Online Appendix:
A Drop in the Ocean:
How Priors Anchor Attitudes Toward the American Carceral State

Contents

1 Sample Descriptives

Table A.1 reports descriptives for our sample on demographics. The columns provide unweighted and weighted percentages. These demographics were used to construct rake weights based on the 2015 Current Population Survey. Weights were constructed separately for each group such that our Black sample reflected the Black population of the United States, and similarly for our White sample (Mondak et al., 2017, adopt the same approach). All analyses reported rely on these group-specific rake weights.

Table A.1: Sample Descriptives, 2017 SSI Survey

	Blacks		Whites	
	Unweighted	Weighted	Unweighted	Weighted
Age				
18-24	24%	17	11	10
25-34	26	20	22	17
35-44	18	17	14	14
45-54	14	19	12	19
55-64	14	15	24	20
65-74	4	8	12	12
74-90	1	4	4	8
Education				
Less than HS	5	13	3	8
HS Grad	34	35	25	31
Some College	31	25	32	23
College Graduate	29	23	39	35
Postgraduate	1	4	0	3
Female				
	55	56	72	57
Income				
Under 20,000	27	29	16	15
20-50,000	40	36	39	33
50-80,000	21	17	26	21
80-100,000	5	7	8	11
100,000 or more	8	10	11	19

Note: Population approximations for raw survey data come from rake weights generated using 2015 Current Population Survey. Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Dependent Variable Items

In addition to the internal consistency information reported in the main text, we report the results from a confirmatory factor analysis of the same to address concerns about assumptions made in the internal consistency calculations. The results support interpreting the 9-item set as capturing a single orientation toward the carceral state. Only the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) falls outside generally accepted benchmarks (Brown, 2015). Even so, this metric speaks to minor model misspecification rather than global misspecification, so we proceed using the single dimension. In additional analyses we find this isn't due to imbalances between Black and White Americans in our sample as a multi-group model constraining factor loadings to equality across groups sees no meaningful change in model fit compared to one freely estimating loadings across groups.

Table A.2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Dependent Variable Items

	Standardized Factor Loading	SE
Support Public Benefits for ex-Felons	0.498	0.01
Support Voting Rights for ex-Felons	0.414	0.011
Support Citizen Oversight Boards	0.430	0.011
Increase Public Defender Pay	0.214	0.012
Support BLM	0.549	0.01
Police Treat Racial Groups Fairly	0.815	0.008
Police Don't Use Excessive Force	0.753	0.008
Police Held Accountable	0.794	0.008
Courts Treat Everyone Fairly	0.716	0.009
CFA	0.98	
SRMR	0.059	
RMSEA (90% CI)	.115 (.111, .119)	

Note: Model estimated using diagonally weighted least squares treating items as ordered. Item thresholds were estimated but are omitted from the table. Residual correlations between items sharing a common response format were estimated but are omitted from the table.

3 Main Text Models

3.1 Contact Frequency

Table A.3 reports the parameter estimates from the regression models estimating the relationship between direct experiences and carceral state attitudes for the bivariate models. Table A.4 reports the parameter estimates for the models after adjusting for other individual characteristics.

Table A.3: Direct Experiences Effect Carceral State Attitudes by Race and Gender

		Black	White
Direct Experiences	.267*	.197*	.296*
	(.012)	(.022)	(.018)
Experiences*Black	−.141*		
	(.019)		
Experiences*Man		−.087*	−.047
		(.028)	(.025)
Black	.205*		
	(.004)		
Man		−.021*	−.025*
		(.007)	(.005)
Constant	.446*	.658*	.456*
	(.002)	(.005)	(.003)
Observations	11,166	3,073	8,093
R^2	.237	.041	.058
Residual Std. Error	.174	.158	.179

Note: *p<0.05. OLS regression results with standard errors in parentheses. Analyses weighted. Measures scaled 0-1.

