

Consent



Georgia State University

Department of Psychology

Informed Consent

I. Purpose:

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to understand how people make decisions in political and justice-related contexts. To qualify, you must be at least age 18, be fluent in English, and be a U.S. citizen. This survey will recruit up to 630 participants, and is part of a larger study that will recruit up to 19,000 participants. It will take 15-30 minutes of your time over a single session.

II. Procedures:

If you decide to participate, you will be redirected from a third-party survey provider (PsychLab) to the Georgia State University survey website. Before you start, please make sure you are in a private location. You will then read fictional short stories about social issues. You will then answer questions about your opinions on these issues. You may do this survey only once. We will not tell you everything about the purpose of the study in advance. As soon as you have completed the study, we will tell you the purpose of the experiment. This research will be conducted through June 2021.

III. Risks:

In this study, you will not face any more risks than you would normally face in your daily life. Some of the stories you will read may describe controversial issues. These issues are similar to what you might see on a political news station. You may find some of these topics upsetting. You are free to skip potentially emotional or personal questions, or select "prefer not to answer", without loss of compensation. You may also stop the study early for any reason by exiting the browser. If you do so, you may not be compensated, according to the sampling company's policy.

IV. Benefits:

This study will not provide any direct benefits to you personally. Overall, we hope to learn about how people form opinions so we can better understand how to assess voters' personal values.

V. Compensation:

The survey provider (PsychLab) incentivizes in the form of points that can be monetized, transformed into a voucher or donated (choice of the participant). The compensation amount may vary according to market rates, but the survey provider posts the specific compensation amount within the survey announcement. You may review that amount before you consent to this survey. If you are not selected for the study, or if you close the browser window before being directed to the sampling company's website, you may not be compensated, according to the sampling company's policy.

VI. Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to be in this study. The investigator reserves the right to adjust enrollment based on demographic characteristics in order to ensure adequate representation of under-represented groups. If you are not selected, or if you close the browser window before being directed to the sampling company's website, you may not be compensated, according to the sampling company's policy. We are not collecting any information that can tie you to the data you provide in the survey. You will not be able to withdraw your data after completion of the survey.

VII. Confidentiality:

No identifying information will be collected by the investigators. The information that you provide will be stored on password-protected computers. These computers are managed only by the research team. The investigators may share the survey responses with one another using secure electronic mail. Information may also be shared with those who make sure the study is done correctly (GSU Institutional Review Board, the Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP). The survey provider (PsychLab) may collect identifying information (such as your computer's IP address). But the investigators will have no access to this information. In order to get paid, the survey company will check your registered bank account number. They will use this to check your age in order to pay you. The survey company will protect any identifying information according to their security and privacy policy agreements with you. This information will not be transmitted to the investigators. Your name and other facts that might point to you will not appear when we present this study or publish its results. The findings will be summarized and reported in group form. You will not be identified personally.

VIII. Contact Persons:

Contact Dr. Eyal Aharoni if you have questions about this study. He may be reached at 404-413-6269 or eaharoni@gsu.edu. You can also call if you think you have been harmed by the study. Call Susan Vogtner in the Georgia State University Office of Research Integrity if you want to talk to someone who is not part of the study team. She may be contacted at 404-413-3513 or svogtner1@gsu.edu. You can talk about questions, concerns, offer suggestions, or get information about the study.

IX. Copy of Consent Form to Participant:

If you agree to participate in this research, please click the continue button. You may print a copy of this consent form for your own records.

Version Date: 10/01/2020

- ☐ YES, I agree to participate in this research study.
- ☐ NO, I **do not** agree to participate in this research study.

Quota Questions

Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Highest educational degree achieved:

- ☐ Doctoral degree
- ☐ Professional degree
- ☐ Master's degree

- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Associate's degree
- ☐ High School graduate
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Age in years (Enter 0 if you prefer not to answer):

Instructions First Crime

Instructions

In this task, you will read a case about a defendant who has been found guilty of a felony crime. Your job is to decide how much the defendant should be punished, if at all. Please assume that all the information described in the case is true. *Your punishment recommendation should be based on your personal opinion, not what you think a court would expect you to say.* Then, you will be asked questions about yourself and about the case, so please read very attentively.

