


Left Out But “In Control”? Culture Variations in Perceived Control When Excluded by a Close Other

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Sasha Y. Kimel¹ , Dominik Mischkowski², Yuki Miyagawa³ ,
and Yu Niiya⁴ 

Abstract

Research and theorizing suggest two competing—yet untested—hypotheses for how European Americans’ and Asians’ feeling of being “in control” might differ when excluded by a close other (e.g., a good friend). Drawing on different national contexts (i.e., United States, Japan), cultural groups (i.e., Japanese, Asian/Asian Americans, European Americans), and exclusion paradigms (i.e., relived, in vivo), four separate experiments ($N = 2,662$) examined feelings of control when excluded by a close- or distant-other. A meta-analysis across these experiments indicated that Asians and Asian Americans felt more in control than European Americans when the excluder was a close other. In contrast, no consistent pattern emerged when the excluder was a distant other. This research has implications for cultural variations in aggressiveness as well as health and well-being following exclusion’s threat to perceived control.

Keywords

social exclusion, interdependence, culture, closeness, perceived control

When we are left out, someone else has determined our fate which often leaves us feeling powerless. We were unable to stop the exclusion from occurring and we may be incapable of fixing it as well (see Williams, 2007). Such an experience jeopardizes our basic human need to feel “in control” and able to exert influence (Zadro et al., 2004) which, in turn, can uniquely impact our well-being and physical health (see review by Williams & Zadro, 2005). Indeed, the feeling of losing control is related to increased aggressiveness (Williams, 2007), more negative emotions (Helzer & Jayawickreme, 2015), failure to achieve goals (Haase et al., 2012), and less adaptive coping (Dijkstra & Homan, 2016). Yet, despite these far-ranging implications and loss of control being a common indicator of social exclusion’s distress (see Williams, 2007), research on how exclusion specifically threatens control has largely focused on North Americans and Western Europeans—individuals socialized in independent contexts where value is placed on separation from others, individual achievements, and actions aimed at standing out (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Thus, whether exclusion’s impact on control might look different for other cultural groups remains unclear.

Research and theorizing suggest two rival—yet untested—hypotheses for how cultural context may shape feelings of control during exclusion. Unlike European Americans, Asians and Asian Americans tend to be socialized in interdependent contexts where value is placed on connection with others, group

achievements, and actions aimed at fitting in (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). This interdependent cultural orientation may have a unique impact on perceived control during exclusion. On the one hand, Asians and Asian Americans may experience *lower* perceived control than European Americans. For instance, because interdependently oriented individuals put more emphasis on maintaining social harmony (Triandis, 1995), being left out may feel particularly threatening, increasing feelings of helplessness and lack of control. Consistent with this idea, some research suggests that interdependently oriented individuals are more anxious about rejection (i.e., higher in rejection sensitivity; see Garris et al., 2011; Sato et al., 2014; Yamaguchi et al., 1995). On the other hand, Asians and Asian Americans may feel *more* in control than European Americans during exclusion. While this hypothesis may seem less obvious, considerably more research supports it. Indeed, this

¹Psychology Department, California State University at San Marcos, San Marcos, CA, USA

²Psychology Department, Ohio University, Athens, OH, USA

³Department of Psychology, Otomon Gakuin University, Osaka, Japan

⁴Hosei University, Faculty of Global and Interdisciplinary Studies, Tokyo, Japan

Corresponding Author:

Sasha Kimel, PhD, Psychology Department, California State University San Marcos, 333 S. Twin Oaks Valley Road, San Marcos, CA 92096, USA.
Email: skimel@csusm.edu

research suggests that interdependently oriented individuals may actually be less threatened by exclusion (see Graupmann et al., 2016; Pfundmair, Graupmann et al., 2015; Pfundmair, Aydin et al., 2015; Over & Uskul, 2016), potentially by being better able to call to mind their larger social network (see Uskul & Over, 2017). Yet, despite these conflicting hypotheses, the vast majority of existing research on exclusion that includes both independent and interdependent cultural groups has not specifically focused on perceived control, instead aggregating it with other human needs that are commonly threatened by exclusion (i.e., need for meaningful existence, self-esteem, and belonging; see Graupmann et al., 2016; Pfundmair, Aydin et al., 2015) or removing perceived control from the main analyses entirely (i.e., due to low Cronbach alphas; see Garris et al., 2011; Over & Uskul, 2016). Indeed, using an interdependence measure among a Chinese sample, it appears that just one culture and exclusion study analyzed the control subscale separately, finding no evidence of differences by cultural orientation (Ren et al., 2013). Thus, considerable uncertainty remains around how being left out may differentially shift Asians' and other interdependent groups' sense of control in particular. Consequently, whether loss of control's unique and harmful downstream consequences (see Williams & Zadro, 2005) may look differently for these culture groups also remains unclear.

