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over to re-examine changing perceptions of particular experiences—establishes a more analytical practice of testimony which may have a longer and more lasting impact than the shock effect of accusation, Nance claims. Nance points out that readers of *testimonio* have hesitated to take a close look at the textual features of the genre in fear that any analysis which points out its status as representation, and hence its artificiality, will erode its potential political influence as an authentic account.¹⁹ And it is precisely this kind of close textual analysis that Nance advocates and performs herself in readings of examples from a number of texts by Rigoberta Menchu, Alicia Partnoy, Esteban Montejo, Carolina Maria de Jesus, and others.

Although Nance mentions “just world theory” and her title alludes to justice, this is not a well developed aspect of her book. By coming back to the theme of justice explicitly at the end and linking it to her advocacy of a prosaics of *testimonio*, Nance could have clarified how justice fits into her argument. Furthermore, although rich in its theoretical allusions, the book does not engage other canons of testimony (the holocaust, for example) in any sustained way. The lack of a comparative dimension limits the book’s ability to make larger claims about testimony.

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Repression and Mobilization (Christian Davenport, Hank Johnston, & Carol Mueller eds., University of Minnesota Press, 2005), ISBN 0816644268 (pb : alk. paper) 081664425X (hc : alk. paper), 258 pp.

Political events after September 11 make *Repression and Mobilization* a timely and prophetic book. “Repression” and “mobilization,” scientific euphemisms perhaps, refer to the way researchers study violent interactions at a collective level that compromise legitimacy and evoke the pathos of “contentious politics.” Revolutions, strikes, ethnic conflicts, and social movements are examples. The essays in the collection follow from a conference at the University of Maryland in the summer of 2001 and are edited by Christian Davenport, Hank Johnston, and Carol Mueller. Charles Davenport thoughtfully introduces the book’s essays in the introduction, and in the last two chapters Charles Tilly and Mark Lickbach provide a theoretical overview of the collection.

The authors demonstrate a tight loyalty to the rigors of an empirical epistemology. While studying their subject, they wrestle reflectively with methodological issues in research and the processes of empirical investigation. The book is ab-

19. *Id.* at 29. She singles out George Yudice and Doris Sommer’s work in particular as being too reverential.

stract because of an excessive concern for positivistic legitimacy and a shunning of theoretically general accounts. Charles Tilly, for instance, insists, “coherent explanations are possible—but not in the form of general laws.”¹ The codings, typologies, descriptions, and explanations throughout the book are indeed logical and coherent, but they remain somehow unsatisfactory. Tilly says again, “[This research project] does *not*, however, call for summing of whole classes of episodes (e.g., revolutions, strikes, ethnic conflicts, and social movements) in pursuit of their common properties. It aims at explaining change and variation, not at discovering uniformity.”²

Repression and mobilization are two poles in a confounding dichotomy, a paradox locked in a tit for tat logic that appears to researchers to be causal. Repression involves the efforts of authorities (often violent) to inhibit and suppress activity by potential or actual opponents. Mobilization involves a group’s polling of resources with respect to shared interests and political action in a given direction. As the authors explain, repression can shape mobilization and mobilization repression. Tilly indicates that it is necessary for social researchers to do more to transform this dichotomy into a fruitful dialectic, albeit with a disheartening qualification: “But those interactions do not conform to covering laws; at the most general level, for example, repression sometimes flattens resistance, but sometimes magnifies it. How and why?”³ The statement is discouraging. What is needed to explain how and why repres-

sion sometimes flattens resistance and sometimes magnifies resistance is also taken off the table. Can researchers, without reference to general laws, answer the pressing question that Tilly raises? I think not. A consequence of September 11 is hopefully not an amnesia within social science of the concepts of legitimacy and social order.

The authors are sophisticated on the methodological and epistemological issues, but they are less so on the theoretical ones. The writing of Theda Skocpol helps depict the problem, albeit in a negative way. In *States and Social Revolutions* Skocpol makes the following statement: “not only does an organizational, realist perspective on the state entail differences from Marxist approaches, it also contrasts with non-Marxist approaches that treat the *legitimacy* of political authorities as an important explanatory concept.”⁴ Skocpol’s approach toward the study of the state contrasts with not only Marxist approaches but also non-Marxist approaches. Skocpol’s approach does not treat the legitimacy of political authorities as an important explanatory concept, which is what non-Marxist approaches such as Max Weber’s do. Skocpol goes on to explain the reasoning behind her realistic approach: “If state organizations cope with whatever tasks they already claim smoothly and efficiently, legitimacy—either in the sense of moral approval or in the probably much more usual sense of sheer acceptance of the status quo—will probably be accorded to the state’s form and rulers by most groups in society.”⁵ Notice that concepts

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1. REPRESSION AND MOBILIZATION 211 (Christian Davenport, Hank Johnston, & Carol Mueller eds., 2005).
 2. *Id.* at 212.
 3. *Id.* at 218.
 4. THEDA SKOCPOL, *STATES AND SOCIAL REVOLUTIONS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FRANCE, RUSSIA, AND CHINA* 31 (1979).
 5. *Id.* at 31–32.

such as rational-legal authority, traditional authority, or charismatic authority are of no importance to this analysis of the nexus between repression and mobilization. Normative moral orientations such as human rights are also irrelevant. Skocpol then explains the upshot of the realist position: "Even after great loss of legitimacy has occurred, a state can remain quite stable—and certainly invulnerable to internal mass-based revolts—especially if its coercive organizations remain coherent and effective."⁶ Skocpol's approach displaces Weber's distinction between authority and power, and power alone becomes the singular explanatory concept.

Davenport laments this same problem in his introduction, "Unfortunately, this normative emphasis on the preservation of human life and freedom of expression has not been linked to . . . the implications of the repression-mobilization nexus for social science."⁷ In his concluding chapter Tilly singles out Davenport and resists Davenport's "distant hope" that, "once we clear away conceptual and empirical debris," we will begin to see how repression and mobilization "conform to general laws."⁸

The task at this point is to suggest how general laws do inform research on repression and mobilization such that this dichotomy becomes a dialectic and the question of how and why repression sometimes suppresses mobilization and sometimes magnifies it is answered. Here is one suggestion that stresses legitimacy as an important explanatory concept: How does a government control the governed? One way in which a govern-

ment controls the governed, as Skocpol explains, is through the use of force and fraud. If, though, all that a government does is control the governed, no matter how efficiently and effectively, it is not truly a government. Such a government only resorts to increasingly sophisticated forms of force and fraud, and this is the road to hell. The government itself is out of control.⁹

A government is also obliged to control itself. What, though, obliges a government to control itself? With rational-legal authority, there is one way to oblige a government to control itself, namely, when the government gives priority to human rights. Giving priority to human rights is tantamount to a government controlling itself. The commitment to human rights obliges a government to control itself as it controls the governed. Indeed, a commitment to human rights wins the consent of the governed to be governed. Thus, the best, most efficient, and so, ultimately, most rational way for a government to control the governed is for the government to respect human rights. Why? By respecting human rights a government wins the consent of the governed to be controlled by what also controls the government.

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6. *Id.* at 32.

7. REPRESSION AND MOBILIZATION, *supra* note 1, at xii–xiii.

8. *Id.* at 211.

9. SKOCPOL, *supra* note 4, at 31–32.