk to me as a person.” I was stopped in my tracks and came to the conclusion that June might be talking about me. So I made the suggested change in my language and the conversation progressed much more easily.

June has a deep love for her family and community and is dedicated to protecting what they have in any way she sees fit. June has a long history of challenging the state with direct action and says, “I have no problem challenging laws that were set up without our input.” One of the young people whom she has helped out shared these words about June: “You do what you believe in and believe in what you do.” After living and working with June, I have come to the same conclusion. June is a rare type of leader and her strength comes from her family’s teachings of generosity, humility, sacrifice and gentleness. From my humble perspective, June is a true Siya:m. We conducted our interview in her office.

Rick Quipp is the son of Freddy and June Quipp. Rick’s longhouse name is Ahawa, which means hunter. Rick has five children (Chaundine, Dale, Willie, Frank and Sheldon) and two grandchildren (Brooklyn and Maurice). Rick’s partner is Wendy Kelly and the couple resides in the community of Cheam.

Rick is an accomplished fisher and makes his living from fishing the Fraser River for spring and sockeye salmon. When he is not fishing, hunting or working in the longhouse, Rick supports the youth and Elders of Cheam by driving them to conferences and events. In addition, Rick has worked as an advocate for the children and families of Cheam in matters that required the involvement of Child Protection Services. He has also served on Council for two years and has his own catering business that he runs with the help of his partner, Wendy.

To complement his fishing, Rick is also a skilled hunter. His longhouse name is fitting as Rick provides fish and meat for numerous community functions. In addition, Rick holds many roles and responsibilities in the longhouse of Cheam. He is an longhouse leader, and also provides direction and teachings for many of the new dancers.

During my first week in Cheam, he brought me out on the Fraser to drift-net fish and the boat broke down in the middle of the river. I was scared as the river was carrying us downstream at a rapid pace and the boat would not start. I had heard from numerous people that Rick was one of the best fishers and skippers on the Fraser, if not the best. I calmed down by thinking that Rick was not new to these types of experiences and would find a way out, which he did. After working on the engine while floating downriver, the engine fired up and we headed back to Cheam Beach. Rick laughed and asked me, “Were you scared?” I responded, “I was a little concerned.”

Rick lives many of the teachings that I have come to learn are associated with being a Siya:m: he is humble about his role in the community and committed to building on the momentum of the Cheam longhouse because he believes that the longhouse is instrumental in rebuilding the

community. Rick and I conducted our interview on the shore of the Fraser River at Cheam Beach while Rick was constructing fishing net in preparation for the day's opening.

Isaac Aleck is the son of Anna Aleck and the late Art Aleck. He has two children, Nicole and Ashley, with his wife, Helen Frumen. The family members have spent most of their lives in Cheam.

In years past, Isaac served on the Cheam Chief and Council for three terms. Helen says that, "Isaac never brought his work home with him and he is dedicated, caring and determined to help his community." Isaac has also worked on numerous fisheries initiatives in the community and is currently responsible for security at the Cheam Administration office.

Helen refers to Isaac as the "River Man," because he spends so much time fishing and truly enjoys his work. He also enjoys hunting and is very knowledgeable about guns, ammunition and ballistics.

When I first met Isaac, we discussed provincial and federal court cases in relation to fishery issues in Cheam. Isaac's depth of knowledge on the issues was apparent as he was discussing court cases, precedents, rulings, and potential strategies faster than I could keep up. After we discussed my research project, Isaac agreed to meet with me and we conducted the interview in the comfort of his home.

Part Two

Findings

I use direct quotations from the community members interviewed in this section to ensure that the community members share their insights in their own words. Too often valuable insights are

lost in the writer's interpretation. It is the words and experiences of the people that are paramount in describing the lived experiences of the community.

Four themes were identified through an analysis of the interviews:

1) *Disconnections between leadership and community members*

This section describes some critical changes to the relationship between leadership and community members as a result of the imposed band council system over the last twenty years. These changes include community members willingly following respected leaders who had deep cultural teachings, values, and fair practices, as well as community members feeling oppressed by both the imposed band council system and by some of the leaders striving for positions of colonial power within that system. For instance, Darwin Douglas shares his teachings regarding the Si:ya:m, saying:

A Siya:m is somebody in our community that is a respected person; somebody that is generous; somebody that carries certain cultural teachings, and certain values. Somebody that shows leadership qualities and with leadership qualities I would say be able to organize people, able to have a vision of where you want to go with different things and willing to, for the most part, sacrifice their own time and their life for the benefit of the people to help lead the people.

Darwin is speaking about the Si:ya:m in a traditional context. The leaders of today, although many are recognized as being part of the Si:ya:m, lead in ways that are not entirely reflective of their ancestors. Community member Isaac Aleck speaks to potential reasons for this shift, saying:

We've kind of strayed away from the traditional roles and responsibilities. I believe the traditional roles were if there was a dispute, you are kept there till you come to an agreement. The issue was discussed until consensus was reached. Now, the responsibilities are not there and you cannot keep a person talking or listening; they can close their mind and go away, so the consensus mechanism is not there anymore.

This change happened with the coming of the white man, they did not understand our ways of governing, our ways of life, because basically they were just coming out of the Middle Ages themselves where the church was all-powerful. They tried making everyone in their

image. As a result, the values of the Si:ya:m are not reflected in the current Chief and Council government structure. Our current Chief and Council governance structure is basically a popularity contest. Our people do not believe in the traditional ways as much and this is all part and parcel of the Indian Act trying to form us after their image. The Indian Act has taught us how to hold our hand out and expect something and now we are in our third or fourth generation of it. It is their way of controlling us so they could rule us.

Isaac raises several important points. First, some of the people have strayed away from their traditional roles and responsibilities, and this “straying” is contributing to the erosion of Si:ya:m governance. Second, the imposed and band council system is meant to restrict and control the community, but nothing more. There are those who argue that the band council system can be “Indigenized” and made to work for the community, but that compromise comes with its own set of consequences and few of them are positive, if any at all exist. Long-time Cheam resident and longhouse leader Rick Quipp sums up this point nicely, saying:

The values of the Si:ya:m are not necessarily reflected in the current Chief and Council governance structure. I would think if Si:ya:m values were part of the Chief and Council structure then you would have harmony and we don't have that; we're nowhere near that. What we see is dysfunction; we see hurt; we see anger and not too often are we happy or laughing. There are a few words that we're not supposed to live by and a lot of people use them in the wrong way. For example, anger, jealousy, hatred and greed. These are the current [inaudible] of Chief and Council. This is how our communities are dysfunctional because of the current system that they are working in. The systems that we live in and when I say the systems I mean the current chief and council system, INAC, welfare, social assistance, CMHC [Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation] housing, these are all new to us whereas in the past we lived in the longhouse.

Rick draws attention to the facts that many of these imposed colonial forms of governance are not only new to community, but they also do little to create and sustain any form of community cohesiveness and harmony. Prior to the European invasion, the people of Cheam had the choice whether or not they would follow the Si:ya:m. The leaders within the Si:ya:m had to maintain a close relationship with the people and the land, and be active members of the community and the culture. The Si:ya:m were powered by the support and will of the people; if they chose to ignore the will of the people, then the people would strip them of their power by not following their

leadership and/or respecting their decisions. However, that is not the case under the current form of colonial governance, which seems to be more about removing the political power from the people and controlling them with policy, procedures and colonial legislation. As a result, the relationship between the community members and elected leadership has suffered immensely.

According to community member Justice:

The values of being a Si:ya:m are not reflected in the current Chief and Council governance structure; I don't see any of it. I think the Si:ya:m would respect everybody no matter what; the Si:ya:m would go to a further distance—he or she would visit the people in the community to see how they were doing; he or she would have compassion for the people in the community—and it's hard now, because the values of respect, empathy, compassion, sacrifice, and generosity that underpin what it means to be a Si:ya:m are all gone. Our ancestors were all traditional Si:ya:m and they had these values; they weren't elected, they just did.

These radical changes to the relationship as described by Justice, and many of the other community members, have happened relatively fast considering the history of colonial interference in the community. Twenty years ago, it was not uncommon to see an elected Chief be in office for 10 to 25 years. These are the Si:ya:m that Darwin, Justice, Isaac, June and Rick are describe in their oral testimonies. The Si:ya:m were the leaders who consistently visited with the people and listened to the people, and as a result, had the support of these people. Even though the Indian Act officially governed the community, the members undermined the system by coming to a consensus prior to elections on whom they would choose to lead them and participation in the electoral process was only to fulfill Indian Act legislation. Today, leadership and elections have taken on new meanings. Community member June Quipp talks about these new meanings, saying:

...today a lot of the Si:ya:m go into it [governance] for personal reasons; it's not always for the people anymore. The decisions of Chief and Council are not always best for the community and the system is easily corruptible. For example, quorum only requires that three elected members be present at band meetings, and those three elected members can

stick together and push their personal agendas, regardless if the other two members are there or not.

June's comments point to one of the main problems with the imposed band council system. The

political power of many has been consolidated in a few and the system is easily corruptible.

There is no guarantee that elected leaders will act in ways that are reflective of the values of the

Si:ya:m, nor is there any real way for the people to hold elected leadership accountable. These

testimonies demonstrate how the relationship between the people and the leadership has changed

so drastically in a seemingly short period of time. However, it is important to not oversimplify

the changes in the relationship between the leadership and the people because the relationships in

question also involve issues of gender, the redistribution of political power, and the distortion of

Si:ya:m roles and responsibilities.

2) *The distortion of Cheam governance roles and responsibilities*

This section describes the view of Si:ya:m governance as perceived by the men and women of

the community. It also describes how the imposed governance system has redistributed political

power in the community, which has had, and continues to have, negative consequences for the

men and women of the community. Rick Quipp comments on his teachings concerning the roles

and responsibilities of men and women within Si:ya:m governance, saying:

The roles of men and women: the men are the voice and the women are the holders of the law. The women are the keepers of all the things that we own. For example, the women keep the names; they keep the songs; they keep everything; they hold it and pass it down so it stays within the community and within the family, whereas the men are the voices for the women; the men sing the songs and speak out for the women.

From what Rick Quipp describes, within the Si:ya:m governance structure, the women of the

community hold and administer a vast amount of political power. Longhouse leader Darwin

Douglas comments on the power that the women of Cheam have:

...the women in our communities and our families they, honestly, hold a lot of power. There are female Si:ya:m and they contribute in different aspects of our community, especially when it concerns children and families.

The responsibility associated with their political power required the women of the community to ensure their cultural survival by choosing and grooming young community members for the roles of hunters, fishers, weavers and speakers. This was a key role that ensured that the teachings of the people were passed from generation to generation, and it also ensured that everyone in the community had a role that was valued by their people. Kasey sheds light on the role and responsibility of the women in this context, saying:

It was the women that decided if your child became a chief, a fisherman, a weaver, or a hunter. It was the women; the grandmothers that decided what role you would fill in the community and in your family.

The women of the community were quite literally the backbone of the community. As we see from these oral testimonies, the women played a role in every aspect of the community's daily functioning. Even when the men went out to hunt and fish, it was never forgotten that it was the women who were the keepers of all things that belonged to the people. Long-time Cheam member Justice comments on the roles and responsibilities of women in the community, saying:

The women played an important leadership role in our communities and they did a lot of community work. The women sacrificed themselves, but I shouldn't say, "sacrifice," because they loved what they were doing and they were there for the people. If a woman's husband were in a leadership role, the women would tell her husband, "This is what I want and this is what I would like to see in our community." Although the woman's voice wasn't as loud as the man's, the men would follow direction of their women and the Si:ya:m of the past would stand up and fight the government and say, "This is what we want."

Justice raises an important point. Si:ya:m governance did not take place in Ottawa or a band office, nor did Si:ya:m governance have "in-camera" sessions that allowed for meetings to happen behind closed doors. Instead, Si:ya:m governance took place in the homes of the people and was built on an institution that is highly cherished and protected, which in Cheam is the

family. Every member of the community had a voice and could use that voice at his or her discretion. Under Si:ya:m governance, the people were not forced to surrender their political power for prolonged periods of time, nor were they expected to follow leadership that was not meeting their needs. Within Si:ya:m governance, the men and women had different roles, but they worked together to meet the needs of the community and plan for the future. As Justice states:

...the men and women governed in unity. If there was a disagreement they would work it out together and there wasn't a lot of every bickering like there is today. The men and women sat down and said, 'This is not working this way and this is what I want.' Under Si:ya:m governance, everyone in the community, regardless of their social status, had a voice in the governance of their community. Once there was consensus amongst a family, then the heads of the family would come together and decide things and the rest of the families would follow suit.

In times when the community was operating fully within the principles and values of the Si:ya:m governance system, the relationships between the leadership and the people was not only healthy and functioning, but the leaders were held in high esteem by the people. However, as we see through the oral testimonies of many community members, these relationships have changed radically with the imposition of the band council system.

3) Interference with Women's Governance Roles and Responsibilities

The forced exposure to colonial ideology has had a lasting impact on the people of Cheam. Even though the band council system of governance has contributed to the erosion of the values, practices and beliefs found within Si:ya:m governance, many of the families still retain and use the values, beliefs and practices of the Si:ya:m to govern their affairs. However, as these oral testimonies clearly demonstrate, the long-term forced exposure to colonial ideologies has also contributed to many community members abandoning their traditional belief systems and striving for positions of colonial power. In contemporary times, the community is well beyond

the “saturation point” as almost every aspect of a community member’s life is governed by the illegitimate state in one form or another, which is filtered into the community via the band council system. This intense saturation of colonial ideologies is one of the main forces contributing to the distortion and redefinition of the roles and responsibilities of men and women within Cheam. Isaac Aleck captures this uncertainty, saying:

Nowadays, the roles of men and women are kind of blurred, but I believe that you should put the best person forward and not be looking at whether or not they are a man or a woman.

Isaac’s insight is shared by many of the people in Cheam and by members of the larger Sto:lo communities. I can certainly testify to it as I discussed this matter with numerous people in Cheam and with members of the surrounding Sto:lo communities. However, many of the interviewees discussed their concerns that leadership roles have come to be dominated by men, which differs drastically from Si:ya:m governance. Within Si:ya:m governance, men and women governed their families and the community in unity. However, with the imposition of the band council system, the unified governance by men and women has been distorted and redefined. As I have already mentioned, the power of the people has been consolidated with five elected members, and while these elected members can be male or female, there is not the same unified and complementary roles and shared governance between men and women that we saw within Si:ya:m governance. Kasey comments on these changes, saying:

Traditionally, we were a matriarchal society, but I always question that and ask myself, “Are we really?” If you look at the governance in Sto:lo communities, it’s mostly males in Chief and Council and in higher positions. They keep saying, “We’re supposed to be led and governed by our wives, our mothers and our grandmothers,” but I don’t know if we are. Some of us may be, but I think that part of Sto:lo culture has fallen to the wayside.

Kasey raises an important issue. In a larger context, men have benefitted from the imposition of the band council system; and in some cases, they have willingly adopted and now perpetuate the

patriarchal values that underpin the band council system. Long-time community member Justice confirms Kasey's analysis and does not mince words, saying:

In my lifetime, I have seen many role changes in our leadership. The head position of the Chief and Council system is seen as a male position and the position is just about power and control. I don't see any harmony. I don't see any empathy. I don't see any of that. Today, Chief and Council just want to rule the people; they want to squeeze the life out of us until there's nothing left.

The insights of Justice and Kasey bring attention to several important issues. First, the unified model of leadership and consensus-based decision-making within Si:ya:m governance has been seriously undermined and corrupted by the imposed band council system, and this corruption has had serious negative implications for the community. Second, in large part, it has been accomplished by stripping the women of their Si:ya:m roles and responsibilities, and by redistributing the political power of the community in a way that assigns women an inferior role, while rewarding leaders that adhere to and perpetuate oppressive ideologies found within the band council system. Rick Quipp speaks to this point, saying:

One of the main ways the roles have changed is that the men try to rule everything. The men figure because they're on Chief and Council you will jump for them. That's where we've lost it in today's society. Today's Chief and Councils don't respect the authority of our woman. Today, we have a lot of chauvinists and a lot of them end up in Chief and Council positions. As a result, there is a lot of head bumping between the men and women, because the men don't listen to the women no more; the men don't respect the ones that carry the law.

Rick Quipp's insights extend beyond the relationship between leadership and the people. Rick's insight brings us to one of the many painful realities of facing our communities: domestic violence. We have to remember that men suffer from violence being directed against them as a result of colonization, but that is not the scope of this discussion. Rick is specifically addressing how colonial values have distorted the relationships amongst the men and women of Cheam and how they have been redefined in a way that oppresses women. Rick Quipp says:

The biggest change I have seen is the men abusing the women because they're fighting for the ownership of the songs or the rights to the fish. It's all abuse and it's the way the current governance system is set up. We are not in harmony with each other and that changes the relationship between men and women. Every day in our community the men and women yell and scream at each other; there is no respect between the men and the women. The men are chauvinistic and they figure they're right and everybody else is wrong.

But to say that it is only the women who have been affected negatively would not be accurate, because the men have also been misplaced and oppressed as a result of this imposed state of reality. For thousands of years, the men of Cheam have been the speakers of the people. The men acted as a buffer between outside forces and the holders of the law, which is the women, but that has changed dramatically with the imposition of the band council system. Longhouse leader Darwin Douglas speaks to this issue, saying:

It seems like there are a lot of female Chiefs and Councils in our communities and it changes the leadership dynamics. For example, when there is an important function some of the lady Chiefs want to go and talk right away. In my grandfather's time it was the man that addressed the people and the women had their own role. I know that the men would consult with their wives on things and the women would give input, but it was the man's responsibility to bring the issues forward. Now, it seems that the men sort of take a backseat a lot of the time and the women seem to be a lot more vocal.

There is power in that silence; there is power in the lady sitting there with what they own and not saying anything; there is power in that and by putting those ladies at the front, we could be giving away some of that power. By men being at the front and speaking for the ladies, men act as buffer to any potential threat.

Darwin's perspective points to the complexity of the issues that face Cheam. Both the men and the women have been displaced from their Si:ya:m governance roles and responsibilities, and this displacement has caused a great deal of confusion in community governance affairs.

From these oral testimonies, we can observe that the people of Cheam have identified the imposed band council system as the root cause of much of the community's dysfunction. The state's imposition of the band council system onto Indigenous communities ensures that it can

control and manipulate community affairs on a daily basis, thus also controlling and manipulating the people. In essence, the band council system operates as a crucial gateway that ensures the consistent flow of colonial ideologies, values and practices into Indigenous communities each and every day, ideologies that seriously distort and redefine Si:ya:m roles and responsibilities at the community and family levels. The consequences of allowing this “flow” to continue unchecked are that the imposed ideologies cause such destruction and havoc in Cheam that no real concentrated form of resistance can be formed, which could potentially lead to decolonization and the regeneration of a contemporary form of Si:ya:m governance. In large part this is due to the fact that the band council system attacks Cheam at its foundational core: the family.

4) Effects on Cheam Families

Si:ya:m governance began in the homes of the people. Each family had a spokesperson and the family would meet to discuss issues and reach consensus on issues that affected the family and the larger community. It was a system of governance that was lived and reinforced each and every day. For issues that affected the larger community, the family spokesperson would meet with the other families’ spokespeople and discuss the issue until consensus was achieved. Within Si:ya:m governance, achieving consensus between all community members is always the goal. It was the role and responsibility of the Si:ya:m to harmonize the opinions of the people using their persuasive skills. If consensus could not be reached, the issue would be put aside and would be addressed at a later time. The leaders did not take it upon themselves to make decisions without the people, or for the people. Rather, the people decided and the Si:ya:m harmonized the political will of the community. But that is not the case today under the band council system.

The imposed band council system is built on the premise that the needs of the majority are more important than the needs of the minority. Decisions are made with the power of a vote, which does not guarantee that the needs of all community members are going to be met. In addition, elected leaders can make decisions with little or no input from the community members, because they are the elected representatives of the people and the political will of the people has been consolidated with a few elected band council members. But more importantly, the imposed system of governance has the families of Cheam competing for political power and it has contributed to the creation of serious “rifts” between families. Isaac Aleck opens this conversation, saying:

When the Chief and Council system was imposed on us the state broke up our bands, our tribes, and put in a system that they understood but was foreign to us. Our governance system was replaced with a popularity contest, which meant if you had the biggest family you generally got more control over community affairs.

To top it off, our leaders are only elected for two-year terms and at the end of that term we just flip-flop back and forth instead of sitting down and saying, “Okay what’s best for the band?” That approach is not there anymore under the Chief and Council system. We no longer reach out and ask the people to open their minds to inform us about what’s best for the band. So the Chief and Council system actually separates the people and limits what we can do, because too many people want too many different things and just for a few people without looking at what would be fair for everyone.