Whereas two previous studies on exclusion from someone close (e.g., a good friend)—one involving Secular- and Orthodox-Jews, and the other, farmers and herders—found no differences in overall levels of threat between the independently and interdependently oriented groups (Uskul & Over, 2014; Yaakobi & Williams, 2016), cultural differences in feelings of control specifically may become particularly pronounced in either direction. Asians and Asian Americans may either feel *especially less* or *especially more* in control than European Americans because, here again, an interdependent orientation is likely to have a unique impact on perceived control when the exclusion originates from someone close. Indeed, interdependently oriented individuals tend to attach considerably greater importance to maintaining harmonious relationships with close others and members of their own group (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). As such, Asians and Asian Americans may feel especially helpless and out of control in the face of ruptured harmony with someone they feel close to. Providing some support for this first hypothesis, Japanese reported more negative emotions than European Americans in the wake of exclusion from members of their own group (e.g., those that shared their same race/ethnicity, nationality, gender and university; see Kimel et al., 2017, Study 2). Alternatively, Asians and Asian Americans may feel especially more “in control” given that both parties in such contexts are likely to be particularly motivated to repair close relationships (see Sato et al., 2014). Consistent with this latter hypothesis, unlike interdependently oriented individuals, past research indicates that independently oriented individuals intended to aggressively confront the excluder they felt close to (see Pfundmair, Graupmann et al., 2015, Study 1). Although such acts of

aggression might provide a momentary sense of control (Tedeschi, 2001), they are likely to further damage a close relationship (see Downey et al., 1998) and, in turn, ultimately leave one feeling powerless over their ability to fix it. However, since the existing research on culture differences in exclusion from close others has not explicitly examined perceived control, considerable uncertainty remains. While interdependently rather than independently oriented groups tend to be less threatened by exclusion from strangers (Fiske & Yamamoto, 2005; Uskul & Over, 2014), we had no a priori predictions for how exclusion from less-close individuals would impact perceived control across cultures, as we assumed substantial variability in the nature of these relationships (i.e., ranging from individuals one will never see again and thus have no chance of repairing the relationship with to those one is likely to interact with often going forward).

Overview of Experiments

In order to test these competing predictions, we conducted four high-powered experiments and a meta-analysis across these experiments. Specifically, because previous research suggests that exclusion can easily be relived (Chen et al., 2008) and can provoke responses comparable to exclusion created in vivo (see Pickett et al., 2004), Studies 1a–2 assigned participants to recall and write about a past experience of exclusion from either someone they felt close to (e.g., a good friend) or not close to (e.g., a stranger, acquaintance). Study 3 used an adapted version of the bogus personality feedback paradigm for evoking exclusion (see Twenge et al., 2007)—an in vivo approach that not only allowed for conceptual replication but also for a standardization of the exclusion experience across cultures. By asking all participants to select someone of both the same gender and race/ethnicity as themselves, Study 3 also sought to both increase the perception of the excluder as a member of one's own group while reducing the potential construal of the exclusion as race-based discrimination. Finally, Studies 1b–3 attempted to more fully capture perceived control during exclusion by expanding the measure.

In all experiments, we examined cultural differences by focusing on Asians and European Americans since these individuals are from sociocultural contexts where differences in interdependent orientation have been most thoroughly documented (e.g., Kitayama & Uchida, 2005). More specifically, in comparison to European Americans, in Study 2, we examined the effects among Japanese individuals living in Japan and because differences in interdependence extend to Asians living in North America (e.g., Kim et al., 2008), in Studies 1a, 1b, and 3, we examined them among Asians/Asian Americans¹ living in the United States. In Table 1, we summarize the main methodological differences between these four experiments.

Methods

We report how sample size was determined plus all excluded data, manipulations, and measures (Simmons et al., 2011).

Table 1. Summary of the Primary Methodological Differences Between the Four Experiments.

