

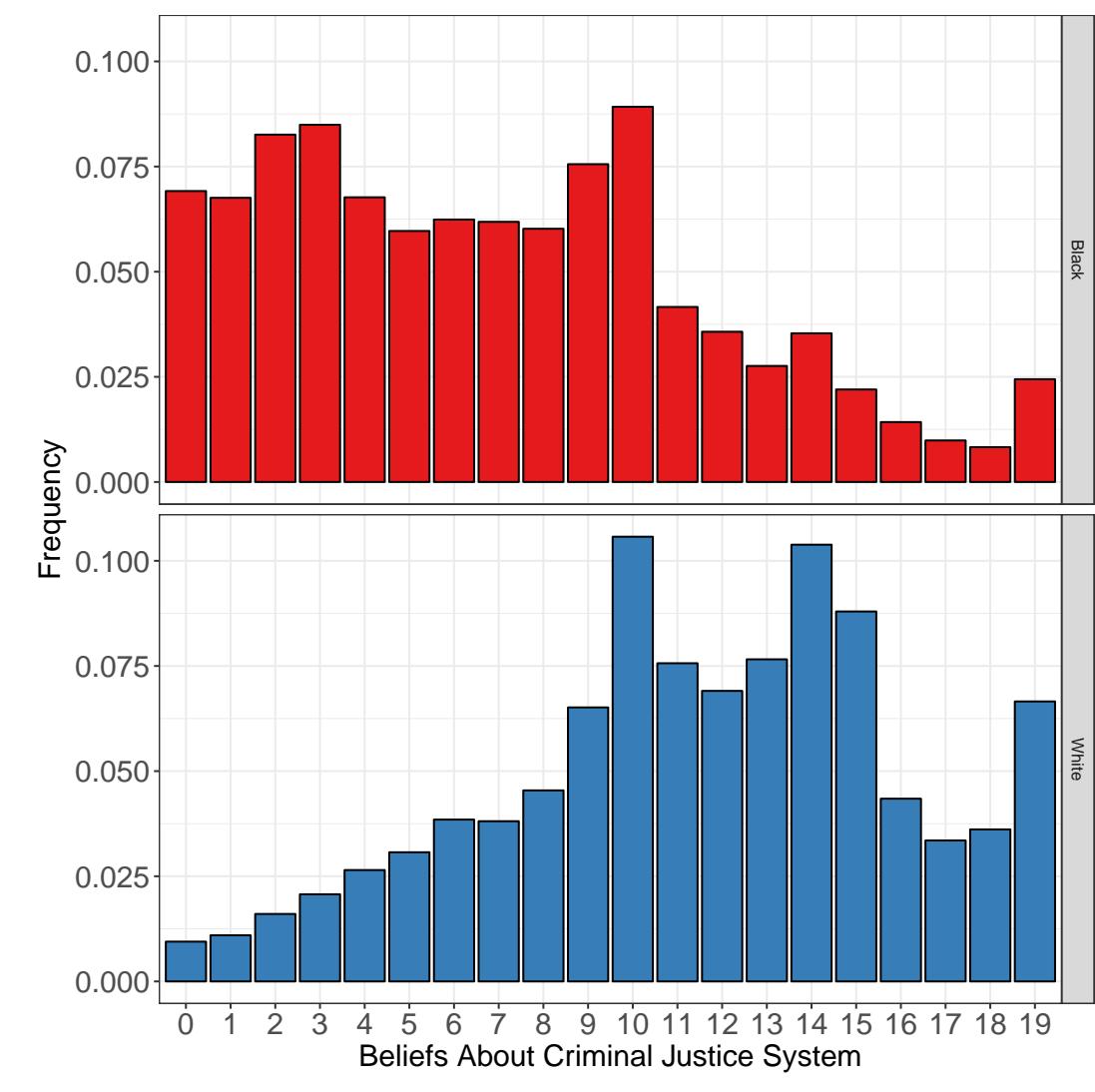
## ABSTRACT

We believe that the way individuals perceive the justice system impacts their opinions about related policy. We separate perception into two components, beliefs and experiences, and use questions measuring each of these factors to ordinaly score citizens' view of the state. Understanding race as a key explanatory factor of perception, we measure the impact that each variable has on a specific aspect of punitive policy: stripping felons of the right to vote. We predict that blacks are more likely to support felons' voting rights than are whites, while increasingly negative experiences with and beliefs about the justice system will decrease support for stricter disenfranchisement laws across races.