The insight of Isaac Aleck highlights several important points. First, from its inception, the band council system has resulted in the families of Cheam competing with each other for political power, which is vastly different from Si:ya:m governance’s striving to achieve consensus and harmony between families. Second, the election process takes place on a bi-annual basis, which does little to create any form of stability and harmony within the community. In fact, Issac suggests that the electoral process has the opposite effect and does more to separate the people than unite them. Long-time community member Justice confirms Issac’s analysis and adds a bit of a different perspective on the issue, saying:

The traditional roles would be that the heads of the family got together to meet and discuss community issues and I don't see that happening as consistently as it used to. As a result of this inconsistency, the families are so broken up and they don't have respect for one another anymore. The traditional roles have changed and I believe that colonial values have overtaken our traditional values. I am not saying all our traditional values and practices are wiped out but there's not as much left.

Justice is a long-time community member and has witnessed many changes to the community governance practices during that time. Justice recalls a time when the families of the community were unified and the community was vibrant and strong. In large part, this strength and unity was attributed to the community's reliance on the teachings, values and practices of the Si:ya:m, but that has changed over the last 20 years due to the prolonged effect of having to operate under the band council system. The relationships between families are not consistently governed by the values of the Si:ya:m and as a result the community has been weakened by the relationship breakdown between families. Rick Quipp provides further insight into how the band council system contributes to breaking down familial relationships within Cheam, saying:

Under the current Chief and Council governance structure there are two sides. There is always going to be one angry side and there's always going to be a happy side. In other words, the Chief and Council have learned to say, "I agree we disagree on this issue, but we're going forward with it." That's how the current Chief and Council structures only work for one side and not for the whole community.

The analysis of Rick Quipp sheds light on another important issue: at its core, the band council system cannot meet the needs of the entire community. Why? This is due to the fact that liberal democracy is not designed to meet the needs of all the people. The process is meant to meet the needs of the majority at the expense of the minority. Although the positions within the system have the titles of "Chief" and "Council," there is nothing Indigenous about the system at all. As Rick Quipp suggests, the continued reliance on this form of governance will ensure that the community remains fragmented and divided.

But more importantly, we have to remember that Cheam is a small community and this fragmentation affects the lives of the people on a daily basis. This imposed form of governance not only has families competing against each other for forms of colonial power, but it also has members of the same family running against each other. Darwin Douglas comments on this issue, saying:

I found it disrespectful to my Uncle Sam when some of my Aunties ran against him in our community elections and I know he did too. Once he started getting his family running against him he just stepped down as elected Chief. He said, 'If my own family is going to run against me, I won't run anymore.' There is an example of how the current governance structure contributes to creating power struggles, tension and family breakdown within our community.

Darwin's sharp analysis sheds light on how the band council system contributes to *creating power struggles, tension(s) and family breakdown within* the community of Cheam. The consequence of having to operate under this imposed form of governance has deep-reaching implications for everyone in the community. Based on these oral testimonies, it is hard to imagine a time when harmony and unity would return to Cheam under the existing band council system.

Discussion

My discussion is organized around the four interrelated challenges to the regeneration of a contemporary form of Si:ya:m governance in Cheam: disconnections between leadership and community members; distortion of Cheam governance roles and responsibilities; interference with women's governance roles and responsibilities; and the effects this imposed governance system has on Cheam families.

1. Disconnections

The state is relentless in its assimilation efforts against the Indigenous people within its illegitimate borders. Turner (2006) asserts that, "the fiduciary relationship is not forever. The

federal government will make funds available to facilitate the scheduled transition from being wards of the state to full participatory citizenship.” (p. 24) One of the critical ways that the state works to accomplish this goal is by destroying all forms of Indigenous governance and replacing them with colonial forms of governance, which in this case is the band council system. This imposed form of governance seriously corrupts and redefines the relationship between elected leadership and community members. Alfred (2005) comments on the band council system, saying:

The path of least resistance I am pointing to is corrupted by greed. The majority of band Chiefs don't care about community accountability and questions of integrity because the colonial gravy train keeps dropping loads of cash into their coffers. As a result, they continue to play their designated and essential role in the colonial system. (p. 44)

Within this colonial framework, elected leaders take on the role of the colonist within Indigenous communities. In many communities, our leaders are detached from their communities as a result of trying to fulfill their colonial mandate and agenda within their community. This breakdown of the relationship between the people and their elected leadership is not uncommon where colonization exists. In discussing the efforts of the Maya, Wainwright and Bryan (2009) discuss this phenomenon, saying,

Where Maya leaders have seen mass mobilization as a principal basis for their authority in the mid-1990s, by 2000, legal victory in the courts and subsequent negotiations with the government were treated as the royal road to land rights. As a practical consequence of this shift, movement leaders spent less time in the community as their energy was consumed by the lawsuit and engagements with the state. The movement became increasingly 'professionalized,' with top positions in its member organizations filled with high-school graduates, most of whom came to work in offices in Punta Gorda only further weakened the links between these communities and the spokespersons of the Maya movement. (p. 163)

The analysis of Wainwright and Bryan points to the irony that, even though the Mayan participation in the colonial process was supposed to strengthen the community, in fact, their

participation had the opposite effect, resulting in weakened relationships between elected leaders and the community members, which had detrimental impacts on the community.

The relationship between elected leaders and community members has changed in a way that gives the illusion that Indigenous governance continues to exist under the band council system, but that is not the case. No longer are the community members participating in the governance of their community directing leadership in a meaningful way. Rather, the community members are “allowed” to vote on issues that the colonist deems important and relevant to the state’s agenda, which are brought into the community via the band council system. In other words, elected leaders are controlled and receive their mandate from the Department of Indian Affairs, not from the members of their communities, which is not even remotely close to authentic Indigenous governance.

2. Governance Roles and Responsibilities

Colonization has distorted and redefined the roles and responsibilities of Indigenous peoples in ways that perpetuate the violence that underpins the colonial relationship, and it is important to articulate the mechanics of how this happens. Mohawk professor Patricia Monture speaks to the roles and responsibilities of Indigenous peoples, saying:

Maintaining good relationships with our family, clan and nation, but the rest of the living world as well (by which I mean the environment and all things around us), means that you are fulfilling one of your basic responsibilities as a human being. It is this web (or the natural laws) that is the relationship that has been devastated by colonialism... (Turner, 2006).

But how does this devastation happen? How have we arrived at a place where it seems that many of our leaders are more concerned with aspiring and serving colonial power than with taking care of their own communities and families? Why have so many Indigenous people abandoned their

traditional roles and responsibilities? Métis scholar Kim Anderson (2011) identifies patriarchy as a casual factor, saying:

...the patriarchal model would help the state seize economic control from indigenous communities. Pre-contact systems of communal ownership were dismantled and in their place the male head of the family was given ownership of everything. This rendered women dependent on the men, made divorce more complicated, and ultimately stripped women of economic freedom. As ‘heads’ of the household, men were encouraged to think as individuals and see themselves as owners of the property. The state encouraged this type of thinking, as property is easier to wrest from individual owners than from interdependent communities. (pp. 83–84)

Anderson’s analysis identifies several important issues that are associated with the introduction of patriarchy into Indigenous communities on such a wide scale. First, as we seen within Si:ya:m governance, the men and women governed in unity, but under this imposed system of governance, the men are the owners of all things, while the women are assigned a second-class role with very limited responsibility outside of the home and especially when concerning community governance affairs. Second, communal ownership of lands is changed to “fee-simple” ownership, which allows for lands to be further dispossessed from Indigenous peoples. But Anderson’s analysis needs to be taken further in a way that captures the violence that underpins colonization.

Many of the imposed roles and responsibilities with which Chief and Council are charged support the broader colonial agenda of economic development. Indigenous peoples are constantly bombarded with messages that economic development will bring their communities out of poverty while strengthening their communities, but at what cost? When reduced, the value systems that underpin colonization, capitalism and patriarchy are based on violence and oppression. Kuokkann (2008) says, “All these systems and structures—colonialism, capitalism and patriarchy—are predicated on violence, whether direct and interpersonal or structural,

economic or epistemic.” (pp. 221–222) She also adds that:

In this process, wealth and productive capital are accumulated by creating and maintaining permanent relations of exploitation, domination and violence between men and women but also by extending patriarchal control over those defined as subordinate, whether women, indigenous peoples or the environment (‘natural resources’). (p. 222)

These are the values that underpin the band council structure and many of the state’s proposed solutions (economic development and treaties) contribute to distorting Cheam governance roles and responsibilities. The values within the colonial framework have the people of Cheam serving the state at the expense of the community members and their territories, which is vastly different from their roles and responsibilities within Si:ya:m governance.

3. Interference with women’s governance roles and responsibilities

Many scholars argue that the weakening of Indigenous communities was only possible by interfering with the roles and responsibilities of the women in those communities. This interference was a multi-faceted attack on the Indigenous women of Turtle Island on behalf of the state, the Church, and the new economic system that was introduced. In reference to the work of Emma D. LaRocque, Boyer (2009) says, “Many, if not the majority, of Aboriginal cultures were originally matriarchal or semi-matriarchal. European patriarchy was initially imposed upon Aboriginal societies in Canada through the fur-trade, missionary Christianity and government policies.” (p. 72) These impositions had a devastating effect on the roles and responsibilities of the Indigenous women; Wesley-Esquimaux (2009) explains: “Native women were removed from their traditional roles and responsibilities and pushed to the margins of their own societies.” (p. 16) These changes also interfered with the power dynamic in Indigenous communities by stripping the women of their governance roles and responsibilities and replacing the Indigenous governance system with band council systems.

As we have seen, the colonial attack on the roles and responsibilities of Indigenous women is multi-faceted. Indigenous scholar, Leanne Simpson (2008) speaks to the depth and complexity of this attack, saying:

All the while the colonial attack on women continued—removing us from having any political power, narrowing gender roles, attacking mothering, birth, breast-feeding, and attachment style parenting. This led to the breakdown of extended family and social support systems, the normalization of the exploitation and abuse of women and land, to the rise of authoritarian relationships. (p. 209)

The consequences of this level of colonial interference has had, and continues to have, devastating implications that extend beyond governance roles and responsibilities, parenting, family breakdown and social support systems. Simpson makes reference to the fact that the “exploitation and abuse” of Indigenous women has become normalized, but what does that mean? As a result of these racist and genocidal policies, many of our women are being forced into situations that put their health and lives at risk. Kuokkanen (2008) states that:

The rampant levels of violence against indigenous women in Canada are created by social and economic marginalization, which in turn are consequences of colonialism such as dispossession of lands and livelihoods, abuse experienced in residential schools and assimilationist and racist policies seeking to erase identities and cultures. As a result, many women are being forced into dangerous or vulnerable situations such as extreme poverty, homelessness and prostitution. (p. 219)

The analysis of Simpson and Kuokkanen identifies the policies and practices of the state as contributing factors to the “normalization of exploitation and abuse” of Indigenous women. And as we have seen, colonialism, capitalism and patriarchy are all based in violence, oppression, and require continuous exploitation of people and resources. These are the values that underpin our current electoral process and the colonial ideas that flow into the community via the band council system.

It is important, however, to not fall into the trap of blaming the colonist for everything that is wrong in our lives and in our communities. Looking at ourselves as victims is part of the problem, and does little to help Indigenous peoples deal with the challenges of finding ways to restore health and unity back into our communities. We must find our own ways that ensure we are not perpetuating the very problems we are trying to overcome. If we continue to depend on the colonist for answers, we can be guaranteed that much of the dysfunction in our communities will continue to exist. In commenting on the efforts of the Nuu-chah-nulth people around family violence, Coulthard (2008) says:

...unlike most liberal approaches to the problem of violence against Native women, which tend to call for *more* state and police intervention into the lives of their communities, these activists are explicitly attempting to undercut the nation's dependence on the colonial state to redress problems that the state itself has played a fundamental role in creating. (p. 199)

Many of our elected leaders continue to look “outward” into the colonial landscape for answers, but after 500 years of colonial interference with no significant results, one has to question the validity of that approach. This “colonial mentality” has affected both men and women. Lee Maracle (1998) comments on her participation in the oppression of women, saying:

We are slaves with our own consent. We do not support each other. We look at males when they speak and stare off into space when a woman steps assertively into the breach of leadership. We mock the liberation of women. I too am guilty of acceding to the erasure of our womanhood. (p. 21)

Maracle's insights point to the important fact that the women from our communities have to contend with oppressive actions from women from their own communities. It would seem that the “colonial mentality” described by Alfred, affects both men and women in similar ways.

4. Effects On Cheam Families

My findings suggest that the relationships between many families have changed over the years, with families competing for political power within the community instead of working together to

collectively to address the needs of the community. In large part, the state has created this situation by imposing the band council system on Indigenous communities. No longer are community members asked to meet and come to a consensus on issues, but rather they are asked to vote in a process that ensures the needs of a portion of the community are not met. In addition, large families potentially have more influence in this process, as they are able to cast more votes in elections and referenda. In communities where this happens, it is not uncommon for the people representing the “minority vote” to feel segregated and frustrated with the process, which contributes to the creation of “rifts” between families. Thus, the band council system contributes to creating and maintaining much of the dysfunction and lack of harmony that is evident in numerous Indigenous communities today. Vine Deloria (1998) sums up this situation: “The struggle is not so much one of unification but of who will eventually call the shots in Indian Affairs.” (p. 219) In a Canadian context, the “struggle” to which Deloria is referring is who will be the next Chief Councilor or national Chief.

Conclusion

My objective in this project was to provide a deeper understanding of the current political environment in Cheam and the challenges that the community faces in attempting to regenerate a contemporary form of Si:ya:m governance, and to a large degree, I believe that goal has been achieved. Through this project, the oral testimonies of the people of Cheam speak to the contemporary governance challenges that the community is experiencing. There was a general consensus amongst the interviewees that the band council system was detrimental to community affairs. However, there are those who also believe that the system can be improved upon in a way that could meet the needs of the community.

Perhaps, but at what cost? The interviews suggest that many community members feel: disconnected from the leadership; that the imposed system is distorting the roles and responsibilities of the Si:ya:m; that the same system interferes negatively with the roles and responsibilities of women; and that this system is detrimental to the relationships amongst the families of Cheam. In addition, the work of many Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars support the oral testimonies of the people of Cheam.

There may be some reluctance to engage in greater critical reflections on the limitations and problems that the band council system has for Indigenous communities, but efforts must be made to move ahead anyways. It is hoped that this project can stimulate “grassroots” conversations in the community of Cheam concerning the development of a contemporary form of Indigenous governance based on the values, practices, and beliefs of the Si:ya:m. A system of Indigenous governance that has the potential to unite the people and provide a foundational base of strength from which the people can draw from in their efforts of resistance against the illegitimate Canadian state.

Part Three

Recommendations

The recommendations in this section were developed in conversations between each interviewee and myself.

1. Create opportunities for the regeneration of consensus-based decision-making at the grassroots level.

From the interviews, there is a general agreement that there is value in returning to Si:ya:m forms of governance, which would mean a return to consensus-based decision-making practices.

The community of Cheam has many difficult conversations that need to be opened up, discussed and resolved in a meaningful way that reflects the interests of the entire community. It is hard to

imagine this becoming a reality under the colonial imposed Chief and Council structure.

Therefore, invite community members and Sto:lo peoples from neighboring communities to the Cheam longhouse and begin the difficult discussions related to governance, community wellness, decolonization and future directions. Have a third party, who carries the teachings and values of the Si:ya:m, facilitate these meetings.

2. Move all Cheam governance business back into the longhouse and have the rules of the longhouse govern the meetings.

The Cheam longhouse is a critical meeting place for the people of Cheam and their guests. The newly built longhouse is used regularly for celebrations, feasts, ceremony, and spirit dancers.

The longhouse has its own rules and laws that govern the behavior of the people within its walls.

Therefore, it would be of benefit to move all governance business back into the longhouse. This includes all meetings with colonial governments, agencies, enforcement agencies and inter-tribal meetings. Open the meetings to the people of Cheam to improve transparency and communications between the community members and leadership.

3. Rebuild the family unit.

I was intrigued by Rick Quipp's response to Question 5. Rick's suggested approach to meaningful change in Cheam is to burn all the houses down and to build longhouses. Rick raises many important issues in his analysis of what needs to change in Cheam for families to be healthy and wealthy once again. Everyday the people of Cheam wake up in the colonial idea of what makes a family. We physically live in houses that are designed for settler families based on the nuclear family ideology. That is not the way the ancestors of Cheam lived and this model has proven to provide many challenges for the families of Cheam in a contemporary context.

Therefore, further research should be conducted investigating the possibility of creating new

forms of housing that meets the family needs of Cheam members. Perhaps this could lead to building modern longhouses for families, or larger homes that house immediate and extended families members.

It is important to note, however, that changing the physical space where people live may contribute to community wellness, but it cannot be the sole approach. The rebuilding of our families requires a multi-pronged approach that involves repairing, strengthening, and creating new relationships within and amongst families. This is done by gathering together on a regular basis and visiting each other in our homes. When we have these gatherings, it is not enough to communicate them through newsletters, emails, and telephone calls, we must go to each person's door and invite them to share a meal and time together.

4. Continue with the efforts to revive the family model of representative governance.

There are numerous benefits of regenerating the family-representative form of Si:ya:m governance. The model is meant to achieve harmony and unity amongst community members, while ensuring that every member of the community has a voice in the political process. For example, each family would select a family member to speak on their behalf at the community level. The family representative would then meet with the Si:ya:m of the the community to discuss the issue(s).

5. Continue to mentor and train the young people of the community the values, teachings and beliefs that define what it means to be a Cheam member.

Colonization has caused a break in the transmission of information from generation to another. In Cheam, many of the young people are avid hunters, fishers and many of them are new dancers. However, these opportunities are not made available to all members of the community.

Therefore, hold seasonal hunting camps and fishing camps that not only teach young people the necessary skills to hunt and fish, but also speak to the cultural teachings, ceremonies, and sacred roles and responsibilities involved as part of the relationship between humans and the animal people. It is important to note that they would not be cultural camps, but rather an experience where the young people of Cheam can learn how to fish, hunt and provide healthy nutritious food for their families and community members. In addition, this process would contribute to cultural and ceremonial revitalization.

*** It is important to note that these recommendations are only short-term strategies that I hope will contribute to uniting the people of Cheam too strengthen them in their efforts of resistance against the illegitimate Canadian state.**

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Appendix – A

Traditional Leadership, Colonial Interference, and the Contemporary Challenges of Cheam Leadership

Interview with Cheam Member

Anonymous

(Justice)

This interview has been edited to protect the identity of the interviewee

John: So this voice recorder is very sensitive so we don't have to be yelling or looking right at it or anything, today's date is August 19, 2010, time is 8:37 am. I am doing a participant interview for the Research Project titled Traditional Leadership Colonial Interference and the Contemporary Challenges of Cheam Leadership with a respected member of the community.

Justice: I respect our family traditions and our culture.

John: Okay, would you like to move on, so in question one it asks what does it mean to be a Si:yam? How are these people chosen and trained?

Justice: I believe and this is my opinion that Si:yam means a person that plays a lead role in the community, involving the people in the community and they go to arms length for the people in the community and they will visit the people, they will stand for the people, they will get involved with everything that the people in that community do, if there's any hunting or fishing or canning that person would be involved, they'd be involved in any court cases, they would go out of their way to help that family or community member, almost like giving up their whole self for the community, that's the way I see a Si:yam...and how people are chosen and trained, I have a hard time with that because I have never seen anyone as of late, I believe that some of our ancestors were in that position although they've never claimed to be a Si:yam, the people today Si:yam means it's just a name now because I haven't seen anybody go that length, some people are chosen to be Si:yam only by popularity, the name wouldn't carry so much in the court system or the provincial system it would, I don't even believe it hardly carries in any of the communities this name Si:yam. And the reason why I believe that is because so many of our people are non-harmony, they're totally bickering with one another, I have never seen anybody in training to be a Si:yam, what I can see is there are people that have good hearts, there are people that do good but only for certain people, they don't cover everybody in the community and I believe that a Si:yam would regardless of what's happening in their life, that is the way that I see it and for training I have never seen anybody trained, I don't think our communities train a person to be a Si:yam, that's all gone I believe.

John: Yeah okay, in question two, it says how do the roles and responsibilities of being a Si:yam relate to the traditional governance of the community?

Justice: I don't believe any person has that, what would I say?...Si:ya:m means a lot and I don't believe any of the people are in that role.

John: Maybe you can touch on the, in the experience that you do have in a time where Si:ya:m were acting in the way you're talking about, how would they play a role in the governance of the community?

