Spotting a Criminal: Examining Perceived Racial Typicality in Violent and Nonviolent Crimes

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As humans, we rely on our eyes to help us understand the world around us. While this seems like the ultimate asset, it is also detrimental because our eyes are often deceiving. Specifically, when we use visual information to draw conclusions about other people, our perceptions are shaped by what we see, and sometimes such information is misleading and inaccurate. The present study's purpose is to identify how visual information (i.e. race) influences our judgement of criminals who have committed violent and non-violent felony crimes. Participants were shown lineups containing headshots of four male criminals, which varied in race (i.e. Black, White, Asian, and Latino), and they were asked to determine which criminal they believed was responsible for 10 violent felony crimes and 10 non-violent felony crimes. I hypothesized that the nature of the crime would impact participants' perception of who committed each crime. Furthermore, I predicted that the amount of time it would take for participants to determine a suspect would vary by crime, and that participants' race would influence who they found responsible for each crime. The findings indicated that racial typicality was evident, and it is possible that new patterns of racial typicality among minority groups are also emerging.

Stereotypes play a prominent role in our everyday lives. Without thinking about it, we often categorize people and make assumptions about their character simply as a result of the visual information we observe about them. The problem with this is that it leads to biased perceptions and inaccuracies in our assessments of other people, which can be detrimental in many ways. Stereotypes are especially damaging in a criminal context because they can lead to wrongful convictions and unfair sentencing, as well as misidentifications in a criminal lineup, which affect thousands of people who are unfairly implicated in the justice process each year.

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Perceived racial typicality describes the stereotypes that are often made regarding assumptions about the behavior and attitudes of people belonging to different races. Researchers in this field focus on crimes that are perceived as "stereotypical" of people belonging to various races. Primarily, this research pertains to differences between Black and White criminals and often emphasizes the attribution of guilt in criminal trials. Simulated jury trial studies have repeatedly suggested that there is a difference in the treatment of Black and White criminal offenders based on the crimes which they are perceived as "likely" to have committed. Specifically, Black defendants who commit illegal acts involving drugs, harming another person, and stealing are more likely to be found guilty and to be punished more harshly than offenders of another race (Jones & Kaplan, 2003; Sunnafranks & Fontes, 1983). On the other hand, attributions of guilt and harsher sentences tend to be made for White offenders when they commit white collar crimes (e.g. fraud, forgery, embezzlement, etc.), crimes against women and children, and sex crimes (Gordon, Bindrim, McNicholas, & Walden, 1988; Jones & Kaplan, 2003; Sunnafranks & Fontes, 1983).

Perceived stereotypicality has also been examined in eyewitness testimony and lineup identification. It is widely accepted that people make associations and develop attributional labels about faces according to their own schematic categories (Klatzky, Martin, & Kane, 1982). These categories are likely the result of subjective experience and expectations about others' dispositions based on the presence or absence of certain facial features, as evidenced by the 'What is Beautiful is Good' effect – the idea that attractive people are perceived as having positive character qualities and unattractive people are perceived as having less positive qualities (Dion, Berscheid, & Walster, 1972). The problem these facial attribution associations pose, according to Kleider, Cavrak, and Knuycky (2012), is that people may be more influenced by facial structure than by skin color when assessing stereotypicality in witness lineups.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to tease apart the effects of various physical features, such as attractiveness and skin color, because they are processed simultaneously as critical pieces of visual information. Furthermore, they are both used to assess the extent to which someone "looks" like a criminal; this means it is nearly impossible to determine whether facial structure or skin color alone has more of an impact on whether people appear as criminals or not. However, it has been made evident that there is a relevant difference in facial processing for Black and White faces. That is, the more "Black" an individual appears (e.g. the more stereotypical facial features they possess), the more likely that person is to be identified as a criminal in a witness lineup, a finding that is both frightening and detrimental to the criminal justice process (Kleider et al., 2012). Moreover, people tend to label those with stereotypically "Black" facial features as criminals much more quickly than those with stereotypically "White" facial features. Perhaps, this is a result of racially stereotypical facial features breeding a sense of familiarity, and thus leading to misidentification of the correct criminal in a lineup (Knuycky et al., 2013).

