

# Pre-colombian society and northern south american chiefdoms

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The chiefdoms of the Pre-Colombian Caribbean were closely related to those of Northern South America. They were different from the Mesoamerican state because of the societal classification that existed. Before the arrival of the European communities, Costa Rica was inhabited by diverse groups of people who had diverse cultures. It was principally divided into the intermediate area (Isthmo-Colombian area) and the Mesoamerican area. The Isthmo-Colombian area included the Caribbean and South America. On the other hand, the Mesoamerican area extended from Chiapas and the Yucatan Peninsula to the Nicoya Peninsula (Diehl 17).

The intermediate area was made up of different societies that were ruled by different chiefdoms. However, these communities would form alliances, vassalages and community ties despite lacking a sole authority. This enhanced the exchange of culture and rules of community organization in these different societies. On the other hand, the Mesoamerican area was governed by a sole chiefdom (Adams 12). There was no specific interaction between the Intermediate and the Mesoamerican area.

The pre-Colombian society also shared key characteristics with the northern South America society. Unlike Mesoamerica, society was organized based on hereditary chiefdoms. The boundaries of the chiefdoms in pre-Colombia and Northern South America were demarcated by prominent geographical features or rivers. Most of the settlements were demarcated by forests. The eldest son was accorded the inheritance of chieftainship. This tradition was embraced by all of the non-Mesoamerican chiefdoms (Adams 34).

Another similarity of Pre-Colombian society with northern South American chiefdoms was in the housing structure. Grandchildren, children, and parents lived under the same roof. This implied that clan houses harbored as many as 100 inhabitants (Bruhns 83). Like the chief himself, the brothers of a chief were allowed to possess multiple wives. From the above evidence, one can deduce that the chiefdoms of Pre-Colombian Caribbean were more closely related with those of Northern South America than those of Mesoamerica.