Justice: *Personal Information*

John: Go ahead what were you going to say?

Justice: Oh no...I am finished with that part.

John: So are the values of being a Si:yam reflected in the current Chief and Council governance structure?

Justice: No I don't see any of it.

John: Can you talk more about these values and how they relate to the current Chief and Council structure, like what are the values that underpin what it means to be a Si:ya:m? Like you've touched on some of it like sacrifice, generosity, what are some of the values that make up a Si:ya:m?

Justice: I think the Si:ya:m role would be they would respect everybody no matter what.....the Si:yam too would like go a further distance and you know he or she would visit or she would visit the people in the community to see how they were doing, he or she would have compassion for the people in the community. The other leaders in our community that have gone beyond us, they were all traditional Si:ya:m in my eyes, they weren't elected they just did.

John: Okay and you don't see those values in the current Chief and Council structure?

Justice: The current Chief and Council are just in there for themselves, they are not transparent and they don't even take any of the issues their community members have and look at it. They are only there to line their own pockets and trying to come up with a way to rule our people. I don't see any Si:ya:m. I don't see any traditions it is all gone, they do not care, there's only one council member I could say that has empathy for the people, that has compassion, the rest of them they can all go to Hell.

John: Yeah so the values you're talking about respect, empathy, compassion, sacrifice.

Justice: Yeah they're all gone.

John: Generosity, Okay.

Justice: So I can't even say anything about them because they're not transparent.

John: Yeah that's a really good point. You've talked a little bit about how the women and men can be Si:ya:m, so what are the roles of men and women within Si:ya:m governance? Although not so much today, but you know in times when you did see Si:ya:m governance. What were the roles of men and women?

Justice: The women played a big role. They were the leaders and they did a lot of community work. They sacrificed themselves too, but I shouldn't say sacrifice because they loved what they were doing. They were there for the community, for the people and the community and they would tell their husbands, if their husbands were in a leadership role... "this is what I want and this is what I would like to see in our communities," so they played a major role. Although their voice wasn't as loud as the men, the men I feel in the past I'd call them Si:ya:m, they would fight the government they would stand up to the government and say, "this is what we want."

John: So is it safe to say that men and women governed in unity?

Justice: I think so and if there was a disagreement they'd work it out, there wasn't a lot of heavy bickering like there is today.

John: When you say work it out what does that mean?

Justice: They would probably, they'd sit down and say this is not working this way, this is what I want.

John: So the second part of this question is, how does Si:ya:m governance unify communities and people?

Justice: There is no unifying in today's world

John: So if we step back into the time you were talking about what do you see? You know leadership that you know that did have some of these values being a Si:yam? How did they work in unifying communities and people?

Justice: Well it wasn't just so much one family all the family members, like the heads of the family would meet and come together and decide things and the rest of the family would follow suit.

John: So when the heads of the family would get together, would they make decisions without the people or would they have already consulted with the people and then come together?

Justice: They probably did it several ways, if a family member said this is what I would like to see, they probably took it to their rep, or as you'd call it the head of the family. The head of the family and say this is what I would like to see, so the rep or the head of the family would bring it to the other members and they would work it out that way.

John: So there was always like I guess a channel for community members?

Justice: Yes.

John: To bring their concerns, it didn't matter where they were in the community?

Justice: Yes.

John: Okay, so in question four, how have the traditional roles of men and women changed with colonization and the imposition of the Chief and Council governance structure?

Justice: Traditional roles would be you know that the heads of the family got together. All of that is gone. I don't see that happening, there may be sometimes, it might happen but not as much. Today the families are so broken up, they don't have respect for one another any more, it is all gone, so it has changed. It has changed and I believe that the colonization has over taken the traditional values, in some communities I am not saying the whole thing is wiped out but there's not as much left.

John: With the imposition of Chief and Council and you were talking about Si:ya:m governance being the man and woman governing together, how has that changed now?

Justice: I feel my opinion, again, that as I see it now, I seen it in the last few years a chief being a male position that they are in it is just power and control. I don't see any harmony. I don't see any empathy. I don't see any of that, it is all gone.

John: You just see power and control? And is there still that unification of gender of men and women governing the community together?

Justice: No and whoever, like the Chief and Council, whoever is in Chief and Council today, I believe that they just want to rule the people. I can't respect any of it because it is so frustrating.

John: It would almost be like the values have been reduced to power and control?

Justice: Yes that's it. And they want to squeeze the life out of us till there is nothing left.

John: Okay, so in the second part of question four asks how have these changes affected the relationships between men and women within a community context? And I guess what I was sort of meaning by that is how you see that trickle down affect to you know to every day relationships between men and women in the community?

Justice: As family values there are not too many people that are, well, that are together. The families are just broken up. I can't see any relationship building because there might be three or four people that have been together for a number of years, whereas today the relationship you hear today and gone tomorrow. Like it's the structure of a family has been broken up you know and I think it's a weakness and other people see that and they work on it. I think, not just our own people, but the people in the government.

John: Yeah that is really a good point. Okay, have you answered that one as much as you would like, question four?

Justice: I have worked with women for a number of years and they try to build a family structure and it's really hard if someone is not there and they believe they are coming back. It is hard to build your self-esteem. I really find it hard I think our esteem is really low in all our communities.

John: Okay, question five asks do you think there needs to be changes in terms of the way your community is governed? That's sort of a rhetorical question and it leads into the next one, if so how can these changes be made and why are they important?

Justice: In order to build a strong community we need to go back to our traditional ways. I mean we have to start working really hard on this within our own family first and I am not sure if that will ever happen.

John: When you say you have to work on it in your family first, if you were helping a young family what are some of the things that you would do specifically in rebuilding a family in a traditional way?

Justice: I'd just let them know who they are. Who their parents are and to build a strong relationship within that family first. Like too share meals together, teach our children how to...you know, simple things like, teaching them how to prepare a meal or you know or make a bed or wash clothes and that builds a relationship because the parent then plays the role. For example, you say, "oh you do that," without giving them a structure of what to do and how I've seen it is you tell them what to do and they disagree and then it becomes almost an issue, so if you bring that person with you to teach these things then they respect that because that person, that young person feels there's a guidance there somewhere.

John: That's really important. I was just thinking about what you are talking about and how the relationships aren't there.

Justice: Yes.

John: I am going by what you are saying here, you could almost say you can live in a house with somebody but still not have a relationship with them.

Justice: Well, for example, and this is an example, a husband and wife were together forever and then their relationship broke down and they were still in the house together and they had nothing in common anymore nothing.

John: And part of the rebuilding the beginning of you know what is self governance? How do you get these traditions back? Is starting with the family, in the event that you know you do see some of these things happening with the family were does it go from there?

Justice: After it's built in the family then you can take it to the community. It probably won't happen all at once, but if they see you doing it the people in the community will join in and it would build a stronger community. I have seen it where people are not together anymore, they are just so totally isolated, separated because the trust is gone and because there's so much crime and drugs that you can't trust any more.

John: Yeah and trust being the foundation of relationships.

Justice: It is.

John: Okay, so why are these changes important?

Justice: I feel that there needs to be a change in order for us to build ourselves our self-esteem without that we are a lost generation and you can see it happening. For example, like about 10 years ago we'd, you can say there's a community lunch, everybody would come and I have seen it whereas we say now there is a community lunch hardly anybody comes. They used to come out just for the food and get together as a community and now our community is breaking up.

John: Question six is pretty much were it starts wrapping up. Do you have any additional feed back regarding this research topic that you would like to share that has not been covered in the interview questions? I understand some of the steps in rebuilding a family and rebuilding a community, but what are some of the steps that you can talk about how would you rebuild the Si:ya:m? The leadership component of the community.

Justice: I think that would take a long time to do because as I see it from yesterday, today I think the big part of it is money. You know they get money that feeds their pockets so it's just gone beyond that and I think we would have to take a step back and give up a lot of things and then maybe build that Si:yam. Like our ancestors that were our leaders they never got paid for doing what they did. A dollar a day from the government and so in order for us to build a Si:yam we would have to...build our life first, our families up first and then maybe we can work on our Si:ya:m, until then we really can't work on our Si:ya:m that is my opinion.

John: Yeah that is a good one. OK so do you have any other additional feed back that you would like to talk about that you feel we haven't covered here?

Justice: No I think it's been covered.

John: Okay, well we are going to conclude the interview with our anonymous community member from Cheam. The time is 9:06 am so thank you very much.

Justice: Okay, thank you.

Traditional Leadership, Colonial Interference, and the Contemporary Challenges of Cheam Leadership

Interview with Sto:lo Member

Anonymous

(Kasey)

This interview has been edited to protect the identity of the interviewee

John: Today's date is August 24, 2010, the time is 6:43 pm. I am conducting an interview with an anonymous Sto:lo community member for the research project Traditional Leadership, Colonial Interference and the Contemporary Challenges of Cheam Leadership.

Kasey: Well lets just go straight into the questions.

John: Okay.

Kasey: Let's just get it done.

John: Okay, so question one asks, what does it mean to be a Si:yam? How are these people chosen and trained?

Kasey: Okay, so from my perspective, Si:ya:m is a fairly new terminology for me because I've been indirectly involved in the Sto:lo, just because my life style, so yeah from my own opinion is someone who is a leader, someone who is humble, but also has a world wide perspective on not just the Sto:lo communities, but all of the Indigenous, all the peoples of the world basically. So it is a pretty wide range, my perspective of Si:ya:m is the wide range meaning I guess, I don't know if I would, if I would be able to pin point someone out in the Sto:lo community and say OK this person is a Siyam, because that would only be my perspective where traditionally they have to have all these traditions underneath their belt to be a Si:yam In Sto:lo perspective I guess, so Si:yam is a pretty wide range.

John: So how are these people identified in communities? How are they chosen and how do they get those traditions under their belt?

Kasey: I think they have to really be involved in the communities. Not just their own community, but the whole Fraser Valley, from the whole Sto:lo from the mouth of the Fraser River to you know up to Thompson where it all comes together. And to be well and to do good things for people and of their families, extended families in their communities and other peoples communities. I don't know how they get pin pointed out, whether it's something they say themselves, you know, "I am a Si:yam," because they have made themselves a Si:yam, or if someone from the family has said,"you should be a Si:yam," because of everything that you do, the leadership roles are. I don't know how you would say it, but they would have to have strong leadership roles to be picked, I think.

John: Okay, so in question two it asks, how do these roles and responsibilities of being a Si:yam relate to the traditional governance of the community?

Kasey: Well traditionally, and this is only from reading books because my perspective of Sto:lo is a lot of it has come from text books, so reading it, like the Sto:lo atlas, you are asked to witness books like that or...not. I haven't spent a whole lot of time with Elders just because of my life style and so I think traditionally their responsibilities is from my own perspective, like the knowledge of history, you know the knowledge of land, the songs and the oral stories and all these responsibilities of carrying on that culture into the next generation, so I think that's part of their responsibility, to me.

John: Okay, so the second part of question two asks, are the values of a Si:yam reflected in the current Chief and Council governance structure?

Kasey: In Chief and Council do you mean just individual reserves or?

John: Well not so much the people, its not about the people but you are talking about.

Kasey: The Sto:lo Nation.

John: You're talking about being humble and been connected with the people and those traditions that those people have under their belt to be a leader, to be a Si:yam. Are those required in a Chief and Council structure? Do you see those same values in the Chief and Council structure?

Kasey: Absolutely, yes for sure, yeah it is part of being a leader I think. If you are knowledgeable about the history and the language, the land and you can pass that on to generations it's part of your, the value that other people are going to see, that you take being Sto:lo, well not seriously but you take it to heart that you want to continue with this tradition. With our ways the traditional ways with our culture and to be able to pass it on and not just let it to disintegrate and to be colonized and have it forgot and only in books.

John: Okay, so can you talk more about these values and how they relate to the current Chief and Council structure? Like you're talking about the, like what are some of the values that underpin a good leadership a good leader? I guess we've touched on some, talking about humbleness.

Kasey: Well yeah I think part of being a good Si:yam is to be humble and people who are humble they don't demand the respect of others, it's comes to them because of being humble you know they're not thinking that they deserve respect, they're just, it comes to them, naturally almost. So it's a huge value that I look for in people because then it almost means that they're sincere, what they are putting out there.

John: That's a good one. So humbleness, sincerity, what other values does a Si:yam have?

Kasey: To be respectful of all peoples, all ages, just to have that world wide view I guess. Not to be so blind sided by what else is happening in the world. You know we're not the only people here, there's other people that are kind of going through the same thing that the Sto:lo are. Other Indigenous peoples across Canada going through the same situation that we are going through with land claims, drugs and alcohol on reserves, poverty, education, you know it's across Canada and to have just blind side and just have you know have a narrow perspective, they're not helping anybody, you know what I mean, so just having a world wide perspective.

John: Okay on with question two. Do you feel you are comfortable with the answer you have given or would you like to expand on any?

Kasey: No, I think that's good.

John: Okay, so question three asks what are the roles of men and women within Si:ya:m governance?

Kasey: Well I think to me traditionally we are matriarchal, but I always question that and ask myself are we really? Because if you look at the governance in Sto:lo communities, it's mostly male models, male role models, males leading as Chief and Council's or in higher positions it's mostly men today. They keep saying well we're suppose to be led by our mothers and our grandmothers and I don't know if we are, some of us may be. I think that part of Sto:lo has kind of fallen to the way side. They say we're being governed by our wife's and our mothers and our grandmothers, but I don't know.

John: Who is they?

Kasey: Well I don't want to name names, but people in leadership roles in Sto:lo, Sto:lo Nation Tribal Council, they're mostly men, you know higher leadership roles.

John: In contemporary times?

Kasey: Yeah in contemporary times.

John: And in more traditional times?

Kasey: And in traditional times Sto:lo, the women was the leader but she was behind the scenes kind of leader you know. Like the men where in front, not necessarily just to be in front because they're the guy, but they're in front because I don't know what that, how to explain that role. But the women, traditionally the women decided who's, if your child became chief or fishermen or who were the weavers or who are the hunters in their families. It was the women, the grandmothers that decided what position you were in, in the family, traditionally so I don't think we definitely don't follow those roles.

John: I get the impression just from what you are saying that in more traditional times that men

and women governed communities together and today you're saying there has been a radical departure from that.

Kasey: I think a lot of it has to do with being colonized, residential schools you know the whole Indian Act was huge in putting the men in front of the leadership roles. You know only a man can be a Chief so in that way we lost the women leadership roles.

John: Okay, so how does Si:ya:m governance unify communities and people? I guess we were talking about more traditional times, more so than today.

Kasey: So do you want traditional or contemporary?

John: Yeah lets go with traditional.

Kasey: Okay, so traditional, oh my gosh, I don't, anything that I know of in my, it would have to be information right that I have read from books...unfortunately.

John: How would you like to address the question? Instead of saying it has to be traditional or contemporary...how does Si:ya:m governance unify communities and people?

Kasey: I don't know, I don't know how to answer that one.

John: Okay.

Kasey: I would have to think about that.

John: Okay, so question four asks how have traditional roles of men and women changed with colonization and the imposition of Chief and council governance system? And you've already answered that in some of our last one, you were talking about the Indian Act and so forth, would you like to add anything to that?

Kasey: Yeah I think the Indian Act and being colonized totally changed the role between men and women. Well even, roles have changed like not only for just Sto:lo, but for all, I mean in the 1800 hundreds the even the women, the non-native women could not vote you know they didn't have that right you know and so it wasn't just Sto:lo women roles it was women roles across the board I think that had changed. And starting to become stronger, slowly, more slowly for Sto:lo, for the women to become stronger again. You know to take back those traditional roles to take back the, not necessarily the power but the power of knowledge I guess, to take some of that responsibility back

John: Okay, so I'm just trying to, I'm really liking what I am hearing around, you know you are talking about the roles have changed and you start seeing men in more leadership roles, so where are women? What role have women been assigned now? You know they're in a position before where they were the leaders of the community, the back bone that you talked about, what new role have they been given with the colonization?

Kasey: I think they, they are slowly coming to the front, they are becoming stronger, spiritually, emotionally. They're not just, how would you say, they're not just staying with becoming a mother and just staying in just that role and raising your children, they're diversifying, they're becoming leaders in their communities and they're also mothers. They're leaders in their extended families in their families they're stepping forward I think, becoming, I don't know more feminized I guess. I don't know what you call it but they're, and it has been slow, it has been very, very slow.

John: Okay, we are talking about all these changes that happened, how have these changes affected the relationships between men and women within the community context today?

Kasey: well I think they, the men are coming to terms with the women becoming stronger. They're being not accepting but they're, they don't mind being, they are equals now they see themselves as equal. You know equal parenting, equal leadership, equal although not equal pay, which is still huge but basically equal in the family structure so I think those roles are coming together more evenly I think. So I think that's a good thing, you know, men are you know they're, they don't have to be so strong and the disciplinarian attitude, you know, they can have more of an equal partnership in their family, in their family structure in their dynamics.

John: Okay so question five asks do you think that there needs to be changes in terms of the way your community is governed? It was kind of a rhetorical question, but it has to sort of happen before the next one.

Kasey: So just in the in the small community or as a Sto:lo community?

John: Either or.

Kasey: Well.

John: Like right now we have the Chief and Council Indian Act governance structure.

Kasey: Right, wasn't going over there though. Well I think locally, in local bands I think I don't know what the changes are or what the needs or I don't know how to make the changes locally other than your. The people that you chose to become Chief and Council on your band should have some type of leadership capabilities you know. That humbleness, that responsibility, the knowledge I think part of that. All of those things should be part of being a good Chief and Council, which not every reserve has a good Chief and Council, you know, that can bring bands forward instead of either holding them back or, or you know or putting them back 20, 30 years.

John: Okay, I am hoping, you sort of touched on this a little bit, the second part of the question says if so, how can these changes be made and why are they important? You said you don't know how it is going to happen on a local level, well okay, I think that is the struggle that a lot of us are in, how does it happen? But can you touch on why these changes are important?

Kasey: I think for the bands to come out of their, the poverty that is on reserves. I don't know how to bring them out of poverty other than to better educate, to have better leaders in their communities that will actually help pull them out of the situations that they're in. Mind you, there are people all over the world that they, they make choices in their life and that's, you can't only help them to a certain degree and they got to start helping themselves and that's life skills that they are lacking. That they need to learn, or I don't know, and then there is addictions, that is a whole issue on its own, but changes I don't know how to change others, I can only change myself.

John: Yeah, that's important.

Kasey: Yeah.

John: Okay, so the final question asks, do you have any additional feedback regarding this research topic that you would like to share that has not been covered in this interview questions? And I noticed you have some notes, I don't know if this stirred up anything or if you would like to address in your notes or?

Kasey: I don't know I think the, most of my notes are from like what's a Si:yam, to me. What's a Si:yam and what I think a Si:yam should look like. And traditionally, I haven't see or heard of a female Siyam. I think that role needs to be taken by a strong female Sto:lo woman. It would make a huge difference. I think a lot of other women that would look up to her and let, you know, kind of give them the push that they need to get up and out of whatever situation that they're in that they don't like. I see more a female Si:ya:m, strong female women, yeah I think that would help.

John: Is there anything else you would like to discuss?

Kasey: No I don't think so.

John: Okay we will conclude. The time is 7:11 pm and we are concluding the interview and I would like to thank you anonymous community member.

Kasey: Thanks

Traditional Leadership, Colonial Interference, and the Contemporary Challenges of Cheam Leadership

Interview with Cheam Member Darwin Douglas

John: Okay today is August 13th, the time is about 10:00 am. I am doing a participant interview with Darwin Douglas and present are Darwin and John the investigator and we can start with question one. Before we start with question one, Darwin would you like you introduce yourself first?

Darwin: First of all my Halqemeylem name is Eyteoeqa. I am 37, a Cheam community member, I have 4 kids and am happy to be doing this interview today.

John: Okay question one says what does it mean to be Si:yam? And how are these people chosen and trained?

Darwin: Okay, I guess first of all I would like to say that I wouldn't consider myself an expert on these subjects, but I will share with you what I know about, what I have learned about this. I think a Si:yam...a Siyam is somebody in our within our community that is respected person. Somebody that shows leadership qualities and with leadership qualities I guess I would say like, you know able to organize people, able to have a vision of where you want to go with different things and someone that has the cultural, carries certain cultural teachings, certain values. I guess in my eyes what I would consider a Si:yam, somebody that is generous and willing too, for the most part they sacrifice you know their own time and their life for the benefit of their people, to help lead their people, that is sort of how I would see it.

John: Okay, the second part of the question asks how are these people chosen and trained?

