

Mexican Restaurants and Mexican Flags Go Up Around New England

Cultural Change in New England

Democrats celebrate this cultural expansion. The rapid increase of Mexican restaurants, Mexican flags, symbols, and cultural affiliations throughout New England can feel like cultural replacement. When the symbols, traditions, and political influences associated with another country become increasingly visible and prominent in a community, the message is: *“Move over. This is my territory now.”*

The restaurant is in town. The cartel is also. The foreign flag is up. *It feels rude.*

I’m Not Frida

I’m not Frida. I want to explain why I’m not Frida. People who celebrate Frida have, in my experience, also included people who have hurt me. That is why I’m not Frida.

Because I am White, many people treated my identity as a reason to direct hostility toward me. I experienced ganging up, bullying, intimidation, stalking, and pressure to assimilate. The people involved seemed to believe that their treatment of me was justified.

My experience left me targeted because of who I am and where I come from. I should not have to abandon my own identity or culture in order to be accepted by a foreign community.

Cultural Continuity and Representation

If relations between our communities had been better, and if cultural change had occurred at a pace that allowed my own community to maintain a meaningful sense of its identity and representation, I would view these changes differently. When Mexican military affiliations, logos, flags, and other cultural symbols become increasingly prominent while the traditions, symbols, and political representation of my own community begin to recede, I see this as a serious problem.

My concern is about cultural continuity, political representation, and the ability of people who have lived in New England to continue seeing their own history and identity represented in their communities. Cultural exchange can occur respectfully when existing communities are also able to maintain their own identity, institutions, traditions, and political voice.

American Cultural Change

We already have examples of international cultures becoming part of American life, including Chinese restaurants and other cultural institutions. Americans are also dealing with a great deal of change from many directions and often all at once. The way many experience culture changes is as forced foreign

assimilation, and it does not feel good. Rapid changes, including mass migration, as we have experienced become a crime against humanity.

I believe there needs to be an honest conversation about what has happened between our communities. A Mexican flag, when displayed in a New England community, represents Mexico to me; it does not represent New England or its historic identity.

New England Has Its Own History

New England is not Mexico, nor has it historically been Mexico. New England has its own history, including deep Irish, French, Canadian, English, Indigenous, and other American influences. These histories deserve recognition and continued representation.

The concern is not simply about restaurants, flags, or individual cultural traditions. It is about what happens when the cultural environment of a community changes so rapidly that people who have lived there for generations begin to feel disconnected from their own surroundings.

Cultural Dissonance

Many people are experiencing **cultural dissonance**—a feeling that the cultural environment around them is changing faster than they can understand or reconcile with their own history and identity. I believe this deserves honesty and understanding, along with a serious examination of what is happening throughout the United States.

Questions about immigration, cultural change, national identity, foreign influence, political representation, and international relations have become increasingly interconnected. These issues deserve to be discussed openly and respectfully, including the possibility that some of the cultural and geopolitical changes occurring today are contributing to a sense of displacement among Americans.

A Real Conversation

I am asking for a real conversation about the hoisting of foreign flags within our regional culture including Mexican. New England history, culture, community, and political voice must have a place in the future of New England. We are not merely “immigrant” communities. New England has long established communities of families, neighbors and friends with one shared culture.

I wish for and hope that cultural relations between communities will be based on mutual respect. I wish for and hope our people are able to preserve their own heritage while not being harmed and forcibly assimilated into any foreign culture or society. I believe this is a reasonable expectation for everyone.