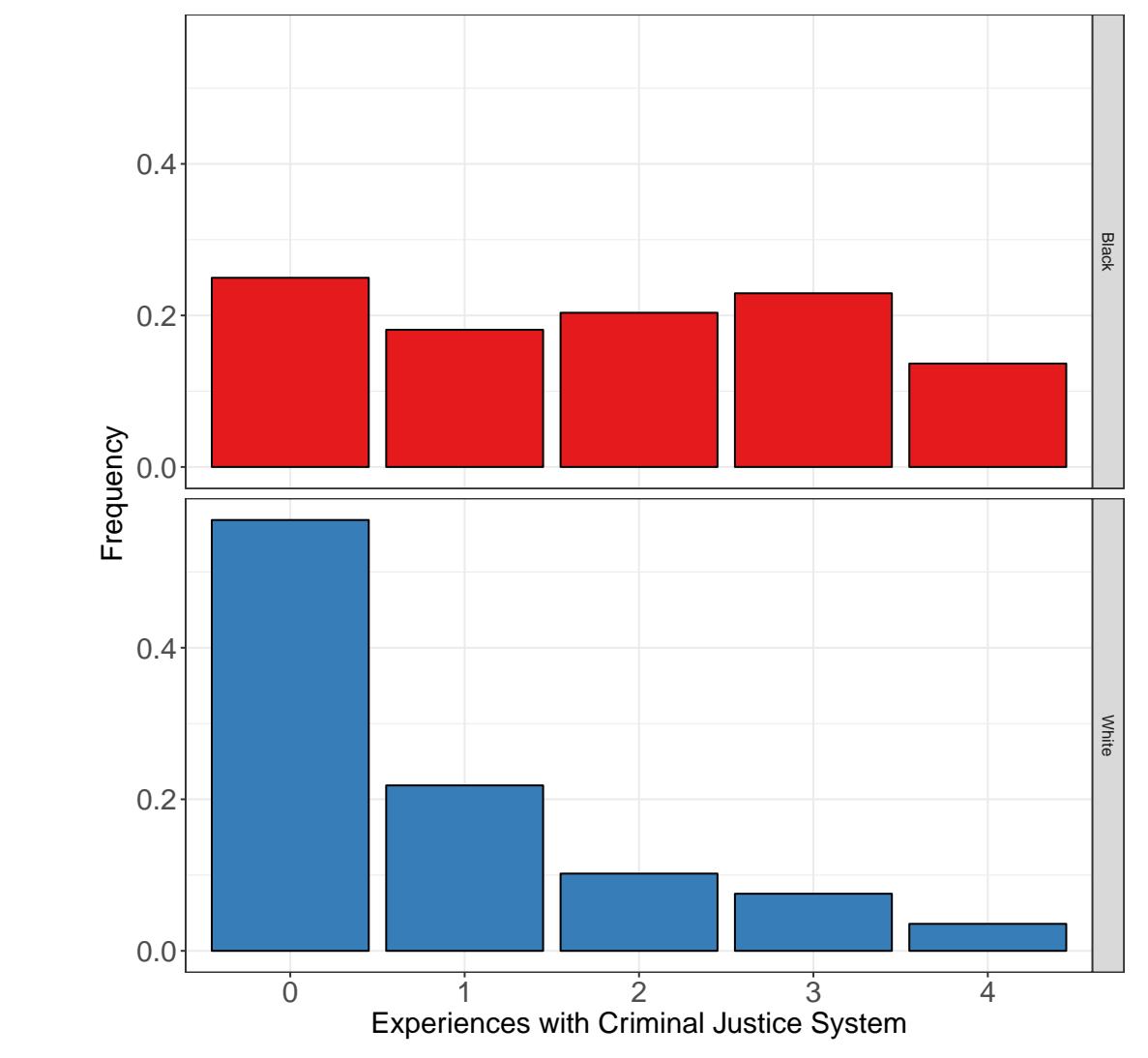
## MOTIVATION AND THEORY

### What basic worldview differences exist by race?

Notable differences in opinion on disenfranchisement by race inform our decision to separate racial groups in our research; differences in experiences by race follow logically from known experiential disparity across racial groups, and beliefs, while separate from experiences in our analysis, are associated with said difference. Our subsequent analysis uses other descriptors as covariates.