Despite these findings, little attention has been paid to other racial and ethnic minority groups, such as Latinos and Asians, which is perhaps a shortcoming of the literature that currently exists on perceived typicality in criminal contexts. The present study aimed to identify how people make determinations about who is most likely to commit violent and non-violent felonies when given four different offenders to choose from in a criminal lineup: White, Black, Asian, and Latino. Additionally, the present study included a time element, meaning that participants' response times were recorded for evaluating each crime and analyzed to determine whether it took less or more time to select some races over others. Another factor differentiating the present study from that of previous researchers is the present study sought to uncover implicit associations and stereotypes by mitigating contextual effects of each crime (i.e. not including a crime scenario, but rather just a crime with its corresponding definition).

In concordance with previous findings on perceived racial typicality in crimes (Gordon, et al., 1988; Jones & Kaplan, 2003; Sunnafranks & Fontes, 1983), I wanted to know whether there are differences in the perception of who committed a crime relative to the nature of the crime. Specifically, I hypothesized that participants will attribute criminal responsibility for drug crimes, violent crimes against people, and stealing crimes (e.g. possession of a controlled substance, assaulting a police officer, elder abuse, murder, robbery, and unlawful use of a weapon) to Black suspects more than to White suspects or Asian and Latino suspects. I also predicted that White suspects will be selected more frequently than other suspects for white collar crimes (e.g. forgery and money laundering), crimes against children and women (e.g. kidnapping, child abuse, and possession of child pornography, and domestic assault), and sex crimes (e.g. rape and patronizing prostitution) than suspects of other races. Overall, I believed that Black and White suspects would be selected more often than Asian and Latino suspects for all crimes.

In addition, I wanted to investigate whether the amount of time it takes to determine a suspect varies by crime. Since Knuycky et al. (2013) found that time is a relevant factor when evaluating faces and making criminal attributions, I assumed that participants will have a longer response time, on average, when selecting the suspect in violent crimes than in non-violent crimes. I also predicted that participants' average response time would be longer for Black suspects than for White suspects, regardless of the crime.

Lastly, I sought to examine whether the race of a participant had impact on whom they select as responsible for each crime. I hypothesized that participants would be less likely to attribute criminal responsibility to suspects with whom they share their racial identity. These variables were assessed using an online survey.

Method

Participants

Participants for this study were recruited from several sources, including social media sites such as Reddit and Facebook. Additionally, participants were recruited through the Psi Chi website (www.psichi.org); Psi Chi is the international honors society for undergraduate psychology students, and one of the benefits of membership is posting and participating in research studies on the site. Finally, participants were recruited through the Lindenwood Participant Pool (LPP), which is a subject pool at Lindenwood University that allows students to participate in undergraduate research studies for bonus credit.

In total, recruitment efforts yielded a sample of 105 participants. There were 76 women and 28 men, ranging in age from 18 to 73 years (M_{age} = 27.2, SD = 11.0). Most participants were White/Caucasian American (76.2%), but the sample also included Black/African American (8.6%), XX Hispanic/Hispanic American (7.6%), XX Asian/Asian American (1.9%), bi-racial individuals or other individuals (5.7%). Most participants identified as having at least a two-year college degree (56.2%) and being employed full or part time (53.3%) or maintaining student status (33.3%). Non-LPP participants were given the opportunity to enter a drawing for a $25 Amazon gift certificate. Participants recruited through the LPP were granted one bonus credit toward a course for participating in the study.

Materials

Recruitment materials. Participants who were recruited through Reddit, Facebook, and the Psi Chi website were provided with a study link and recruitment description indicating that they would be asked to quickly determine who they believed the criminal to be in a lineup for several different crimes. LPP participants were recruited through a link, which was posted on Sona Systems, using a similar recruitment description about the study (see Appendix A).

Suspect pictures. Pictures of suspects were headshots provided by the Chicago Face Database (Ma, Cornell, & Wittenbrink, 2015). All pictures showed young men with short hair, little to no facial hair, a neutral facial expression, and no outstanding or unusual facial features. Pictures of 10 White men, 10 Black men, 10 Asian men, and 10 Latino men were used for the study (see Appendix B).

Survey. The online Qualtrics survey in the present study consisted of 20 questions. Each question showed the name of a violent or non-violent felony crime, a brief description of the crime, and four pictures of suspects. Violent crimes included arson, kidnapping, assaulting a police officer, murder, child abuse, rape, robbery, domestic assault, elder abuse, and unlawful use of a weapon. The violent crimes were offset with equally severe, non-violent crimes, such as vandalism, stalking, driving while intoxicated, patronizing prostitution, trespassing, forgery, possession of a controlled substance, leaving the scene of an accident, possession of child pornography, and money laundering.

