

How racism shapes prison policy

August 28, 2014

The Boston Globe:

WHY DOES AMERICA incarcerate so much of its population compared to other first-world countries? New research from psychologists at Stanford University suggests that some of our toughness on crime may be driven by racism. In one experiment, white voters in California were significantly less likely to sign a petition to weaken California's three-strikes law after viewing a series of mug shots of which 45 percent were black men, compared to viewing a series of mug shots of which 25 percent were black men. In another experiment, white residents of New York City were significantly less willing to sign a petition against the police department's stop-and-frisk policy after being told that the prison population was 60 percent black, compared to 40 percent black.

Read the whole story: [*The Boston Globe*](#)