	Cultural groups			Setting		Exclusion manipulation		Control measure		Excluder's identity	
	European Americans	Asians/Asian Americans in United States	Japanese in Japan	Online	Large classroom	Recall	In vivo	3-item	8-item	Same race	Same gender
Study 1a	X	X		X		X		X			
Study 1b	X	X		X		X			X		
Study 2	X		X		X	X			X		
Study 3	X	X		X			X		X	X	X

Participants

A power analysis determined that 787 participants are needed for an analysis of variance (ANOVA) with interactions and an 80% chance to observe a between subjects effect of small size ($f = .10$). Far exceeding this number, we recruited 3,220 participants across our four experiments. Furthermore, to determine the sample size needed for each study, we conducted a comprehensive review of similar research which, to the best of our knowledge, suggested that only one previous paper had examined cultural differences in terms of close- versus distant-other exclusion specifically (see Uskul & Over, 2014). This study found a medium to large effect yet, given that the impact on perceived control was not examined, we decided to err on the conservative side and assume a small to medium size effect ($f = .20$). Running the power analysis described above with this effect size indicated that 199 participants were needed. To satisfy this criterion while accounting for potential data exclusion due to the attention checks, we recruited the following number of participants per study: (1) Study 1a: 175 Asians/Asian Americans, 285 European Americans; (2) Study 1b: 393 Asians/Asian Americans, 701 European Americans; (3) Study 2: 296 Japanese, 281 European Americans; and (4) Study 3: 239 Asians/Asian Americans, 850 European Americans.²

We conducted Studies 1a, 1b, and 3 via online platforms hosted in the United States, using four different methods: (1) a volunteer laboratory called *Digital Lab for the Social Sciences* that is suggested to be equally or more representative than comparable services (e.g., Amazon's *MTurk*) and, importantly, to have respondents who are more naive about psychological methods (Strange et al., 2019); (2) a similar, yet separate, volunteer laboratory of general (i.e., mostly nonstudent) participants, hosted by a university the lead author was affiliated with; (3) two different pools of students participating for credit in their psychology classes, one at an elite private university in the Northeastern United States and one at a public university on the U.S. West Coast; and (4) LISTSERVS across the United States specifically for Asians (e.g., *Asian American Association*). Unless otherwise noted, participants were entered into drawings for \$50 gift cards. Recruitment method did not influence the main results (see Supplemental Online Material [SOM] Table 1). In Study 2, we administered paper-and-pencil packets to large psychology classes (approx. 100 people)

as part of an optional class activity at a university in the Kansai area of Japan and a university in the U.S. Midwest.

Across all four experiments, we excluded participants for failing at least one of two attention checks (i.e., items embedded in the measures below that required a specific numeric response). In Studies 1a–2, we additionally excluded participants for leaving the writing manipulation blank, failing to recall exclusion from a close- or distant-other, or writing about a non-exclusion event (e.g., failing an exam). Finally, in Study 3, we additionally excluded participants for suspecting that the exclusion feedback was fake and for not selecting someone of the same race/ethnicity as requested—we wanted to rule out the possibility that such a mismatch could evoke Asian/Asian Americans' perception that the exclusion was due to race-based discrimination. In Table 2, we present the breakdown of exclusion by study for each of these criteria.

In this same table (Table 2), we also report final sample sizes and demographics by study and cultural sample. In Studies 1a, 1b, and 3, European Americans were significantly older than the Asian population, $F(1, 373) = 52.86, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .12$; $F(1, 918) = 148.63, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .14$; and $F(1, 888) = 134.68, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .13$, while, in Study 2, the pattern was reversed, $F(1, 435) = 11.50, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .03$. See online material for the sociodemographic breakdown of the Asians/Asian American population (i.e., by specific ethnic origin and connection to United States; SOM Table 2) and for analyses controlling for both age (SOM Table 3) and gender (SOM Table 4), neither of which substantially changed the main results.

Procedure

Following ethics board stipulations (IRB 16-0067 & 18-X-321), participants provided consent, were debriefed and could decline responding to any measure. We introduced Studies 1a–2 as about *Visualizing Past Experiences* and participants spent 5 minutes deeply bringing to mind and writing about exclusion from either a close- or distant-other (randomly assigned).³ Studies 1b and 2 made various improvements (e.g., to strengthen the manipulation, asking participants to indicate their relationship to the excluder *before* the writing began), while, to facilitate a private experience in a large classroom setting with pencil-and-paper packets, Study 2 instructed

Table 2. Breakdown of Data Exclusions and Sociodemographics by Study.

	Breakdown of data exclusion criteria by order applied										Final sample					
	1. Failing attention checks					2. Lack of engagement with writing manipulation		3. Knowing relationship feedback was fake		4. Mismatched race/ethnicity	Asian		European American			
	n	[approx. %]	n	(by condition)	[approx. %]	n	[approx. %]	n	[approx. %]	n	Approx. % female	Age M	[SD]	n	Approx. % female	Age M
Study 1a	34	[7%]	51	(24 close, 27 distant)	-	-	143	-	-	65%	22.83	[6.99]	232	69%	34.48	[18.35]
Study 1b	59	[5%]	108	(31 close, 77 distant)	-	-	331	-	-	64%	23.32	[6.88]	596	67%	37.29	[20.14]
Study 2	57	[10%]	83	(21 close, 62 distant)	-	-	226	-	-	57%	19.38	[1.23]	221	65%	18.89	[1.81]
Study 3	67	[6%]	-	-	12	[1%]	176	99	[10%]	64%	20.57	6.40	737	60%	38.41	[19.62]

participants to spread out and not to look at their neighbor's responses.