Crime 1

Case Summary

Karl Johnson, a 29 year old construction worker, was convicted of one count of *aggravated robbery*. *You were the person he robbed.* According to two security personnel who witnessed the event, Karl confronted you behind a gas station, demanding your wallet. When you hesitated, Karl swung a crowbar at your face, breaking your jaw, then fled with your wallet. Police were able to conclusively match

Karl's fingerprints to the crowbar and found him with the wallet. Karl has one prior felony for domestic violence.

Case Summary

Dwight Davis, a 32 year old sales representative that you work with, was convicted of one count of *second-degree theft*. While on the job as an employee of a large company, he stole a winning lottery ticket in the amount of \$5,000. The ticket had been purchased by a group of 10 employees using personal money that they donated to a collective pool. *You were a part of this group and contributed to the collective pool.* The winnings were intended to be shared by the group, and so you would have made \$500. Company security cameras captured Dwight taking the ticket from your locker, and a bank statement subsequently showed the winnings cashed out in Dwight's name. Dwight has one prior felony on record for tax evasion.

Case Summary

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Case Summary

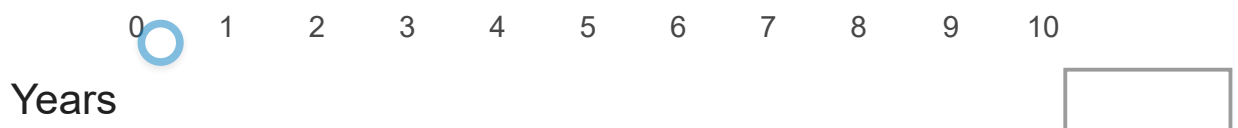
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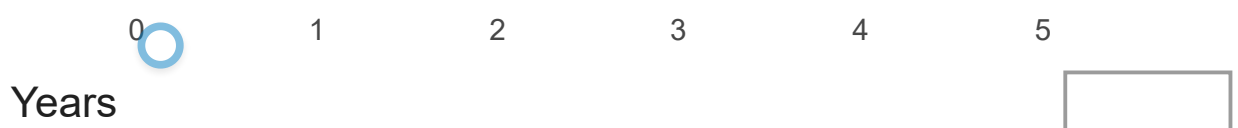
While awaiting trial, Karl served a 10-week jail term. In the trial, Karl pled guilty and underwent a sentencing hearing to decide on his punishment. The maximum possible prison sentence for this crime is 10 years. The sentencing guidelines in your state require that any amount of this time *not* served in prison must be served under community supervision in the form of parole.

While awaiting trial, Dwight served a 10-week jail term. In the trial, Dwight pled guilty and underwent a sentencing hearing to decide on his punishment. The maximum possible prison sentence for this crime is 5 years. The sentencing guidelines in your state require that any amount of this time *not* served in prison must be served under community supervision in the form of parole.

How long in prison should the defendant be incarcerated for this offense?



How long in prison should the defendant be incarcerated for this offense?



Therapist Evaluation

In the hearing, the jail therapist, after numerous interviews with Karl Johnson, testified that, in her professional opinion, Karl has come to deeply regret his actions and now understands why they were wrong. Karl also requested to apologize to his victim in a public or private forum.

The therapist also stated that Karl has already suffered greatly as a direct result of his time in jail. He lost his job and experienced severe anxiety, which re-activated a painful stomach ulcer.

Therapist Evaluation

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In the hearing, the jail therapist, who conducted several interviews with Dwight Davis, testified that, in her professional opinion, Dwight has come to understand why his actions were wrong and now deeply regrets what he did. Dwight also expressed a desire to apologize to his victims, publicly or privately.

The therapist also stated that Dwight has already suffered greatly as a direct result of his time in jail. While in custody, he lost his job, and his asthma has worsened, causing full-body weakness and panic attacks.

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Therapist Evaluation

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The therapist also stated that Dwight does not believe his actions were wrong and does not regret doing what he did. Dwight also refused to apologize to his victims.

Initially, you recommended that the defendant be incarcerated in prison for **`\${q://QID431/TotalSum}` year(s)**. Given the new information that you learned from the therapist, would you like to change your previous sentence recommendation or keep it the same?

- ☐ Change my sentence
- ☐ Keep it the same

If you said "change my sentence," how long in prison should the defendant be incarcerated for this offense? Remember, any amount of this time not served in prison must be served under community supervision in some form of parole. You may drag the cursor to change your previous answer.

