

of course led to the promotion of dissension within or between groups as well as individuals.⁷² Moreover, no one leader emerged from the pack to give direction to the movement—not even Chávez, whose modest education and unbending social conservatism made him ill-suited for the role that Dr. King or even Jesse Jackson played among blacks.

It should also be noted that not all Mexicanos bought into the movement. As might be expected, many older and more affluent Mexican Americans, especially Hispanos in New Mexico and Colorado, had difficulty identifying with the goals of the movement, let alone endorsing the tactics. Called *tapados*, literally “stuffed up people” (essentially, those who refuse to hear the truth) or, worse still, *vendidos* by Chicano sympathizers, these conservatives were quickly alienated by what they perceived to be the excesses of the militants. In truth, even elements within the movement—among them, some of the most determined defenders of Mexican rights, including César Chávez, Bert Corona, Henry B. González, and Anthony Quinn—decried extremist tendencies. The point of view of more moderate Chicanos was best expressed by Rodolfo de la Garza, then on the political science faculty of Colorado College, as the movement lost its impetus:

I am convinced that American society has never dealt justly with Mexican Americans and that Anglo politicians have systematically deprived us of our political rights. Nonetheless, it is also my belief that we must accept some of the responsibility for the situation in which we find ourselves. Too many of us, however, have ignored the example Chávez and the farm workers have given us and instead have resorted to rhetoric and have blamed others for all our problems. We must never allow Anglo society to deny the oppression imposed upon us, but we must also recognize that unless we admit our own weaknesses we can never correct them.⁷³

Some working-class people expressed reservations also. Most immigrants, for example, especially recent immigrants, shied away from the movement. To some extent, this reluctance reflects the subtle tension that has always existed between the Mexican immigrant and the native-born Mexican American—as is true historically of almost any immigrant community in US society. Recent immigrants are generally preoccupied with making a living. Moreover, despite their problems, they are grateful for the opportunity to improve their lives.

But ultimately, the failure of the movimiento needs to be seen in a broader context. Despite its deficiencies and weaknesses, the fact of the matter is that all the civil rights movements faded, not just the Brown Power groups. The political and intellectual climate of the country changed drastically with the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. Problems, perceived and real, with the economy altered priorities, as well. As Americans approached the eighties, Armando Navarro argues convincingly, the concern for human rights was eclipsed by the desire for financial security.⁷⁴