Each lineup consisted of one White man, one Black man, one Asian man, and one Latino man, from which the participant could choose a suspect responsible for the associated crime. It should be noted that the suspects' pictures were randomized and used for lineups in two different crimes, but the order in which those pictures were presented varied. For example, for the first crime, vandalism, the order of the suspects was as follows: Asian, Black, White, Latino. For the second crime, Arson, suspects were presented as Latino, Asian, Black, and then White. Suspects in the third lineup were presented in the order of White, Latino, Asian, and Black. In the fourth lineup, they were shown as Black, White, Latino, and Asian, and so on. Systematically manipulating the order of the races as they were presented in each lineup helped to serve as a control for mitigating potential order effects (see Appendix C).

Procedure

Upon accessing the link to the survey, participants were asked to read and agree to the electronic consent statement. They were subsequently redirected to the survey and were provided with a prompt explaining the task of identifying the suspects in a series of crimes as quickly as possible. After answering all 20 survey questions, participants were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire on their gender, age, racial identity, education, employment status, profession, and income. Following this, participants were provided with a debriefing statement, which explained the purpose and method of the study. Non-LPP participants were then redirected to another page containing a link for the option to enter their email address for the Amazon gift certificate drawing.

Results

My first hypothesis was that there would be a significant difference in the perception of who committed certain crimes, based on the type of crime. Specifically, I believed Black suspects would be selected more frequently for stereotypical "Black" crimes – that is, those involving drugs, violence, and theft. A frequency count indicated that Black suspects had a selection rate of 23.5%, White suspects had a rate of 35.7%, Latino suspects had a rate of 22.7%, and Asian suspects had a rate of 18.1% for these crimes. A 4 (race) x 3 (crime category) chi-squared analysis was conducted to determine whether suspect race – White, Black, Asian, Latino – and crime category – drugs, violence, and theft – had a significant interaction. The results revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the selection rate between these groups, χ^2 (8, $N = 105$) = 39.4, $p < 0.01$. However, given that White suspects had the highest selection rate for these crimes, my hypothesis was not supported.

I also thought White suspects would be selected more for stereotypical "White" crimes – those involving financial matters, women and children, and sexual conduct. For these crimes,

White suspects had the highest selection rate (47.0%), followed by Latino suspects (20.1%), Asian suspects (17.9%), and Black suspects (15.0%). I conducted another 4 (race) x 3 (crime category) chi-squared analysis, which indicated that there was also a significant difference in the selection rates between these groups, χ^2 (8, $N = 105$) = 82.1, $p < 0.01$. Because I believed that White suspects would have the highest selection rate for stereotypical "White" crimes, and the chi-squared analysis results confirmed that, my hypothesis was supported.

I also predicted that Black and White suspects would be selected more frequently than Latino and Asian suspects, regardless of the crime type. Descriptive results indicated that, when combined, Black and White suspects had a selection rate of 61.8%, and Asian and Latino suspects had a selection rate of 38.2% for all crimes. A 2 (racial group) x 20 (crime) chi-squared analysis revealed that the difference in the overall selection rate between these groups was statistically significant, χ^2 (19, $N = 105$) = 131.9, $p < 0.01$. Therefore, given that Black and White suspects had the higher selection rate, my hypothesis was supported.

Additionally, I hypothesized that participants would take a longer time to select the criminals whom they believed to be responsible for violent crimes. The average response time for non-violent crimes ($M = 8.62$ s, $SD = 10.11$) was not much higher than the average response time for violent crimes ($M = 8.53$ s, $SD = 10.19$). To determine whether there was a meaningful difference in response times for violent and non-violent crimes, I conducted a paired-samples t-test, which yielded no significance, $t(104) = 1.04$, p = 0.30, meaning that my hypothesis was not supported.

I also predicted participants would have longer average response times for Black suspects than for White suspects, regardless of the severity of the associated crime. Overall, participants actually had a longer average response time when selecting White suspects ($M = 9.48$ s, $SD = 9.25$) than when selecting Black suspects ($M = 8.91$ s, $SD = 5.09$). A paired-

samples t-test indicated that this difference was not significant, $t(104) = -0.62$, $p = 0.54$, and thus my hypothesis was not supported.