Darwin: I think, like from what I understand in the past that you know a lot of times people would be groomed for certain roles, Si:yam roles in the communities right. They...you know, a lot of times it was probably the younger relative whether it was the son or you know the daughter of a person who had certain skills and responsibilities in the community, they probably pass on their knowledge and their teachings about that to one of the younger relatives right. For the most part that to me is how I think it seems it went. It still happens today and I think that you know certain leaders, or certain Si:ya:m they kind of watch for people that exhibit certain skills or personality traits, or you know they say that everybody is sorta born with gifts and born with roles and what not and sort of watch for those people I guess. And when they see them they kind of groom them to do the work. I think I can speak for my late Uncle (Haylematesum) Sam Douglas, like in my eyes he was chosen as a, you know to be the leader of our community right. He was the oldest son of my grandparents Albert and Edna Douglas, and my grandpa was a chief and my grandpa you know he took on the responsibilities of a sort of like a Si:yam of the community. And I think my Uncle Sam was trained, sort of groomed for that position and he got a lot of the history, the family history and the cultural history and that was, it was sort of instilled in him from when he was young and he was groomed to be that person to sort of be the next leader. And when my grandpa was in an accident with the train and he was killed and sort of

Sam assumed that responsibility.

Although we are under the election system by then in our community, so he had to get voted in after but it was just sort of, I don't think anyone ran against him. It was sort of accepted that he would do that and so to me I think that that is an example for me and I always look at that you know to see how he was trained and how he carried himself like you know. He did a lot of work in his younger years and he kind of strayed off the path in his older years, but always he was still always a very highly respected person in the community.

So I think it is for a lot of different things right, because there are different leadership. There are different Si:ya:m right. There is always the like what we sort of call the chief now sort of like the head person who you go to for the decision making, but there are a lot of other things in our communities like our ceremonial, our longhouse, there's like fishing and hunting right. There's different people you go to that I consider Si:ya:m. You know like my Cousin Rick for fishing and for hunting right and my Uncle Fred to me they are Si:ya:m and what they do right. If I got a question about it then I will go to them and ask them you know. I respect their decisions in those things as well right and then with our ceremonial life.

I was fortunate enough you know I was fortunate enough to get a lot of teachings handed down to me though that longhouse. Now I kind of assume some responsibilities and leadership responsibilities in our longhouse and our winter ceremonial life. You know I was taught originally by an older guy that, he wasn't a really close relative he is a distant relative of ours, but he sort of took me under his wing right. He told me that. He said, "I have watched you now and you know you displayed the right attitude and you listen you know, you listen to what's...you take it in so," he said, "I am going to teach you more," and he goes, "you are going to," he told me straight out, "you are going to be the one to help lead you know your community in this for the next while." So I think it was you know these people watch for and now me. I am still just a young guy and what not and I am doing the same thing. You watch for people that can sort of assume some of the responsibility and then in the future they're going to be there ones that kind of take up more of the responsibility and then you get to sit back right. Like I got a long ways to go before then, but you know you watch for them. The young guys you know we are talking about like Justin for his hunting and that, but you look at the other guys in the longhouse, you know speakers. Like the people who get up and speak on behalf of the families and that, so you are always looking for people that kind of displays of the natural skills right. So yeah I think it's, I think that's probably how it was done in the past too.

Just because you're the son of a big guy, a Si:yam doesn't necessarily mean you are going to carry all the skills and the abilities to fill those shoes right. Like I have seen that a lots too. You know sometimes people are just because this was dad or this is my grandfather and I carry a name like this or something that makes me somebody. Well in my eyes it doesn't right. You have to just, you have to forge your own ways, I believe, in life. I believe, you have to make your own. You have to make it yourself right. You can't ride on somebody's shirttail. You know I hear that right, especially with our names, you know. People will carry, people would be handed down big names you know, big names throughout our history and the person that carried them or big Si:yam right, big name and then they get that big name and then all of a sudden they figure you know they're the one, but I don't think so. It is sometimes that case like obviously they get

the name for a reason and what not, but you know sometimes that's not enough for me. I think people need to really show and display their own abilities right. It comes from a lot of ways, it comes from sacrifice too, you know, so anyway.

John: Okay, so question two asks how does the role and responsibilities of being a Si:yam relate to the traditional governance of the community?

Darwin: Yeah I think this is something that, this is probably an area where we might fall off a track a bit like I think that a Si:yam like I said has to earn that, right. They got to earn the respect of their people, right, and, but also sometimes they are going to have to make decisions that aren't going to please everybody right you know like, but I think that the roles...the Si:yam, the role definitely would keep order in the community. More like so if there is a situation coming up say with fishing, right, are we going to go fishing? What are we going to do? Even with today with this agreement now and everything else what are we going to do about our fishing right?

Like when my Uncle Sam was around, I will go back to him again, I would just you know check all hands to him you know what I mean. Like cause in my eyes he is the one that is going to make that decision and I am going to follow suit even if I might think his decision is a little bit off or whatever. I am just going to follow suit and it enables you to be united and we always say there is power. Your power comes from working together you know, one mind, one heart, one hand too. That is how you make things happen right and so the Si:yam would make that decision. Could have the people to sort of follow him and you know make it happen. Now it is sort of like you know when you don't have somebody that everyone is gonna respect and their decision making abilities and trust them, then everybody wants to say we should have done this and then you get that in fighting and then you are scattered and then you are screwed, right. So I think even more so in the past like if you talk to about pre-contact or whatever, I mean your lives depend on this right. You had to work together as one otherwise you might not survive ,right.

John: That is a really good point.

Darwin: There might not be, you might not get enough food to last the winter, you might not be able to protect your resource from you know battles that might happen like your life depended on it and to be honest with you John, in my eyes I think it is important that we get back to this way because I think there is a day coming in the future that we are going to be forced to use this type of organization and structure again. We always talk about you know there is a big calamity coming and that the world is going to change and what not. And I, well in my eyes what I think it is and I think that the only way we are going to survive that is if we can go back to our traditional ways of organizing and taking care of governing ourselves in order to protect our people and our land and our resources whatever they might be right. So I think that, that's sort of the big thing for me is that you have a person that, you know where it still is.

It still goes that way is in our longhouses, because that is what we are taught right. Is that okay you know and you don't want to say that oh I am, you know there are different styles of leadership right. Not everybody is the charismatic leader like I got all the answers to everything right, give me what, I am going to make a good decision for you. There different styles of leaderships right like in the longhouse, because I am such a young person although I was given a

certain responsibility I try and use it more, what would you call it a more inclusive style of leadership. Okay lets sit down what do you guys all got to say about this right? How are we going to do this? Take that, take everybody's sort of information and then try and you know forge a decision that you know the best thing based on what everybody says. So it is more inclusive, but at the end of the thing you still got to make the call, right. So that's sort of the type of leadership, my Uncle Sam on the other hand, he was a charismatic leader. He had the answers, he was the one. So I think that there is different ways, but at the end of the day you need to be able to trust in someone and respect them enough to be able to follow their decision making right.

John: Those are excellent points man. I really liked how you talked about lives depended on unity and that's not the case now eh?

Darwin: It isn't.

John: because you can say I can go to Safeway or I can be supported through you know DIA, you know and actually that is a really, really solid point that I never really considered or heard before

Darwin: Right.

John: Okay, so another question, are the values of Si:ya:m reflected in the current Chief and Council governance structure?

Darwin: Well in some ways they are okay. There is still I think when we have an election one of the things is of course now we have family grouping that have always been important. Our culture based on family right. Your family, your family lineage, your history, who's your family, because those are the ones that you take care of one another right and you, you know. You look after one another and you help one another out, so family is huge right. That is the base of our culture is the family structure and there has to be you know some recognition of that.

I think as far as leadership goes you can't have all, all of the leadership can't be from one family otherwise you get you know, rebelling from those guys. So I think when we do our elections it always balances out so that there is the different families that are represented on the Chief and Council which is appropriate, right. Not always though is it totally fair right. Sometimes like cause say for our family, for example, in Cheam we have like lots of members right, the biggest family there so it can end up that so we have you know have more of our family members on council right, but usually it works out so that it is representative. We might have 2 of our family on council and the other families have you know a representative each or whatever right. So I think that that sort of reflected in the, the sort of proper way to go, but the whole election system in general is just messed as far as I am concerned. It's really detrimental to the community and it is detrimental to the families because you get, now you get family members running against each other from, for the positions right. And then you get that in-fighting so what it really does is it breaks down the base of our culture which is family. And rather than saying maybe a better system would be to say Okay each family has to get together and figure out a way to decide on who their representatives are going to be right. Some communities are doing that. It seems to be

working a little better that way and yeah and then, but yeah I think other than that I don't think it is really representative of our traditional way of values and leadership. Because you know the people that are, say you get, you are voted in Chief and Council and then they decide Okay. So there are different portfolio's they have right. You are probably familiar with this so, oh you are going to get the fishing portfolio or you know it doesn't necessary meant that, that person is an expert on fishing right, but so it's not really that way. I think another way may be to do it is just to identify Okay what are the different areas that we need to deal with like fishing? Okay, you have like you know like land protection, our environmental protection and we have culture and language, we have economics now business right. Maybe to look at the different areas and to say Okay who's the best person in our community to sort of head this up right? That would be a lot more traditional in my eyes and to say and then you get somebody that's an expert at that and people to look up to them right.

John: So I don't want to stop your train of thought, but as we can see that a lot of these questions over lap right, right. Now you are sort of talking about the last part of the interview. I was sort of hoping you would be able to touch more on when we talked about these values and how they relate to the current Chief and Council structure. What are these values specifically that we are talking about that don't really get represented or start breaking down as a result of the Chief and Council system?

Darwin: Yeah I think that the Chief and Council system like my Uncle Sam told me one time he goes basically it is a popularity vote. You're popular if you can please enough people then you get in to the Chief and Council. You might get people in there that you know that don't carry the, to me like I said a Si:yam they need to be, you know a respectful person, they need to be a humble person, they need to have some of our traditional values right like humble, humility is one you know, they need to have generosity right.

John: Sacrifice, you mentioned sacrifice too.

Darwin: Sacrifice they have to be able to sacrifice and I think they need to have an understanding of our, you know some of our spiritual belief systems as well right. I think you know that is really important to me is that it is sort of. So yeah they have to be able to sacrifice themselves and their time right, it is a big sacrifice, when you're on Chief and Council like it is a big sacrifice. You sacrifice your family and everything else in order to do this job for your people right, so you have to be willing and able to do that I guess. Sometimes people aren't like, Chief and Council they get in there and then they are just like you know I have the authority now and through INAC and can I do this and that.

John: Or you are paid for your participation in the community.

Darwin: Yeah you get paid. Like I mean obviously I think that people if they are giving up their time to do this they should be compensated for it some how. It should be fair and it should be open and it should be you know clear on what you're getting or compensation wise out of it right. Like money is important to everybody now a days, but yeah sometimes it gets a little bit of extravagant right. Okay I don't know if that answers the question.

John: Yeah it does. Okay on to question 3. What are roles of the men and women within Si:yam governance?

Darwin: Well this is a tough one right. Like it is a little bit of a tough one because I am still, I don't know I still, through the longhouse right the guy that taught me he was very adamant that there are certain roles for the men and there are certain roles for the women right. And you know he might have been a little old school that is just the way he was and that is the way he taught me and I sort of have that in my value system as well. For instance a speaker, someone to get up and speak on the floor he always says, "it is not a lady's place to get up on that floor and speak," right, "that's your job you get up, if they have something that they want to say... then they should speak through the speaker right, which is usually a man," so there is a role there right.

John: I noticed that happening yesterday at the gathering with your Aunty June

Darwin: Yeah and that's, you know that's the way right. That's the way it has always been. So you know some of these things we have to keep in there. I think that definitely there was, I mean our, the women in our communities and our families they honestly hold a lot of the, a lot of the power you know when it comes to, for example, some of our ceremonial activities right. With our ceremonials like skwhy, skwhy. Its the women that, they're the ones that hold the songs and the masks and that and that goes to the women side right, that's the way it is suppose to go.

John: A matriarchal based society.

Darwin: Yeah primarily it is a matriarchal, primarily from my understanding right. You know even with the, when you marry right. Like my wife always bugs me, because one on the things in the culture is when you get married a lot of times the guy would go to the women's community right, because they held certain responsibilities in the community right. But so that a lot of times gets twisted too, but you know, but they would say sometimes that would depend on the mans role in his community as well right. But she is still trying to get me to move up there, but I wouldn't and we were going to build a house. You know not that I have anything against it. It is more so where the community is located right now too right because she lives up in Chehalis and so it is kind of out of the beaten path that is going up and she works up at that way so.

Anyways I think that the roles have gotten a little bit twisted. I'm one that, I think it's best if we have a spokes person. When we have a spokes person that, that is a man just because of the speaker type role and that, and that people get up and you know the Si:ya:m. And obviously we have women that are you know play a role, a Si:yam role and different aspects of our community like maybe especially when it comes to like families, child and families and these types of things right. I think that there Si:ya:m in our communities that take care of these things that are gonna be women, but I think the head spokes person should be a man, the head person. It's just my opinion, I would probably get my hands slapped from my Aunty for saying this but.

John: Okay, so the second part of the question asks how does Si:ya:m governance unify communities and people? You've touched on this a little bit already talking about, you know if they're respected. How they can unify and by taking all the information together and you know the different leadership styles of been charismatic and sitting down with people and being

inclusive.

Darwin: One of the things I kind of noticed in my life is that people wanna look up to somebody and follow somebody right. I want to have somebody there to say okay he is going to lead the way and I am going to you know follow him and I can put all my energy behind him and you know people want to do that right. I see that throughout time and throughout the world right. The leaders of the whole nation will go to war because it is one person.

You know they believe in this one person right, so I think that a Si:yam, you know in a sort of Si:yam the old style structure of this person, respected person and everything, people want that. They still want it and allows you to put, get together and say you know it's a way to unify because you have this person leading the way and you're backing them up right and come together. They can make the hard decisions and you know you just kind, you follow with that, people want that but it's hard. It's funny too because a lot of times it's like, I have experienced this first hand. It is the people that want to be the Si:yam or they want to be the one to make the call in the leadership or they just don't got it sometimes and they want to. So there is always that struggle too right but yeah I think you know in a lot of ways it's like I said there are a lot of times you are born with certain things right.

I don't know if you want to call it fate or what you want to call it, but we have the belief too that you know sometimes you will take on your ancestors that have passed on. Sometimes you will take on a, their demeanor right, their kind of spirit will live through you, comes back, you know a kind of reincarnation or whatever. People sometimes, you know the elders will watch for that and they'll say hey this is that person. One of their ancestors, their grandfathers, this is that person here and they will give them that Indian name right and that's a legitimate thing too right. And that would be, they'll already have those things in them when they're born right and you can see that in kids, you know you will have a kid that comes out and then all of a sudden he can just drum and sing since he's a little as two years old, you know. So I can't even remember the question but I mean that's ya that's, you know sort of, I guess the why it unifies people is, we get that belief to right, the people to have that sort of belief in the person, belief in the creator and in our ways.

John: Okay, so question four asks, how have traditional roles of men and women changed with colonization and the imposition of the Chief and Council governance system? So we've talked a little bit about the traditional role of men speaking but women having you know speaking through the men, but also women having Si:ya:m leadership roles in the community.

Darwin: Yeah, I think if you look around the nation now there's a lot of, it seems like there is a lot of female Chiefs and Councils right in a lot of communities. And it changes the dynamics right, like it changes it. I don't know, we do a dance performance with our kids. We do a berry picking song and we talk about how in past, like starting now and later into the summer and into the early fall you go up to the mountains to pick huckleberries and blueberries right so they use to walk up the mountain and they use to take along the, some of the young guys my grandmother called them the, there was a Halqemeylem name for them it was like they are the canes, for the older people. The lady's and everybody that went up berry picking right and so in our dance performance we have our young hunters with their spears and they come out and they are

protecting the berry pickers that are coming up right. They chase off the bears in the song and the girls do a dance where they berry pick and then they thank the berries and then one part of the song then they kind of huddle-up and they fix each other and they talk and chatter and you know do little things in there. Like why did you put that talk and chatter in there. I don't know. That is just what we see you know it is like we see women doing that all the time and they get together and talk and chatter and everything else right, but I don't know. But in the song there's sort of roles and there are different aspects of it.

It just changes the dynamics you have a lot of female leadership and sometimes it ahhh, I don't know it just, the men sort of take a back seat a lot of time. And the women seem to be a lot more vocal so and in the past in my grandfathers time, my grandfather all the men, all the Si:ya:m, all the leaders in the communities that had guys were men. And I guess it's a certain, for the most part there's a certain demeanor men have and certain demeanor women have that is different right. Not to say men are you know more, like they can sit back and I don't know listen and make decisions and kind of go forward with it but sometimes it seems like some of the lady chiefs right away they want to go and talk and you know. I don't know but it does change the dynamics. Maybe that's what we need in some ways I don't know, but yeah I'm not sure. I know in the past though like in my grandfathers time it was the men and the women had their own role.

The women had their own group of, they had their own group right. The wife's of all the Si:ya:m and all the chiefs and everything, they were obviously there at all the political meetings and all the things and they had their own group. And I know that the men would obviously consult with their wife's on things and the wife's would give them input and what not, but you know it was the men that brought the issues forward. You know, so I like that way, but I know in my family in particular man it's the women are the most vocal now. But to me I don't know sometimes...ahhh I will get slapped on the hand again I hope my aunt doesn't probably listen to the whole interview, but sometimes I find it just disrespectful. I found it disrespectful to my Uncle Sam when some of my Aunties' ran against him and for Chief and Council, because nobody would run against him and then all of a sudden his sister runs against him right but she had her own issues. It wasn't June or any of that, the older ones but it yeah I find it disrespectful and I know he did. Once he started getting his family running against him that's when he just stepped down as elected chief. "If my own family is going to run against me," you know he did an couple of times just because he knew that they were just trying to be ignorant but after it started to get out of hand, said, "I won't run any more," I was there at the meeting when he said that and then he turned to my younger, his younger brother and said, "I am going to support him and running as chief now and I will put my support behind him."

John: I think that is a good example of how it, that creates that family breakdown, that alien system.

Darwin: It does big time.

John: That is an excellent example though.

Darwin: Yeah so in some ways I find it disrespectful. I know some of my, not my immediate Uncles because some of my Uncles in the communities like, that are chiefs I call them my

Uncles but like they're probably just been distant relatives of mine right but I call them Uncle anyways. Like they call me their nephew and they have claimed me you know. When I was in the longhouse, they stood up and said this is my nephew and I am claiming him and so I call him my Uncle. But I know that they find it disrespectful too with some of the...you know I don't know if it is a macho male thing, but I don't think so. I think it's just the way it has been. They know that, they grew up, their fathers were chiefs and they seen how theirs went through but it's changed a lot right. I don't know if you will ever get to say, we might in our community, you know to say okay hey our head spokesman is going to be man, but I think it's proper.

John: Yeah, the second part of that question is how have these changes, the changes that you have mentioned here, affected the relationships between men and women within a community context?

Darwin: Yeah I think it again I think it, it might add to the family breakdown right you know. And it definitely creates more power struggles right so yeah I mean I don't know if you are going to interview my Uncle Charles. If you do get a chance to talk to him just kind of pick his brain a bit about this. He will have some things to say to you about it because he has things to say to me about it too right. I think it does it creates tension and I think that yeah it's you know I am not saying that women have their place you know they should just do this or you know stay home and you know I don't believe in that. I think women you know have and throughout history have exhibited leadership roles in a lot of ways right. A lot of healers, a lot of different things but there are certain roles that I think that are best suited for men than for women right.

John: Yeah well just reflecting on a matriarchal society like women owning you know like songs and masks and dances and you know. Grounds that are for resources and you know the men exercising certain roles, you know it is almost like a protection of those certain roles because the women do have a lot of roles, maybe they are like political power isn't seen in the same light or not always at the front, the men voice is always at the front.

Darwin: And the men I think in the past the men life's were at the front too right. Like we would go out and put our lives to defend this right so if we died, so you died. You die in battle whatever trying to protect your wife or your mother or your grandmother whatever right that's what was important. And there is power in that silence too right, there is power in the lady sitting there with what they own and in not saying anything. There is power in that and you know putting those lady's at the front, you can be giving away some of that power. You know you can be weakening that rather than having that. Men are almost like a buffer to that right. I don't know like I think strategically you know we can have things set up a lot better because I always felt like, I always, to me, I always felt like there's a lot of power in silence right, not silence but I mean you practice your traditional ways you'll sit there if you got people at a meeting or whatever and they have all these government officials or you know there is a power in listening to what all they have to say and then waiting and consulting and then responding right and the response can be short or whatever. But there is a power in that rather than getting into this know where we debate. Like in the government house of commons and they get up and make stupid fools of themselves like I just can't. I look at that and I think oh my god you can't be serious like these people are running the country. They are like a bunch of childish idiots right. Like this is stupid, like in our way there's more. You know you're there you listen to what and then you

have your chance and then you do have your chance you say what you want. Then that is it you know, but if it goes beyond that then we'll take it to the next level. You know whatever that might be right, that's you know there's power in that.