Table A.4: Direct Experiences Effect Carceral State Attitudes by Race and Gender

	Race	Gender	
		Black	White
Constant	.607*	.686*	.591*
	(.008)	(.015)	(.010)
Direct Experiences	.171*	.155*	.206*
	(.011)	(.021)	(.016)
Experiences*Black	−.052*		
	(.017)		
Experiences*Man		−.055*	−.070*
		(.027)	(.022)
Black	.066*		
	(.014)		
Man	−.004	−.041	.037*
	(.003)	(.022)	(.015)
Man*Black	−.013*		
	(.006)		
Racial Resentment	−.288*	−.253*	−.277*
	(.007)	(.016)	(.009)
Resentment*Black	.024		
	(.014)		
Resentment*Man		−.019	−.027
		(.025)	(.014)
Peers with Felony Convictions	.096*	.071*	.100*
	(.007)	(.011)	(.009)
Peers*Black	−.029*		
	(.011)		
Peers*Man		−.013	−.010
		(.016)	(.015)
Age	−.062*	.031*	−.049*
	(.007)	(.015)	(.009)
Age*Black	.109*		
	(.013)		
Age*Man		.033	−.031*
		(.022)	(.014)
Education	−.019*	.005	−.016
	(.006)	(.014)	(.009)
Education*Black	.016		
	(.012)		
Education*Man		−.020	−.004
		(.021)	(.013)
Income	−.054*	.025	−.051*
	(.006)	(.014)	(.008)
Income*Black	.068*		
	(.012)		
Income*Man		−.019	−.005
		(.020)	(.012)
Partisanship	.156*	.032*	.153*
	(.006)	(.013)	(.008)
Partisanship*Black	−.095*		
	(.011)		
Partisanship*Man		.066*	.006
		(.020)	(.012)
Observations	11,091	3,041	8,050
R^2	.492	.230	.408
Residual Std. Error	.142	.142	.142

Note: *p<0.05. OLS regression results with standard errors in parentheses. Analyses weighted. Measures scaled 0-1.

3.2 Contact Quality

Table A.5 reports the parameter estimates from the regression models estimating the relationship between experience quality and carceral state attitudes. As described in the main text, these models use coarsened exact matching (CEM) using the several covariates included in the models (Iacus, King and Porro, 2012). Specifically, for the racial background comparison, we matched on: gender, number of police stops in the last 5 years, racial resentment, peers with felony convictions, age, education, income, and partisanship. We use the same variable for the gender analyses within racial group, but remove gender. Following this matching procedure, we then estimated linear regressions including the matching variables as covariates to adjust for any remaining imbalance and weighted the models to the matched sample using weights generated by the CEM procedure.

Table A.5: Experience Quality's Effect on Carceral State Attitudes by Race and Gender

	Race	Gender	
		Black	White
Mixed	.082*	.065*	.094*
	(.011)	(.016)	(.015)
Mixed*Black	−.039*		
	(.017)		
Mixed*Man		−.029	−.011
		(.027)	(.027)
Negative	.121*	.088*	.114*
	(.013)	(.020)	(.019)
Negative*Black	−.032		
	(.018)		
Negative*Man		−.014	.026
		(.027)	(.029)
Black	.114*		
	(.044)		
Man	−.009	.045	−.033
	(.011)	(.071)	(.070)
Black*Man	−.025		
	(.016)		
Police Stops (n)	.077	.003	.206*
	(.053)	(.105)	(.079)
Stops*Black	−.089		
	(.070)		
Stops*Man		−.114	.031
		(.128)	(.149)
Racial Resentment	−.352*	−.137*	−.327*
	(.023)	(.041)	(.028)
Resentment*Black	.080*		
	(.037)		
Resentment*Man		−.212*	−.018
		(.062)	(.050)
Peers with Felony Convictions	.063*	.054*	.108*
	(.017)	(.020)	(.021)
Peers*Black	−.023		
	(.023)		
Peers*Man		.0003	−.032
		(.031)	(.041)
Age	.088*	−.034	.016
	(.027)	(.040)	(.029)
Age*Black	.035		
	(.045)		
Age*Man		.109	.037
		(.061)	(.050)
Education	−.032	.040	−.099*
	(.021)	(.043)	(.028)
Education*Black	−.025		
	(.038)		
Education*Man		−.096	.009
		(.068)	(.049)
Income	−.048*	.041	−.002
	(.018)	(.035)	(.022)
Income*Black	.077*		
	(.031)		
Income*Man		.059	−.011
		(.050)	(.041)
Partisanship	.164*	.101*	.153*
	(.018)	(.037)	(.023)
Partisanship*Black	−.087*		
	(.030)		
Partisanship*Man		.057	.051
		(.052)	(.040)
Constant	.587*	.609*	.561*
	(.029)	(.050)	(.039)
Observations	4,526	1,472	3,054
R^2	.458	.302	.453
Residual Std. Error	.137	.127	.145

Note: *p<0.05. OLS regression results with standard errors in parentheses. Analyses weighted for matched sample. Measures scaled 0-1. Positive experiences are the omitted baseline category.

