

1. Description

- 1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: Paya, Pech, Chibchan
- 1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): pay
- 1.3 Location: Northeastern Honduras as well as in the towns of Dulce Nombre de Culmí and Santa María del Carbón (2). However, the language is quickly disappearing from these towns.
- 1.4 Brief history: The Paya used to inhabit an area of about 26,000 square kilometers. They were seminomadic and cultivated different crops. In 1498, Christopher Columbus came into contact with the Paya (although he called them the Taia). Like almost every contacted Indian group, the Paya had a huge portion of their people die due to European diseases. They were also attacked often by a neighboring tribe of Indians, the Miskito (2). They have since then been dwindling in numbers. A lot of speakers have completely assimilated into urban culture and no longer speak their native language. Many speakers are converting to Spanish.
- 1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: In 1864, the Paya were given land by the government; however, loggers have ravaged these lands and still continue to pressure the Paya to move. Even with the land from the government, the Paya hit a low in the 1920s, with only 600 people left (2).
- 1.6 Ecology: The Paya hunt deer, monkeys, wild pigs and turkeys, as well as iguanas. They practice swidden agriculture (2). They live in the Northeastern part of Honduras (2).
- 1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: They currently have a population size under 3,000 (1). They live in about 11 different villages in northeastern Honduras. Due to logging and immigration on land given to them by the government, they have been pressured into small villages. They do not really have any sort of range and are mostly confined to their villages, although they did used to have a home range of about 26,000 square kilometers (2).

2. Economy

- 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Maize, cassava, beans (2), and manioc (4, pg. 361).
- 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Meat from deer, monkeys, fish, wild pigs and turkeys, and iguanas (2).
- 2.3 Weapons: They did have blowguns with clay pellets and handmade harpoons for fishing (2,4, pg. 359). The Paya also used throwing lances and arrows with tips made of flint, obsidian, turtle shell, alligator teeth or shark teeth (4, pg. 359).
- 2.4 Food storage: The Paya use woven baskets as storage bins. They make the baskets out of the tips of leaves from the bayal palm (4, pg. 360). They also use different kinds of gourds (4, pg. 361).
- 2.5 Sexual division of production: Women are in charge of planting corn and squash in June, as well as a second planting in February (4, pg. 361).
- 2.6 Land tenure: Land is passed down through the family; however, there is little information how the land passes down through the family line. Currently, as the Paya do not have titles issued by the government, loggers and immigrants have taken land from the Paya without any consequences (8).
- 2.7 Ceramics: The Paya do have ceramics. They mostly construct vessels using the coil method and very rarely decorate them at all. Sometimes they will incise designs, but often they do not even do that. They use gray clay and fire their pots in an open pit (4, pg. 360).
- 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:
- 2.9 Food taboos:
- 2.10 Canoes/watercraft: They use dugout canoes for fishing as well as navigation in local rivers (2).

3. Anthropometry

- 3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): No exact numbers can be found, but they are observed to have a "small to medium stature" (6, pg. 68).
- 3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

4. Life History, mating, marriage

- 4.1 Age at menarche (f):
- 4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):
- 4.3 Completed family size (m and f):
- 4.4 Inter-birth interval (f):
- 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): It is typical for females to marry between 14 and 16 years of age (7).
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:
- 4.7 Percent marriages that are polygynous and percent males married polygynously:
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price, bride service, dowry)?:
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns:
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:
- 4.11 Homosexual activities and social attitudes towards homosexuals:
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (or endogamy): There is evidence that men would marry into a neighboring tribe called the Miskito, and then live within the Miskito tribe, but it is unclear how often this happens, or if this is always the case (5, pg. 204).
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception (Is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized?):

- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (i.e., "receptacle in which fetus grows"):
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?:
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion and/or rape:
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (i.e., cross cousin):
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?:
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring:
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?:
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio (number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females):
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades:
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (i.e., lesser/younger vs. major/older):
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?:
- 4.24 Joking relationships?:
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (i.e., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations:
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules:
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?: In traditional Paya culture, often times there was no marriage ceremony. A couple would live together and even have children, but with no formal ties, they are free to separate at any time (7).
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?:
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community?: Marriage is preferred to be within the community. Especially now, as the Paya are becoming a smaller and smaller group, there is pressure from Paya elders to marry only other Paya (7).
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (i.e., parents, close kin)?:
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:
- 4.15 Outgroup vs. ingroup cause of violent death:
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): History of attacks by a neighboring tribe called the Miskito (2). The Miskito actually began to collect tribute in the form of cattle and other things from the Paya (3, pg. 44).
- 4.18 Cannibalism?: There are reports that the Paya are, or at least were, cannibals. They would eat male captives of war (4, pg.359).