Furthermore, I hypothesized that participants' race would have an impact on their selections for each crime; that is, Black participants would be less likely to choose Black suspects, White participants would be less likely to choose White suspects, and so on. This was tested using a 4 (suspect race) x 5 (participant race) chi-squared analysis. The results demonstrated that there was not a statistically significant effect of participant race on suspect selection, χ^2 (12, $N = 105$) = 26.08, $p = 0.01$; this hypothesis was not supported.

Finally, a post-hoc analysis was also conducted to identify typicality patterns by race and crime. A frequency count showed that the overall selection rate for all crimes was highest for White suspects (44.4%), followed by Latino suspects (22.5%), Black suspects (17.3%), and Asian suspects (15.8%). A 4 (race) x 20 (crime) chi-squared analysis demonstrated that there was a statistically significant difference in selection rates based on suspect race and the crime committed. Based on this finding, it is worth noting that White suspects were selected most for stalking (72.4%), arson (64.4%), child abuse (61.0%), possession of child pornography (60.0%), driving while intoxicated (52.4%), patronizing prostitution (50.5%), rape (50.0%), domestic assault (49.5%), kidnapping (47.8%), elder abuse (46.7%), assaulting a police officer (42.9%), possession of a controlled substance (35.2%), unlawful use of a weapon (33.3%), and leaving the scene of an accident (31.7%). Latino suspects were selected most frequently for vandalism (50.5%) and murder (42.0%). Black suspects were selected most for trespassing (45.8%) and robbery (37.1%), and Asian suspects were selected most for financial crimes – money laundering (33.7%) and forgery (33.7%).

Discussion

The present study's findings demonstrated that patterns of racial typicality were evident in the context of perceived criminality among different races of suspects. Although somewhat contrary to the findings of Jones and Kaplan (2013), Black suspects were not selected most frequently for stereotypical "Black" crimes involving drugs (i.e. possession of a controlled substance) or violence against another person (i.e. elder abuse, assaulting a police officer, murder, and unlawful use of a weapon), but they were selected most frequently for robbery, which is considered a racially typical crime (Sunnafranks & Fontes, 1983). Similarly, consistent with other researchers' findings (Gordon et al., 1988; Jones & Kaplan, 2003; Sunnafranks & Fontes, 1983), White suspects were selected most for stereotypical "White" crimes involving acts against women and children (i.e. child abuse, possession of child pornography, domestic assault, and kidnapping) and sexual conduct (i.e. patronizing prostitution and rape), but they were not selected most for white-collar crimes, such as forgery and money laundering. Perhaps these findings can be explained by the fact that White suspects had the highest selection rate overall, making them more likely to be selected for both "Black" and "White" crimes than other suspects.

It is also worth recognizing that the present study yielded results that suggest new patterns of perceived racial typicality may also be emerging. For instance, Latino suspects were selected most frequently for the crimes of vandalism and murder. Although there is little empirical evidence that is useful in explaining this finding, it is possible that popular culture is contributing to this pattern in perception; particularly, the media may portray Latinos in certain parts of the world as being associated with gang-related activity, such as vandalism and homicide. Furthermore, although Asian suspects had the lowest selection rate overall, they were selected most frequently for both white-collar felonies that were included in the study: forgery

and money laundering. The association between Asian suspects and financial crimes is unclear, but it still suggests that participants relied on their own schematic categories to determine that Asian suspects were most culpable for these crimes, an explanation that is consistent with that of Klatzky et al.'s (1982) ideas regarding perceived racial typicality.

Although Black and White suspects had an overall higher selection rate than Asian and Latino suspects, the implicit measure of response time did not yield significant results in the context of crime type or suspect race, despite previous findings of Knuycky et al. (2013). As mentioned, there were very small differences in the average response times for violent and non-violent crimes, as well as for Black and White suspects. What this suggests is that crime severity and suspect race may not have a substantial effect on how long it takes for people to determine who looks most responsible for committing a crime.

I also found that participant race did not have an effect on suspect selection by race. That is to say that participants were no more or less likely to select suspects with whom they shared their racial identity. However, it should be noted that the actual p value was slightly higher than the alpha level of 0.01, which suggests that, had I recruited more participants, it is possible that my initial hypothesis would have been supported at this alpha level.

The present study had several potential limitations. For example, only 105 participants were recruited. While this is not a small sample size, my findings would be more generalizable with a larger group of participants. With a larger sample size, it is also possible that I would have found significance for some of my refuted hypotheses, such as that regarding the effect of participant race on suspect selection.