We introduced Study 3 as about *Personality and Relationships*. Here, we slightly modified the well-established *future alone* procedure for evoking exclusion (see Twenge et al., 2007) by adapting it to an online context (e.g., adding animated “processing icons” to bolster the perceived validity of participants' results) and including close- and distant-other conditions. Consistent with previous versions of the paradigm, participants completed an actual measure of extraversion (though, in this case, we used Eysenck, 1959) and received their extraversion score. This approach was intended to bolster the believability of their relationship results which followed. Next, participants indicated a close- or distant-other (again, randomly assigned) of their same gender and race/ethnicity who they interacted with fairly often and had neutral/positive feelings about. They then completed 12 items (e.g., “This person smiles a lot around me”; “This person seems irritable around me”) allegedly assessing how their relationship with this individual would change over time. Also consistent with previous versions of this paradigm, in each case, participants' bogus relationship results indicated that they had overestimated how much the selected individual liked them, and furthermore, that this person would grow increasingly distant from them.

Measures and Materials

All materials for experiments reported here have been made available on the *Open Science Framework* (https://osf.io/mzde6/?view_only=9a0c60af9f2944e8b1f71756864a92d5; data and syntax available on request). For the Japanese arm of this study, two of the paper's authors who are fluent in English and Japanese forward-and-back translated the materials into Japanese, including one back-translating without seeing the original English version. In addition to filler items intended to bolster the cover stories, participants completed the following main measures:⁴

Manipulation check. We assessed participants' level of closeness to the excluder by asking on a scale from 1 (*not at all close*) to 7 (*very close*): “Prior to this event, how close did you feel to this person?” In Study 3, we assessed level of closeness *before* receiving the exclusion feedback.⁵

Perceived control during ostracism. In Study 1a, we assessed perceived control during exclusion with a 3-item subscale (e.g., *I felt powerful*; European American: $\alpha = .79$; Asian/Asian American = .72) from a larger standard scale by van Beest and Williams (2006) assessing threats to human needs during exclusion.

To more comprehensively assess control, Studies 1b–3 included an additional 5-item measure of perceived control during exclusion (van Beest & Williams, 2006; e.g., *I had the feeling that I could influence the direction of the situation*), while Study 3 assessed control in terms of the relationship specifically (e.g., *I had the feeling that I could influence the*

Table 3. Manipulation Check: Perceived Closeness.

	Main Effect of Condition		Close Other Condition		Distant Other Condition	
	F	η_p^2	M [95% CI]	SD	M [95% CI]	SD
Study 1a	937.19***	.71	6.01 [5.82, 6.19]	1.29	1.85 [1.66, 2.04]	1.35
Study 1b	1633.98***	.63	5.81 [5.68, 5.94]	1.39	2.10 [1.97, 2.23]	1.41
Study 2	512.98***	.54	5.57 [5.38, 5.76]	1.55	2.39 [2.19, 2.59]	1.36
Study 3	527.30***	.37	5.08 [4.95, 5.21]	1.40	2.93 [2.80, 3.06]	1.43

*** $p < .001$.

Table 4. Perceived Control During Ostracism.

	Close other				Distant other				Culture	Condition	Culture \times condition			
	Asian		European American		Asian		European American							
	M [95% CI]	SD	M [95% CI]	SD	M [95% CI]	SD	M [95% CI]	SD						
Study 1a	1.86 _a [1.66, 2.05]	.92	1.57 _b [1.42, 1.72]	.78	1.58 _b [1.39, 1.77]	.66	1.74 _{a,b} [1.59, 1.89]	.90	.53	.001	.39	.001	6.28*	.02
Study 1b (z-score)	.20 _a [.07, .33]	.92	-.10 _b [-.21, .002]	.84	-.01 _b [-.15, .14]	.90	-.02 _b [-.12, .08]	.94	6.36*	.01	1.01	.001	5.62*	.01
Study 2 (z-score)	.10 _a [-.07, .26]	.86	-.03 _{a,b} [-.18, .12]	.95	.07 _{a,b,+} [-.09, .23]	.85	-.17 _{b,+} [-.36, .01]	.84	4.67*	.01	1.06	.002	.46	.001
Study 3 (z-score)	.24 _{a,+} [.06, .42]	.82	.07 _{a,+} [-.02, .16]	.82	-.32 _b [-.50, -.14]	.82	-.06 _c [-.15, .03]	.91	.42	<.001	22.97***	.03	8.81**	.10

