Background

- Restorative approaches to criminal justice are a compelling alternative to our current punitive justice system and have been increasingly adopted by juvenile justice settings and schools.
- Restorative justice aims “to prevent further offending by restoring the well-being of victims, offenders and communities damaged by crime” (Liebmann, 2007, p. 25) shifting focus away from individual punishment.
- Restorative approaches appear particularly suited for youths—offenders are early in their offending trajectories and often lack the social-emotional and cognitive perspectives to understand the impact of their actions.
- Despite the growing application of restorative approaches in youth settings, little is known about what fosters restorative values in young people.
- In particular, are there intrapersonal factors or life events that shape youths’ viewpoints about restorative versus punitive justice?

Present Study Goals:

- To identify individual characteristics and life circumstances that foster young people’s attitudes about restorative versus punitive justice.
- To examine the role of empathy on youths’ attitudes about justice.
- We build upon previous research showing compassion and empathy are related to how people appraise and judge one another’s behaviors (Goetz et al, 2010).
- To investigate whether the experience of being marginalized or discriminated against influences attitudes toward justice.
- Perceptions of discrimination (self or minority group) influence how youth think about punishments for others’ offenses (Ruck & Wortley, 2002).
- Youth feel marginalized for several reasons beyond ethnic-racial discrimination including being overweight, not smart enough, uncoordinated, acting shy, etc.
- Discrimination experiences may strengthen punitive views in response to wrongdoing; alternatively, such negative life events can generate compassion, understanding and more restorative justice values.

Methods

Participants

- College students (N=256, 40% female)
- Age 18-23 (M=20.1, SD=1.2)
- Ethnically-racially diverse sample
- Recruited from Psychology Department Participant Pool; received course extra credit for participation

Procedures

- Completed an online survey assessing attitudes about justice, empathy and compassion, and discrimination experiences.

Measures

- Restorative and Punitive Justice Attitudes
  - Items assessed different philosophies of justices (Gromet & Darley, 2011).
  - Example restorative item: “Victims voices should be heard as part of the justice process.”
  - Example punitive item: “An eye for an eye is the correct philosophy behind punishing offenders.”

Empathic Concern

- Empathy Questionnaire (Davis, 1980)
- Experiences of Discrimination and Marginalization
  - 27 items developed for this study
  - Assessed a wide-range of reasons including physical characteristics, intelligence, personality traits, family background, ethnic-racial, religious, and sexual identity
- On a 4-point scale (“Not-at-All” to “A lot”) rated to what extent they had ever been teased, picked on, excluded from something they wished to do, felt disliked, or discriminated against.

Results

- Males and females were similar in their restorative justice attitudes and discrimination experiences; however, males reported more punitive views (t=4.74, p<.001) and females reported more empathy (t=4.61, p<.001).

Discussion

- Hierarchical multiple regression analyses controlling for ethnicity/race revealed a significant 3-way interaction between empathy, discrimination and sex predicting punitive justice.
- For males, although more discrimination experiences predicted more punitive justice attitudes, for females, empathy positively correlated with restorative attitudes and negatively correlated with punitive attitudes.

3-way Interaction: Discrimination X Empathy X Gender

• Restorative and punitive justice attitudes were not significantly related. For males, discrimination experiences positively predicted punitive justice attitudes. For females, empathy positively correlated with restorative attitudes and negatively correlated with punitive attitudes.

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The Many Faces of Discrimination: Uncommon Characteristics are the Common Experience

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**Discrimination**
- Powerful, unpredictable, and uncontrollable stressor (C. G. Williams & Mohammed, 2004)
- Linked to psychological adjustment
- Low self-esteem (Fishbein et al., 2012; Green et al., 2006)
- Declines in academic functioning (Wong et al., 2009; Green et al., 2006; and cognitive risk factors for depression: rumination (Bohlin & Liang, 2013) and hopelessness (Polavieja-Barron & Miranda, 2010)
- Greater negative affect (Butler et al., 2008, 2006; and Davidson, 2008)
- Anxiety (Baron et al., 2004; 2006; 2005)
- Other psychological distress (C. G. Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson, 2003; Panos, 2006)
- Linked to health factors
- Lower self-reported health (Kawel et al., 2004)
- Chronic health conditions (Wuey et al., 2006, 2007)
- Blood pressure (Wuey et al., 2007)
- Cancer (Gayle et al., 2007)
- Most research focuses on commonly discriminated against groups:
  - Racial and ethnic minorities, women, the lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) population

**Current Study**
**Goal:**
- Develop a measure to:
  1. Assess the prevalence of all forms of discrimination
  2. Discover different forms of discrimination that individuals may experience beyond discrimination related to race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality.
- Exploratory in nature, aimed to understand who is experiencing discrimination and for what reason they perceive they are being discriminated against.

**Method**
**Participants:**
- 225 university students
  - Ages 18 to 23 (M = 20.0, SD = 1.2)
  - Female (40.2%) and Male (59.8%)
  - Asian (32.1%), Black or African American (3.7%), Latino or Hispanic (10.7%), more than one race (13.1%), White or Caucasian (40.3%)
  - Bisexual (7.8%), Heterosexual (87.7%), Homosexual (7.8%)
  - Participants were recruited from intro to psychology research pool

**Procedure:**
- Participants completed demographic information and our discrimination questionnaire:
  - Using a 4-point scale ("Not-at-All" to "A lot"), participants rated "To what extent have you ever been teased, picked on, excluded from something you wished to do, felt disliking, or discriminated against because of..." (27 items)
  - All participants given class credit for compensation.

**Results**
- Of the sample reported experiencing some kind of discrimination
- **For 5 most commonly endorsed items, no significant differences based on gender**

**Implications**
- Findings highlight the importance of expanding the discrimination literature to include multiple forms of prejudicial treatment and the need to examine the impact of wide-ranging discrimination experiences