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“Cultural Geography”

Geography influences the style of dress, choice of food, preferred music genre and many other defining factors for societies everywhere across the globe. The way that a culture is defined is dictated by where it resides on the world map. Countries that neighbor others tend to share in the practices and beliefs of those in the surrounding areas. For example in the country of Panama a country on the isthmus linking Central and South America, the Spanish language remains consistent throughout the region. Spanish is spoken as a primary language by the surrounding countries Costa Rica and Colombia as well as Panama. While these countries share the same language there are secular differences that distinguish these cultures from one another.

The traditional dresses of Costa Rica and Panama are fundamentally the same in structure but blatantly different in terms of stylization. The national dress for Costa Rican women are long vividly colored skirts called (golas) that have ruffled blouses with trimmings and different color combinations. In Panama the traditional dress the “Pollera” is also a blouse and a long skirt similar to the “Gola” but stylized with jewelry over the blouse and adorned by a tortoise shell comb called the “peinetas”.

My personal sense of fashion has been influenced by the Panamanian culture heavily in terms of the choice of jewelry used to accent outfits. Pulling inspiration from the “Pollera” dress has allowed for robust combinations of modern silhouettes with traditional style jewelry to give an almost regal sense of style that Spanish cultures are not usually associated with. Truly bridging the gap of cultures much like how Panama does geographically.