

Justice in America: The Separate Realities of Blacks and Whites (Cambridge Studies in Public Opinion and Political Psychology)

Mark Peffley, Jon Hurwitz

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As reactions to the O. J. Simpson verdict, the Rodney King beating, and the Amadou Diallo killing make clear, whites and African Americans in the United States inhabit two different perceptual worlds, with the former seeing the justice system as largely fair and color blind and the latter believing it to be replete with bias and discrimination. Drawing on data from a nation-wide survey of both races, the authors tackle two important questions in this book: what explains the widely differing perceptions, and why do such differences matter? They attribute much of the racial chasm to the relatively common personal confrontations that many blacks have with law enforcement - confrontations seldom experienced by whites. And more importantly, the authors demonstrate that this racial chasm is consequential: it leads African Americans to react much more cynically to incidents of police brutality and racial profiling, and also to be far more skeptical of punitive anti-crime policies ranging from the death penalty to three-strikes laws.



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