

Reading Guide 3

Dixon, T. L. (2006). "He was a Black guy": How news's misrepresentation of crime creates fear of Blacks. In R. A. Lind (Ed.), *Race/gender/media: Considering diversity across audiences, content, and producers* (pp. 24-30). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

1. What was the primary purpose of this research project?

This project wants to examine how stereotypes in the news are relayed into everyday thoughts. Specifically focusing on racial aspects of crime and how it is translated from the media into society and its perceptions.

2. Define the terms listed below. For this question only, it's ok to use quotations from the article.

Cognitive accessibility: **people use mental shortcuts to make social judgments.**

Spreading activation: **Stereotypes form an associative network of related ideas or schemas linked in memory, and activating one idea spreads to other linked notions.**

3. What research method (type of study) did the author use?

This was an experiment. Participants were asked to watch news stories and then answer a questionnaire. The main focus in the videos was to examine the images of the perpetrators, both black and white with no differences in the presentation of the photos. So this was a visual participation experiment that followed up with a survey.

4. Who made up the sample?

There were 147 undergraduate students. This study consisted of both females and males who were white.

5. You may notice that this book chapter doesn't have any tables for the results. Create one by filling out ALL of the blue cells in the table below. First, enter the independent variables (the three conditions) in the row right under "Condition." You can find these in the hypotheses or methods sections. Then find the means (the averages for each condition) reported in the results section for each of the two dependent variables. Enter those in the bottom two rows.

	Condition		
	majority black suspects	majority white suspects	race not identified
	Mean	Mean	Mean
"Support for the Police"	4.61	4.25	4.94
"Misremembering a Suspect as Being Black"	4.11	3.04	4.04

6. What were the author's main conclusions?

In both cases of supporting the police and misremembering a suspect as being black, there were no significant differences between the categories of majority black suspects and race not identified. These two categories also showed more support towards police. This study also showed that people tend to assume the perpetrator/criminal is African american. This supports the idea that there is a link in people's minds between black and criminals.

7. Based on the theory of cognitive accessibility, what other media stereotypes might influence viewers' judgments and behaviors? (There are many stereotypes to choose from. Just name a few and how you think they might affect consumers..)

Schema theory might influence these stereotypes because you are looking to group these racial.ethnic roles in order to organize them in the social world. Another stereotype would be priming. The media controls how you see a specific race by linking them to other concepts. If you see African Americans being overrepresented in the media as criminals, then that is what you will begin to link them to.

8. What limitations did the author acknowledge? Can you think of any others?

There was one overall question the researchers said they did not acknowledge. That was to examine what contributes to strengthening or weakening of these effects of race linked to crimes. I think this is a very broad limitation so I cannot really think of any others.

9. Were you convinced of the authors' conclusions? Why or why not?

I was convinced of the author's conclusion. This seems to be something you can observe in society by just listening to the news. I believe this is an issue that people think of when watching the news and there doesn't necessarily have to be research done to prove these stereotypes. The overrepresentation simply proves that.

10. Is there anything about this book chapter that you found hard to understand (for Dr. Kretz to explain)?

I would've liked there to be a specific outlined research question.