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):
- 5.3 Political system (chiefs, clans etc. wealth or status classes): There is a political leader called a cacique who is elected to his position by the elderly males. He mediates disagreements within the group, and as the Paya have to deal more and more with the outside world, he is often called upon to act on behalf of the village with outsiders (4, pg. 360).
- 5.4 Post-marital residence: The son-in-law and his wife live with the wife's parents (6, pg. 69).
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): The Paya have had a lot of problems with their neighbors, the Moskito. They have been attacked by this group relentlessly and have been driven into smaller areas. Their boundaries have been closing in as they dealt with these attacks as well as other outside pressures.
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions (age and sex)?:
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:
- 5.8 Village and house organization: Houses are often a small collection of buildings. There is a larger main house where the Paya sleep. Another smaller structure close to the first houses the kitchen. And sometimes there is a third building that is used for storing grain and tubers (4, pg. 360). These compounds are scattered throughout the village.
- 5.9 Specialized village structures: In some ceremonies, they do erect temporary buildings for ceremonial food preparation and storage (6, pg.141).
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?: They did have hammocks in their main house. It is never stated if they slept in them, but they have been observed to have them (6, pg. 69). They more than likely did use these hammocks for sleeping.
- 5.11 Social organization (clans, moieties, lineages, etc): In the village of Las Marias, there are four Paya clans (7). There is no further information on the clan structure, or on clans in other villages.
- 5.12 Trade:
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?:

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

- 6 Time allocation to RCR:
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): They do have shamans. One thing shamans are called upon for is when it is believed that an animal from the forest has cast an evil spell on a member of the tribe (4, pg. 360). Shamans are also used for snakebite victims. They have 68 plants they use for medicine, and a large portion of those are for snakebites (4, pg. 363).
- 6.2 Stimulants:

- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): When a Paya dies, they perform a kesh ceremony. They have certain foods and drinks present during the ceremony, "...otfa (chicha made of corn), muña (yucca wine), and a beverage made from chocolate" (6, pg. 141). Nine days after the person has died, the entire community has a huge feast. Any leftovers from the feast are wrapped in a special sheet called a tapukah and left by a tree (6, pg. 141). A ceremony very similar to this is performed when a baby is born (6, pg. 142).
- 6.4 Other rituals: The Paya have ceremonies when a person recovers from an illness, but no detail was given as to what it entails (6, pg. 142).
- 6.5 Myths (Creation):
- 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): The flute is played when a Paya dies, and throughout the ceremony (6).
- 6.7 Sex differences in RCR:
- 6.8 Missionary effect: Franciscan missionaries began working within the Paya community in 1622 (6, pg. 58). The Paya did build a church under their direction, but it is unclear of how well the missionaries did in the community. The Paya today do still have some practicing Christians, but there is also evidence that they still continue their traditional religious practices.
- 6.9 RCR revival:
- 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: When a Paya dies, they are wrapped in a blanket and put in a canoe. Material items are deposited into the canoe with the body, as they help the deceased on their way to Paradise. Before burial, the house that the deceased lived in is abandoned, and a new home is built. Female relatives of the deceased braid their hair, and do not eat until the burial is completed (6, Pg. 70).
- 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?:
- 6.12 Is there teknonymy?:
- 6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems, etc.): The Paya believe in a supreme creator, and a devil. They believe that the creator is indifferent to events on earth. They also believe that animals have souls, and can cast evil spells on humans. Shamans can help heal those who have had a spell cast on them by an animal (4, pg. 360).

7. Adornment

- 7.1 Body paint:
- 7.2 Piercings:
- 7.3 Haircut: They keep their hair long and never shave it. They are said to value a full head of hair (6, pg. 69).
- 7.4 Scarification:
- 7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): Warriors wore cotton jackets, red or white cotton hats, and loin cloths made of cotton or bark (4, pg. 359).
- 7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: At the kesh ceremony (when a Paya dies), the female relatives of the deceased will braid their hair (6, pg. 70).
- 7.7 Sex differences in adornment:
- 7.8 Missionary effect:
- 7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

8. Kinship systems

- 8.1 Sibling classification system:
- 8.2 Sororate, levirate:
- 8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

There is a huge threat to the Pech language. There are estimates that as few as 20 people are completely fluent in Pech (7). There is a huge movement by the younger generation to begin to speak only Spanish, and move away from their native language.

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