Note. Means in each row that share subscripts do not differ significantly at $p < .05$ while means that share + are marginally significant. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

direction of the relationship). Because the number of Likert-scale anchors varied between the 3-item (1 [do not agree] to 5 [agree]) and 5-item measures (1 [do not agree] to 7 [agree]), z-scores were created for each of these measures within each study separately and the two scores were then averaged to form a combined 8-item measure of perceived control. This measure also showed sufficient reliability across different studies and cultural samples (i.e., European American: $\alpha = .81-.87$; Asian/Asian American: $\alpha = .82-.84$, Japanese: $\alpha = .69$).

Generalized perceived control. In Studies 1b–3, we also assessed general levels of control prior to the manipulation using the same 3-item subscale described above yet adapting it to general feelings (i.e., *In general, how do you feel?* 1 [not at all] to 5 [very much]). Generalized perceived control was internally consistent (European American: $\alpha = .73-.79$; Asian/Asian American: $\alpha = .79-.80$; Japanese: $\alpha = .76$) and controlling for did not substantially change results (see SOM Table 9).

Results

Using Bonferroni correction, we adjusted significance levels to reduce Type-1 error inflation when conducting multiple *post hoc* tests. Furthermore, given potential threats to *F* test robustness with unequal sample sizes, we calculated variance ratios

(i.e., by dividing the value of the largest variance of the groups by the smallest) and confirmed that these ratios were less than 1.5—a cutoff suggested by a recent paper using a Monte Carlo simulation and considerably more restrictive than previously recommended maximums of three (see Blanca et al., 2018).

Manipulation check

We confirmed the effectiveness of the close- versus distant-other contrast in the exclusion manipulation by conducting 2 (Relationship with excluder: close vs. distant) \times 2 (Culture: European American vs. Asian/Asian American or Japanese) ANOVAs in each of the four experiments (see Table 3). As expected, participants in the close other condition felt closer to the excluder than participants in the distant other condition. Cultural background did not moderate this effect: In Studies 1–2, the Relationship \times Culture interactions, *F*s = .14–1.59, and main effects of culture, *F*s = .01–3.56, were nonsignificant, *p*s > .05. In Study 3, while the Relationship \times Culture interaction was not significant, *F* = 1.07, there was a main effect of culture with Asians/Asian Americans feeling closer to the excluder than European Americans (*M* = 4.28, *SD* = 1.97 vs. *M* = 3.96, *SD* = 1.72), *F*(1, 909) = 6.21, *p* = .01, $\eta_p^2 < .01$. Controlling for the different degree of closeness which Asian Americans and European Americans felt

with the excluder in Study 3 did not substantially change results (see SOM Table 10).

Perceived Control During Ostracism

See Figure 1 for means and standard errors of cultural variations in perceived control during exclusion from a close and distant other in each of the four experiments.⁶ For the effect of culture on perceived control during exclusion by a close other, see the upper panel. Furthermore, see Table 4 for full statistics of culture effects in each condition, separately by experiment. To integrate our findings across experiments, we conducted a random effects meta-analysis (Borenstein et al., 2009) and compared perceived control between Asians/Asian Americans and European Americans. The meta-analysis showed that Japanese and Asian/Asian Americans reported more control than European Americans when excluded by a close other, Hedge's $g = 0.27$, $SE = 0.06$, $z = 4.51$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [0.15, 0.38]. Follow-up analyses indicated no significant heterogeneity across the four experiments in the sizes of culture effects on perceived control during exclusion, $Q = 2.08$, $df = 3$, $p = .556$, suggesting that—regardless of study—Asians/Asian Americans relative to European Americans showed similar levels of perceived control when excluded by a close other. In contrast, in the distant other exclusion condition, the random effects meta-analysis indicated that there was no cultural difference in perceived control, Hedge's $g = -0.05$, $SE = 0.12$, $z = -0.42$, $p = .68$, 95% CI = [-0.28, 0.18]. However, follow-up analyses revealed significant heterogeneity in effect sizes across experiments, $Q = 10.73$, $df = 3$, $p = .013$, suggesting that some unmeasured moderator might explain the effects in this condition.

Finally, we conducted a subgroup analysis (e.g., Borenstein et al., 2009) to compare the sizes of culture effects on perceived control between the close and distant other conditions. As expected, the difference in culture effect sizes between conditions was significant, Hedge's $g = 0.32$, SE of difference = 0.13, $z = 2.39$, $p = .017$. These results suggested that Asian/Asian Americans experienced a higher level of perceived control during exclusion than European Americans and that this effect was particularly pronounced when the exclusion perpetrator was a close other.