Higher values are more positive beliefs  
Figure 1: Beliefs about Justice System



Higher values are more negative experience  
Figure 2: Exp. with Justice System

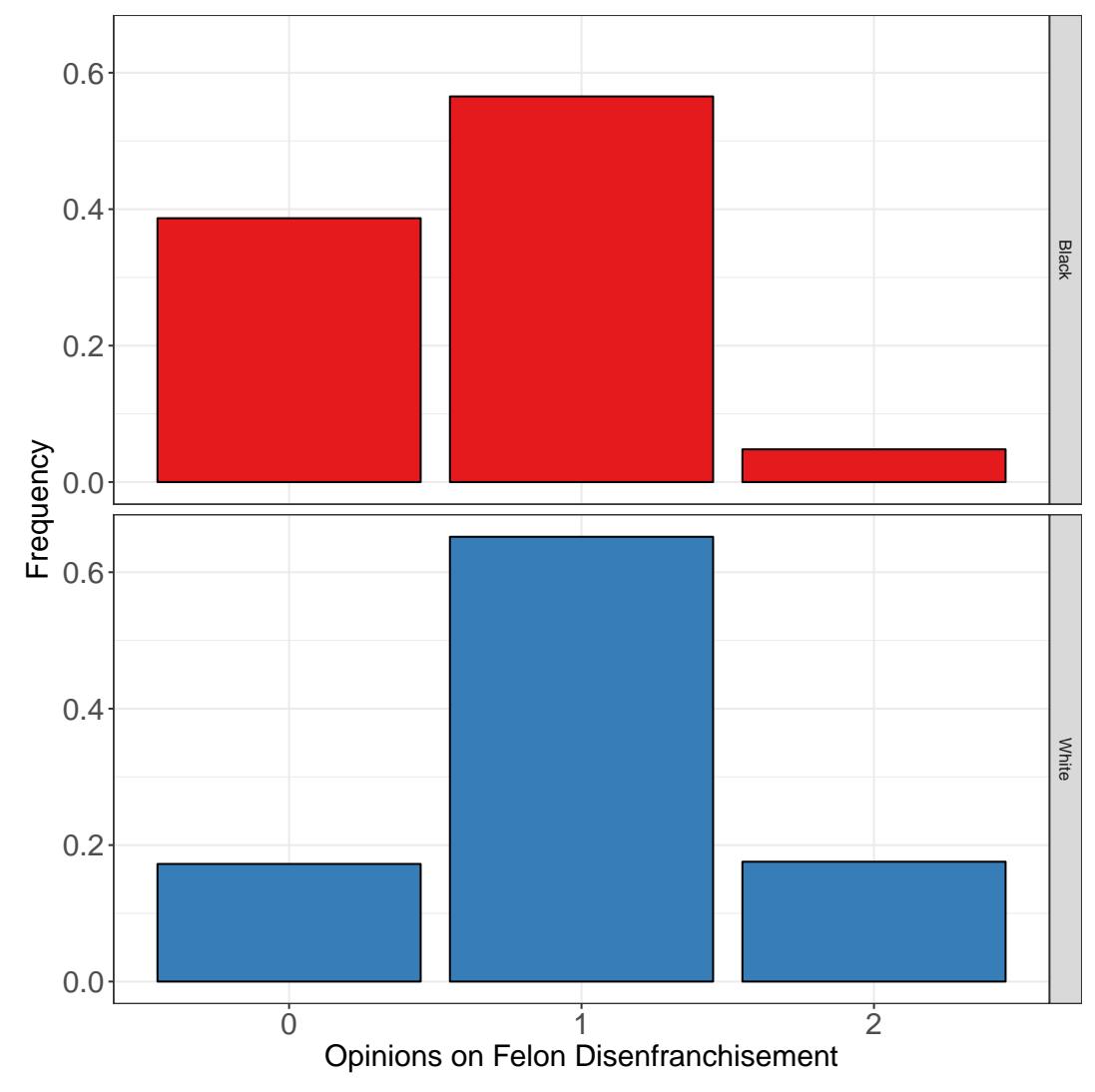


Figure 3: Opinions on Disenfranchisement

## COMMENTARY

### Other Areas of Interest

- Impact of public opinion on policy outcomes
- Ubiquity of disenfranchisement as public opinion item
- Outcomes by state compared to constituent beliefs and experiences

### Limitations

- 'Beliefs' and 'Experiences' variables designated after survey design
- Only two racial groups are considered
- Disenfranchisement opinion measured by three choices