John: Like acting in, I'm not to sure if I am reading it right, but sort of like governing in unity?

Darwin: Yes, exactly.

John: Instead of the individual governing now.

Darwin: And for, even to me I was talking with my Aunty June yesterday, when we had this meeting yesterday you know. I was saying that to me like to me, they always say a lot of times they say an Elder gets up and they'll speak first right but I was told another way too. It was the oldest one, the most highly respected one speaks last because the words that they put out, if they get up first and they put out their words and everything for everyone and then you get 4 or 5 speakers coming behind them and they might not be as meaningful or powerful or knowledgeable. It is like they are stepping all over those words that that person put out so to me the person that speaks last is the one that you know should be the big, the one with the, the oldest one or whatever it might be, the most knowledgeable one get up and speaks last. That way their words don't get stepped on by the other people right.

John: Okay question five asks do you think that there needs to be changes in terms of the way your community is governed?

Darwin: Well yeah, I think that's a no brainier to most people right.

John: If so, how can these changes be made and why are they important?

Darwin: Yeah I think that we need to go back to this. To some of our traditional ways and one of them is the family. The family structure and we are going back to our family. Like in our family, like our extended family, our Aunt's and Uncles and cousins and go back to there for, putting forward people as our representatives and as their leaders and identify them and not just because. You need to identify these people for their skills right and for their abilities and you even have to like in today's world like I mean, in some areas you need people with education right, if they are going to be dealing with government people. You can't, you need people that are educated but also carry the traditional value systems and the knowledge and that for different areas, so I think going back to that family structure and building that family structure back up to unify that and then to work with the other families to unify in the community and everybody you know gets, puts forward their representatives. Those representatives need to work together and they need to designate a spokes person sort of like a lead person. You know something like that. We have to get away from this Indian Act voting system, especially if they get people in for like 2 years and by the time 2 years clicks by before you know it you are back to another election and then the S--- hits the fan again. And then everybody hates each other. It is just ridicules. It is just, you just fragment your community and then you know on top of it, yeah it continues over and over again right. Like every 2 years and then you get the community fragmented and then on top of that, we are now, our nation is fragmented right, so I think if you can just start from the base

which is our families and move up from there you will get people in those leaderships roles on a community level that have enough skills and knowledge and teachings that they can work together and keep our nation together right. And then on top of all of that I think you need you know your Elders and your, because there are certain people that won't run for like Chief and Council or leadership roles. Like people I know, people in like some of the longhouses some of our leaders in the longhouse say straight out, "look I won't be involved in politics. My role is here and this is what I want to take care of and this is what I want to make, you know a good thing here," but you need those peoples input so some how you need Elders and those other types of you know maybe longhouse leaders to have some input some how to the overall nation right. Like so I think the basic is the start of it though is at the family level right. You have to organize your family

John: Yeah so you are talking like, I am looking very briefly at this what I have learned about you and Cheam and their acts of resistance. A lot of those acts of resistance seems to be reactive, you know either because of pressure from DFO, RCMP but it sounds like what you are talking about is very much more is proactive and long term. Like a really deep building of community and relationships. A long term plan of developing leadership from a more traditional perspective.

Darwin: Yeah and you know what and...like at this point right now I tend to want to shy way from confrontations and to real (inaudible), shy away from confrontations. I don't want to be out there fighting right now, because I don't think we have that, a game plan. And we don't have that vision and why, like hey if we have a vision and we have this thing set up and we now where we are going and everything else I am all for fighting you know. I am all about it like lets do it, but I have just seen in the past with the reactive type of stuff but if you don't have a plan for it, it can really screw you up and it can put you back worse right like where we have kind of come and in a lot of ways.

We have lost some ground right and I know my Uncle when we shut down the tracks, and I guess it was the early nineties when we shut those tracks down he had a game plan. He said, "I want the Minister of Fisheries to come here so that we can have a meeting to negotiate with the high level decision makers and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. I want them to hear what we have to say. Hear what we want and I want them to respond to it." You know whether it comes out a hundred percent what we want or not, it might not, but at least we get them at the table and sit down because they are sending all their lower level people out just basically stall right. And he said, "that is enough." So he had a game, he had a out, he had a destination where he wanted to go and they wouldn't come so he said, "okay if you don't come we are shutting these tracks down and this is why we are shutting them down. We have a legal right to shut these tracks down because you never paid us for 2 ½ kilometers of the tracks that went through our reserve. So you have an outstanding specific claim on this that hasn't been addressed either we are going to act on it until we get them here to negotiate." So it was all planned out and we did it and it was tough for a few days right and we were under scrutiny and the cops where there and the army was there and whatever else, but we where within our, he made sure we were within our legal rights and everything. And the cops came and we said, "No. You have to leave and this is what we are doing." We had a personal relationship with the chief of police over there and he said, "look this is what we are doing we are not, we might be costing CN money. We might be costing the government money but that's too bad. We want, we want to sit down and once we get

our meeting, I will open these tracks up.” They stalled for whatever however many days it was. It was seven days and they were losing millions everyday, but we got the meeting right and when we got the meeting after we sat down at the table we let the trains go through. After the meeting was finished we let the trains go through and you know we didn’t get everything we wanted out of that negotiation. We didn’t, they didn’t give us everything that we asked for, but we got a fair shake out of the, at least out of it. We were able to negotiate something. They were able to negotiate something, that sort of you know, to me that was how you need to do things right so if you can have a plan you can set out these plans and we have what we have on our side is that we’re right. This is our land and you know we’re, we have, we’re right here. We have been wronged, but you got to set it up so people can understand that you won’t want to, another thing is you won’t want to make enemies with all of the general public. You got to try and build allies right like in any war and in any battle. If you can have allies on your side right then you are going to be stronger in your fight right. We just, we love to fight there right like we all like to throw down and say lets do this you know, like it is in us to do that. I think it is something that we have always probably had in our community and we just don’t realize it, but we are all pretty gamers to fight. But sometimes you know, you get beat up if you don’t plan it out right. If you are not prepared for the fight.

John: Yeah so the last part of the question, why is it important? Like you have touched on it a little bit. Another way of phrasing it maybe is what is at risk if some of these changes don’t happen?

Darwin: You know I, what is at risk is that we keep, we continue on being impoverished, we keep on being, you know our people keep on killing themselves with drugs and alcohol. And you know we keep on being like we have so many growing mental health, physical health issues like in our communities like we don’t even know man. We got kids that are being born that are addicted to drugs, we got, you know our poverty level is sick really right. Standard living, there is a lot of our children are growing up in the S--- that they have to deal with. The gangs, you know we are killing each other, literally, you know...the ones that are, we should be using, we should be bringing these people in right.

We should be bringing in our warrior’s, they are our warrior’s, they are sick a lot of them you know. You know I am not perfect right. Like I still like to go out and have a good time once in a while and I will drink once in a while and what not, but you know some of these guys they’re, it is so disheartening to see your cousins and these people. These are our young warrior’s right. We should be all, we got, I got 80 or some odd first cousins right, like 50 or 60 of them are all men. We should all, we got an army there. We got a small army. We should be organized and be strong together, but we are not because everybody’s messed up right and it’s because of the system that we are in right. If we had it, if our families were strong we could help these people. We could bring them in and we can find them the role. A lot of them and you know we could be forced to reckon with, but the way that we have it now is we got everybody just coming in, taking our land over, taking our resources, because we’re in a lot of ways we are still sick in our community. I think if we had a strong leadership that carries that traditional and we can unify more and work together more, we could fix some of those problems right. And like I said I think the days is coming where we are going to be forced and it is almost here now. We are almost forced to, well we are not yet but I think a day is coming when we are going to be forced to have

to work together and go back to our traditional ways in order to survive, in order to live right, in order to be able to eat and you know to live so I don't know. Yeah our future is at stake. Our kids future is at stake if we don't do it you know. My kids are going to be the next ones to be so frustrated and pissed off and lost that you know they turn to heroin or crack or crystal meth right. God only knows.

I mean there are good things happening too. I don't want to paint like a lot of our people paint a dismal picture. There are a lot of good things that are happening. Look at our longhouse has been built and that is sort of building up and gaining momentum and strength and power through prayer and through beliefs and through practicing our traditions. We got to keep that straight too. We can't let that get watered down and get off track, but I think there's a lot of good things happening in our communities too. But we still got a lot of huge problems right and I think if we can develop a unified leadership and unify our communities more, our families, build our families up that we can really have a strong nation again.

John: I just wanted to be clear on one part of the question before we move on to the final question. So when you are talking about these family representatives you know families getting together and selecting and putting forward representatives to speak for them is that still within the Chief and Council system?

Darwin: Well you know what I don't think so, I don't think so. I think we need to really look at a real restructuring. I think we need to look at what do we need? What do we need to move forward into the future? What kind of people do we need? What kind of leadership do we need to move forward into the future? And then I think we need to look at, you know trying to organize that way where we address some of our real needs to move our community forward right.

John: I am not in disagreement with you but I am curious this is the part where a lot of communities are struggling. Like what do you do when the Chief and Council system is being forced on you and there are consequences or you know for not operating under the system. For example, you could loose funding. The funding that does come into the community to help run the services and programs. You could have CSIS come in like they have in Ontario and force the community to have an elections. So when you bring in these ideas you are also faced with how the state is going responds to that. How does that get dealt with?

Darwin: Yeah I mean obviously we are going to be staying under, we are going to be having to deal with the Indian Act right. We are going to have to deal with the federal government and the Department of Indian Affairs right. You got to deal with them because we are not wanting to give up that funding right away right, until you can be economically self efficient you need that right like we can't kid ourselves. So I think to me I think that we haven't looked enough, we haven't planned enough into the future, we haven't thought enough about our long term plan right. How we are going to move into the future? Like you hear yesterday I heard, it was I think Joe or Cat or somebody we need to think about our seventh generation into the future. You know I hear that around right. You need to think about that. It's true like the seventh generation thing I know that is sort of like something I hear around. I don't know. I haven't heard it directly from like in my teachings from the longhouse and what not, but I do know we need to look into the future and you know obviously it can't be in the next 5 years. We are cutting the Department of

Indian Affairs out of the scene. We are going to be doing our own thing I think you need to plan and work you know like custom what do they, you know like custom elections. Custom governments or whatever it is right. Like some of the communities are doing it so I think that, yeah there's a way. We still got to keep them involved but we need to be thinking into the future right because really like we are just here for a short time right. We are just here for whatever for how, we are lucky to be here for 80 - 90 years. Well that is a long time but I mean in the spectrum of things that is just a short time right. You know you got to be thinking down the road right. You got to be thinking about your kids and your grand kids right. What are they going to do? What are you going to leave them with? What am I going to do to make it better for them right? To make a better foundation for them right. We have been kicked around now for the last hundred so years. You know we have really been beaten up pretty bad so I think we are starting to get our strength back. We are starting to get our feet back on the ground and what not so okay now we got to start to make some moves to do it right. If I thought in my time that you know make some, do something drastic to put your life on the line or whatever or to do something drastic so that your kids and your grand kids would have it better life, then hey why shouldn't I do that right. Like what am, who am I? Like you know. I would do that you know. It would be tough. You got fears about things but it has got to be for a, its got to be for a purpose down the road. You don't just want to do it and make it worse for them right so there is always a chance.

John: That is a good point.

Darwin: Yeah so you got to have that long term vision and I think that having the leaders that carry that knowledge, that carry that gift you know for that leadership. To be able to make those, to look down the road and sort of plan that out and to be able to make those decisions in doing that. That is what we need right, so even talking about it now like this, and that is why I said I am so glad that you are doing this because we have been talking about this for 15 years right. Since my Uncle Sam was still alive he was getting all crazy and he was talking about it, so we just kind of, the wheels haven't hit the ground yet to make it change so hopefully this is what you're doing is going to help us right now yeah hopefully.

John: The last question is just like a real general question. If you have any additional feedback regarding this topic that you would like to share that hasn't been covered in the interview questions?

Darwin: Nothing really, I am just glad that you are doing it. I know that there are a lot of students coming in and out and I haven't really, I am not always up to date on what they all do you know. And in some ways, in the winter time I go to the community and I live in the community in the longhouse and do my, what I figure is my role there and that. But the politics and what not it kind of does bug me because you know I should probably have more input.

I have been on council before and I spent 2 terms on there and I didn't like it. I didn't like the way it was set up. I didn't like the way that we acted you know so I just, I don't want to. I won't run for Chief and Council like, I don't want to do it. I like to have a, I would like to think that I still have a leadership role in some ways and help out in some ways without being on Chief and Council. I am just glad that there is more work being done to sort of look at this and I hope that you know we can find a better way to work together to move forward. It bothers me that we beat

up our leadership. It bothers me that my cousin now is chief there and you know I have a lot of respect for him in a lot of ways right and I think that he has a real good leadership qualities as well as my Auntie you know. She has those leadership, warrior leadership qualities and she has got that in some other people in our communities. I think we have good people in Chief and Council right now pretty much. They are all good. They all have good skill sets but the way that it is all structured we beat up on them. Like everybody, I go there and I hear people talking bad about them. Why are you doing that you just voted these guys in and now you're trash talking them? Like we need to stand behind our leaders. We need to give them that respect right and the current system it's not, you do your vote and then you get pissed off because you voted for them.

John: Ya it's built into the system, the fragmentation.

Darwin: Yeah and then now they got to fight their own people and try and fight this you know. So it kind of bothers me that we do that right. We need to, we need to humble ourselves and say OK this person is going to do this and lets stand behind them and fight it. If I am going to say something about them then why don't I go to them and say this is what I think you know. And I will give you some of my input right and that person should be able to listen, that is another skill that I think that a Si:yam has is to be able to listen to people right, but not trash em and talk behind their back. We all do it. I do it too. You know that was one thing that I was taught, don't do it. The words that you put out, the things that you put out, they are only going to come right around and come right back to you, so that is about it.

John: So the time is about, it is shortly after 11:00 am concluding the interview with Darwin Douglas. The only other question is how do you spell your name?

Darwin: my Halqemeylem name? Eyteleq. My grandma when I got that name she said it meant good person or a good man.

John: Okay. Thank you Darwin .

Darwin: No problem.

Traditional Leadership, Colonial Interference, and the Contemporary Challenges of Cheam Leadership

Interview with Cheam Member Isaac Aleck

John: So the date is August 24, 2010 the time is 8:59 pm. I am interviewing Isaac Aleck, Cheam First Nation, for the research project Traditional Leadership Colonial Interference and the Contemporary Challenges of Cheam Leadership. Isaac would you like to share anything about yourself?

Isaac: I'd like to say I'd be honored to think that maybe that my point of view might be accepted. I have been on council for the band 3 times. I've been on boards helping representing Sto:lo on fisheries, membership and House of Justice, so I have been able to. I have grown up off reserve so I kind of know a little bit about that side, but I have not had the residential experience which from what I hear I'm glad I did not have. So I have grown up with some views of off reserve ideas, so.

John: Okay, alright Isaac question one asks what does it mean to be a Si:yam? How are these people chosen and trained?

Isaac: I have...read some books on and heard Elders say that they where chosen back when they were about five on what they were going to be and they were trained in that field. So if you were chosen to be a Si:yam you were chosen on how to conduct yourself. How if you did anything you shamed your, your whole family not just yourself, so you had to be a person or strive to be a person that was above reproach. So you had to be a person who was fair to everyone not taking your family's cares and considerations, but if your were leading someone more than just your family you had to take their cares and considerations into considerations to think about. So you were trained from very young on what was expected. I image it was a lot tougher when you're growing up because you were expected to be a model citizen at all times and very little time was maybe spent in being a kid.

John: Okay, question two asks how do the roles and responsibilities of being a Si:yam relate to the traditional governance of the community?

Isaac: They can relate to the traditional governments, but the traditional governments is not there anymore. There is some people that are more readily believable and in what they say than others, so we've kind of strayed away from the traditional roles and responsibilities. I believe for the traditional roles was a, if there was a dispute you were kept there till you come to an agreement, until consensus was reached. Now the responsibilities are not there. You cannot keep a person talking or listening they can go close their mind and go away, so the consensus is not there.

John: Why do you think that change happened?

Isaac: That change happened when with the coming of the white man and in the, they did not understand our ways of governing, our ways of life, because basically they were just coming out of the middle ages themselves, where the church was all powerful and it was my way or the highway. So they tried making everyone over into their image because they believed no one else was that was proper to be anyone else.

John: Okay, the second part of that question asks are the values of a Si:yam reflected in the current Chief and Council governance structure? You touched on this a little bit talking about consensus.

Isaac: Yeah, no it is not because our current Chief and Council governance structure is basically a popularity contest. So you're popular until you get in and then you're, when you're tasked with the duty of doing what's best for the entire band, for the majority instead of specific people and then all of a sudden the governance structure isn't there anymore. People do not believe in it as much so this is all part and parcel of the Indian Act trying to form us after their image.

They cannot, that's still part that they did not understand us in that but also their way of controlling us so they could rule over us. As you look at how long it took us to become voters in our own country, which was about 1960. The women though, non-native women had the vote forty years before us so we could not vote in our own country. It was against the law for us to even hire a lawyer to even to look into this right up on to about twenty to twenty-five years ago. If I was a potato farmer, I could not sell a bag of potatoes off reserve without getting okay from Ottawa, which took 6 months. By that time it was a great hindrance in trying to teach people how to become business men or how to assimilate in society.

John: Ohay the last part asks can you talk more about these values and how they relate to the current Chief and Council structure? Maybe we can move away from that a little bit and talk about the values, what are the values that make up a Si:yam? What values should a Si:yam have?

Isaac: I believe there should be truth and honesty in dealing with your people and telling them what needs to be done. The process that it takes which due to the workload very few people understand the process when they apply for something. The Chief and Council and it's not only this bands but all bands keep the knowledge to themselves. When they're the ones that get re-elected because they have the knowledge of doing something. So when you have a clean sweep you get new council in there and they just re-invent the wheel, because they do not understand the process. So they are just treading the same trail over and over again. They also I believe need to look at what's good for the band and not what's just good for themselves.

I realize that you look right across Canada there's a lot of envy on what. How come Chief and Council get anything. We're not training our people to look at all the time and effort put in we've, we need people in there who can be teachers, trainers of skills. Teach them how to think

because all the Indian Act is taught us is how to hold our hand out and expect something. When you want something hold their hand out. Not how to get out there and earn it, but how to hold our hand out and now we are in our third and fourth generation of it. So we need people out there training our little, our young ones. You want something work for it. I had to work hard for mine. You got to work for yours. Thereby raising a productive member of society. At the moment I don't think we're, we're too busy babying them, hiding them from the real facts of life and then when it does come there, it's tough on them, they can't cope. We're just like a modern society. We've had it too tough, take it easy on the kids, but the kids when adversity comes they can not cope.

John: What happens when they can't cope?

Isaac: What happens when they can't cope? They get into drugs and they get into drinking. They hide from their problems, but their problems are still there when they come down. It's teaching them what to do. To learn from this. How can you better yourself? What lesson is learned from this?

John: Okay question 3 asks, what are the roles of men and women within Si:ya:m governance? So maybe your understanding more in a time when there wasn't an Indian Act. Or you know some of the stuff that you heard from Elders.

Isaac: The roles of men and women you know is, now a days is the, I think it... kind of blurred, but I believe that you should put the best person forward not be looking at whether or not that they are man or woman. It's the person with the best of ability in that way is the way we can move forward best. Having that best person in there. I think I am maybe out of tune with everyone else on that, but I believe we can advance to greater places, to greater things, if we got someone that can look at the overall thing and concentrate also on little things.

We've had some good men and some good women in various positions here, but you can not just look at just one family and say all our leaders come from there. Everyone is a leader in some part, some trait. Look at their best skills and ask them to teach other kids why they're good, because the good always makes a job seem easy. There's always some few little tricks that take time to learn and I believe that's part of the training system that the residential school had knocked out of us. The Elders had the time and the patience to train the kids and show them what they were doing wrong and letting them learn where as the parents are probably out working, gathering food and that, getting ready for the winter.

John: Okay, so the second part of that question asks how does Si:ya:m governance unify communities and people? So you have somebody who's five years old, has been trained, but now they're in their early twenties. How does that person take their training and unify the communities and people as a Si:yam?

Isaac: I'd have to say you lead by example. You help out where you can, if your help is wanted.