Discussion

Japanese and Asians/Asian Americans experienced *higher* perceived control than European Americans when socially excluded by someone they were close to (e.g., a good friend). This pattern was confirmed in four highly powered experiments involving different national contexts (i.e., United States and Japan), cultural groups (i.e., European Americans, Asian/Asian Americans, and Japanese), and exclusion paradigms (i.e., relived and evoked). A random effects meta-analysis conducted across the experiments lent support for this overall pattern. In contrast, when the excluder was someone one did not feel close to (e.g., an acquaintance or stranger), the results were

inconsistent across studies. Moreover, while we found cultural differences in perceived control when exclusion was from someone close to them, consistent with previous research (Uskul & Over, 2014; Yaakobi & Williams, 2016), no cultural differences emerged when examining overall levels of threat within this same condition.

Compared to European Americans, Japanese living in Japan and Asians/Asian American living in the United States indicated more control when excluded by someone close to them. At first glance, this may be surprising given research and theorizing suggesting that interdependently orientated groups are particularly concerned with maintaining close bonds (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) as well as adjusting themselves to situations (i.e., secondary or harmony control) rather than influencing them (i.e., primary control, see Morling & Evered, 2006). However, growing evidence suggests that interdependently oriented individuals may actually be less threatened by exclusion (see Graupmann et al., 2016; Over & Uskul, 2016; Pfundmair, Aydin et al., 2015; also see Uskul & Over, 2017), and moreover, research also suggests that exerting control over situations may still be the preference in interdependent cultures (Yamaguchi, 2001). Furthermore, unlike independently oriented individuals' aggressive intentions toward close others who exclude them (see Pfundmair, Graupmann et al., 2015, Study 1), interdependently oriented groups may feel more *in control* by instead considering subtle control strategies that are common in Asian contexts and that are particularly effective for maintaining harmonious relationships (see Park et al., 2018; Sawaumi et al., 2015; Yamaguchi, 2001). This may involve hiding attempts to exert influence over the excluder (e.g., giving them compliments, i.e., *indirect control*) or, consistent with theorizing that interdependent groups may be buffered from exclusion by bringing to mind their other relationships (see Uskul & Over, 2017), asking friends and family members to repair their relationship with the excluder on their behalf (i.e., *proxy control*). Interdependent cultural group's sense of control may be especially strong within close relationships since such relationships are likely to provide more insight into which subtle strategy is best suited for repairing it.

Interestingly, when the excluder was not a close other, results were inconsistent across studies. Degree of closeness to the excluder nor intensity of the exclusion experience explained this inconsistency since there were no study by culture interactions in the distant other condition (see SOM Table 11). However, it is possible that an unmeasured moderator might explain the effects, such as the extent to which one expects to interact with the non-close excluder going forward and, thus, feels able to repair that relationship. While most of the present studies either indicated no cultural differences in this distant other condition or that effects were in the opposite direction, the experiment conducted in Japan and the United States (Study 2) showed the same pattern as the close other condition. Specifically, here, Japanese participants reported more perceived control relative to European Americans. Unlike the other studies which compared Asian/Asian Americans with European Americans and, thus, held the larger sociocultural