Additionally, it is possible that the present study's design was flawed in a few ways. First, no context was provided regarding the criminal act. To avoid confounding the results, I decided not to provide a detailed account of the crime because I wanted participants to make

quick judgments about culpability based on visual information alone; specifically, I did not want

participants to use details of the occurrence to make their decisions about which suspect

committed each crime. Secondly, it is possible that the race of certain suspects may not have

been transient enough. For example, it may have been difficult for participants to determine

whether some suspects were Asian or Latino due to the presentation of similar skin tones or other

facial characteristics, whereas it is likely that participants did not have much difficulty

differentiating Black and White suspects. Third, it is also possible that my crime list

was ineffective or inadequate in some way (e.g. too many crimes used, lack of diversity in

perceived severity, unfamiliarity, etc).

Lastly, some participants who were recruited through Reddit reported feelings of

discomfort and discontentment in "profiling" suspects for certain crimes; a few of these

participants stated that they were so uncomfortable in completing the survey that they were

unable to do so. This could be a potential result of two factors. On one hand, Reddit indicates

that its users are moderately liberal, which implies that an underlying liberal bias may have

affected some participants' perspective and ability to finish the survey. Alternatively, it is

possible that, since there is a general awareness of race issues in modern society, especially in

the United States, some individuals may generally feel less comfortable than others in

participating in racially-charged conversations or completing race-oriented research studies.

The present study has provided at least some evidence that people assign stereotypes to

criminals based on their appearance, and more specifically, their race. Going forward,

researchers should continue studying the effects of visual information, such as gender and facial

features, on stereotyping and the perception of culpability in a criminal context. It is important

that we continue our efforts to identify flaws within our justice system, and to find ways to

mitigate their effects, so we are able to preserve the fairness and equality of the criminal justice process in the United States.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Materials

LPP Recruitment Description:

"Do you think you have what it takes to be a private investigator? Well, several crimes have been committed recently, and we need your help to figure out who committed each one! As a participant, you will be asked to spot the criminals responsible for 20 different crimes as quickly as possible. The study should take no more than 10-15 minutes of your time. Good luck!"

Non-LPP Recruitment Description:

"Do you think you have what it takes to be a private investigator? Well, several crimes have been committed recently, and we need your help to figure out who committed each one! As a participant, you will be asked to spot the criminals responsible for 20 different crimes as quickly as possible.

This online psychology study is for my Independent Research Lab course at Lindenwood University. It is completely anonymous, it should take no more than 10-15 minutes of your time, and upon completing it, you may enter to win a drawing for $25 Amazon gift certificate for completing it!
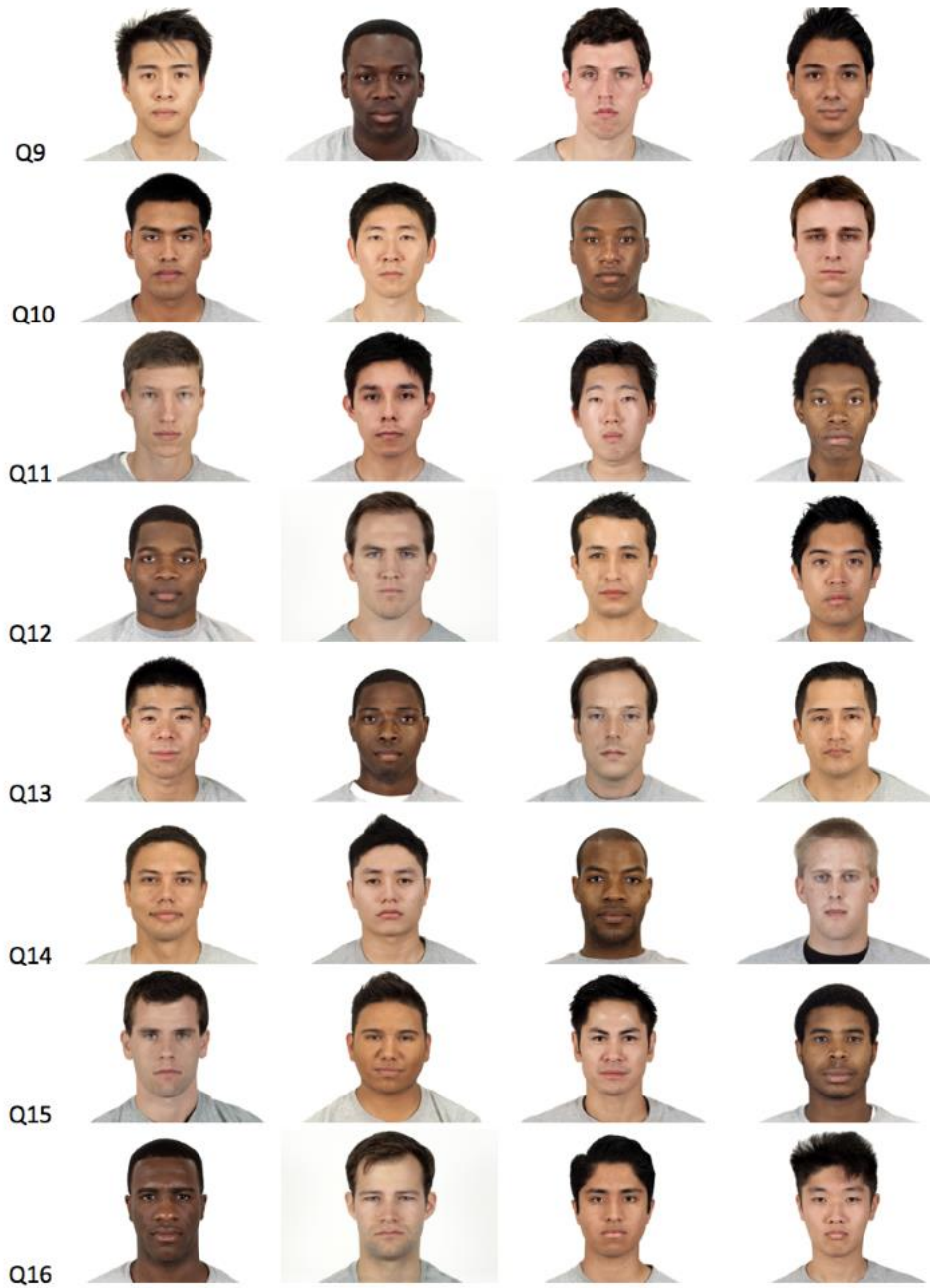
Thank you, and good luck!"