If it is not you say thank you very much, oky I'm out of here. If you wish I will show you to the best of my abilities, how to do it maybe in an easier way. If you want to follow that, if not. Then it slowly builds up. Okay next time you speak it might be three months, six months or a year down the road. They'll more readily listen to you and you can also, they'll also impart your, their views, so then you're sitting there okay how do you incorporate everyone's views so everyone's OK with something but it's not specifically helping one person. It's generally satisfying most of the people, that would be how it would come into being.

John: Okay, question four asks how have the traditional roles of men and women changed with colonization and the imposition of Chief and Council governance system?

Isaac: The traditional roles have changed quite a bit. They took away our training system with the colonization, of our land. They took, they took our land away. They took away our mobility and with the imposing of this Chief and Council system, they broke up our bands, our tribes and said, moved everyone out and put in a system that they understood but was foreign to us. By putting in a popularity contest, which meant if you had the biggest family then you generally got more. Then or when they got over turned then theirs got in, got more one year so the next election then it just flip, flops back and forth instead of sittin down and saying, "Okay, what's best for the band?" Reaching out and asking the people to open their minds say, "we want to know what's best for the band." That is not there any more under the Chief and Council system.

John: The consensus?

Isaac: Hmmmm?

John: The consensus?

Isaac: And...the chief, then your, you can get into custom chiefs, custom elections, where you're chief for life, which means there's no way to oust someone that is a detriment to the band under the governance system unless he resigns. So under that system you're stuck with them. And then under this government system right now two years is to short to start. By the time you jump through all the government loop holes to get something good to happening. Four years is good, but four years is too much of someone is incompetent in there, so that's a catch 22 there. We've tried. You'd have to do it if an ideal situation would be under this would be an election every year, but just part of council, so you're not spinning your wheels on council all the time. Reinventing it if there is a clean sweep of the slate, but then you'd have to go into custom election and then you would also have to get it to Indian Affairs to agree to it, so.

John: I kind of get the impression by eliminating this consensus in the meetings that would happen in the community, that the leadership and community are separate and that before there would be like the consensus mechanism where there would be, it would bring them together, but without that now they operate separately. Would that be fair to say?

Isaac: Yes it would be fair to say. And that you could also call it a special interest groups, which they, oh I want this, I want that and then someone else will be on a different subject, oh I want this, I want that. So is actually separates what we can do and what we can't do because to many people want to many different things just for a few people, without looking at the true cost of the overall program where it would be fair to everyone.

John: Those are some good points. So how have these changes affected the relationships amongst men and women within the community context? So today, you know you touched on a very big part of history you know from residential school, to the white man coming and the roles of men and women changing. How have we seen the effects in the community today between men and women?

Isaac: The effects are that, it's pretty rough and that some people will talk to some people but they won't talk to others, or they wouldn't talk to you if there is other persons there. Their attitudes change depending on who they're with. If you have something, if you are doing something for the band you only get a few people or so, out of a certain group, others. I am talking whole families won't like one person. So they will say, "no we don't want this to happen, I want such and such a person in instead." So they'll undermine the process to make that person incapable of doing their job, but so they're not looking at the community, the health of the community they're just looking at what do they want for themselves. Do they want to be the ones with the say? I know there's one person here that wants to be the one with the say on anything you know, but quite often that point of view is contrary to what's in the best interest of the band at whole. So with a lack of consensus who do you listen too. So that is really tough you know it's, they got everyone in special camps. It takes a lot of some, a lot of (inaudible) people say okay to reach across to these different camps and to be able to converse with them and find out what their point of views are and why. And try to understand that if you cannot then we are back to being polarized, but we still have, then we're not pulling together. We're distrusting what anyone has to say it could be man or woman. So, it's getting so you know, our leaders are hopefully we get the best leaders in each time there's an election, but there is so much history that you know that oh I don't like this person because such and such. I don't think that he'd be a, but they'd be a good person for council and this is why my decisions are so like I say all it comes down to is the popularity contest.

John: Yeah I have heard that numerous times now and I didn't really understand it till you started talking about it the politics of families and how big are families are. Large families could have certain people elected just by their mere size.

Isaac: Yeah.

John: Okay question five asks and this is rhetorical, but it sort of needs to be asked before the second part. Do you think that there needs to be changes in terms of the way your community is governed? If so, how can these changes be made and why are they important?

Isaac: At one time there was something where we tried committee's of a representative of each family hoping to get unified or get an understanding on what each family needed or understood.

John: How long ago was this?

Isaac: Oh about 20 years ago, but it didn't work out because there are very few people out of the family that is willing to sit there and be pointed at as a target. They do not have the desire or the temperament to represent their family and families interest in anything in any of the committee's, because as soon as you say, "no," and why you can not do anything, you have to tell your own family sometimes that you're being stupid and we don't think that's right. Families are turning a blind eye to things that, on things that should be right you know so that in effect you are still down to just two or three people that are willing to help govern the band. But if we can get family reps out then we have true governance and that they're representing their families. The only problem with that system is the bigger families still would only have one vote, for the smaller families will have one vote too.

John: You talked about the importance of the consensus mechanism in more traditional times, how would you see that been regenerated and is it important or is it enough to have a vote?

Isaac: I think overall I would like to see the consensus idea better myself, because then you can't go in there with a closed mind and refuse to listen. You have to come to an agreement.

John: The community would?

Isaac: Yeah or the reps, but if you have a vote there's ways of getting around that so you can block votes. But then, is the family rep being really true to what that family wants? So there has to be a, that family has to have things in there were they can remove their family rep if need be. It can't be a life long thing.

John: Where would these meetings happen, ideally?

Isaac: Ideally over at the, at the band hall or something. Before we had the smokehouse, it would be a place to gather you know where you can sit around and talk and where you have access to information.

John: So what you're purposing, just so I make sure I understand what you are saying, is that you're not talking about each family rep having a vote, like Liberal democracy and coming and exercising that vote, but it's more about having a representative from each family coming together with other representatives to come to a consensus on an issue?

Isaac: Well that would be the ideal way and then Chief and Council would have a clearer understanding on what the band wanted. Right about now, I believe our Chief and Council is a, isn't really representing what the community wants or we don't even know what they're doing. So if we don't know what they're doing when the time comes for them to throw something

together it will be defeated. Or come next election there could be a one eighty turn in which they say, “no we decline this project.” It could be for spite because they have not let the people know what’s going on and what’s been consistent is they have not educated the band members on the process. On any of the processes on how long it takes to get anything done.

John: Yeah, what you’re purposing sounds very much like the grassroots form of governance where it comes from the people?

Isaac: Yeah.

John: Ideally this is where you would like to see things go, but what you see happening today seems to be very much at top down approach with a very small group of people, pretty much controlling the future of the band, with no input from the band.

Isaac: That’s the way it is right now. When I want information and I’ve a hard time getting it and when I do get it it’s history.

John: It’s has already happened?

Isaac: Yeah so especially in fishing, because I am a, I try to keep up with what’s going on. I hear more from non-band members, members from other bands on what is going on, then I actually do from my own band. So there is a problem with governance within. We are moving ahead so fast that, it almost, you would almost have to be a full time position.

John: Chief and Council?

Isaac: Yeah.

John: That’s a good point, why are these changes, like the changes that you are talking about regenerating that community, that census in the communities and having decision making coming from the community at grassroots level, why are these changes important?

Isaac: They’re important and then you understand what the community actually needs. What they want and maybe find out where they want to go, but the way it is now you ask twenty people you have twenty different opinions on where they go because none of them have a complete grasp on the, what’s going on out there. They just hear bits and pieces so that’s how they make their information, their decisions, is on what bits and pieces of data that they have. It is not a complete set.

John: Interesting, well the final question asks do you have any additional feed back regarding this research topic that you would like to share that has not been covered in the interview questions?

Isaac: Yeah just one. I heard one time that that, it was mentioned just once, years ago...being an Elder was a term of respect. That was something that had to be earned. It wasn’t given

automatically, wasn't given just because you were old. So it was something that had to be earned in your life time, to be called an Elder, not just automatically given it, so I have given you something else to ponder.

John: Yes. Well thank you very much.

Isaac: Yeah, I thank you. Hopefully I helped you out a bit.

John: The time is 9:42 pm and I am concluding the interview with Isaac Aleck. Thank you very much Isaac.

Isaac: Yeah.

Traditional Leadership, Colonial Interference, and the Contemporary Challenges of Cheam Leadership

Interview with Cheam member #2 Rick Quipp

John: So today's date is August 17, 2010. The time is 10:25 am and present are community member from Cheam, Rick Quipp and John Swift. So Rick would you like to introduce yourself?

Rick: My Indian name is Ahawe and I am from Cheam First Nation and my given name is Rick Quipp. My Indian name Ahawe means hunter, provider. It was given to me by two of our Elders that have gone now. They stood me up on the floor with the masks, felt that I earned it for providing meat not only to the community but to the valley and fish in the summer times. So that is pretty much how I got my Indian name. It's my job to hunt and provide for the people.

John: How do you spell your Indian name?

Rick: It is spelled Ahawe with a line over the e.

John: Okay, so question one asks what does it mean to be a Si:yam?

Rick: What it means to be a Siyam is to be a great person that can lead the people in a good way whether it's political or survival. They're the ones in the fore front leading the people. To lead them in a good way. Si:yam means great, I think it kind of means great person. That's what our leaders are. Our Si:ya:m that's how there, why they are called, they work for the people. My understanding is Si:yam is known through the longhouse. There's people that you know that lead it and there's people that, you know we each have a job in the longhouse in the community and each one of us is could be considered a Si:yam depending on our jobs. But Si:yam most of all, most is I think to be a leader of the people, you know we, there are few and far between, you know the ones that stand up strong.

John: Okay, so how are these people chosen and trained?

Rick: Chosen and trained, I think I heard from the past is you had to have a special head, form of head. They were, they were trained from very young when they were chosen to be leaders. You know we see now a days is people push people in certain ways to make em work for the people. You know its something that's, I think in the most part it's starting from the very young. You know when we look at our, when you look at our communities today I am kind of fortunate I have been taught to hunt, to fish, to look after my family at a very young age. These are how Si:ya:m are built. They are taught from when they start walking or even before when they are getting talked to.

John: While they're inside the mom?

Rick: Yeah, well when comin out. You know the first, you know you look around the beach and see people with their kids, you know it's pretty much the same way as the Si:ya:m there. They are trained, known and then they are given a role, different roles as they are growing up. They experience life I think and in many ways it's what makes them great I think. You know they experience how to you know going through the rough and the bad and the ugly and the good. I think that's how they're molded. That's how they are, it takes them, I think it takes a very special person to be a Si:yam. They got to have a good heart and a good mind. They also have to listen, take it you know, otherwise they don't learn.

John: Who trains them?

Rick: Who trains them? I think they are trained by everyone in the community. It's just the way they are molded they may not realize their Si:ya:m until one day they're told they are. I think that's, you know that they are pushed into that fore front of leading the people. So that's kind of my sense you know today in this day and age you know, but back in the day you know with our ancestors you can look at family trees and see that each you know there was a, they had a way of training and who was going to get trained. You know like say on my dad's side the hereditary chief always come down to the, I am not even sure I have to look at it and study it again, but it was handed down. I am not sure how like today you know things are different with the political with the governments and how the people are elected. You know it doesn't matter what you do today a Si:yam is, you can only make one side happy, or chief.

John: A Chief and Council can only make one side happy?

Rick: Yeah, and you know there's many different sides on the band. There's the cultural, the ones that want to fight for the land, fight for the rights and then there's the ones that want to sign to get what they can out of it, so that's as we are going down, that is how the structures are working now.

John: Okay. Question two asks how do roles and responsibilities of being a Si:yam relate to the traditional governance of the community?

Rick: On most part I think in traditional governance of the community. The roles, I think the roles and the responsibilities are to lead the people in the good and the bad.

John: Like I am thinking of an example of like your role and responsibility of being a provider of food for the people and not only the people of Cheam, but in the valley. How does that contribute to that overall governance of the community?

Rick: to lead to the traditional governance?

John: How does your activities work to keep the community to keep together?

Rick: How does my activities, okay, my activities, you know to be able to work through the hard

situations, instead of puttin them off. If you don't work through the hard situations then you just more or less saying it's not, no it's alright the way it is and that is where I was saying that there are two sides. You can't make one side happier and one side, there is always going to be one angry side and there is always going to be a happy side and I have witnessed.

You know we have many different leaders in our community where title and rights were top priority and signing was a top priority. You know our community had pride in the title and rights and when the signing come along, you know we kind of lost it. A lot of our members turned to drugs and alcohol because they didn't have that pride so I think that some how a Si:yam would kind of harmonize it so that the community is healthy and wealthy.

I heard a lot of different people talk, a lot of Elders speak. In our culture you always hear we're rich with family and that family has to have some kind of structure and that structure is like where does it start and it starts from the Si:ya:m being able to listen and hear what the members have to say. But the Elders that I heard speak they did say we're rich with family and I also heard different Elders say you're never going to be poor, because you always have people around. So it's the, it's how things are different I guess, I don't know my best way to explain it I think say cross cultural training. We look at our structure in the smokehouse, which is the old way of living. You have the people that take care of the people. Know one's greater than anyone really because we all have a job for each other, we're equal, you know. We never put anyone down because you're the fisherman and I am the hunter and we both look after the people and then we have the speakers, the ones that take care of it that way. They're the Si:ya:m that take care of the people and in a good way I guess. But when we look at it through the longhouse way and the structure there, you know, when we are all there, we're family and we're happy and we have guidance. Somebody is always guiding us in a direction that you know and that guidance is a spirit. So that could be part of the teachings for a Si:yam. The spirit is always talking to em and that's something that we believe in you know is that spirit and that's pretty much, spirits the one...I guess part of our molding of what we're to do and how we have to accept life as far as I know. I watch a lot of people and the greatest leaders are the ones that are the Si:ya:m that are the most humblest because they got what they need and it is guiding them, whether it is family or the spirit or know its something that, I guess comes natural too. You know how you're asking, you know how you are chosen and then trained and that is how the roles and responsibilities come out through the guidance. A lot of times it is not just one person guiding them or teaching them a person, all these Elders are talking to the person. And from there you know we are told to take what we need and use it in a way that it's suppose to be used not the way the economics or the settlers. That's their thought to take everything and leave nothing.

John: Yeah that is a good point Rick. It sort of leads into the next question that asks are the values of Si:ya:m reflected in the current Chief and council governance structure?

Rick: I would say are the values of the Siyam are reflected? Like I would say not necessarily. I think if there were values that was Si:yam reflected in current Chief and Council governance

structure there would be, you would almost, if the values where there you'd have harmony and we don't have that. We're nowhere near that, what we see is, we see is dysfunction, we see hurt, we see anger, not to often we hear happy or laughter.

It's always, there are a few words that we're not suppose to live by and a lot of people use them too, in the wrong way like anger and jealousy and hatred and these are the current (inaudible) of Chief and Council. You see lot of that. They use it, greed so this is how I say our communities are dysfunctional because of the current system that they are working in. One way or another they're getting pulled one way or another to be beaten. You know you look at our fishing how we're you know told as a fisher, what I was told when the fish start running they're certain things happening there in mother nature like say the sockeye, the salmon berries are coming out and the sockeye are hitting the river. You know you see the cottonwood fluff snowin and then you know the springs are running heavy. These are, this is how we survived in the past. To live off the land and this is how we see the current dysfunction in our communities, because we don't have a hunter or a fisher, a wood gatherer or a cooker maybe even in the different homes. And the systems that we live in and when I say the system that's the current Chief and Council system, that's INAC, welfare, Social Assistance, CMHC housing you know these are all new to us. Whereas in the past we lived in the longhouse so the dysfunction is there from. No it's not maybe our current Chief and Council's fault or it is the way they were brought up, in a dysfunctional way. So this is how we are, how the governance structure is moving, we see, what I witness now over the past twenty years maybe thirty years, not just our Chief and Council, but all Chief and Council at their. They see a uniform or something, right away they get passive, instead of aggressive and that's how most Chief and Council's are molded. It's take what you can get today and don't worry about tomorrow.

John: Yeah that is such a good point Rick. So it sort of leads into the next question that asks, can you talk more about these values and how they relate to the current Chief and Council structure? Maybe that question, maybe we can change that a little bit like what are these values like we talked about some that are like being humbleness as part of it means to be Si:ya:m, but also you talked about the values that you see in the current Chief and Council being greed. What are some of these values that you are, what does it mean, what are the values that the Si:ya:m carry and what are some of the values you see come into the community in Chief and Council?

Rick: The values? I think a lot of people are changing now on values. We see it all over. Current Chief and Councils figure the agreements are gonna help the people or signed. Maybe not the agreements so much but the protocol or the agreements that they sign with say the different organizations like say the RCMP or DFO. And the structures there the values, you know (inaudible) term because a lot of times when we're dealing with these different government structures and how they relate to our current Chief and Council, it's always about the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. That's pretty much how you can say it. We see the current Chief and Council getting richer and the members getting poorer and that is pretty much standard not

just in Cheam but you know all over. Because it's the them, people working out the agreements with the governments and getting their five percent or ten percent of the monies that are coming in. And it just kind of heart breaking I guess because they're not working for the people then, they are working for themselves and that's how the current Chief and Councils kind of work. They may figure okay we are going to consult with the community today, but we are gonna sign tomorrow and that's what we have seen a lot of in the past. So that's how the structure, the current chief and council structures only work for one side or not for the whole community.

John: Yeah, I think consultation, I am just thinking, like consultation in the big house is something I am assuming is different than consultation with Chief and Council.

Rick: Okay, consultation in the big house, if there's a matter that arises we've had a lot to get where we're at today in our longhouse. A lot of consultation within ourselves. We have our longhouse is ours, it's Cheam. It's looked after by Cheam people and that's we are trying to mold it not to be Chehalis or Schowcahiel or Sumas, but we are trying to mold it to be us. And what we see now a days with the vehicles and the boats, things happen real quick, parties come real fast, they go real quick, people come from all over in the valley now to different homes lookin to get clubbed. So once you start mixing people in your homes there is always well you can't do that. Well why can't we? It's our home we can do what we want right as long as it's the protocol that we're still trying to mold. So in that protocol when we are molding it we'll all sit down and discuss it and then nobody will leave the room until it is settled. Okay this is how it is going to be. This is you know from experience. I was growing up I heard talk, "oh we're going to get a longhouse, we're gonna get a longhouse," for 30-40 years I heard that. Thirty years and then the last ten years I heard, "oh we broke the ground we are getting a longhouse," I think we will stop there for a minute

John: Okay, train coming, all right we are back in the interview.

Rick: So we were talking about the values of the current Chief and Council structure?

John: By the consultation, we are talking about the difference in defining consultations. You were talking about the consultation in the big house and how that was with different compared to Chief and Council consultation.

Rick: Yeah, so in the longhouse when we have disputes we sit down and air it out and then when it's aired out, it's law for our home. So we make law as we're going because it's a new home and we're so new to it. It's a old way of living, but we're new to it. People always say you come in to change your life. Well in reality you're just, the people say it is a new way as living, well, in reality it's our old way of living, it's not new, it's old and all we're doing is bringing back our culture.

But today when you know, the things that I witnessed with Chief and Councils over the last thirty years with our band meetings all they come to learn is, to do is, the Chief and Council

learn to say, “yeah I agree we disagree on this issue, but we’re going forward with it.”

John: Yeah.

Rick: You know they agree and they disagree with each other, but they’re going to move forward with it.

John: That is the same policy, the exact same policy you see happening with the government and Indigenous communities.

Rick: Yeah.

John: we will listen to the Indigenous communities, but we’re going to go ahead with our plan anyways, we have consulted with you.

Rick: And so that’s what I have witnessed over the last thirty years since I have attended council meeting. But in them council meetings there there’s a lot of, I think that’s what made us such a strong, strong people because we did come to terms where we agreed with a lot of the stuff and you know our fishing was one of them. We agreed that we are going to fight for our rights and that’s what we did for the last thirty years.

I remember back in 1984 they called it the *Paddle War* and then in 1999 it was a *Pulling War* so on and so forth, now it is a Court War. That’s the structure and the values of the chief and council now. Some agree to fight them, some don’t. Our current and last council agreed not to really fight for it. They even pulled out of the support, so that causes a lot of dysfunction there cause now the council is working on their own.

John: Yeah for sure eh. Okay, let’s go to question 3, what are the roles of men and women within Si:ya:m governance?

