


# Brown, Not White: School Integration and the Chicano Movement in Houston

*By Guadalupe San Miguel Jr.*

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**Brown, Not White: School Integration and the Chicano Movement in Houston** By Guadalupe San Miguel Jr.

Strikes, boycotts, rallies, negotiations, and litigation marked the efforts of Mexican-origin community members to achieve educational opportunity and oppose discrimination in Houston schools in the early 1970s. These responses were sparked by the effort of the Houston Independent School District to circumvent a court order for desegregation by classifying Mexican American children as "white" and integrating them with African American children—leaving Anglos in segregated schools. Gaining legal recognition for Mexican Americans as a minority group became the only means for fighting this kind of discrimination.

The struggle for legal recognition not only reflected an upsurge in organizing within the community but also generated a shift in consciousness and identity. In *Brown, Not White* Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., astutely traces the evolution of the community's political activism in education during the Chicano Movement era of the early 1970s.

San Miguel also identifies the important implications of this struggle for Mexican Americans and for public education. First, he demonstrates, the political mobilization in Houston underscored the emergence of a new type of grassroots ethnic leadership committed to community empowerment and to inclusiveness of diverse ideological interests within the minority community. Second, it signaled a shift in the activist community's identity from the assimilationist "Mexican American Generation" to the rising Chicano Movement with its "nationalist" ideology. Finally, it introduced Mexican American interests into educational policy making in general and into the national desegregation struggles in particular.

This important study will engage those interested in public school policy, as well as scholars of Mexican American history and the history of desegregation in America.

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**Brown, Not White: School Integration and the Chicano Movement in Houston By Guadalupe San Miguel Jr. Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #780819 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Texas AM University Press
- Published on: 2005-10-26
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.21" h x .64" w x 6.14" l, .95 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 298 pages

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## Editorial Review

About the Author

Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., who holds the Ph.D. from Stanford University, is an associate professor of history at the University of Houston. He is also the author of *"Let All of Them Take Heed": Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 19101981*, now available as a Reveille Book from Texas A&M University Press.

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