4 Principal Components Model Results

Table A.6 reports the results from a linear regression replacing the additive carceral state attitudes and direct experiences measures with variables constructed using principal components analysis. This approach flexibly combines the relevant items by assigning each a weight such that the linear combination maximizes the variance across outcomes a single component explains. For each variable we estimate the PCA using correlations as inputs.

The results offer similar insight as the additive models.

Table A.6: Direct Experiences Effect Carceral State Attitudes by Race and Gender, Principal Components Model

	Race	Gender	
		Black	White
Direct Experiences (PCA)	.179*	.161*	.219*
	(.012)	(.024)	(.017)
Experiences (PCA)*Black	−.054*		
	(.019)		
Experiences (PCA)*Man		−.056	−.082*
		(.030)	(.024)
Black	.084*		
	(.015)		
Man	−.007	−.046	.021
	(.004)	(.025)	(.016)
Black*Man	−.012		
	(.007)		
Racial Resentment	−.278*	−.266*	−.275*
	(.008)	(.018)	(.010)
Resentment*Black	.001		
	(.015)		
Resentment*Man		−.018	−.007
		(.027)	(.015)
Peers with Felony Convictions	.097*	.074*	.098*
	(.008)	(.012)	(.010)
Peers*Black	−.026*		
	(.011)		
Peers*Man		−.013	−.005
		(.018)	(.016)
Age	−.076*	.014	−.061*
	(.007)	(.016)	(.009)
Peers*Black	.107*		
	(.014)		
Peers*Man		.032	−.036*
		(.024)	(.014)
Education	−.023*	−.0001	−.021*
	(.007)	(.016)	(.009)
Education*Black	.017		
	(.013)		
Education*Man		−.015	−.001
		(.023)	(.014)
Income	−.055*	.028	−.053*
	(.006)	(.015)	(.008)
Income*Black	.071*		
	(.012)		
Income*Man		−.023	−.004
		(.022)	(.013)
Partisanship	.155*	.026	.152*
	(.006)	(.014)	(.008)
Partisanship*Black	−.100*		
	(.012)		
Partisanship*Man		.068*	.008
		(.022)	(.012)
Constant	.597*	.695*	.587*
	(.008)	(.017)	(.011)
Observations	11,091	3,041	8,050
R^2	.463	.208	.377
Residual Std. Error	.153	.155	.151

Note: *p<0.05. OLS regression results with standard errors in parentheses. Analyses weighted. Measures scaled 0-1.

5 Building Blocks Model Comparisons

To offer a more restrict test of direct experiences' varied effect by racial background and gender, we include a series of covariates to account for other characteristics plausibly connected with views of the criminal justice system and contact. Importantly, though, we acknowledge that some of these controls may be post-treatment to experiences. It's possible, for instance, that individuals partisanship, racial resentment, whether they report having friends with felony convictions are at some point subsequent to carceral state contact. The end result is that the adjusted model captures the direct effect of direct experiences to the exclusion of indirect effects potentially mediated through some of our controls (Hayes, 2021).

Because our question of interest focuses largely on experiences' divergence by party, this direct effect is our key quantity of interest. We are less interested in apportioning its total effect, observed in the main text's bivariate relationships, into direct and indirect effects. But to shed light on the nature of this potential direct effect, we estimate a series of linear regressions adding different blocks of covariates that move from likely causally prior to contact, to plausibly subsequent to contact. Variation in direct experience's estimate coefficient and difference between groups (e.g., Black Americans and White Americans) across models sheds light on whether changes we observed in the main text likely came more from differences in background characteristics which may yield differences in experiences (e.g., demographics) or adjustment for potential post-treatment factors (e.g., partisanship and racial resentment).

Tables A.7-A.9 report the results. They suggest that adjusting for potential post-treatment variables is not substantially altering the picture we present about the difference in carceral state attitudes across differences in direct experiences by group. While marginal effects do fluctuate, differences remain largely consistent, except for one case. In Table A.7, the es-

timates indicate that accounting for background demographic differences sees a dramatically reduced decrease in the difference in direct experiences' marginal effect between Black and White Americans. Importantly, though, this is unlikely due to accounting for post-treatment measures and instead due more likely to selection into contact. Education, income, age, and gender are predict carceral state contact (Baumgartner, Epp and Shoub, 2018; Soss and Weaver, 2017). After accounting for this, we get a clarified picture of the racial gap in direct experiences' contribution. That this gap remains consistent when including other post-treatment measures reinforces our supposition that differences are more likely due to selection than post-treatment adjustment. Further, we see smaller but similar demographic based differences within racial group by gender which is again suggestive of this.