Rick: That’s kind of a tough one. The roles of men and women. The men are the voice, the women are the holders of the law. They’re the keepers of all the things that we own. The women they keep the names, they keep the songs, they keep the, they keep just everything, they hold it and pass it down so it stays within the reserve, within the family whereas the men are the voices for them, they sing the songs, they speak out for them and that’s where we lost it in today’s society. Today’s Chief and Council’s, they don’t respect the women. You know today we have a lot of chauvinists and a lot of them chauvinists end up in Chief and Council’s and that’s where I witnessed over the years. A lot of head bunting because the men don’t listen to the women no more. They don’t respect they’re the ones that carry the law and that’s pretty much how it works. They carry the law, they’re the ones that say, “Okay, you guys are doing the wrong thing in this.” It is kind of like disowning respect I guess because they’re the ones that give birth and we don’t see that no more too much.

I heard one family in town, the momma said you guys ain’t pulling this year. They pulled their

canoe's. I guess you would call them the captain and the canoe club mom said, "we are not pulling this year." He listened. Pulled his canoe's and this guy is in his seventies. So that's showing respect to the women and we don't see that in Chief and Councils because they are the one's that are guiding us I guess you could say.

John: Yeah I sort of got this from a couple of interviews I've done and interacting with the community. I sort of got the sense it was a unified form of leadership. Men and women playing different roles, but acting together. I don't want to say equal roles, but they acted together to direct the community or to govern the community, where as Chief and Council you can get an individual, just a man or just a woman dominating the governance of the community.

Rick: Yeah so I guess you know, the roles, I am not sure if you read it but to be self governance as we were way back when under Si:ya:m governance, we'd have to know we were stable. We were economically stable or socially I guess you can say. I guess a lot of things well I guess you can put it like looking back when I was young child I moved in with my grandma. I was her cane, that was my role, to help with my grandma and when I was living with my grandmother it was kind of like say it gave the opportunity for my parents to do their work to look after the whole family. And that's a structure that we don't see today too much. You know where that was our structure in the old days. The grandparents raised the children so the parents can collect and provide for the winter. I guess the four stages of life were you know I guess the first stage would be how I heard it was you know you just learn without realizing and play. Then you hit your second term, term of life you get taught and then your third life you live it and then your fourth stage is you teach it. That's you know that's not just 4 years of living, that's a whole life time and that's how it was put to me the stages of life it's how it comes in fours.

John: That's a good one. I like that. Okay are we okay with moving on to the second part of the question? How does Si:ya:m governance unify communities and people?

Rick: I think Si:ya:m governance it takes a unique person to unify a community in people if we've, I guess that is where the ears come in and you have to learn to listen and to be able to lead and that in a certain way. And that's I guess say in Cheam we're unified for many, many years on our fishing. We're unified when we're unified there. We are unified up here as a people saying, "this is what we're gonna do, this is how we're gonna do it." and that Si:yam took care of us, guided us and he guided us. He was always in the front you know the fore front fighting away and leading the way. So we look at Si:ya:m governance how it unifies the people and then we look at Chief and Council how it, you can almost say it dis-unifies the people to make it dysfunctional the way it is today. I guess that leads into question four.

John: Yeah, so how have the traditional roles of men and women changed with colonization and the imposition of Chief and Council governance system?

Rick: I think how the roles have changed is that the men try to rule everything. Whereas the women you know they are the holders and carriers of all things. They've lost that a bit and don't

know. If my grandma said, “go and fish.” I went and fished, but if my Uncle said, “go and fish.” I would say what is the matter with you’re a___. And that is where it’s changed. That’s how the men changed. They figure, you know because they’re Chief and Council, you know you’re gonna jump for them, but when it’s your grandma saying it you have to show respect to her and say, “okay I will go and get you fish grandma.” And that’s where, I think that’s where a lot of our, we lost a lot of our teachings that way.

You know I always think back it was just I actually read something my Uncle Sam wrote, or it was something he said, he said “if we are to be self government, we would have to go back to our old ways of law, to discipline ourselves.” A way that a lot of us probably couldn’t live in that way because we’re so use of a lot of different things.

John: Maybe being undisciplined?

Rick: Yeah.

John: So used to being undisciplined, that’s interesting.

Rick: So he said if we are to change, if we wanted to be self government we had to be self sufficient economically. We shouldn’t have to rely on the government for funding and our current Chief and Council’s rely on that to survive on that to make their payday. That’s where I was saying that five percent. No funding agreement that they sign for getting moneys in, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

John: Yeah, you see that coming in through the capitalist ideology.

Rick: So the role, we will just move on to the second part how it changed.

John: So how did these changes affect the relationships between men and women within the community context? Like what do you see today right? Like you see some of these changes and you talked about the fishing.

Rick: The changes I see is abuse. The men abusing the women because they’re fighting for that ownership of the song or the rights to the fish. It’s all abuse. It’s just the current the way the system is set up not to be in harmony with each other, so the changes the relationship between men and women we see it everyday in our community. Where they yell and scream at each other. We hear. There is no respect between the men and the women. The men are all chauvinist and they figure they’re right and everybody else is wrong, so that is what we, what I have witnessed over the years on the current system of the Chief and Council.

John: Okay, do you want to take a break?

Rick: No

John: So number five asks do you think that there needs to be changes in terms of the way your

community is governed? And if so how can these changes be made and why are they important?

Rick: Yes there needs to be changes. I think I kind of mentioned a few couple of lines ago that we'd have to, the changes that need to be made, or to go back to the old way of where the people are molded. We look at our current system, I have witnessed a lot of our council's, council members and chiefs, succeed, succeed in money wise through agreements or so on and so forth on that part. The changes are that why they're so important is to bring harmony back to the community. Respect for each other. Without the respect and harmony there is no function, it is one for all and all for one.

John: Yeah, if you were to develop a plan today on how you would do some of these things, what would you start doing today? What are the physical actions that you would take?

Rick: I think the physical actions I would take to make changes is burn all the houses on the rez. Move them all back into one. That's it.

John: That's awesome man.

Rick: That would be the start.

John: Instead of having one longhouse you would have lots.

Rick: Yeah.

John: That's awesome man. I love that.

Rick: That would be the most physical change that the rez would need.

John: Because it starts with the family.

Rick: Yeah

John: And right now, the people are all living in separate houses is a fragmentation?

Rick: Yeah, well living in different homes is. You don't have a hunter in each home. You don't have a fisher in each home. You don't have a cook in each home. Without each other we're nothing, because we need each other to survive and that's how we survived all these years.

John: Yeah, that's awesome man. I am going to leave it at that. That's perfect. You already touched on why they're important, so in number six it says do you have additional feed back regarding this research topic that you would like to share that is not been covered in this interview? We touched very briefly on like you know what are some of the restrictions of what going back to traditional ways. Like we talked about you know you said it would be hard. Can you expand on that?

Rick: I think some of the restrictions, the hardness would be...

John: Because we hear all the time like people say, “go back to traditional ways.” The first argument that comes out of peoples mouths, “well those ways will not work for us anymore.” So we are saying go back to traditional ways, but how do you get them to work today? Or how do you get over that hump of getting the people to buy back into them?

Rick: I think going back to traditional ways, or just the society we live in today and how people are, I guess so passive in a way they live. You know people accept things for what they are and how they are represented. A lot of times people don’t understand what we are fighting for, but when the time comes they’re the ones that benefit in the end, whether they realize it or not. I can say you know I sat here a couple of weeks in a row now just P----- right off because I am sitting on the beach and everybody else is fishing while I spent time in jail for that and they don’t. I guess they don’t realize you know the fight that it took to get what we’re doing. So for change, people I think need to really understand what change is and what it’s for and what’s going to come out of it in the end. Because the way we are now we see change, we felt change many different ways we felt change, physically, mentally, socially and to change back is, it’s going to be just as harmful as changing the way we are today.

John: That is a really important point eh? Like there is going to be conflict within the community to change back. And there is also going to be conflict with the state and when you’re conflicting with the state and going to jail for fishing rights, but the conflict within the community, that is going to happen too.

Rick: Yeah

John: It is going to be hard, a hard transition.

Rick: And that’s what I read in my Uncle Sam’s, in his stuff. To change would mean sacrificing lots, but that sacrifice in the end would be, to be harmonized. We haven’t seen that ourselves for probably many, many years. And as long as I can remember there was always drugs or alcohol or know all that hurt and that pain and that’s where the drugs and alcohol came to cover that up. And probably that’s how, what came with that was the physical abuse. You know where we see a lot of our leaders get that passiveness, they would rather, I see, well I guess I could put it this way, you know where I’ve seen some of my Uncles stand up the authorities and some of them my Uncles jump and that’s the abuse level of the I guess the schools in the day. To me a uniform to me is just another person that is trying to do their job when I am trying to do my job. Knowing there is no, I guess no, I don’t have the threat that my Uncles had, they got the beatings, I never.

John: Yeah.

Rick: I don’t have that threat, my threat is okay you’re just a person, I’m too.

John: Right.

Rick: I guess that’s the thing. I heard my mom say, “some of us are willing to die for this and

some aren't." They and the uniforms, I heard my Uncle, I heard my dad even talk about, "well maybe someone's got to die for change."

John: Okay well to conclude Rick do you have any other additional feed back regarding this research topic?

Rick: Not today but you're going to be here a while and I'll just take your paper and think about it.

John: Okay.

Rick: How does that sound?

John: It sounds good. So the time is 11:15 am we're going to conclude the interview with Rick Quipp. Thank you Rick for volunteering to participate in this, it's been a pleasure.

Rick: I didn't want to give you too much because I want to write my book.

John: Awesome.

Traditional Leadership, Colonial Interference, and the Contemporary Challenges of Cheam Leadership

Interview with Cheam Member June Quipp

John: Okay today's date it is August 18, 2010. The time is 1:10 pm, present are John Swift and June Quipp for the research project Traditional Leadership, Colonial Interference and the Contemporary Challenges of Cheam Leadership. Thanks for participating June.

June: You're welcome. I am glad to do it.

John: Would you like to introduce yourself for the record.

June: Okay. My name is Sioyila. That's my Indian name which means the Great Spirit Protector and the spelling is Sioyila and it has a long thing over the first o, it's Sioyila. I was given the name about two or three years ago. Normally we take ancestral names you know from our ancestors, but in my case we had several names that were given out and the names we started sort of a first generation names. Some people called it first generation and others said this is the first time you will be using these names, so all of the names it will be passed down to my family. So that's, it is really a brief history of names. Indian names, it took me a long time to accept an Indian name, because you either have to earn it and once you earn it you have to live up to it. So I never ever was ready for an Indian name up until then, because that's, anyways that was sort of just a brief introduction about Indian names that we get and so when I got my name there was twelve of us. All my children and grandchildren got their Indian names and so anyway.

John: Okay.

June: I am ready to start.

John: Okay, so you have had a chance to look at the questions. Question one asks what does it mean to be a Si:yam?

June: I guess it, in my interpretation Si:yam means leader. A lot of people feel it means, I don't know Chief and Council would just sort of, there is no definition really for Chief and Council, but I think as far as in our language a Si:yam was someone who led the people, who took care of the people, who protected the people and all the interests of the people.

John: Okay, so the second part of question one asks how are these people chosen and trained?

June: Well for myself I think a lot of times the, I think when you're looking at my history, most of the chief's in Cheam who are the Si:yam are from my family. My great grandfather

and my great, great grandfather. People tried to look at our history as far as Si:ya:m goes on my dad's side, but it was on his mother's side, not his father. So the line came down from his mother, who's her father was one of the big Si:ya:m here in Cheam. And so it resorted back to my father.

In my mind and I am only guessing John, because I am not really familiar with how they chose the leaders in the past, it is just that, I am guessing that even though we're section 74, band elected Chief and Council, I think our traditions were kind of followed with the people. They all agreed prior to the elections who was going to be the chief, but I think that kind of ended once my oldest brother was no longer the leader here. It became a big fight, mud slinging and what not during the election time and people fighting for the position. Even though I have one of my nephews that's in there as chief right now, it's Si:yam if you want to keep going back to Siyam, he, although he had lots of good teachings, his main concern is money. His own pockets actually. It's not really the best interest for the whole community that, I think that he accepted this position that he was elected into.

John: I have seen some of what you are talking about with the break in the pattern. I look at the pictures that are posted in the office of the past chiefs. In the first three pictures you see really long terms of leadership over ten years, thirteen years, fourteen years and then after Sam you see a break and then you start to seeing two years or three years. You start to see shorter periods of leadership of consistency right around the time. And not only you're saying that but also other interviewees, they're saying that as well. After Sam there was a break in the way that the community chose leadership, it was no longer a consensus based.

June: Well in my observation and I let people know my opinion is that prior to Sam stepping down from his position, which he did, there wasn't really a lot here. When my dad was chief he used to get programs going to make sure that people were working. And the whole community agreed at one time when the welfare system first came in that nobody in Cheam would be on welfare. And so one of the families decided that they were going to collect welfare and the whole community went after them and told them that they couldn't collect welfare here. I can't remember I think welfare came into affect after probably in the mid-fifties or sixties when people started getting that kind of help and so that was sort of the rule that I remember when I was young. You know that nobody collected welfare here they all did some kind of work to provide for the families.

I know my dad was a hunter and so was my grandfather and they use to go hunting and they'd share all the members some of the meat. To me those are like Si:ya:m.

I think you could almost go right into this whole questionnaire with where it all falls in together about colonization and stuff. How our own people are starting to be the colonizers and in the communities, our own leaders of today. I sort of don't even like to call them leaders, you know.

It's really and especially when the landfill got started my brother got the landfill started and it brought in a fair amount of money. As soon as all that money started coming in to the reserve and then everyone wanted to take that position as the, as a leader in the community or to the Chief and Council. Everybody started competing, so I don't think it was just the matter of Sam stepping down, it was the matter that he brought a lot of dollars into the community and people were concerned about those dollars and how they were going to be spent or not.

today I keep saying the motto for the, the money right now is that the staff rule how the money is being spent, how it's being used and there is a real big concern I think with the head operations managers. They want to make sure that there is going to be enough for payroll every two weeks. It makes it really difficult. The members were always left at the mercy of the staff and I think it's a really sad situation for some. You know we, my brother I know he probably brought the landfill in to help support the people and it's just not working that way.

John: Yeah, you talked about there's different types of Si:ya:m. You talked about the hunters that provides the meat for the community, how are these people trained?

June: I think it is handed down to generation to generation and I think we're maybe losing a lot of that. I know I used to be, my dad was a real big fish buyer and seller as I was growing up. We use to have the trains even come from Yale with loads of fish. They'd stop up there and pick up some of the people from Sto:lo and they would bring their fish down here and my dad would buy it. And of course then we had to process it so I was, I learned how to clean and skin the fish and everything else, right from really young.

John: Sorry for the interruption. We will pick that back up you were talking about how these people were trained?

June: Yeah I think it's handed down without even realizing you know. That we hand down our teachings and at least for me, I mean like with my mom the way she taught us how to cook was she would come in and tell us to do this, this and that and we had to do it and then she'd leave. We had no cook books. We had nobody to fall back on so we just had to follow her quick instructions and hoped that it turned out for the best and it usually did. I think that's how I teach my children too, I just tell them this is how you got to do it. There is no written books or manuals that we have where we get our teachings from. We're taught quite a bit about how we're connected to the land I think in ways that when we do certain things we do it with certain signs of the environment. I am trying to think of some of examples like even with, you know my children, they all fish, they all hunt and I think that I played a really big role in teaching them how to fish and my husband played a really big role in teaching them how to hunt. The boys, as he went along he talked to them about different things. They could probably tell you about the whole area around here, a lot more than anybody else you know so I think that's why I, that's my theory. I was taught that way and I passed that teaching

down the same way and the same with my husband, he was taught the same way.

John: You talked a little bit about it being lost today. How has it being lost?

June: Well I think a lot of people like in our family, it's not lost in our family, but if you look around the community and see, I think a lot of it you see out a lot of greed. I don't think our people would really, my understanding is we shared, I mean you look at all the settlers that came over here how much we catered to them. I think to make sure they stayed alive and you know and what we shared with them when they got here and so now I think a lot of that is falling to the colonial side of the scale rather than you know the sharing and the balancing of the way we live.

At one time even though there was, when I was younger I know there was only about six to seven families living on the reserve. And if there was ever any problems, any trouble you know a loss in the family, everybody got together right now. We don't see that anymore.

I was just mentioning you know with the young fellow that, before when that happened and it's the regulations that we're ruled by, governed by. And at one time if a person drowned everybody below that place of drowning, everybody would set out a net and that was kind of to make sure that, you know that that person floated down, somebody might catch that person. And so that's kind of lost even.

And I guess going to funerals people maybe have lost the reason why we have a big meal. Why we normally have a little bag of goodies that we hand out at the end of the dinner. I know I mentioned it a few years back and it was an Elder who was really surprised. We were at a funeral and I got up to speak and I said, "you know I said we always hand out a little baggie at the end of the service at the end of the meal to make sure when people are traveling." I said, "at one time people traveled days and days by foot or by boat and so we always hand out a little baggie for them to take to make sure that they have some nourishment on their way home," and the Elder was really surprised. So those kind of things they, although we sometimes practice them people don't know why we practice that.

There's a lot of things that we talk about whether we had shoes or not in the day. Our little friends that came over last night. She put her daughters shoes on the table and everybody just about had a fit. And you know and I never really knew why, but any where I have gone a lot of places I have gone they have that concern when you put shoes on the table. We were up at my brother in-laws funeral and my niece-in-law put her babies shoes on the table and I said please don't do that and then one of the Elders from there said to me, "I don't know why but everybody gets excited when you do stuff like that." And one Elder from up there said, "because that means you're offering your child to somebody when you do that." So it took me all these years to get an explanation from somebody, but and I think that's kind of a sad. Thing that we don't always have the reasons why things are done or why they're said, but a lot of that is getting lost. Like the obvious things like the sharing and the caring that we have

you know. People can understand that when you make something, when you catch something, your first catch, your first whatever you make is usually to be given away. And people say that's to bring you, you know more riches in the future. When you give something you get it ten times back you know. So that's still kind of a belief that we have I guess. A lot of those things you know those are I don't know how you classify them they're still, I know I've passed a lot of that on to my children, but I don't think there is a lot of people in the community that have the same teachings or trainings.

John: Or the passing on. Okay, so question two asks how do the roles and the responsibilities of being a Si:yam relate to the traditional governance of the community?

June: I think a lot of the of them just fell into to what I explained so...

John: Yes, I agree. A lot of these questions are going to overlap.

June: Yeah, and I think the you know of the role of a Si:ya:m are I think they're honorable, they are very honorable role and that you have to, I think you have to be a certain kind of person to do that, but like today a lot of the Si:ya:m go in it for personal reasons, or you know whatever for, it is not always for the people anymore.

John: Yeah, so in the second part of the question it asks are the values of being a Si:yam and I guess what I could have put in there is been a more traditional Si:yam when we were talking about back in the day, you know somebody who is caring for the people, are those values reflected in the current Chief and Council governance structure?

June: Not the current ones no. I think Joe still carries a little bit of that traditional stuff, but I almost suspect that there was some kind of pact that they were going to make sure that they all stuck together and their decisions and it's not always best for the community, the decisions that are being made.

I don't know if you wanna, you know you look at the plaques that they have on the wall there and all the stuff that they were going to do. We're almost at a years end already for the terms of the Si:ya:m and as far as I can see none of that is been carried through. I feel we, I've played almost a useless role as far as bettering the community, you know the environment for the community.

John: Okay, and the last part it asks can you talk more about these values and how they relate to the current Chief and Council structure? Like what are the values? We touched on these, you said something about sharing, generosity, a certain type of person what are the values that make a Si:yam?

June: I think honesty, integrity, you know. I'm not sure how to explain it, but a genuine concern for the people. My own goals for a long time have been to trying and get some health back into our community. I believe that you know with the help of government, with

the help of the RCMP.

We actually been really cursed with a lot of drugs in our community, but I think it's been something that has been pushed. So I think trying to get people back into their normal state of body and mind. We've been really unfortunate. We've had, I would say at least maybe four people that have ended up with some real mental conditions that are irreversible. I think we need to have a safe place for people like this. That's a long time coming with other priorities and I think when you look at the values of what we had here, we don't have the values of making sure that there are safe places for our people. We are more concerned about maybe sometimes with what other peoples think. What kind of a building we have for the staff, our kind of self, I don't know.

John: Mmmhmm. Okay, have we finished with that one?

June: I think so.

John: Okay, so question three asks what are the roles of men and women within Si:ya:m governance?

June: I don't think there's any specific roles for us here. We don't have any roles, but I think we have some unwritten chauvinistic actions and attitudes from some of the male councilors.

And I think there's some, for myself I feel that anything that has to do with the membership is part of my role or responsibility. I don't feel that because I am a female I have the responsibility of being just a grandmother. Well I think a grandmother covers everything anyways but, but here there's, I think we've lost any sight of any unwritten roles and responsibilities we may have had in the past from our past leaders. And so there's new colonial rules and regulations that are trying to be enforced and I don't agree with, because I don't really believe that we have come to a point in our community where we can start even being colonized like that more, by your own people.

