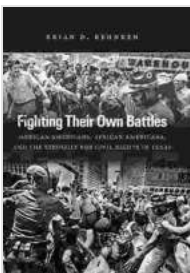


# Mexican Americans and African Americans: The Intertwined Struggle for Civil Rights in Texas

The history of civil rights in Texas is marked by the intertwining struggles of Mexican Americans and African Americans. Both groups faced pervasive discrimination, segregation, and disenfranchisement, and their shared experiences led to a convergence of their movements for justice. This article will delve into the shared history of these two communities, highlighting their common struggles and their contributions to the civil rights movement in Texas.

## Antebellum Texas: Roots of Oppression

Prior to the Civil War, Texas was both a slave state and a territory with a large Mexican American population. African Americans endured the horrors of slavery, while Mexican Americans faced discrimination and segregation under the "Jim Crow" system. The annexation of Texas by the United States in 1845 extended these injustices across the state.



## Fighting Their Own Battles: Mexican Americans, African Americans, and the Struggle for Civil Rights in

**Texas** by Brian D. Behnken

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 2872 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 367 pages



## **Reconstruction and Segregation**

After the Civil War, Reconstruction brought about a brief period of hope for both African Americans and Mexican Americans. However, white supremacists quickly regained power and implemented oppressive policies, including the establishment of segregated schools, public facilities, and neighborhoods.

Mexican Americans faced particular discrimination in the education system. In 1947, the landmark case of *Mendez v. Westminster* challenged the segregation of Mexican American children in California schools. The case ultimately reached the Supreme Court, which ruled in favor of desegregation. This victory paved the way for the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, which overturned the "separate-but-equal" doctrine in public schools nationwide.

## **The Rise of Activism**

In the decades following World War II, the civil rights movement gained momentum across the United States. Mexican Americans and African Americans in Texas played a crucial role in this struggle, organizing protests, boycotts, and voter registration drives.

One of the most significant figures in the Mexican American civil rights movement was Dr. Hector P. Garcia. A physician and activist, Garcia led the American G.I. Forum, which fought for the rights of Mexican American veterans and their families. He played a key role in desegregating public places and schools in Texas.

African Americans in Texas also faced widespread discrimination in housing, employment, and voting. The Fair Housing Act of 1968 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 addressed these injustices, but their implementation in Texas faced significant resistance.

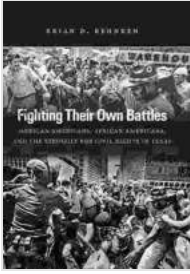
## **Contemporary Challenges and Persistence**

Despite the progress made during the civil rights movement, Mexican Americans and African Americans in Texas continue to face challenges. Racial profiling, police brutality, and economic disparities persist, highlighting the ongoing need for activism and advocacy.

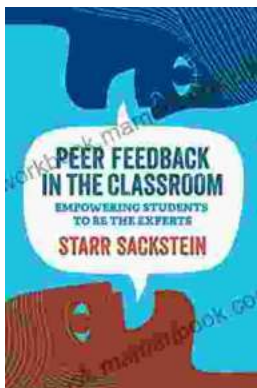
In recent years, there has been a surge in activism by young people of color, both Mexican Americans and African Americans. Organizations like the Black Lives Matter movement and the United We Dream network are working to address racial injustice and promote equality.

The struggle for civil rights in Texas is a complex and ongoing one. Mexican Americans and African Americans have faced similar experiences of discrimination and segregation, and their shared history has led to a convergence of their movements for justice. From the Mendez v. Westminster case to the Voting Rights Act, these communities have fought alongside each other, making significant contributions to the fight for equality in Texas and beyond. As challenges persist, the legacy of their activism continues to inspire future generations to work towards a more just and equitable society.

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