shows that these interactions vary, and in unanticipated ways, in terms of how African Americans perceive legal authority, fairness, and legitimacy. On the second count, the attention to Black Americans is born out of a late recognition that racialized policy feedback can imperil support for public systems. Even the authors seem to acknowledge as much, writing: "we have been among the most insensitive scholars in terms of our unwillingness in our past research to acknowledge that general findings may not pertain to all segments of the general population. Even the widely accepted Positivity Theory (PT) on which we have so often relied has failed to recognize that positivity may not apply to minority groups that have experienced rocky relationships with legal authorities" (xviii).

The resultant book is recalibrating Positivity Theory, an effort "to try to rectify the myopia of [their] earlier research agenda" (xviii). *Black and Blue* is a welcomed example. The research is well-designed, clearly written, and updates an existing framework to take better account of race. But *Black and Blue* warrants a reminder from Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*: "I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me" (p. 3). One substantive criticism is perhaps that the invisibility of the first kind—i.e., that race was not considered relevant to positivity—introduced a second veil that made more research in Black political psychology, the racial socialization of Black Americans, and race in American political development less seen. There was too little retelling of Black political thought. While *Black and Blue* may be less inventive in this regard, it affirms the relevance of the question: How do African Americans judge public systems? In answer, the authors achieve their analytic objectives well.

Violence Work: State Power and the Limits of Police. By Micol Seigel. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 2018. 312 pages, $27.95, paperback

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Borrowing and modifying a phrase popularized by the late Woody Guthrie, "this book kills fascists." In nothing less than a historical and

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conceptual tour de force examining the depths of the U.S. State Department's Office of Public Safety, which existed from 1962 to 1974, Micol Seigel's *Violence Work: State Power and the Limits of Police* lays forth an intriguing concept (violence worker) and story (their existence in the United States and abroad). The book reveals a great deal about what we do and do not know about state-sponsored violence as well as how best to get there.

My take on *Violence Work* might be surprising to some, as it fundamentally takes issue with the premise underlying much of the field, including some of my own research, albeit without always doing so directly. Seigel portrays state repression in a relatively new light, leading to refreshing insights about theory, data sources, and unexamined hypotheses. The book kills fascists because if you follow the logic contained within it, you are led directly to perpetrators of violence, as well as the varying types of institutions in which they are found.

Though it is not how the author frames it, a key contribution of the book is in pointing out what prior research has been doing wrong. In particular, five things come to mind.

First, *Violence Work* tells us that much of the research on state repression/human rights violation employs the wrong *theoretical framework*. Adopting some form of rational choice theory, most scholars assume that the decision to engage in repression is driven by dispassionate bureaucrats who evaluate the costs, benefits, available alternatives, and potential of success for repressive action. Seigel basically says that this is unlikely or inappropriate given the highly personal and somewhat distorting factors actually involved: there are a group of trained individuals who (with a hammer in hand) try to convince all around them to let them strike. For these individuals, there is no "real" cost, there are mostly benefits, there are no alternatives, and the probability of succeeding is fantastic. Why listen to these people? They come with references from one of the world's most powerful nations and frequently arrive with a funding source that can make their involvement essentially free.

Second, *Violence Work* tells us that much of the research on state repression/human rights violation employs the wrong *label* for those involved. Mentioning actors like the police (the focus of the book) or the military or border guards is problematic because it imbues them and their actions with a certain degree of legitimacy. Seigel suggests that we should not view these actors in abstract ways. They are all unified as "violence workers" because this is what they do or, rather, this is what they can do, and this is what distinguishes them from others. In one fell swoop, Seigel

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strips away perceptions and opinions that obscure more than they clarify. This helps the reader see that the police are inherently tied to the state, which in turn is tied to economic elites; that the police are not and could never be beholden to the public; and that the police are not local despite the differences in uniforms, badges, names, and color of vehicles. Rather, they are national representations of the order placed in localities throughout the nation.

Third, *Violence Work* tells us that much of the research on state repression/human rights violation largely focuses on the wrong *type of explanation*. At present, researchers employ an interesting combination of political, economic, and demographic explanations/explanatory factors. Seigel points in one principal direction with implications for a second: it is the economy, and politics is largely brought along in tow. But unlike scholars who almost hypnotically conceive and operationalize the concept in terms of the ever-mystifying GDP, Seigel says that the problem is neoliberalism. In an effort to make the world safe for markets, violence workers are unleashed to help all those who need to be mobilized toward this end—inevitably, this would be all states interested in capitalism as this economic system demands that some be treated poorly and it is expected that this group will require some coercion/force to keep them in line. Equally as provocative, Seigel notes that historically private violence workers generally started before public ones, but over time there is basically no need to make a distinction between them as they constantly move around.

Fourth, *Violence Work* tells us that much of the research on state repression/human rights violation is largely focused on the *wrong countries*. Typically, scholars of state repression/human rights violation act as if the problems lie in the lesser developed world. Like Darius Rejali and Noam Chomsky (in separate books), though, Seigel points to the United States as the centerpiece in an evaluation of state-sponsored coercion/force/violence. This is where tactics are developed, where training comes from and where hired-guns/minds can be found. Somewhat beyond the scope of the author, this is also where the weapons are created/produced.

Fifth, and finally, *Violence Work* tells us that much of the research on state repression/human rights violation applies the *wrong method* (not all the time but frequently). At present, a large part of the literature on state repression/human rights violation is quantitative in nature with little attention to detailed historical work. Seigel is seemingly skeptical, if not slightly hostile to quantitative research on the relevant topic (a

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position that many of us within the community share). She drives home the point that some factors not generally highlighted in the data (i.e., who is actually implementing repression and where they come from) are extremely important for understanding the phenomenon under investigation—though would push against this characterization.

"Caveat civis" (citizens beware), Seigel warns—and we would be much better off as researchers, advocates, activists, and citizens if we read her book and carried on.

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