

1. Description

- 1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family: **Mopan Maya, Mopane, Mopanero, Mopán Maya, Mayan language family**
- 1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): **Mop**
- 1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): **Toledo, Stann Creek, and Cayo districts of Belize. Also in Guatemala**
- 1.4 Brief history: **Previously a lowland group living in the west-central region of Belize and the Peten region of Guatemala. When the British took control of the area from the Spanish and founded British Honduras the mop were forced to move into the interior region of Guatemala. Logging operations by the English then brought them to the west where most of the Mopan were kicked out or died of disease.**
- 1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: **Missionaries successfully instituted Christianity into most communities and the church now plays an important role**
- 1.6 Ecology (natural environment): **Regions of rainforest, jungle and swamp areas**
- 1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: **9,200 in Belize (2006). Population total in all countries: 11,800, 2,600 in Guatemala**

2. Economy

- 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): **crops of beans, corn, rice, tubers, cacao and sugar cane**
- 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: **pig, chicken, eggs and fish occasionally, mostly for special occasions, and fiestas**
- 2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: **Bow and arrow**
- 2.4 Food storage: **Corn is ground into tortillas, these tortillas will last longer than just the pure corn, so in a way, that's food storage**
- 2.5 Sexual division of production: **Men do pretty much all labor, they say women must be "protected from the Sun like the beans are". However, women do domestic duties, like washing clothes and dishes in the river and cooking**
- 2.6 Land tenure: **Land available for all to use**
- 2.7 Ceramics: **Lots of ceramics, such as pots, plates and corn grinders**
- 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: **Daughters and daughters in law exchange food with their mothers and mothers-in-law, and between themselves on a daily basis in the villages**
- 2.9 Food taboos: **A pregnant woman is not to feed other children from the breast for fear of hurting the fetus. Mopan have an obsession with ingesting the "correct foods", according to Anne Fink, these foods are deemed "correct" by whether they are classified as "hot or cold". Hot foods, such as pig meat are said to strengthen the blood. Cold foods supposedly fill your belly but leave you weak. Newborns are only to be fed water flavored with garlic and oregano for first three days of life because the breast milk is seen as poisonous.**
- 2.10 Canoes/watercraft? **Yes, water travel was popular**

3. Anthropometry

- 3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): Not recorded
- 3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): Not recorded

4. Life History, mating, marriage

- 4.1 Age at menarche (f): **Before about age 14. After marriage it is rare for girls to have a regular period because pregnant so often**
- 4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): **Usually give birth within their first year of marriage**
- 4.3 Completed family size (m and f): Not recorded
- 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): **1-4 years**
- 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): **Females-14**
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: Not recorded
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: Not recorded
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: **Yes brides are paid for, unless stolen**
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns: Not recorded
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: **Children not allowed to laugh or joke around their parents**
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: Not recorded
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): **Both**
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized? **One father recognized**
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows") **receptacle where the fetus grows**
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? **No**
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: Not recorded
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin): **Someone of higher wealth and social class**
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? **Not really, if they are sleeping around, its very secretive**
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: **Wife stealing occurs often**
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? **Godparents, they have a lot to do with how the child is raised**
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: Not recorded
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades: **No**
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older) **Older, and of higher wealth and status**

- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? **Elders are greeted in a different manner to show respect**
- 4.24 Joking relationships? **Yes, everyone can joke and laugh with each other except children with parents**
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations: Not recorded
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules: **No one is to marry one another who have any kind of relation to. The parents and grandparents of both the bride and groom can't have had any kind of intimate relations between them, past or present**
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? **Yes, a huge feast is put on; however, not always, there are many ways of informally being married, wives are stolen a lot**
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? Not recorded
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?) **Either is accepted**
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? **Yes, godparents and parents**
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: **Men have been known to fight with other men over wives, especially if a wife was stolen from another man**

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: **exact number not recorded, but many sources state that a large part of the Mopan Mayan population was wiped out by warfare**
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: Not recorded
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: Not recorded
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): **Neighboring societies didn't interact with the Mopan Mayan, they didn't know their language or customs.**
- 4.18 Cannibalism? **No**

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: **Village with about 20-30 families**
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): **Not very mobile**
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): **Wealth and Status classes**
- 5.4 Post marital residence: **After bride learns her domestic duties from her mother-in-law they build their own house**
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): **Not recorded**
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): Not recorded
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: Not recorded
- 5.8 Village and house organization: **Houses made of wood with thatched roofs, with one or two rooms inside**
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): **Churches**
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? **Families shared adjoining hammocks and chatted in them before bed.**
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: Not recorded
- 5.12 Trade: **Rice crop is traded for cash now in the market. Bargaining not common amongst the mopan, items are seen as having a monetary price**
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? **Yes**

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

- 6.0 Time allocation to RCR: **Moderate amount**
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): **Shamans known as Pulyas learn to "read blood" to determine how to remedy bad temperatures of blood**
- 6.2 Stimulants: **Planting of new crops, Wet season and life events**
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): **After someone dies, their home is abandoned and all the family members stay in close quarters with each other while the spirit of their loved one supposedly roams the village for 8 days trying to take family members as companions in the afterlife. Formal burial after repeatedly checking the body to ensure that the soul has actually left it, and the village deciding it's burial time.**
- 6.4 Other rituals: **Before corn is planted, multiple ceremonies are held to ensure that the crop will be a good harvest. They make sacrifices at these ceremonies and the sacrifice can be anything from a bird to a female virgin. Sacrificial ceremonies involving animals are used to help heal the sick**
- 6.5 Myths (Creation): Not recorded.
- 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): **Music played at ceremonies**
- 6.7 Sex differences in RCR: **Women aren't allowed to attend most ceremonies**
- 6.8 Missionary effect: **Missionary efforts lessened the prevalence of ceremonies**
- 6.9 RCR revival: Not recorded
- 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: **Evidence of possessions by "evil spirits"; a soul is said to roam during life while dreaming and after death into other people's dreams and as physical shadows**
- 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? **No**
- 6.12 Is there teknonymy? **No**
- 6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.) **Believe in a physical entity that created everything and influences life, this entity is thought to be represented by a person's shadow. The Mopan Mayan people believe that as people mature, the farther they drift from this entity. Pray to moon and sun and Venus, which they also believe is in charge of what happens in life**

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint: **During festivals**

7.2 Piercings: Not recorded

7.3 Haircut: Not recorded

7.4 Scarification: Not recorded

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): **Wore beads and feathers during festival**

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: **Wore body paint and beads and feathers during festivals**

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: **Women didn't usually wear the ceremonial dress because they didn't attend festivals**

7.8 Missionary effect: **Civilized clothing**

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: Not recorded

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: **No**

8.2 Sororate, levirate: **No**

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): Not recorded

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

1. **After a woman gives birth, her blood is thought to be cooling at a very dangerous rate (they believe cooling blood=death) so they light a fire under the bed of the new mother.**
2. **Menstruation is taboo and to never be spoken of.**
3. **People thought that the soul of a baby was barely attached to their body, and that at any moment a wandering spirit could entice the soul of the baby to join them in the afterlife**
4. **Blood readings done by the Shaman were said to be impossible to perform on babies and younger children because their souls weren't fully attached yet.**
5. **When babies are born, they are thought to not have a complete circulatory system and that if they were cut they could bleed all over the place until they die.**
6. **Women are to stop breast feeding other children when pregnant, or else their breasts will turn yellow and the fetus will be unhealthy.**
7. **Women often become ill because they are exposed to the evil water spirits, while washing clothes and dishes in the rivers, these are the most evil spirits of all.**

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