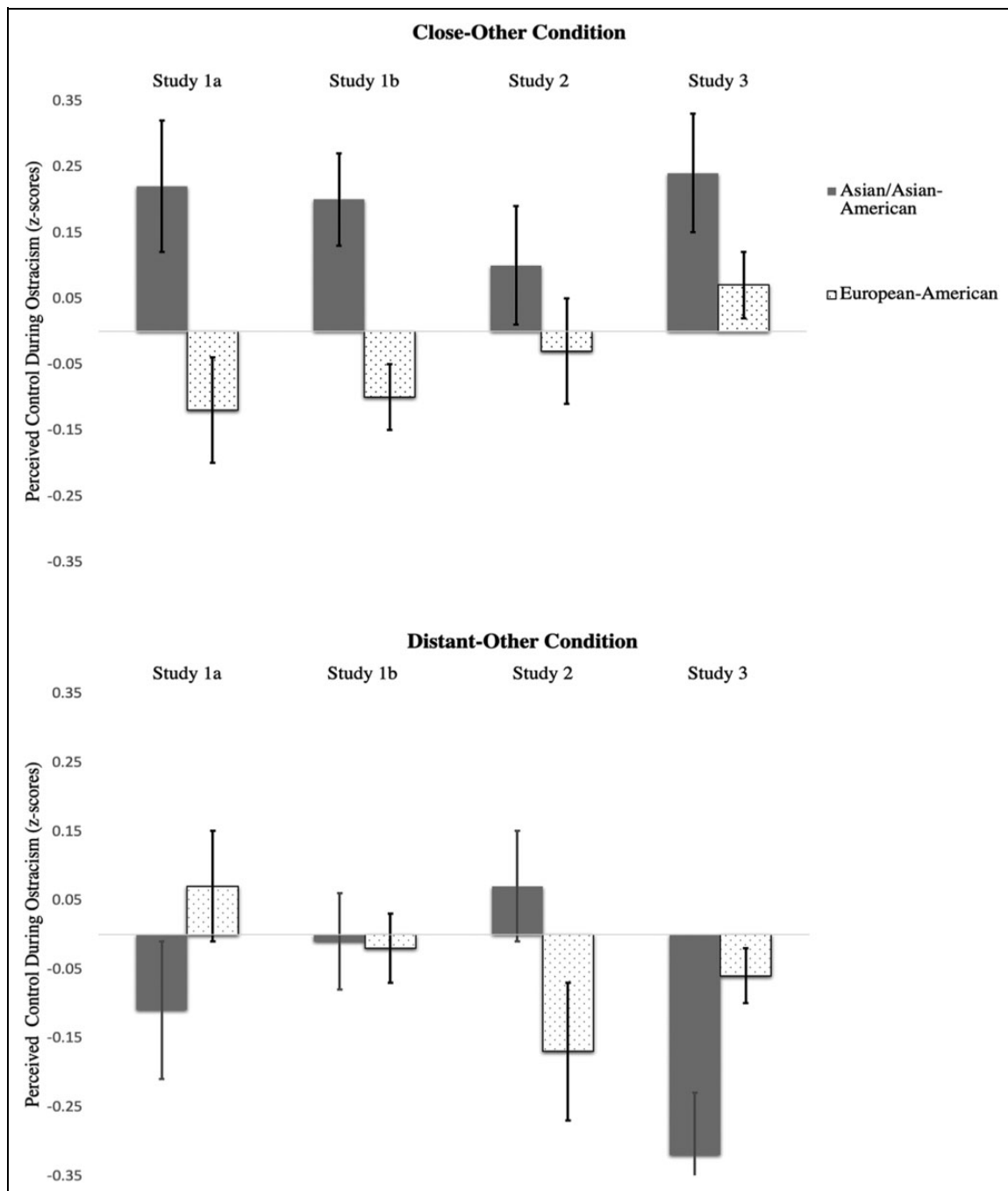


Figure 1. Culture and condition differences in perceived control during ostracism. Note. For visualization purposes only, we transformed Study 1a into z-scores to make it comparable with the other studies. Error bars represent one SE.

context somewhat constant, the Japanese participants were not living within the same context as European Americans. Thus, it is especially possible that some other cultural difference (e.g., economic) or other cultural dimension may be responsible for this pattern of results. For instance, even when the relationship with the excluder is not close, participants in Japan might still believe they have relatively high control since relationships in this cultural context tend to be particularly durable, and there are few opportunities—for all parties involved—to build new

relationships (i.e., low relational mobility; Thomson et al., 2018; Yuki & Schug, 2012).

Limitations and Future Directions

We believe that a strength of our studies is our inclusion of different cultural groups, cultural contexts, and recruitment methods. However, our results using these samples should also be interpreted in light of some limitations. For instance, although

the online volunteer laboratories used in many of our experiments are more representative than traditional psychological samples that either rely on undergraduate students or Amazon's *MTurk* (Strange et al., 2019), our samples are still not representative of European Americans and Asians/Asian Americans in the United States. Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that the majority of our Asian sample was East Asian, and thus, our results may not generalize to other Asian cultural groups (e.g., South East Asian) or to interdependently oriented non-Asian cultural groups (e.g., Middle Easterners; Thompson et al., 2018). Furthermore, cultures vary along multiple additional cultural dimensions (i.e., relational mobility; tightness–looseness; see Gelfand et al., 2011; Yuki & Schug, 2012). In addition, our diverse recruitment methods often led to unequal sample sizes. While we calculated variance ratios to confirm that Type-1 error was not inflated and we had large sample sizes in general, the unbalanced samples may have somewhat diminished our power (see Blanca et al., 2018).

The mechanism underlying cultural differences in feelings of control during exclusion from close others is speculative, and it remains untested whether Asian and Asian Americans intentions to draw on a variety of less overt, and more beneficial (Yamaguchi, 2001), influence strategies may play a role. Moreover, although we assessed perceptions of control using measures that are the gold standard in the exclusion literature (see review by Williams & Zadro, 2005) and we included an expanded measure in several studies, the exact nature of perceived control during the exclusion experience remains somewhat unclear. More specifically, while the measures mostly included items assessing control over making the relationship better or worse (e.g., feeling able to interact with the excluder), some items assessing control during exclusion more generally (e.g., how powerful one felt, in general, during exclusion). Thus, the present measures may also be capturing the degree to which participants felt that they could influence their own thoughts and feelings about the exclusion more generally, and in turn, future research may benefit from including measures that focus on perceptions within the relationship specifically.