Otherwise, **if you said "keep it the same,"** please skip ahead to the next question.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Years

`\${q://QID431/TotalSum}`

Initially, you recommended that the defendant be incarcerated in prison for **`\${q://QID562/TotalSum}` year(s)**. Given the new information that you learned from the therapist, would you like to change your sentence recommendation or keep it the same?

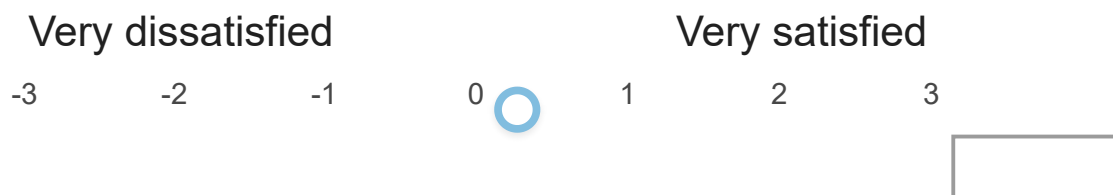
- ☐ Change my sentence
- ☐ Keep it the same

If you said **"change my sentence,"** how long in prison should the defendant be incarcerated for this offence? Remember, any amount of this time not served in prison must be served under community supervision in some form of parole. You may drag the cursor to change your previous answer.

Otherwise, if you said **"keep it the same,"** please skip ahead to the next question.



Suppose that after his 10-week jail time, the defendant was granted immediate parole in the community instead of prison time. Further suppose that he did not commit any further crimes during parole. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with parole as his only sentence?



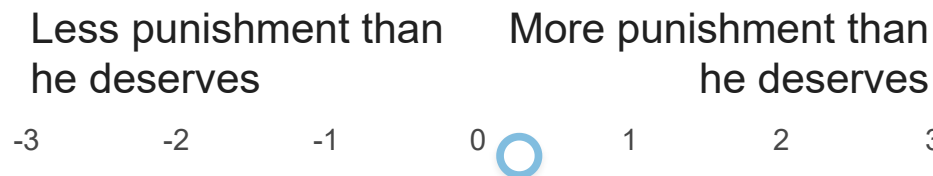
If the defendant was granted parole in the community immediately after his 10-week jail time instead of prison time, I would feel:



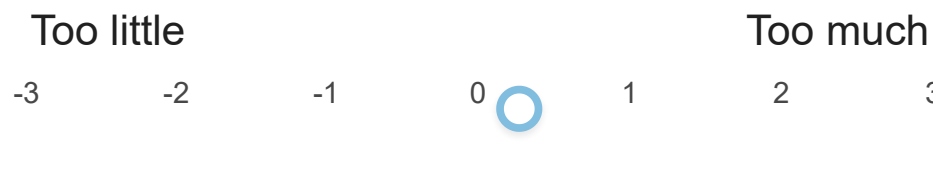
If the defendant was granted parole in the community immediately after his 10-week jail time instead of prison time, I would think that he suffered:



If the defendant was granted parole in the community immediately after his 10-week jail time instead of prison time, that would be:



If the defendant was granted parole in the community immediately after his 10-week jail time instead of prison time, *he* (the defendant) would believe he had been punished:



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

“The perpetrator fully understands that his actions were wrong.”





“The perpetrator genuinely suffered as a result of his 10-week jail stay.”



“The jail therapist’s assessment of the defendant was believable.”



“Justice has been done in this case.”



In your opinion, how likely is it that the defendant will commit another crime within 3 years of his release?

Not at all

Extremely

0 Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely 6

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

In your opinion, how harmful was the defendant's crime in terms of physical, emotional, and financial harm?

Not at all Extremely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

In your opinion, how morally wrong was the perpetrator's crime?

Not at all Extremely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

In your opinion, how immoral was the perpetrator's character?

Not at all Extremely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

In the previous story, what crime did the perpetrator commit?

☐ Home invasion

- ☐ Drug trafficking
- ☐ Murder
- ☐ Aggravated robbery

In the previous story, what crime did the perpetrator commit?

