




# My Cross-Cultural Experiences

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CLDV 100

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Fall 2022



# Puebla, Mexico



My experiences in the states of Mexico where my parents are from, greatly differ. My mother is from Puebla, Mexico. From the start of my parents' life inside the U.S, my mothers' family has always been the sole provider of closer, emotional relationships with family members. Which is why, when visiting Puebla, there is always the feeling of comfort and hospitality. In Puebla, we visit artisanal markets, museums, cafes', and enjoy everyday with the company of now, my only grandmother.

My grandparents have a house in Puebla so when we visit Mexico, the first place we go is with them!



# Michoacan, Mexico



While we have closer relationships to my mothers' family, it is not to say we do not enjoy our time in Michoacan. But, because we do not have closer relationships with my fathers' family, our time in Michoacan is filled with conversations about our lands, our harvests, and our plants. It is a very beautiful place with lots of memories of before. When visiting before the pandemic, my grandparents were still living. My grandmother would take us to the forest and share her knowledge on the various types of mushrooms that we would later eat for dinner and our grandfather would go on walks with us to buy local pulque, "a traditional Mexican alcoholic beverage produced from the fermentation of the fresh sap known as *aguamiel* (mead) extracted from several species of *Agave* (maguey) plants (Escalante et al., 2016)," for our aunts and uncles to serve for dinner as well.



# NYC and it's Mexican Connections...

Having access to our Poblano Mexican products has always been easy. The struggle is getting there to buy them! When my grandmother, my mom's mom, sends us food or if my mom needs products to make Mexican dishes, we go to Roosevelt Ave. In this location, you will find a melting pot of Latin Americans as well as their foods, drinks, art, jewelry, and more!



Because of the abundance of Mexicans in this area, I was able to have access to my culture and participate along with it from another country. During religious holidays, we would go to church in this area as many events prior and after are common practices in Mexico such as buying tamales with champurrado which is a Mexican chocolate drink or partaking in conversations with locals my grandmother knew. Although it is a very busy place, I gained a lot with being able to visit it whenever I need to. In the next slide is an excerpt of an article that explains Roosevelt Ave. best!



# NYC and it's Mexican Connections (continued)...

**SPANISH:** “En un negocio se venden tacos de carnitas de cerdo. A unos pasos se encuentra una tienda que ofrece vestidos para las chicas que cumplen 15 años, y después hay un restaurante donde el menú del día es verdolagas en salsa verde, quesadillas de papa y mixiotes de borrego, un guiso de cordero que se prepara al vapor. Los anuncios en los negocios, la oferta de los vendedores y las conversaciones que se escuchan son en español. Parece una calle de cualquier ciudad de México. Pero no lo es. Se trata de la Avenida Roosevelt, la calle principal del barrio Elmhurst de Queens, en Nueva York. Desde hace décadas el barrio es uno de los refugios para mexicanos que se encuentran en EE.UU. sin documentos. Muchos en el barrio son de Puebla, el estado que más migrantes aporta a la ciudad. De hecho fueron los primeros mexicanos en llegar a esta ciudad, dice Joel Magallán, fundador de la Asociación Tepeyac de Nueva York (Nájar, 2016).”

**ENGLISH:** “Pork carnitas tacos are sold in a business. A few steps away is a store that offers dresses for girls turning 15, and then there is a restaurant where the menu of the day is purslane in green sauce, potato quesadillas and lamb mixiotes, a lamb stew that is prepared vapor. The announcements in the businesses, the offer of the vendors and the conversations that are heard are in Spanish. It looks like a street in any city in Mexico. But is not. This is Roosevelt Avenue, the main street in the Elmhurst neighborhood of Queens, in New York. For decades, the neighborhood has been one of the refuges for Mexicans who are in the US without documents. Many in the neighborhood are from Puebla, the state that brings the most migrants to the city. In fact, they were the first Mexicans to arrive in this city, says Joel Magallán, founder of the Tepeyac Association of New York (Nájar, 2016).”

# Food

Champurrado



Food in my Mexican culture comes in arrays of dishes. But, in my family, these three dishes were ones we consumed constantly!

Champurrado is a thick Mexican hot-chocolate. It is a drink made with Mexican chocolate, cinnamon sticks, corn flour, panela, and sugar! For many Mexican families, it is served during cold months, and/or holidays!

Mole poblano is a dish made with various types of dried chilies including: Chile ancho, Chile guajillo, Chile pasilla, Chile de arbol, and many more. It is most commonly eaten with chicken but many people eat it with turkey as well. Along side the mole can be arroz rojo (Mexican rice), onion, and tortillas. It's a meal that can be eaten daily and the mole can also be used to make another dish called enchiladas which are basically chicken rolled inside tortillas and mole served over it with tons of lettuce, cream, cheese, radish, avocado, and more!