Appendix B

Suspect Pictures/Lineups (Ma et al., 2015)
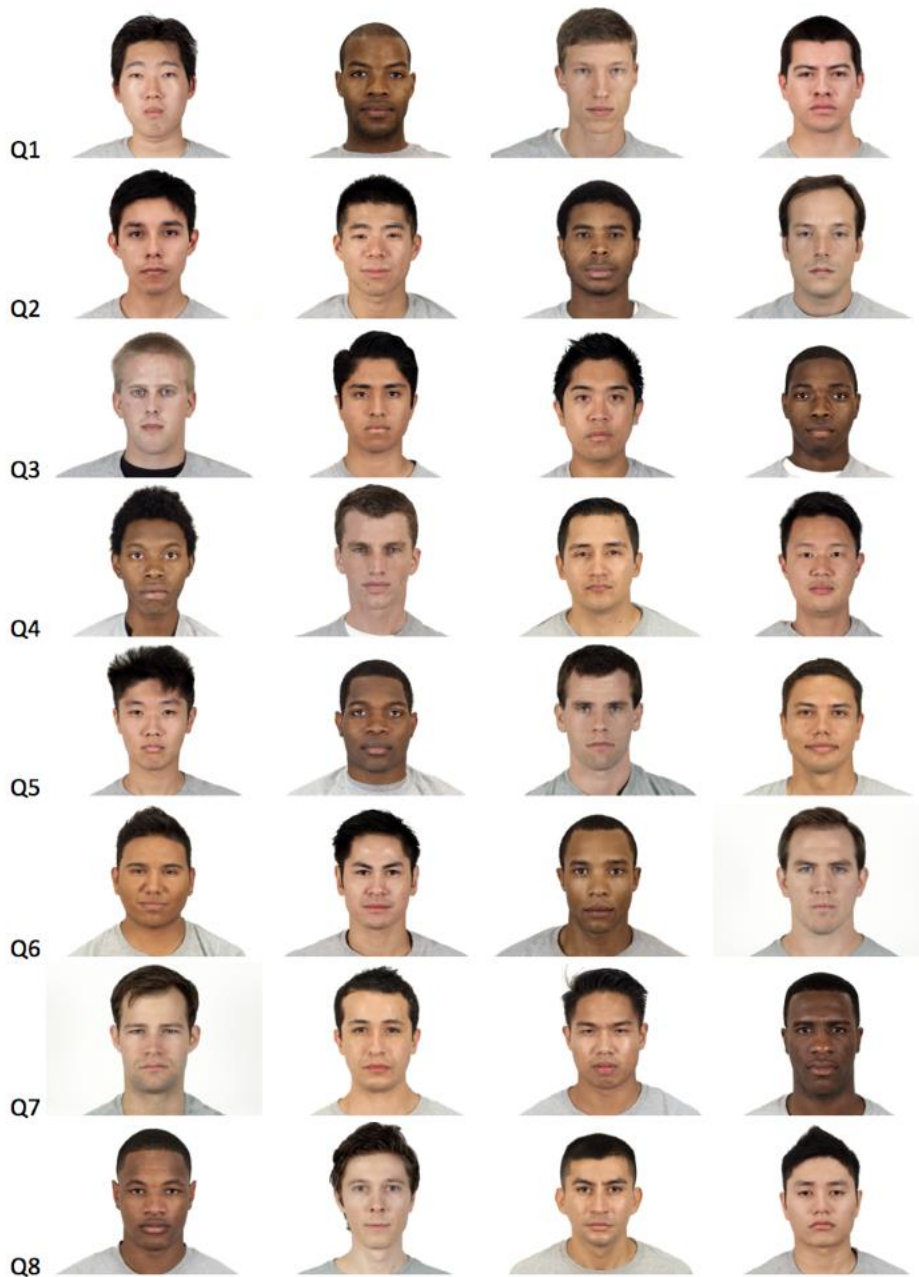
Appendix B cont.