John: When you're talking about the new colonial mentality coming in to the community through the Chief and Council governance system, when you are talking about it oppressing it's own people, what does that look like? Are we talking patriarchy when you say chauvinism?

June: Well I think male dominance, but along with that there's greed. There's greed for you know different, in particular two of our councilors, our current councilors are very greedy and I think the most important thing to them is money, material things. Where for me if somebody was paying me for cooking for a funeral or something, I would rather have a small token of thanks than to be always handed cash. We did cook for one funeral where one of the families, not the immediate family member, but a family member came up and gave us all a rose you know stuff like that. It is a sign that they are really thankful you know. Anybody can

give money. I gave Mr. Cohen 50 cents and I told him it's not normally what we give away, but we have picked that up. We use it as a token of thanks. We're paying you to do something.

John: Yeah, I was amazed by that. After all these years of the relationship between settlers and the people of Cheam, that you still came with gifts, and you still presented gifts to him. I found it ironic that after all these years of relationship between these two groups, that he they still came gift less.

June: Yeah, to me I think presenting gifts some things like that sometimes is more than saying something. It's not just the giving of gifts, but it's, I think it's a strong, I don't know what you would call, it is called like a strong indication that you know like a, in the words that I used with the gifts that I gave him. Normally we praise people when we give them gifts. I did explain to him that they he had to speak from the heart and the truth with the feather. I explained to him that gave him the 50 cents because he has got to witness some of the work that we have done here. And with the blanket, I made sure he knew I wasn't covering him. The blanket was significant to us. He was getting a blanket because of the significance of how we host people. I think that is one of the traditions and maybe that is being lost or not. So I made sure I kind of chose my words when I gave him the gifts. As a matter of fact I got a letter from him today.

John: Did you?

June: Yeah, but actually he thanked me very quietly. He said he was really, really honored to get the gifts. He would remember what went with him, the words. I am hoping it did and when you do it in a public's eye the way, you know like that, hopefully it is going to mean something to him.

John: Yeah okay, and the last part of question three asks how does Si:ya:m governance unify communities and people? And I guess what I meant by this question would be you know in times where the leadership, maybe Sam and prior who operated more for serving the people, how did they work? What was their role in unifying the people?

June: I know with Sam, he communicated with the people. Like a lot and even us who didn't live on the reserve, we always knew what was happening here. When things were, like with Cheam we did a lot of direct action I guess or challenging the government, so when those kind of things happened Sam had his staff trained to be on the ball right now. He had things ready to do things. Today's staff they don't even listen if you ask them to do something when it comes to those kinds of actions.

Everybody was on the move kind of, you know whenever anything happened like when I was involved with as the chief. I had a lot of the young kids out there fighting for their rights and they felt that they were doing something. And I know the last time, I wasn't, I had

already stepped down from that position and then that was when DFO was stealing our fish. Someone had phoned me, they didn't know what to do, so they phoned me and so I went around and collected up all the young warriors from Cheam. They were all so excited you know and after it was all over they were all talking about how good it felt, you know, to be there to support our people. How they were jumping out of bed and hoping around on one leg and trying to get dressed you know. It was quite exciting for them and so you have to almost personally, I think personally you have to go out and get them involved.

John: In the governance of their own community?

June: Yeah, and taking responsibilities for protecting their own community, you know, and being part of the ownership you know of what (inaudible).

John: Okay, so question asks how have the traditional roles of men and women changed with colonization and the imposition of Chief and Council governance system? You touched on this a little bit already.

June: Well I think, you know in the past the, and again it is not very often spoken of, that everybody in the community has a role pretty much. You know you have your hunter. You have your hard working people. You have your herbalists. You have your food suppliers. You know those who supply fish. You have boat builders. You know we had all of that, you know you have the gardeners for your harvesters and stuff.

We have all of that and I can't say there's a, I guess with the grandmothers and there's the mothers they would take the young people up the mountains to harvest, you know, berries and stuff. They taught the young people a lot of, in our way.

From what I have heard and recall is that even with families when you have new babies in your family, if the parents aren't doing the right thing. The Aunts and Uncles or the grandparents that they take over and it's always handed down sort or you know side ways other than in a pyramid. So I think those roles may have really changed where people can't be bothered looking after their niece or their nephew. Or some people get angry if you try to discipline your niece or your nephew and those types of things. When we were young everybody had the right to tell us off or discipline us, if we did something wrong. The parents all accepted it, but that has all changed. I can say that's a big change and the, so it sort of changes the whole thinking of the young children too I guess. They start to lose that part of our tradition.

John: Yeah, liberal democracy is based on the rights of the individual and what happens when you really take that identity on? Nobody can tell you what to do? You know, you don't have to follow the direction or orders of any other person, because you have rights as an individual. It's funny I keep hearing this in the interviews about the break down of how teachings are passed and you know how people don't respect those more traditional ways of

teaching children.

June: Well I even find with like with the Elders, there is a real lack of respect. I am one that never ever lost the respect. I think that if people are going to respect me, I've earned it, but you don't go out and say that you should respect me because I am your Elder or whatever. I really don't believe in that. I think you have to earn your respect, if that's what you want and I think for me, whether people respect me or not, I was put here to do what I do, not just as a...cause I'm looking for respect or anything. I do it just cause it was the way I was brought up. The way I was taught. It sort of is I guess an unconditional action or whatever.

John: Okay, now how have these changes affected the relationships between men and women within a community context? And you touched on this a little bit talking about the way teachings are passed down, the attitude of the male dominance in the governance structure. How does that trickle down to the community level in everyday life?

June: Well I think when you have a leadership regardless whether you agree with that leadership or not, what ever that leadership I think composes to the people, it's another way of teaching the people. Handing that tradition down I guess. That's a different tradition you know of handing down the colonization of stuff.

Then you take our young director here right now, a lot of us feel he has absolutely no traditional values. He has come in here with some education that has nothing to do with traditions, nothing to do with traditional leadership or passing anything down. It is more by section this and section that he rules the roost, you know. And he expects everybody to abide by it.

And when I was talking about Elders a few minutes ago, one of the recent chiefs, when I was talking to him about Elders, he said, "don't give me all this elders b- -s- -t." I said, "well one day you know you'll be an Elder and lets see how you feel about it." So now I refuse to talk to him. The male leaders of today about Elders and respecting Elders, because they don't anyway. It's a waste of breath to even talk to them they're not about to try and learn anything about what the Elders hold.

And maybe that's an area that's kind of missing in here is the Elders roles in the community. And right now there are no roles for the Elders. They are treated like they are into their second childhood or something.

So I think that relationship between men and women in the community is, it's really changed. I think maybe, I know we have had a lot of single parents in our communities and that's actually a lot of our males. Our male members have been single parents, so even those kinds of roles change and I go back to my mom's teachings. Although I found it was very comical when she talked to me about you know making supper for Freddie and saying I married him for better or for worst, my mom was one of the worst ones I think, for making sure that we

took care of our men. And that we did this for them and we did that for them and so that's how she taught a lot of my brothers you know. That's how they needed to act, that they're to be waited on, but that they are also made to be the providers. That role, I think, has changed quite a bit. The women normally stayed at home and did their job as what some people call them house technicians and now the men are. A lot of men are kind of reversing the role and that's, I don't know.

When I first married Freddie, before I married him I told him I was never gonna work while we were married. He had to provide for me, but then my mom taught me that too. And the same way she taught my brothers that they were the providers, they were the rulers or whatever. So I didn't. I never worked for about six years. I stayed at home and raised the kids until Leanne went to school and then I got bored so then I went to work, but it was my choice to do it. But I think you know that role has really changed where some of our men are really, really adamant about that attitude were the woman's place is in the home.

John: Okay, question five asks do you think that there needs to be changes in terms of the way your community is governed? If so, how can these changes be made and why are they important?

June: Well you know I can voice my option about changes that need to be in particular, the current leadership. I think our current leadership, a few of them are very heartless. They're only, they think they are real business people, but I think they need to be aware of what's happening with the people. All the people are still suffering. What can we do to help the people? All they're concerned about right now I believe is in particular a like a couple of them are really concerned about their own pockets. Their own future and when it comes to the membership, they feel that the members can get out and defend themselves. I really don't think that's, with all the sickness and drugs and stuff we have in our community, they are not capable of doing it, That's why I say, "we need to work towards bettering the health situation in our communities," and I have seen a bit of that improvement.

Well I have seen the big ups and downs with the community especially with drugs. We went through a real crystal meth problem here. I don't think it is bad now. We have been through cocaine. We have been through heroin. Everything else. It gets really scary, because you know all these drugs are mixed. I think the people are mixing them and one of the reasons I heard like when you're on crystal meth you never sleep, you are always busy and it's really hard to come down off that crystal meth high. So now what they've done is they go to heroine, which is a down. They call it a downer. It puts you to sleep for a little while so between the two, we are really blessed with real hard core druggies and we need to try and stop that cycle some how. We have three to four generations that are participating in the same activities that are druggies and that is really hard. It becomes really difficult to deal with...

John: At the same time?

June: Yeah, you know when they're all still doing it together. For the grandmother to sit with the son and the granddaughter or grandson, whatever, and do the same drug. It becomes really hard to break the cycle then.

John: Wow, you said it was important to raise awareness with the current leadership about the needs of the membership. How do you raise that awareness?

June: Well for me, I just keep bringing it up every time we meet. I haven't really found a solution to get their full attention on what the, what really needs to be done other than you know there's big talks about economic development.

I don't know if you have seen it anywhere, but any community that has good business happening it is normally two or three families that benefit. The rest of the community still live in the poverty we face.

Although you know a lot of people, especially those that make it in the world they will, you know I made it, how come nobody else can, but there is only a few people that can get out there and handle that I guess. You know racism, attitudes and even if you get out there and you are fairly successful you have to be way better than the average guy to even move ahead.

Even if and this is an area that I find really difficult to deal with is even if we have a business on the reserve, I am not sure what kind of business would ward settler business, is we have had the fruit stand here several times and we very seldom get business or support from the local people here. Even our own members won't do it because of the jealousy and so I think that plays another big role in the unsuccessful, I guess you can call it the unsuccessful adventures that happen or that try to happen here.

John: But they will dump their garbage and take your gravel?

June: Yeah, and then saying other, you know, if somebody has a small business here who's going to support it enough to keep it as a good business. One that is going to sustain somebody with their life.

John: In the event June, that you were able to work free of the Chief and Council system and you were charged with the task of bettering the health of your community, what would you do?

June: Well actually I have done quite a bit in the last, not so much this year, but the year before. I was a real political person and a real activist and I think a real protector of rights when I was chief. After I stepped down, you know, I kind of looked at some of the things that I let go to the way side and although I hired three people to really look into the health system, you know, our health programs and stuff in the community, their roles kind of

changed as they got into doing the political stuff that I was doing. Doing research you know and putting stuff together and we actually put the health thing on the wayside. So myself what I did, I really pushed not this year but the year before, I really pushed for all the different programs we have going right now for the community members. To try and build self-esteem. To try and get this drug and alcohol councilors out there you know really being active in the community, which I still don't really think they're still doing, not yet. Pursue somebody.

One young fellow, he did really well. He went to treatment and everything and he was doing really well and he said, "you know, now that I've gone to treatment my dad wants to go." He kept talking about it and talking about it and finally I talked to one of the drug and alcohol and I said, "you know this guy wants treatment," and I said, "my recommendation is you get out to his house and start talking to him." Well I don't know if they did you know, but we need, you know, we need people here that are going to be able to support those people that need the support. They say people have to want to do it themselves. I agree with that, but on the other hand I tell people they're so addicted they can't even help themselves even if they wanted to change. I've had conversations with different addicts I guess, you know one of them told me, "we only go to treatment cause we get to the bottom. We have a lifestyle where we are really are at our bottom when we are stealing doing whatever and the only reason we choose to go to treatment is to bring ourselves back up. It is not to quit the drugs." So you know some of these comments I really take into consideration and I really have no idea. And try and get stuff for the people. Try and get support for them. Let them know I support them.

I've been accused of being a little Columbia thing, a big part of the drug world, because I stuck up for people that were on drugs and I said, "you know they need help. They're sick. It's a disease. It's a health issues." And so we, I had some real problems with our health department, because it's not run by our own band saying that they have absolutely no obligation to deal with drug addicts in our community. I just told them that, "are you on the payroll?" And they said, "yes," [I responded], "then you have very obligation."

If you look at the health of our community that's the biggest part of our costs in the future. I said, "if that's the only way you look at it is for money." I guess I find money a real evil. Although we all need money to probably survive today. I think there's a difference between having enough money to be sustained and whatever we need to having access to dollars I guess, to you know to be able to show off a new truck every now and then. You know now we even have the people complaining about all the new vehicles, staff vehicles. So it's kind of a shame when our band members are still begging for help and in a lot of ways it's thrown in their face at the band office here with all these new vehicles, you know. You come up here and everybody is having coffee, it doesn't matter what time of the day it is, so those types of things I think are really, even the big part of the frustration, anger and everything that keeps

some of our people addicted or whatever.

What's the use and that's where a lot of our I think our family values are going. When some of these people have lost their children. It's okay as long as they think their children are doing fine. They continue to carry on with that lifestyle. Some where along the line we have to change that part too where they know, they have to know they have children. There needs to be that connection. So as far as health goes, I think my sentiment is almost you have to be able to take the time and visit each family. That was our thing in the past that we have lost. Nobody visits anybody anymore.

John: With the exception of your house.

June: Yeah and all of that ties in to the healthiness of the community, and the loss of the friendship, the loss of family.

John: Yeah, okay, we are coming to a close here and it asks in question six do you have any additional feed back regarding this research topic that you would like to share that is not been covered in the interview questions? I took some brief notes and I was wondering if you want to touch on? You talked about chauvinism in Chief and Council and you also talked about how your participation has been limited in Chief and Council with not being assigned a portfolio. That was one issue. If you wanted to talk about it more and then you talked about the questionnaire was missing the involvement of Elders of the community, so if you can talk about it more that would be great.

June: Well I think for myself, I think our Elders always played a huge role in our leadership, in giving direction. I can't say it did, but so many people talk about how our Elders should be respected. Our Elders should be and you should be taking advice from your Elders and I think for myself, you know, I've learned so much throughout my life time that I feel like I can share with people. Not just you know not just in our traditional ways, but even in the work force. I have worked for the government. I worked for Indian bands. I have been on Chief and Council.

They're always like really different roles and so my being excluded from portfolio positions in Cheam right now, it kind of bothered me. It really bothered me at first, but then I just do. I told them, "I am just going to continue to do what I normally do for the reason that I was voted in," I said. And I mentioned it several times, I was voted in for what I did in the past, not for what the people think I might do.

And that you know there's many roles that I played in the community and I still do. I still have a lot of people that seek my assistance and so I did when I talked to Chief and Council about the lack of the portfolio I said, "well I will do just whatever I want to do, but I do have members that really believe in the work that I do."

John: How did it come to be that you were not given a portfolio?

June: Well they, the new Chief and Council quickly, they started to developing policies. One was an nuisance policy that I didn't agree with and because of the nuisance policy I refused to sign the code of ethics so they sort of fell into place with one another. So I refused to sign them, so anyway, Lincoln just asked me one day, "when are you going to agree with us?" I said, "when I believe in what you're doing, then I will agree with you, but until then I have my own principles," I said, "I am not here to be forced to agree with everything you guys are doing," I said, "I let my name stand and I committed myself to this position and as an advocate for the people and right now, I don't think these are policies that will help me to follow through as an advocate." And so I refused to sign them and so then at the next meeting, well he, what he did ask me, "how do you explain an advocate. What do you mean when you say an advocate?" I said, "well I'm here to help the people. They go through a lot of frustrations with the chief and council and the band staff. They have government issues and you know in any way that I can help them and because I worked for the government there's a lot of ways I can help them there." So he didn't respond to that, but anyways at the very next meeting, he had a decision sheet what they call the decision sheet brought forward saying that if I didn't sign any of the policies I couldn't have a portfolio and they all agreed to it so they signed the decision sheet so I said, "well that's fine. I will do whatever I want to do." So I do. I still do a lot of work that is part of my what I let my name stands for and I still carry on with that.

And so it's just sort of a, it's if I put something out there they're going to disagree with it and they do quite often. Even to the point where Ernie Victor told our lawyer that he was going too do something with the requisitioning for her and he told her that, they told her I already did, well he said, "I will put it in for you anyways, because whatever I say the council will do." He said, "it doesn't matter what June says." So right there you get the feeling that whatever I say or do they're gonna disagree with. I go ahead and do what I need to do, but a lot of times I don't give them direction and a lot of times when I put things on the table they get angry. So it's I guess just a waiting game. We'll see what happens in the next election, because I really don't feel this council is done a lot for the community.

John: Okay.

June: You want to go on to chauvinism. It's like what the old people call the old boys club or whatever. It's a new thing to them and they are kind of busting their shirt buttons, because they were elected in and been able to go out in the public or go out to other organizations as part of the council. It's just kind of almost to me, it almost just feels like a contest sometimes with what's gonna happen.

John: Like a popularity contest?

June: No, no. It's just a contest on who's going to win. Me or them. You know it seems like

and they all when one of them makes a suggestion they really like to scratch one another's backs and suck up to one another. You know that kind of game. If one of them suggests something, "oh that is such a good thing." You know and so I always know when one of them puts something forward it's going to go. Like one real concern I have is our council meetings, and we use to have them every two weeks and all of a sudden, because Lincoln couldn't be here, he asked Leanne to reschedule for once a month. And when it really didn't go over to well, what he did was he got Eric to make the suggestion and of course Ernie said that's really good and Joe agreed with it. So there you go. Lincoln got his way with having a meeting only once a month

John: Because all you need is three for quorum.

June: Yeah.

John: And then how is information passed from Chief and Council to the community now?

June: Some of the stuff has been going out into the newsletter. Whether people understand what it's all about or not I don't know. Some of the stuff I think needs clarification like with this last meeting we had, there was a community meeting called and a few people showed up. Even I wasn't really aware of what the meeting was really going to end up meaning, but what they did was they brought this consultant in and he explained this whole strategy about what kind of business's we could have on the reserve and the reason they are doing that is that we have five hundred and thirty thousand dollars in a suspense account. It started out at 330 thousand dollars for the reclamation for the gravel with Lafarge and so I negotiated that 300 hundred thousand to reclaim the area that they took gravel, but since then Lincoln's been taking gravel for ten to twelve years. Probably the same area so they're thinking that they are going to use this money to reclaim what he's taken out and I don't think that is right. So I met with the resource manager from INAC and I told him, "I realize all through Sid's whole term he tried to get that money out of INAC." And they wouldn't let it go. The first thing Lincoln did when he got in as chief is try to get that money out. So I met with the resource manager from INAC and I told him as far as I was concerned unless it was proven that it was to benefit every band member, I said that money can sit there and collect interest and so they hired this consultant to put a strategy forward that is going to provide economic development, but it's still not in that strategy and somebody definitely have to really point out where it is going to benefit all the members. So when I went to the meeting I said, "well where do the members fit in here." Oh that's right they should go in here and what they're talking more is having leases, which isn't going to benefit the members much. Everybody else will get rich on the businesses, but band members still won't. It's really hard to, I mean even the meeting we had yesterday when we were meeting with the Ministry of Transportation and they start talking about this land we have down there and I told them, "I wanted to be excused from the meeting, because I really disagree with what you guys are doing and I know I am going to hold you up." I said, "there's three of you here as a quorum

to make a decision.” And I said, “I think I will leave because I don’t agree with your plans. This is the first time I heard the highways want another 3 or 4 feet of land on the strip of the highway and I said I don’t agree with that.” And their trying to tell me that was all done before and I said, “not when I was on council it wasn’t.” And I said, “and they still want more land.” So I said, “I don’t agree with that.”

John: And how many council members, I mean how many community members are aware of that?

June: None that I know of. I mean I wasn’t aware of it, so those are the types of things that I get really concerned about. If you look at the brochure for their campaign, their election campaign they said, “they’re going to involve and make sure they have input from the community,” but from what I have seen it’s all three of them mostly making decisions, having meetings, putting things together and then putting it to a vote.

John: And the structure itself, the Chief and Council structure allows for that kind of stuff to happen?

June: Yeah.

John: Well June that was question six. Is there anything else that you would like to touch on?

June: No, I think. I can’t really think of anything right now.

John: Okay with that we will close and thank you very much June for taking the time to meet with me. The time is 2:18 pm and we will conclude the interview with June Quipp. Thanks June.

June: Thank you.