Mole Poblano



# Food (continued)...

Pozole Blanco is made from the Cacahuazintle (hominy) heirloom variety of white maize that originates from Toluca, Mexico. It is boiled down until soft and when soft, the ends of the kernel is taken off making it a very intricate process. It is made with most commonly, pork and seasoned to taste with radish, white onion, avocado, oregano, salt, and cabbage.



# Family and Culture

If you come from an ethnic background, the family surrounding you is one of the many ways to connect with your culture. From your family comes your customs, traditions, language, values and many more important attributes that make you, you!

In my personal life, the family surrounding me was my main source of having access to my culture and everything that comes from being apart of it.

The way my mother's family immigrated to the U.S is through my grandfather. He set partial roots down in the U.S, enough for my grandmother, mother, and uncles to arrive without any worries about money. Although they left behind their country, they left with the knowledge of previous generations in celebrations, beliefs, religion, home remedies, plants, herbs, and more. When my father settled down, all he brought back was his families' beliefs, religion, and memories. Both connecting families gave me different experiences regarding my culture and what it meant to be Mexican American...







# Celebrations and Holiday's!

A highly regarded celebration that takes place in my Mexican culture is Independence day! Independence day takes place on September 16 and celebrates those who led the revolution towards freedom from Spain in 1810. At 11:59 pm on September 15, the President of Mexico stands before the people in the Zócalo (main square of a town or a city) of Mexico City and performs El Grito De Independencia.

This day is celebrated by Mexican's around the world and is something we value every year. Its easily accessible as this ceremony is broadcasted on live T.V. for millions to watch. My experience with this day is my mother making some sort of beverage such as coffee, arroz con leche, or champurrado for us to sip on while we watch. We would all gather around once it started and my parents would sing their national anthem that is sung after "El Grito."

# Religion

Religion has played a big part in my life. I was raised Catholic and still partake in some religious activities and beliefs.

My religion and culture is heavily connected which means that no matter what, sexism will always be tied to both and was therefore something I faced throughout my early childhood. I was forced to partake in gender roles and grew up with the idea that is still prevalent in the U.S and its politics of Adam and Eve/ Men lie with Women.

I think that one of the many reasons I grew apart from my religion was due to how involved Christianity is in the U.S government and the conflicting opinions I have regarding that religion.

Apart from this, I still celebrate Day of the Dead which involves lighting candles for loved ones who have passed so they can safely make their way from purgatory to heaven and praying for them that night.

I also enjoy going to mass on Christmas Eve as it makes me feel more grateful for the next day and listening to the story of Jesus seems to impact me more that night since its more significant.



# Norms and Values

Values that have been brought into my life through Mexican culture is respecting your elders, family, and those around you. I was also taught to value family above all else.

Which is why building meaningful connections with the family and friends surrounding me is so important for my beliefs and mental wellbeing.

I was also taught to value my religion, which is catholicism, and the rituals that include being apart from this religion.

Norms that are prevalent in my culture that are admittedly forced upon women include: serving your male counterparts, take care of siblings which undeniably leads to one becoming a parental figure to siblings, and cleaning up after everyone with the woman around you.

The experiences when facing these value and norms differ in Mexico and in NYC. Because my parents left their country so early, around the 80's, they left with the norms and values of that time period...

When visiting Mexico, although these norms and values are still prevalent, people are now much more lenient with the norms listed.

It baffles me on how behind my parents' beliefs and norms are due to the type of positive environment I am placed in when in Mexico with our family members who didn't immigrate to the U.S.

As years go by, norms and beliefs change do too.



# 1<sup>st</sup> Generation American



My claim to being 1<sup>st</sup> Generation Mexican American is one that makes me feel like an imposter. Although I have lived my life with this culture, language, religion, beliefs, norms, values, etc., a part of me does not feel Mexican enough.

I've tried so hard to put myself out of the stereotypical box Mexican's are put in, to the point where I've lost years gaining more knowledge from my country, it's customs, and its language.

Ultimately, as 1<sup>st</sup> generation American, I'm faced with the pressure of leading a successful life in the U.S while still maintaining my culture and language alive. Because this rhetoric has been passed down to us, I feel the need to accomplish it and I'm extremely grateful for the opportunities my parents provided for me. I am now a college student at CUNY York College and plan to be the first to receive a bachelors degree in my family.

# Conclusion



In conclusion, my cross-cultural experience is one that is filled with many positive experiences.

I've lived my life experiencing Mexican culture in New York surrounded by people who have given me the knowledge necessary to feel intact with our culture and customs.

I feel very grateful to have family both in NYC and Mexico to be able to learn on how different lives are led in both places and the traditions we aren't able to participate in due to residing in the U.S.

My experiences are one that I will carry with me and the lessons learned throughout will be ones passed down to younger family members surrounding me to spread the knowledge.

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