General Overview Of Costa Rica: Analytical Essay

Throughout the semester we have been learning about countries in the Peace Corp and off Hofstede's website. We have been learning about their social norms, their cultural norms, and them as a collectivist society. Throughout this essay, it is going to talk about how one country, Costa Rica, falls into all these categories compared to America, how they are as a society and some issues that are going in their society to this day. Last, this essay is going to talk about something that is happening all over the world, called the coronavirus, and how it is affecting individuals in Costa Rica.

The first thing I'm going to talk about in the Peace Corps country that I chose to research is some background on Costa Rica in general. The country of “Costa Rica is located in Central America and is bordered by the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea”(Costa Rica map and satellite image). 3/4 of the population are Roman Catholic and their main language is spoken in Spanish. Costa Rica is bordered by Nicaragua to the north and Panama to the south. Its capital is San Jose and its currency is Costa Rican Colon (How to use Costa Rican currency) and as of 2017, the population is 4,906 people. When it comes to labor many people work, even though the country is very poor, and most people earn an average of $10 a day (Costa Rica map and satellite image).

When looking at Hofstede's website store many categories that Costa Rica is compared to the United States in. The first one is power distance where Costa Rica ranks 35 and the US ranks 40 (Country comparison). This means that there are a greater power distance and inequality in the United States over Costa Rica meaning that the amount of people in power is not equal. The second category That is compared is individualism and Costa Rica ranks 15 where the United States ranks 91(Country comparison). This means that Costa Rica is more about the “we” Society and the United States is more of an individual society referring to itself as an “i” society. This means that Costa Rica is more about helping the people around them and supporting everyone whereas in the United States it is more about what you can do for yourself. The next category that is compared between the two countries is masculinity meaning whether the society is more of a competitive and dominant Society or more of a female nurturing and caring Society. Costa Rica ranks 21 in this category and the United States rank 62 showing that the United States is more of a competitive country than Costa Rica (Country comparison). Another category that is compared between the two is uncertainty avoidance and Costa Rica ranks 86 in the United States ranks 46 (Country comparison). This means that they have a strong emotional need for structure and rules. Costa Rica feels that this kind of society is very important to them and helps them have more structure and control in their day-to-day lives then compared to the US. In the last two categories listed on hostas websites called long-term orientation, meaning how the society stays connected to the past and how they deal with the changes that the future brings, and Indulgence, meaning how the culture tries to control their desires and impulses, Costa Rica has no numbers listed in this category. This means that for the society in Costa Rica this is not important to them therefore they do not show any aspects of these categories and do not rank in any of these categories.

When it comes to people in the United States they tend to be more punctual than other countries. People in Costa Rica tend to always run late and don't manage their time as well as

other people do. People in Costa Rica often arrive late to things by 30 or more minutes. It's not only family events but it's also important dinners appointments and get-togethers (Customs & etiquette). Because of this most people tend to adjust the times that they want to meet with friends and family because everyone knows that the other person will usually arrive late.

When it comes to communication many cultures have different techniques and styles that they use when communicating. Some societies use hand gestures and facial expressions of others 10 to speak to eat more creatively making it so that people need to interpret more. Costa Rica is one of the societies that have creative speaking and listening techniques. They choose a more indirect path when communicating with others. When you see Costa Ricans communicating with each other they tend to stand what is your feet away from each other and there's a fair amount of touching between men and men, woman and woman and even meant woman while communicating. Costa Ricans favor direct eye contact over indirect and they think it's necessary to have direct eye contact when expressing a message that they want the audience or the person they are talking to understand (Culture crossing).

One thing I found interesting about the country and liked about the country is its national anthem. Through a website that said the Spanish and English version I was able to get a translation of the national anthem and it says “Noble homeland, your beautiful flag, Expresses for us your life, Under the limpid blue of your skies, Peace reigns, white and pure.