Practical Implications

Feeling “in control” is a basic human need (Zadro et al., 2004) that, once threatened, can have uniquely harmful implications for mental and physical health (see review by Williams & Zadro, 2005). Threats to perceived control stemming from exclusion specifically can also motivate aggressive behavior (Williams, 2007). Consistent with previous cultural research suggesting that independently orientated individuals report aggressive intentions toward the excluder (see Pfundmair, Graupmann et al., 2015), potentially due to threats to perceived control (Williams, 2007), the present findings indicated that exclusion by a close other threatened European Americans' sense of control more than Asians' and Asian Americans'. Thus, efforts to explore interventions that increase feelings of control following exclusion from a close other may be especially valuable for mitigating European Americans' potential

retaliatory behaviors. In contrast, Asian and Asian Americans' relatively higher levels of perceived control following exclusion from a close other could act as a protective factor for their health, well-being, and relationships. Indeed, research suggests the psychological benefits of perceived control exceed those of actual control (see Morling & Evered, 2006). While some research suggests that control more generally might not lead to as many benefits for the health and well-being of Asians as compared to European American (Kitayama et al., 2010), it is still possible that feeling more in control when excluded by a close other specifically may buffer Asians from (a) the immediate experience of feeling out-of-control which may inhibit intentions to retaliate and (b) the deleterious downstream consequences of exclusion for physical and mental health.

Conclusions

The present research tested two rival hypotheses for how culture may shape one's sense of control when excluded by a close other (e.g., a good friend). Consistent with previous research and theory on interdependent orientation and culturally specific control strategies, Asian and Asian Americans felt more “in control” than European Americans when excluded by someone they were close to, while there was no consistent pattern when excluded by a non-close other. These findings may have implications for how exclusion could differentially impact physical health, well-being, and aggressive behavioral reactions across cultures.


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ORCID iD

Sasha Y. Kimel  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6476-657X>

Yuki Miyagawa  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0529-3124>

Yu Niya  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2733-3724>

Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

Notes

1. We use the term Asians/Asian Americans to refer to a sample that includes Asian Americans as well as Asian immigrants and/or students within the United States.
2. Due to using multiple recruitment methods simultaneously, we accidentally oversampled European Americans in Studies 1b and 3.
3. In Study 1a, a separate group of participants was randomly assigned to close- versus distant-other inclusion. Because the present paper is only aimed at understanding whether Asians feel more or less in control when excluded by a close other compared to

European Americans, results from these conditions will be published in a separate paper.

4. Additional measures were included for exploratory purposes and for a separate paper on social inclusion.
5. In Study 3, all dependent measures used present tense language.
6. Results for the aggregated 12-item threat to human needs scale and its other three subscales (i.e., self-esteem, belonging, meaningful existence) did not show the same pattern of effects (see SOM Tables 5–8). Moreover, random effects meta-analyses indicated that Asian/Asian Americans did not differ from European Americans on these measures when excluded by a close- |Hedge's g s| ≤ 0.10 , |SEs| ≥ 0.06 , | z s| ≤ 1.06 , p s $\geq .291$, 95% CIs = [LLs ≤ -0.06 , ULs ≥ 0.15] or distant-other, |Hedge's g s| ≤ 0.04 , |SEs| ≥ 0.07 , | z s| ≤ 0.48 , p s $\geq .633$, 95% CIs = [LLs ≤ -0.11 , ULs ≥ 0.16]. Subgroup analyses suggested that differences in culture effect sizes between the conditions were also nonsignificant, |Hedge's g s| ≤ 0.07 , |SEs of difference| ≥ 0.10 , | z s| ≤ 0.43 , p s $\geq .667$.

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Author Biographies

Sasha Kimel is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at California State University San Marcos. Her research focuses broadly on cultural variations in psychological processes and on understanding the factors that drive groups in conflict.

Dominik Mischkowski is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Ohio University. His research focuses on the interrelationship between physical and psychological pain, using behavioral, psychophysiological, and neuroimaging methodology.

Yuki Miyagawa is a Lecturer at Otemon Gakuin University. His research primarily focuses on understanding the processes through which people cope with adversities.

Yu Niya is a Professor at the Faculty of Global and Interdisciplinary Studies at Hosei University. Her research examines the role of motivation in prosocial behaviors.

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