- ☐ Drug trafficking
- ☐ Second-degree theft
- ☐ Home invasion
- ☐ Murder

Instructions Second Crime

Instructions

You will now read a second, different case about a different defendant who has been found guilty of a felony crime. As before, your job is to decide how much the defendant should be punished, if at all. Please assume that all the information described in the case is true. *Your punishment recommendation should be based on your personal opinion, not what you think a court would expect you to say.* Then, you will be asked questions about yourself and about the case, so please read very attentively.

Crime 2

Case Summary

Karl Johnson, a 29 year old construction worker, was convicted of one count of *aggravated robbery*. *You were the person he robbed.* According to two security personnel who witnessed the event, Karl confronted you behind a gas station, demanding your wallet. When you hesitated, Karl swung a crowbar at your face,

breaking your jaw, then fled with your wallet. Police were able to conclusively match Karl's fingerprints to the crowbar and found him with the wallet. Karl has one prior felony for domestic violence.

Case Summary

Dwight Davis, a 32 year old sales representative that you work with, was convicted of one count of *second-degree theft*. While on the job as an employee of a large company, he stole a winning lottery ticket in the amount of \$5,000. The ticket had been purchased by a group of 10 employees using personal money that they donated to a collective pool. *You were a part of this group and contributed to the collective pool.* The winnings were intended to be shared by the group, and so you would have made \$500. Company security cameras captured Dwight taking the ticket from your locker, and a bank statement subsequently showed the winnings cashed out in Dwight's name. Dwight has one prior felony on record for tax evasion.

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Case Summary

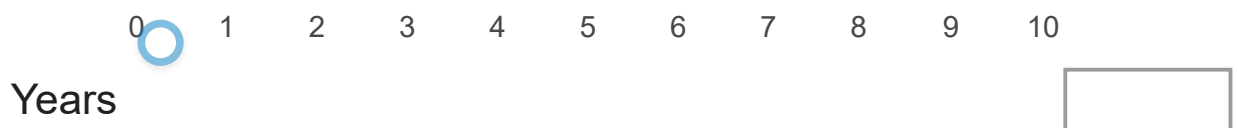
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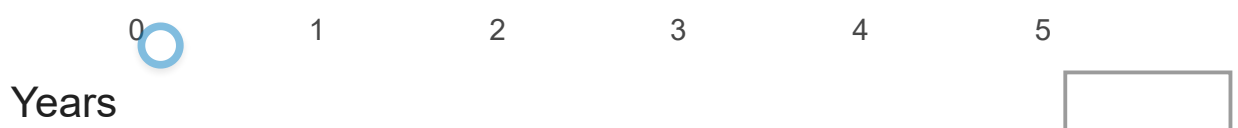
While awaiting trial, Karl served a 10-week jail term. In the trial, Karl pled guilty and underwent a sentencing hearing to decide on his punishment. The maximum possible prison sentence for this crime is 10 years. The sentencing guidelines in your state require that any amount of this time *not* served in prison must be served under community supervision in the form of parole.

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How long in prison should the defendant be incarcerated for this offense?



How long in prison should the defendant be incarcerated for this offense?



Therapist Evaluation

In the hearing, the jail therapist, after numerous interviews with Karl Johnson, testified that, in her professional opinion, Karl has come to deeply regret his actions and now understands why they were wrong. Karl also requested to apologize to his victim in a public or private forum.

The therapist also stated that Karl has already suffered greatly as a direct result of his time in jail. He lost his job and experienced severe anxiety, which re-activated a painful stomach ulcer.

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Initially, you recommended that the defendant be incarcerated in prison for **0** year(s). Given the new information that you learned from the therapist, would you like to change your sentence recommendation or keep it the same?

- ☐ Change my sentence
- ☐ Keep it the same

If you said "change my sentence," how long in prison should the defendant be incarcerated for this offense? Remember, any amount of this time not served in prison must be served under community supervision in some form of parole. You may drag the cursor to change your previous answer.