Table A.7: Building Blocks Test of Direct Experiences Effect Carceral State Attitude by Race

Direct Experiences	.267*	.205*	.164*	.213*	.171*
	(.012)	(.013)	(.013)	(.011)	(.011)
Experiences*Black	−.141*	−.045*	−.043*	−.058*	−.052*
	(.019)	(.020)	(.020)	(.017)	(.017)
Black	.205*	.074*	.072*	.065*	.066*
	(.004)	(.010)	(.010)	(.014)	(.014)
Age		−.133*	−.129*	−.066*	−.062*
		(.008)	(.008)	(.007)	(.007)
Age*Black		.200*	.194*	.114*	.109*
		(.015)	(.015)	(.013)	(.013)
Man		−.013*	−.012*	−.005	−.004
		(.004)	(.004)	(.003)	(.003)
Black*Man		−.019*	−.019*	−.012	−.013*
		(.008)	(.007)	(.006)	(.006)
Education		.019*	.028*	−.027*	−.019*
		(.007)	(.007)	(.006)	(.006)
Education*Black		.002	.001	.017	.016
		(.014)	(.014)	(.012)	(.012)
Income		−.085*	−.080*	−.059*	−.054*
		(.007)	(.007)	(.006)	(.006)
Income*Black		.110*	.108*	.071*	.068*
		(.014)	(.014)	(.012)	(.012)
Peers with Felony Convictions			.095*		.096*
			(.008)		(.007)
Peers*Black			−.020		−.029*
			(.013)		(.011)
Racial Resentment				−.287*	−.288*
				(.007)	(.007)
Resentment*Black				.021	.024
				(.014)	(.014)
Partisanship				.157*	.156*
				(.006)	(.006)
Partisanship*Black				−.091*	−.095*
				(.011)	(.011)
Constant	.446*	.546*	.530*	.622*	.607*
	(.002)	(.006)	(.006)	(.008)	(.008)
Observations	11,166	11,166	11,165	11,092	11,091
R^2	.237	.273	.286	.480	.492
Residual Std. Error	.174	.170	.168	.144	.142

Note: *p<0.05. OLS regression results with standard errors in parentheses. Analyses weighted. Measures scaled 0-1.

Table A.8: Building Blocks Test of Direct Experiences Effect Carceral State Attitude by Gender, Black Americans

Direct Experiences	.197*	.204*	.161*	.196*	.155*
	(.022)	(.022)	(.023)	(.021)	(.021)
Experiences*Man	−.087*	−.070*	−.061*	−.068*	−.055*
	(.028)	(.028)	(.029)	(.026)	(.027)
Man	−.021*	−.037*	−.038*	−.044*	−.041
	(.007)	(.014)	(.015)	(.022)	(.022)
Age		.018	.019	.030*	.031*
		(.016)	(.016)	(.015)	(.015)
Age*Man		.112*	.107*	.035	.033
		(.024)	(.023)	(.023)	(.022)
Education		.036*	.040*	.002	.005
		(.016)	(.015)	(.015)	(.014)
Education*Man		−.035	−.026	−.026	−.020
		(.022)	(.022)	(.021)	(.021)
Income		.041*	.043*	.023	.025
		(.015)	(.015)	(.014)	(.014)
Income*Man		−.031	−.030	−.020	−.019
		(.022)	(.021)	(.020)	(.020)
Peers with Felony Convictions			.074*		.071*
			(.012)		(.011)
Peers*Man			−.004		−.013
			(.017)		(.016)
Racial Resentment				−.253*	−.253*
				(.016)	(.016)
Resentment*Man				−.021	−.019
				(.025)	(.025)
Partisanship				.035*	.032*
				(.013)	(.013)
Partisanship*Man				.070*	.066*
				(.020)	(.020)
Constant	.658*	.623*	.607*	.700*	.686*
	(.005)	(.010)	(.010)	(.015)	(.015)
Observations	3,073	3,073	3,073	3,041	3,041
R^2	.041	.066	.087	.214	.230
Residual Std. Error	.158	.156	.154	.143	.142

Note: *p<0.05. OLS regression results with standard errors in parentheses. Analyses weighted. Measures scaled 0-1.