## DATA AND METHODS

### Data Sources

- Race and the Carceral State Survey (2017)

### Analysis: Regression Models

#### Dependent Variables

- Support for felon disenfranchisement

#### Independent Variables

- Aggregate beliefs about criminal justice system
- Aggregate experiences with criminal justice system

Covariates: income; education; state; gender; partisan ideology

## RESULTS: EFFECTS OF PERCEPTION ON OPINIONS BY RACE

### Findings

1. Variance in opinions regarding felon disenfranchisement by race can be explained by overall perceptions of fairness.
2. Blacks have **more negative experiences** with the criminal justice system than do whites, causing less support for laws that disenfranchise felons.
3. Blacks have **more negative beliefs about** the criminal justice system than do whites, causing less support for disenfranchising felons.
4. Experiences are a more **salient** causal factor in overall perceptions than are beliefs for both racial groups.

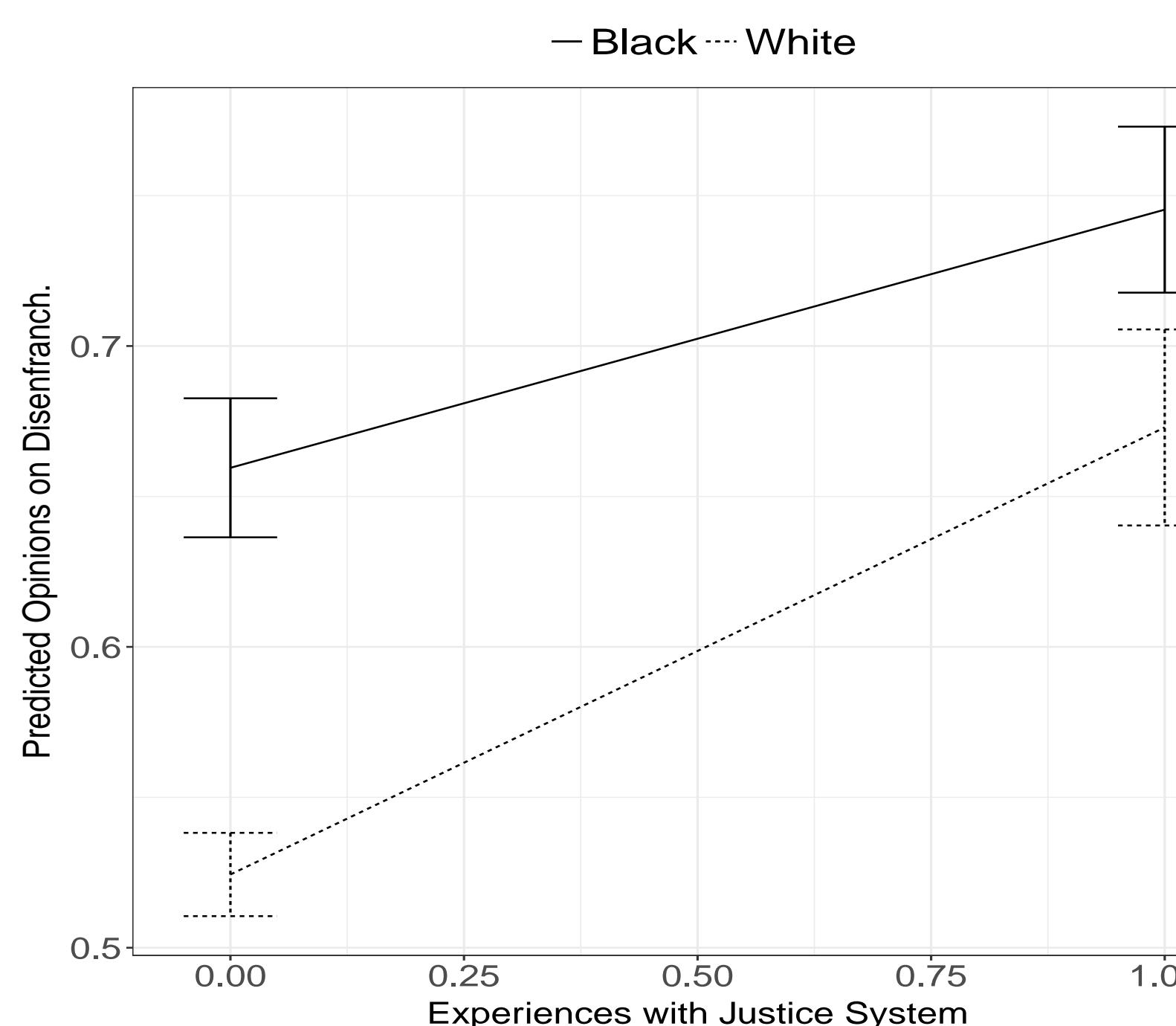


Figure 1: Pred. Opinion by Experience

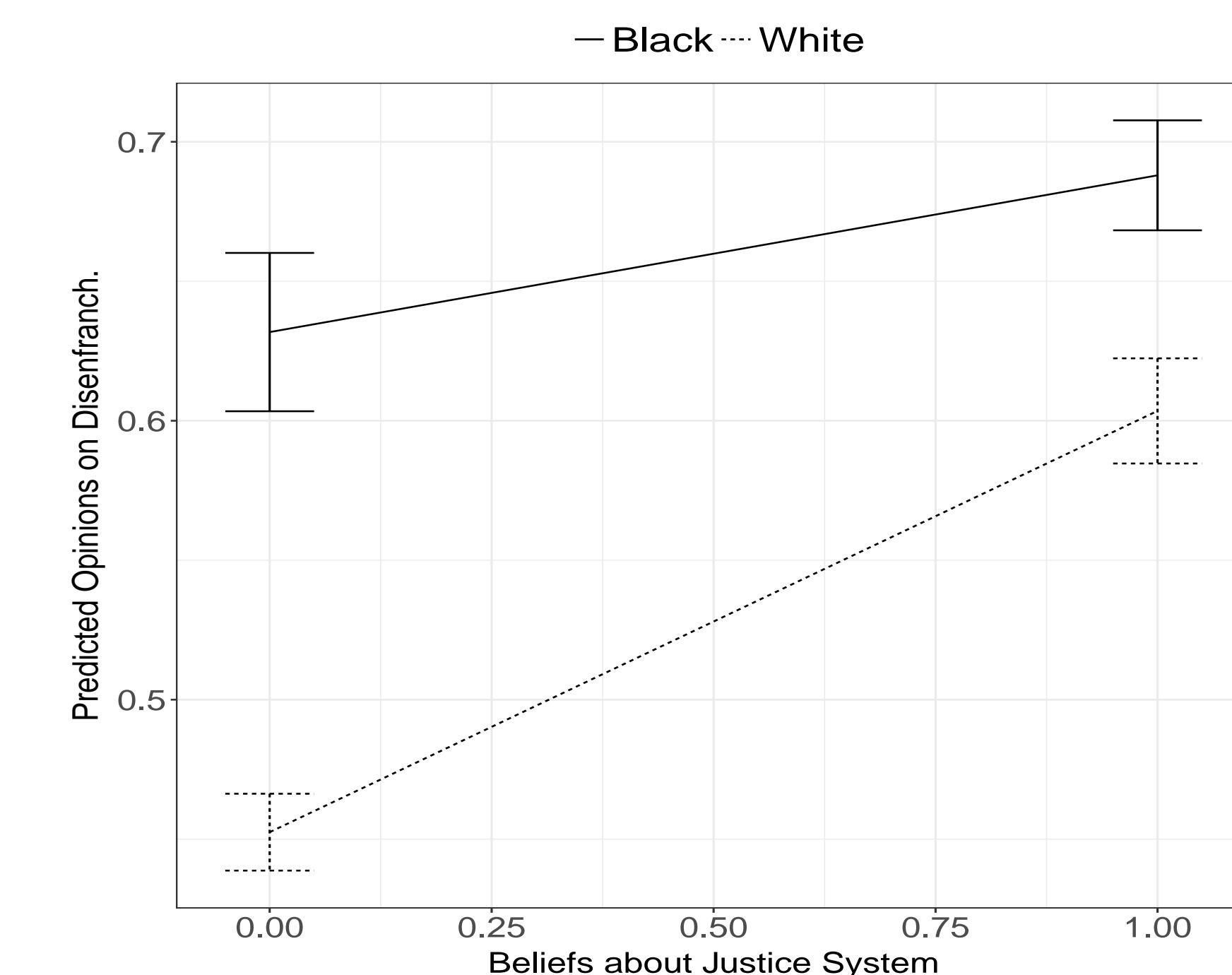
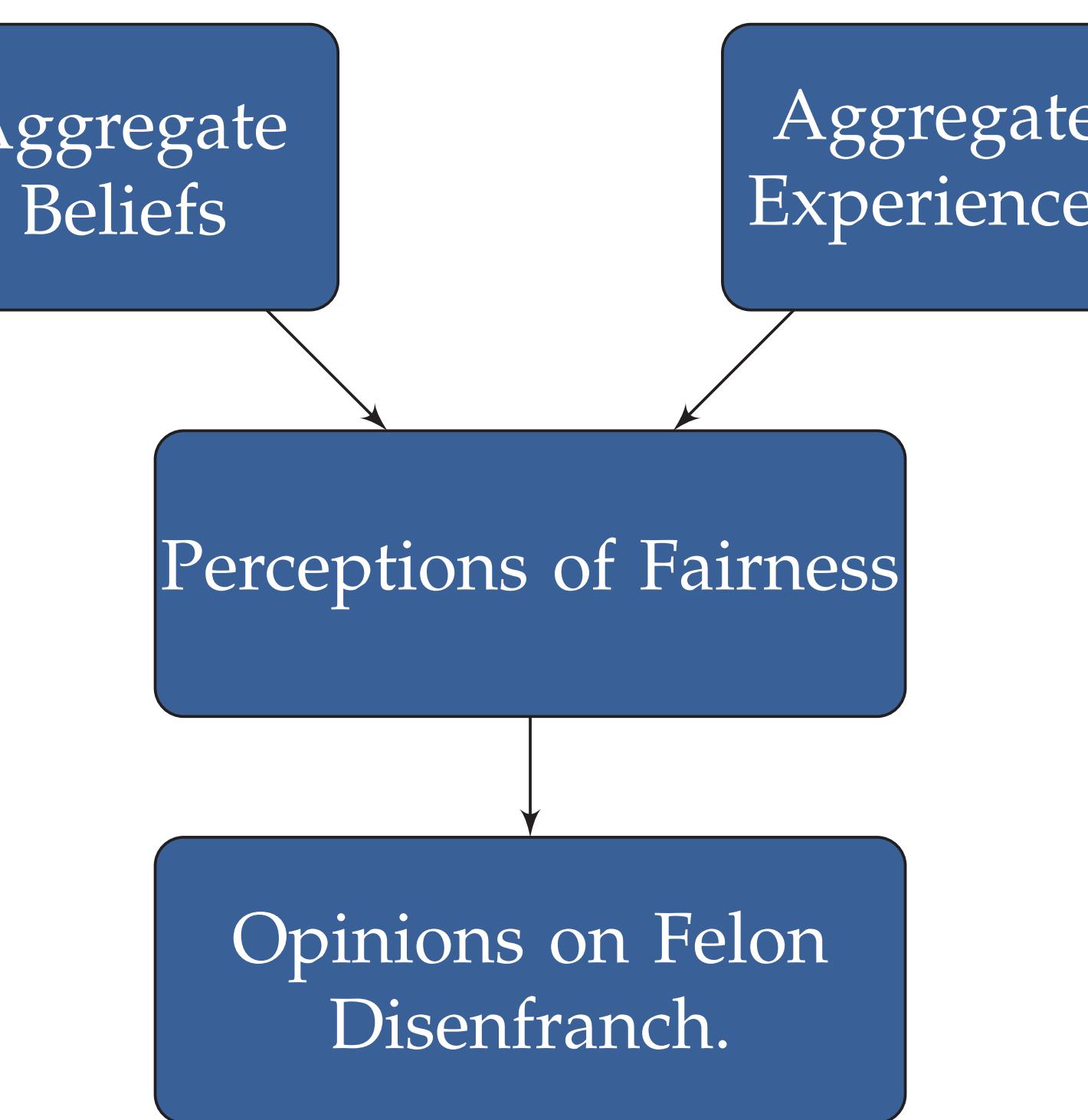


Figure 2: Pred. Opinion by Beliefs

## CONCLUSION



Our results show consistent skepticism regarding felon disenfranchisement from Blacks. Notable differences in opinion across racial groups can be extrapolated to provide key insights:

- The expected difference in opinion for an individual with wholly negative beliefs or experiences from an individual with policy ones is **distinctly larger** for whites than for Blacks;
- An individual's beliefs are a **more important** causal factor than his or her experiences in impacting opinions on disenfranchisement policy, reflecting the important of secondary sources in perception formation;
- Differences in experiences and beliefs by race reinforce differences in worldview for Blacks and whites.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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