Suspect Pictures/Lineups (Ma et al., 2015)

Appendix B cont.

Suspect Pictures/Lineups (Ma et al., 2015)

Appendix C

Survey

CAN YOU SPOT A CRIMINAL?

A series of crimes have been committed by several individuals recently, and we need your help figuring out who they are! In the following questions, you will be shown a crime and its definition. As the investigator in each case, it is your responsibility to identify the criminal you think is responsible for each crime! Only one criminal can be responsible for each crime committed, so use your best judgement to figure out who it is! Also, remember your performance will be timed, so be sure not to take too long! Good luck!

(1) VANDALISM
Knowingly vandalizing, defacing, or damaging institutional property, such as that of a religious, educational, military, or government building or structure

O   O   O   O

(2) ARSON
Knowingly damaging a building or inhabitable structure by starting a fire or causing an explosion

O   O   O   O

Appendix C cont.

Survey

(3) STALKING

Engaging in behavior without a clear purpose that would cause a reasonable person under the circumstances to be frightened, intimidated, or emotionally distressed

O   O   O   O

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(4) KIDNAPPING

Unlawfully removing another person without his or her consent from one place to another

O   O   O   O

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(5) DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED (DWI)

Operating a motor vehicle while in an intoxicated or drugged condition

O   O   O   O

Appendix C cont.

Survey

(6) ASSAULTING A POLICE OFFICER
Knowingly causing or attempting to cause physical injury to a law enforcement officer

O   O   O   O

(7) PATRONIZING PROSTITUTION
Giving something of value to another person as compensation for engaging in a sexual act

O   O   O   O

(8) MURDER
Intentionally and deliberately killing another person without a legally justified reason

O   O   O   O

Appendix C cont.

Survey

(9) TRESPASSING

Knowingly, unlawfully enters into a building or inhabitable structure without permission

O   O   O   O

(10) CHILD ABUSE

Intentionally inflicting physical, sexual, or mental injury against a child

O   O   O   O

(11) FORGERY

Making, completing, altering, or authenticating writing so that it appears to have been made by another person

O   O   O   O

Appendix C cont.

Survey

(12) RAPE

Having sexual intercourse with another person who is incapacitated, incapable of consent, or by the use of force

O   O   O   O

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(13) POSSESSION OF A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE

Knowingly possessing a controlled substance (illegal illicit drugs or chemicals)

O   O   O   O

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(14) ROBBERY

Forcibly stealing property and threatening to harm or harming another person, with or without the use of a deadly weapon

O   O   O   O

Appendix C cont.

Survey

(15) LEAVING THE SCENE OF AN ACCIDENT

Using a motor vehicle to flee the place of damage or injury following a motor vehicle accident

O   O   O   O

(16) DOMESTIC ASSAULT

Intentionally causing physical injury to a domestic victim with or without the use of a deadly weapon, or by choking or strangulation

O   O   O   O

(17) POSSESSION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Knowingly possessing any obscene material that has a child as one of its participants or portrays what appears to be a child as an observer or participant of sexual conduct

O   O   O   O

Appendix C cont.