In the tenacious battle of fruitful toil, That brings a glow to men's faces, Your sons, simple farm hands, Gained eternal renown, esteem, and honor. Hail, gentle country! Hail, loving mother! If anyone should attempt to besmirch your glory, You will see your people, valiant and virile, Exchange their rustic tools for weapons. Hail, O homeland! Your prodigal soil Gives us sweet sustenance and shelter. Under the limpid blue of your sky, May peaceful labor ever continue.”(Costa Rica national anthem lyrics). I liked this national anthem because it talks about “farmhands, loving mothers and peaceful labor”. To me, this relates to the cultural dimensions because “farm hands” (Costa Rica national anthem lyrics) represent hard-working and people farming not to only support themselves but others in the community and this reminds me about how they are a collectivist society and are more of a feminine nurturing society and think of each other as a “we society”. When it talks about “loving mothers” (Costa Rica national anthem lyrics) it reminds me about how the society is a more feminine and nurturing one compared to others. Lastly when it talks about “peaceful labor”(Costa Rica national anthem lyrics), it reminds me that they do not have a police system or an army in place because they want to be a peaceful society. If it comes to using violence to protect or take some power away from the people they tend to deal with it when it comes to bringing the society back to the place where they were.

After looking more into the country of Costa Rica I realize that there were many cultural and societal issues going on in the country. I chose to talk about two ones that I think are very important than being poverty and child labor. When it comes to Poverty most people are in poverty because there is income inequality in the country. In Costa Ricans, the wealthy are making almost “13 times as much as the poor ones”(Income inequality: One of the causes of poverty in Costa Rica). Wealthy Costa Ricans make about $4,650 per month whereas the poor ones make close to $360 a month (Income inequality: One of the causes of poverty in Costa Rica). Because of this, it causes the economy to slow down and prevents people who are poor from finding high-paying jobs. The government could fix this problem if they helped to provide more high-paying jobs and encouraged women to join the workforce in Costa Rica (Income

inequality: One of the causes of poverty in Costa Rica). When it comes to child labor this is an issue because in Costa Rica it is said that “children are in the worst form of child labor that there is including commercial sexual exploitation which can result in human trafficking and also work hard in the agricultural business”(Findings on the worst forms of child labor - Costa Rica). The working age for most children is 5 to 14 years old and that's at about 1.1% of the country's population, or around 8,071 children, are working in all kinds of jobs (Findings on the worst forms of child labor - Costa Rica). When it comes to the cultural side of child labor, it's about 35.5% of the population and this includes picking coffee, raising cattle, doing all farm work, and many other jobs. In the industry there about 9.8% of the population of children working in it and this includes construction, manufacturing, even helping to build new buildings and many other things. Lastly in the service industry, it is the highest-ranking one of all at 54.7% of all children in the country working in these industries (Findings on the worst forms of child labor - Costa Rica). Some examples of us are working in restaurants, shops, and other domestic kinds of jobs to make money.

To wrap up this I say I thought it would be good to include a current event that is affecting Costa Rica's economy and all the people that live there. One major event that is not affecting only Costa Rica all over the world is the coronavirus that is spreading rapidly. It is affecting Costa Rica because it is affecting their major tourism industry and causing a significant reduction in international travel which to them is their most important industry (Coronavirus pandemic begins to affect Costa Rica’s tourism industry). The National Tourist chamber reported, “that COVID-19 has caused ‘strong effects in terms of cancellations... and decrease in future reservations’ ” (Coronavirus pandemic begins to affect Costa Rica’s tourism industry). The Costa Rican hotel association says that visitors canceled more than 8,000 Hotel nights throughout April May and June because of the virus and it was said that the government is trying to help support smaller businesses through this tough time (Coronavirus pandemic begins to affect Costa Rica’s tourism industry).

Overall I like researching and learning more about Costa Rica because I would like to one day visit the country and see how the natives live day-to-day lives and how they're culturally and socially different from where I come from. I liked learning about issues they face and getting more insight into how they act with each other and other cultures around them. Hopefully, this will help me if I ever do get the chance to go visit this country because I have learned more about their social cues, what is important to them, and how they are as a society.