

In short, the book examines the extensive range of ways in which victims are employed, enlisted, and even drafted to do the political and commercial work of activists, politicians, and journalists. As Rentschler writes, “While so much mass communication research tends to examine the work of media influence according to the effects that can be measured within groups of people that consume media texts, this book offers a different way of thinking about the strategies that advocates and other cultural producers use to influence public debate through the infrastructural, strategic, and pedagogical dimensions of victim-based publicity” (218). This book, then, focuses less on the media themselves and more on victims’ rights claims makers and how they have built a “communication infrastructure” and “set of conventions for telling stories” (218).

This reader would have been interested to encounter more examples of secondary victimization by the media and the perilous dance in which many victims and their families are often forced to engage when dealing with journalists. For instance, the fickle role the media played in the high-profile case of three-year-old Madeleine McCann’s disappearance in Portugal might have been useful to consider. McCann’s parents made heavy use of the tabloid press in both Portugal and the United Kingdom to raise the alarm about their missing daughter; only, in time, to have many in the press turn on them as their accusers. However, such examples of secondary victimization, particularly from abroad, lie beyond the scope of the American victims’ rights discourse and activity that is the focus of Rentschler’s thorough and compelling book.

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Justice in America: The Separate Realities of Blacks and Whites. By Mark Peffley and Jon Hurwitz. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 276 pp. \$27.00 paper.

Reviewed by Tom Tyler, New York University

There is a large and persistent gap between Blacks and Whites in their levels of trust and confidence in the police and the courts. This gap has been consistently revealed in national public opinion polls, is striking in its magnitude, and does not seem to be diminishing. It is important because it leads to differing

interpretations of and reactions to events. For example, in high profile cases such as those of Abner Louima and O. J. Simpson, race is suggested by many to have played a central role in shaping varying interpretations of events. Such racial differences in the interpretation of events, as well as in views about the general policies and practices of the legal system, impact people's law-abidingness, propensity to commit crime, and willingness to cooperate with the police. These differences also generalize and shape views about society and government. Peffley and Hurwitz's book focuses upon these differences and thereby addresses a crucial issue that underlies the legitimacy of legal authority and thus has important consequences for justice in American society.

Peffley and Hurwitz help to shine new light on the nature and reasons for the separate realities of Blacks' and Whites' views about the police, the courts, and the law. They do so using the results of a national survey of White and African-American respondents. Their analysis of the findings of that survey is valuable not only for addressing this key topic, but also for doing so in new ways that present us with novel framings of Blacks' and Whites' experiences of justice and injustice when dealing with legal authorities. There is a lot to like about this book, which helps to illuminate the striking and long-standing—but poorly understood—race-based divergence in views about the legal system.

The authors focus on Blacks' and Whites' perceptions about the fairness of the legal system. This focus is compellingly justified by an analysis showing that fairness perceptions are central to views about the system. These perceptions are impactful and important even when differences in objective social context are taken into account. To assess Blacks' perceptions of fairness, the authors develop two new measures of fairness: overall system fairness, which they deliberately make abstract, and attributions for treatment of Blacks in the justice system. These two judgments are found to be distinct and to have different antecedents. System fairness is linked to personal and vicarious experiences, while attributions for the treatment of Blacks reflect stereotypes about Blacks, beliefs about the causes of crime, and ideology.

Having defined justice in these new ways, the authors examine the consequence of fairness beliefs. They first look at the influence of race on the understanding of particular events. This effort involves the use of experimental vignettes to determine whether and in what ways the same facts take on differing meaning depending upon the races of both those involved and those making judgments. Their findings demonstrate clearly that Blacks and Whites diverge sharply in their interpretations when presented with potential instances police misconduct. However, these differences are not simply a reflection of race, although Blacks are generally more

skeptical of the police. Rather, the authors argue, they reflect beliefs about system fairness. It is only when Blacks view the system as unfair that they are more sympathetic toward Black civilians and more mistrusting of the police.

The authors also consider support for punitive anticrime policies, including policies such as the death penalty and a preference for preventive as opposed to punitive approaches to crime. The authors focus upon support for such public policies to explore the degree to which they are polarized along racial lines. Using a combination of experimental and survey approaches, they find evidence of such polarization and link it to different views about the reasons for the disproportionate punishment of Blacks. Whites, who are more likely to view the system as fair, place responsibility for the punishment of Blacks upon the alleged perpetrator, while Blacks, who are more likely to view the system as unfair, and attribute responsibility for punishment of Blacks to biases in the justice system. The authors argue that because of the nature of Whites' attitudes, arguments for change linked to the suggestion that Blacks are unfairly treated are unlikely to prove effective within the White community.

This book will be of value to anyone seeking to understand racial differences in experiences with or views about the police and courts. This review can only touch upon the highlights of a thoughtfully conceived volume whose results are clearly presented in a timely and important effort to examine racial realities in the United States today.

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Ordinary Injustice: How America Holds Court. By Amy Bach. New York: Picador, 2010. 320 pp. \$18.00 paper.

Reviewed by Paul James Pope, Montana State University Billings

What is meant by "ordinary injustice"? The idea of injustice has a powerful legal presence in American history. One might conjure up images of Civil Rights marches, voting rights for women and minorities, or something as simple as the right to counsel. So how might injustice be ordinary? In *Ordinary Injustice: How America Holds Court*, attorney and journalist Amy Bach attempts to guide us through this very subject. Injustice that impacts any class of person, individually or at large, is often quite noticeable and tangible