Survey

(18) ELDER ABUSE

Attempting to kill, or knowingly causing or attempting to cause serious physical injury to any person 60 years of age or older

O   O   O   O

(19) MONEY LAUNDERING

Conducting or attempting to conduct a monetary transaction with the purpose of promoting criminal activity

O   O   O   O

(20) UNLAWFUL USE OF A WEAPON

Carrying a knife, a firearm, or any other weapon readily capable of lethal use in a concealed manner on one's person

O   O   O   O

Appendix C cont.

Survey

DEMOGRAPHICS

Q1. Your gender:
     o Male
     o Female
     o Other, please specify:
     o Prefer not to answer

Q2. Your age: _____

Q3. Your racial identity (please select all that apply):
     o Black/African American
     o White/Caucasian American
     o Hispanic/Hispanic American
     o American Indian or Alaskan Native
     o Asian/Asian American

Q4. The highest level of education you have completed:
     o Less than a high school diploma
     o High school degree or equivalent (e.g. GED)
     o Some college, no degree
     o Associate degree (e.g. AA, AS)
     o Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS)
     o Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, MEd)
     o Professional degree (e.g. MD, DDS, DVM)
     o Doctorate (e.g. PhD, EdD)

Q5. Your current employment status (please select all that apply):
     o Employed full time (40 or more hours per week)
     o Employed part time (up to 39 hours per week)
     o Unemployed and currently looking for work
     o Unemployed and not currently looking for work
     o Student
     o Retired
     o Homemaker
     o Self-employed
     o Unable to work

Q6. Your current profession: _____

Q7. Your annual income:
     o Less than $20,000
     o $20,000 to $34,999
     o $35,000 to $49,999
     o $50,000 to $74,999
     o $75,000 to $99,999
     o Over $100,000

Appendix C cont.

Survey

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Thank you for your participation! The present study was conducted in order to examine perceived racial typicality of felony offenses. Participants were asked to make judgments about which "criminal" was responsible for 10 violent crimes (arson, kidnapping, assaulting a police officer, murder, child abuse, rape, robbery, domestic assault, elder abuse, and unlawful use of a weapon), as well as for 10 non-violent crimes (vandalism, stalking, driving while intoxicated, patronizing prostitution, trespassing, forgery, possession of a controlled substance, leaving the scene of an accident, possession of child pornography, and money laundering). For each crime, participants were presented with pictures of four offenders varying in race (White, Black, Asian, and Latino), and participants' response times were recorded to determine which offenses were more difficult to answer.

I believe that participants will take a longer time to determine which suspect is responsible for committing violent felonies. I predict that participants will attribute criminal responsibility for violent crimes to Black suspects more frequently than to White suspects. Furthermore, I hypothesize that White suspects will be selected more frequently than those of other races in white-collar crimes (such as forgery and money laundering), crimes against children (kidnapping, child abuse, and possession of child pornography), and sex crimes (rape, patronizing prostitution). Additionally, I assume that Asian and Latino suspects will be selected less frequently than Black and White suspects for all crimes. Lastly, I predict that participants will be less likely to attribute criminal responsibility to suspects with whom they share their racial identity.

One potential benefit of this study is that its findings may provide insight into the perception of race and crime in American society. Specifically, it may reveal stereotypes associated with race in the context of criminality, which is a highly relevant issue. In a broader way, this research may indicate that peoples' judgements of character are, at least initially, implicitly influenced by visual information pertaining to appearance.

Please note that the purpose of this study was not to obtain or evaluate your individual results; rather, we are only interested in the overall findings based on aggregate data. No identifying information about you will be associated with any of the findings, nor will it be possible for us to trace your responses on an individual basis.

If you are interested in obtaining the final results of this study, or if you have any questions or concerns regarding any portion of this study, please do not hesitate to let the researcher know now or in the future. Contact information can be found at the bottom of this letter.

Thank you again for your valuable contribution to this study.

Sincerely,

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Non-LPP participants will be re-directed to a second anonymous link after survey which asks for email address for gift certificate drawing. See below.
If you would like to be entered into a drawing for a $25 Amazon gift certificate, please enter your email address. This will not be connected to your survey responses. _____