Table A.9: Building Blocks Test of Direct Experiences Effect Carceral State Attitude by Gender, White Americans

Direct Experiences	.296*	.232*	.190*	.252*	.206*
	(.018)	(.018)	(.019)	(.015)	(.016)
Experiences*Man	−.047	−.056*	−.051	−.081*	−.070*
	(.025)	(.026)	(.027)	(.021)	(.022)
Man	−.025*	.015	.015	.034*	.037*
	(.005)	(.012)	(.012)	(.015)	(.015)
Age		−.121*	−.117*	−.053*	−.049*
		(.010)	(.010)	(.009)	(.009)
Age*Man		−.028	−.027	−.032*	−.031*
		(.016)	(.016)	(.014)	(.014)
Education		.023*	.032*	−.026*	−.016
		(.010)	(.010)	(.009)	(.009)
Education*Man		−.004	−.007	−.0002	−.004
		(.016)	(.015)	(.013)	(.013)
Income		−.077*	−.073*	−.055*	−.051*
		(.010)	(.009)	(.008)	(.008)
Income*Man		−.018	−.015	−.007	−.005
		(.015)	(.015)	(.012)	(.012)
Peers with Felony Convictions			.094*		.100*
			(.011)		(.009)
Peers*Man			.0004		−.010
			(.018)		(.015)
Racial Resentment				−.276*	−.277*
				(.009)	(.009)
Resentment*Man				−.028	−.027
				(.015)	(.014)
Partisanship				.153*	.153*
				(.008)	(.008)
Partisanship*Man				.008	.006
				(.012)	(.012)
Constant	.456*	.534*	.519*	.606*	.591*
	(.003)	(.008)	(.008)	(.010)	(.010)
Observations	8,093	8,093	8,092	8,051	8,050
R^2	.058	.104	.117	.395	.408
Residual Std. Error	.179	.174	.173	.143	.142

Note: *p<0.05. OLS regression results with standard errors in parentheses. Analyses weighted. Measures scaled 0-1.

6 Attitude Certainty following Direct Experiences

Here we consider a second consequence of information the Bayesian framework highlights: changes in attitude certainty or strength. Acquiring new information tends to clarify the state of the world and individuals tend to possess more certain attitudes (cf. Alvarez and Brehm, 2002), with this also potentially varying across groups. Because we lack individual-level certainty measures, we model the variability in responses to our measure of carceral state attitude via heteroskedastic regression (Alvarez and Brehm, 2002). We estimate the same linear models predicting carceral state attitude as before but now also model opinion variance using the same predictors. Direct experiences offer information and the remaining covariates, in our view, provide potential competing considerations for holding positive or negative judgments of the carceral state which could affect the error variance (Alvarez and Brehm, 2002). If direct experiences increase certainty, then the Bayesian framework predicts a reduction in the variance of responses as experiences increases. But we also note that increased information could also increase response variance through ambivalence. Recent direct experiences may introduce new considerations which conflict with individuals' priors. Consequently, those with more recent experiences in fact show greater opinion variability because people have irreconcilable beliefs about the carceral state which some resolve in one direction and others resolve opposite (Alvarez and Brehm, 2002).

We report the results by racial background in Table A.10 and gender in Table A.11. The top panels in each table replicate the models predicting attitude levels. The bottom panels feature our quantities of interest by linking direct experiences and attitude variance. The estimates in column 1 of Table A.10 indicate that direct experiences reduce attitude variance for Black Americans, but insignificantly so ($p = .66$). This is consistent with the Bayesian framework and also our supposition the Black Americans have strong initial beliefs about the carceral state. But the results for White Americans run counter. Di-

Table A.10: Race

	Black		White	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
Direct Experiences	0.119	(0.013)*	0.181	(0.012)*
Racial Resentment	-0.280	(0.012)*	-0.295	(0.007)*
Peers with Felony Convictions	0.067	(0.008)*	0.102	(0.008)*
Age	0.04	(0.012)*	-0.051	(0.007)*
Man	-0.021	(0.005)*	0.0003	(0.004)
Education	0.005	(0.012)	-0.015	(0.007)*
Income	0.006	(0.01)	-0.058	(0.006)*
Partisanship (Democrat)	0.066	(0.01)*	0.167	(0.006)*
Constant	0.686	(0.011)*	0.596	(0.008)*
Variance				
Direct Experiences	-0.058	(0.132)	0.354	(0.115)*
Racial Resentment	0.551	(0.118)*	0.166	(0.066)*
Peers with Felony Convictions	-0.064	(0.076)	0.165	(0.07)*
Age	-0.135	(0.123)	-0.058	(0.068)
Man	0.055	(0.054)	0.042	(0.036)
Education	0.091	(0.116)	0.046	(0.072)
Income	0.012	(0.101)	-0.168	(0.064)*
Partisanship (Democrat)	0.06	(0.095)	0.133	(0.056)*
Constant	-4.171	(0.111)*	-4.046	(0.073)*
N	3041		8050	