Otherwise, **if you said "keep it the same,"** please skip ahead to the next question.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

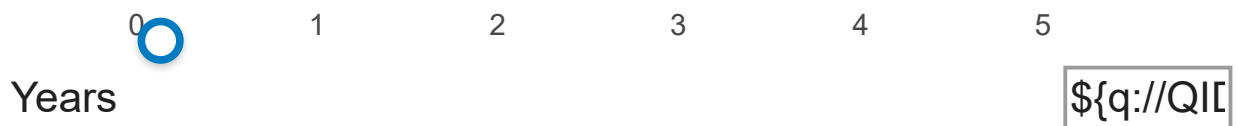
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If the defendant was granted parole in the community immediately after his 10-week jail time instead of prison time, I would feel:



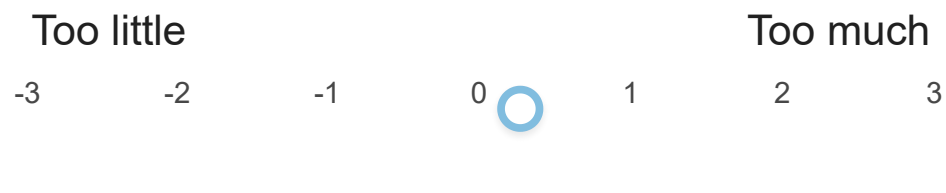
If the defendant was granted parole in the community immediately after his 10-week jail time instead of prison time, I would think that he suffered:



If the defendant was granted parole in the community immediately after his 10-week jail time instead of prison time, that would be:



If the defendant was granted parole in the community immediately after his 10-week jail time instead of prison time, *he* (the defendant) would believe he had been punished:



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

“The perpetrator fully understands that his actions were wrong.”



Strongly disagree Strongly agree

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3



“The perpetrator genuinely suffered as a result of his 10-week jail stay.”

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3



“The jail therapist’s assessment of the defendant was believable.”

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3



“Justice has been done in this case.”

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3



In your opinion, how likely is it that the defendant will commit another crime within 3 years of his release?

Not at all

Extremely

0 Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely 6

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

In your opinion, how harmful was the defendant's crime in terms of physical, emotional, and financial harm?

Not at all Extremely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

In your opinion, how morally wrong was the perpetrator's crime?

Not at all Extremely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

In your opinion, how immoral was the perpetrator's character?

Not at all Extremely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

In the previous story, what crime did the perpetrator commit?

☒ Murder

- ☐ Home invasion
- ☐ Aggravated robbery
- ☐ Drug trafficking

In the previous story, what crime did the perpetrator commit?

- ☐ Home invasion
- ☐ Drug trafficking
- ☐ Second-degree theft
- ☐ Murder

Justifications

In the stories above, which perspective were you asked to take?

“The victim of the crime was portrayed as...”

- ☐ Myself
- ☐ Someone else / Not specified

How strongly do you agree with the following statement?

“People who commit crimes deserve to be punished even if punishing them won't produce any positive benefits to either the offender or society—e.g., rehabilitation, deterring other would-be offenders, etc.”

- strongly disagree disagree somewhat disagree neutral somewhat agree agree strongly agree

Please rank the following justifications for punishment by dragging each of the four statements into your preferred order. The statement that you agree with MOST should be placed at the top.

“People who commit crimes *should be punished because by punishing them...*”

we give them what they deserve

we protect society from future crime

we reform and rehabilitate them

we send a message that what they did is wrong

Introduction Demographics

The survey is almost over. You will now be asked some demographic questions. This information helps us to balance our sample. It will never be shared or used to identify individual respondents.

Demographics

Race/Ethnicity (check all that apply)

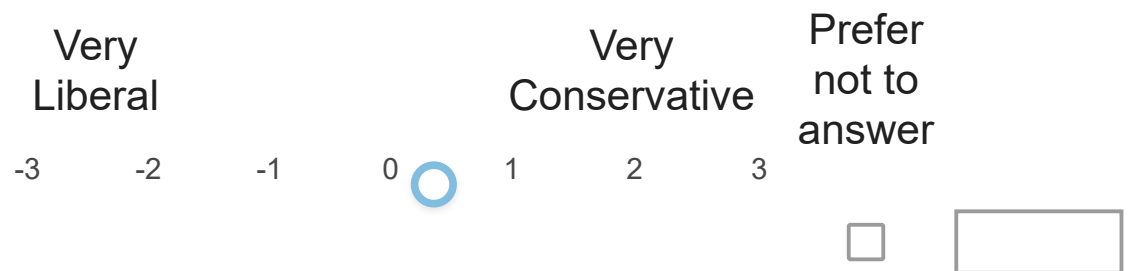
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ☐ White/Caucasian

- ☐ Other/Unknown
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Have you or any of your family members ever been part of a criminal trial (as a defendant or an accuser)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Overall, where do you place your political attitudes on this spectrum?



