



# Mexican Inclusion: The Origins of Anti-Discrimination Policy in Texas and the Southwest

*Matthew Gritter*

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Immigration across the US-Mexican border may currently be a hot topic, but it is hardly a new one. Labor issues and civil rights have been interwoven with the history of the region since at least the time of the Mexican-American War, and the twentieth century witnessed recurrent political battles surrounding the status and rights of Mexican immigrants. In *Mexican Inclusion: The Origins of Anti-Discrimination Policy in Texas and the Southwest*, political scientist Matthew Gritter traces the process by which people of Mexican origin were incorporated in the United States' first civil rights agency, the World War II-era President's Committee on Fair Employment Practices (FEPC).

Incorporating the analytic lenses of transnationalism, institutional development, and identity formation, Gritter explores the activities and impact of the FEPC. He argues that transnational and international networks related to the US's Good Neighbor Policy created an impetus for the federal government to combat discrimination against people of Mexican origin. The inclusion of Mexican American civil rights leaders as FEPC staff members combined with an increase in state capacity to afford the agency increased institutional effectiveness. The FEPC provided an opportunity for small-scale state building and policy innovation. Gritter compares the outcomes of the agency's anti-discrimination efforts with class-based labor organizing. Grounded in pragmatic appeals to citizenship, Mexican American civil rights leaders utilized leverage provided by the Good Neighbor Policy to create their own distinct place in an emerging civil rights bureaucracy.

Students and scholars of Mexican American issues, civil rights, and government policy will appreciate *Mexican Inclusion* for its fresh synthesis of analytic and historical processes. Likewise, those focused on immigration and borderlands studies will gain new insights from its inclusive context.

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