rect experiences reliably increase response variance ($p = .003$), at odds with the Bayesian notion of information increasing certainty. This pattern, however, is consistent with ambivalence (Alvarez and Brehm, 2002) where individuals have trouble selecting among competing predispositions to make a policy choice. Given our view that White Americans have little information about the carceral state, and what they do have is positive given their position in the racial hierarchy, we find this likely. Recent direct experiences provide information contradicting Whites' priors, leading them to adjust their attitudes on average but with some Whites relying more on this new information and some less, producing wider response variability.

Table A.11: Gender

	Black				White			
	Women		Men		Women		Men	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
Direct Experiences	0.127	(0.02)*	0.113	(0.017)*	0.196	(0.015)*	0.15	(0.022)*
Racial Resentment	-0.26	(0.016)*	-0.296	(0.019)*	-0.291	(0.008)*	-0.304	(0.014)*
Peers with Felony Convictions	0.081	(0.01)*	0.05	(0.011)*	0.099	(0.009)*	0.108	(0.014)*
Age	0.017	(0.016)	0.068	(0.019)*	-0.042	(0.008)*	-0.075	(0.013)*
Education	0.006	(0.016)	-0.004	(0.018)	-0.019	(0.008)*	-0.002	(0.013)
Income	0.016	(0.014)	-0.003	(0.015)	-0.055	(0.007)*	-0.065	(0.012)*
Partisanship (Democrat)	0.048	(0.013)*	0.087	(0.015)*	0.168	(0.007)*	0.168	(0.011)*
Constant	0.691	(0.015)*	0.662	(0.016)*	0.59	(0.009)*	0.612	(0.015)*
Variance								
Direct Experiences	-0.103	(0.211)	-0.031	(0.172)	0.238	(0.143)	0.624	(0.196)*
Racial Resentment	0.718	(0.16)*	0.367	(0.177)*	0.033	(0.078)	0.481	(0.126)*
Peers with Felony Convictions	-0.065	(0.105)	-0.087	(0.111)	0.223	(0.082)*	-0.028	(0.139)
Age	-0.288	(0.164)	-0.026	(0.191)	-0.005	(0.08)	-0.2	(0.134)
Education	0.034	(0.163)	0.133	(0.17)	-0.067	(0.085)	0.315	(0.135)*
Income	-0.134	(0.144)	0.193	(0.144)	-0.147	(0.076)	-0.237	(0.118)*
Partisanship (Democrat)	-0.054	(0.129)	0.227	(0.142)	0.115	(0.067)	0.201	(0.104)
Constant	-4.028	(0.15)*	-4.274	(0.16)*	-3.935	(0.086)*	-4.285	(0.143)*
N	1644		1397		5808		2242	

Table A.11 provides complementary information. Direct experiences reduce response variance for both Black women and Black men, though both differences are insignificant. Likewise, while this effect is stronger for Black women, consistent with our expectation that they possess weaker initial attitudes and learn more attitudinally consistent information, the difference is insignificant. For our White respondents, direct experiences increase response variance but only reliably so for men ($p = .002$). These differences again suggest that information functions to reduce uncertainty for Black Americans and increase ambivalence for White Americans. The asymmetry among White Americans likely corresponds with expectations of gender differences in legal socialization (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999). White men have unique beliefs about the carceral state serving them given their elevated status across racial and gender hierarchies. Thus information provided by more recent experiences increases ambivalence by introducing greater decision conflict when selecting among existing predispositions to reach a judgment about the carceral state.

Taken together, the results point to direct experiences having an information effect dependent on group membership. Recent experiences increase attitude certainty among Black Americans, and especially Black women, but reduces certainty among White Americans, and particularly White men. These patterns complement our preceding results by showing not just how attitudes differ on average, but also how the variance in opinion depends on the information people have on hand and how it does or does not help them use existing orientations to form an attitude.

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