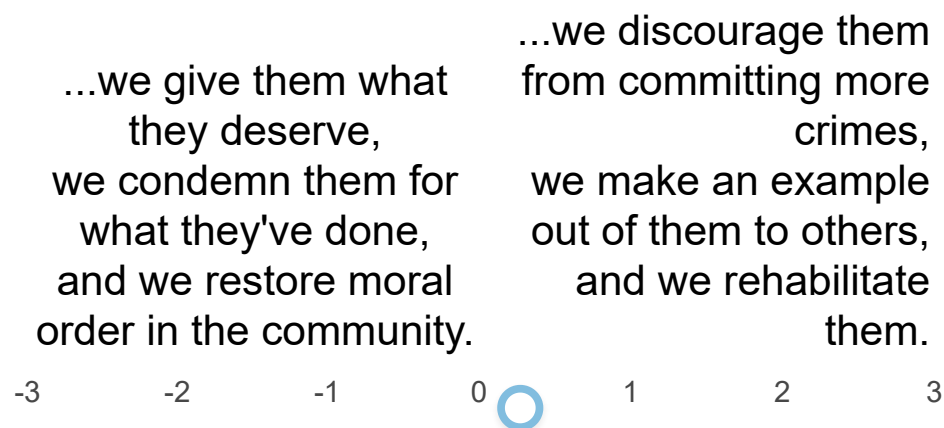
What are the colors of the American flag?

- ☐ Red, White, Green
- ☐ Red, Yellow, Blue
- ☐ Red, White, Blue
- ☐ Blue, White, Grey

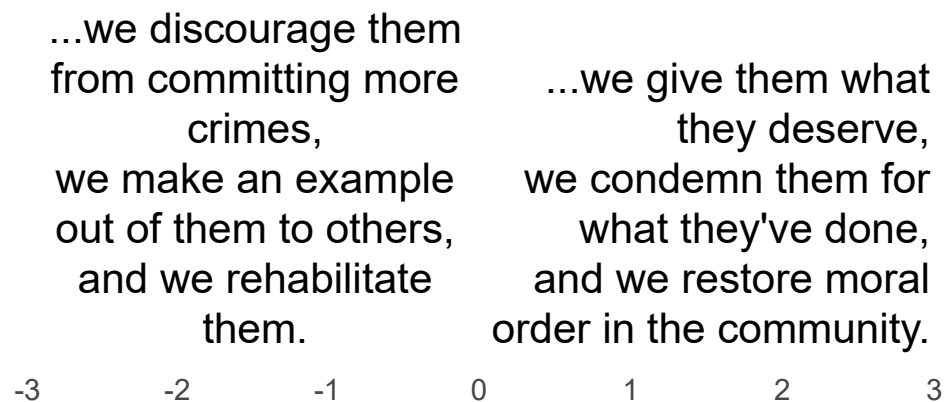
With which political party do you most strongly affiliate?

- ☐ Democratic
- ☐ Republican
- ☐ Independent
- ☐ Green
- ☐ Libertarian
- ☐ None of these
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

“Criminals should be punished because, by punishing them...”



“Criminals should be punished because, by punishing them...”



...we discourage them
from committing more
crimes,
we make an example
out of them to others,
and we rehabilitate
them.

...we give them what
they deserve,
we condemn them for
what they've done,
and we restore moral
order in the community.

-3

-2

-1

0

1

2

3



What do you think was the purpose of this study? That is, what question was it trying to answer? (Optional)

Any comments about the survey? (Optional)

Debrief

Thank you for your participation. The purpose of this survey was to understand how suffering, understanding, and crime seriousness affect people's satisfaction with punishment. We hypothesize that when the offender suffers as a result of the punishment, people will be more satisfied with the punishment. We also hypothesize that when the offender comes to understand that what they did was wrong, people will be more satisfied with the punishment. We did not tell you about this aspect of the survey in advance because we wanted to observe your natural decision-making. We hope this study will help to clarify how punishment philosophies impact support for punishment. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact Dr. Eyal Aharoni (eaharoni@gsu.edu).

PLEASE CLICK THE BLUE BUTTON TO SUBMIT

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