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# Cultural Shaping of Basic Psychological Processes: Implications for Survey Research

Shinobu Kitayama  
University of Michigan

# Selves as Cultural Constructions



**Incentive structure  
of the society**

-- Reinforcement  
-- Rational decision  
making

**Social norms**

-- Conformity

**Symbolic resources  
(laytheories, icons)**

-- Affordances

**Mental representations** -- Priming

**Self-enhancement of those  
engaging in North American  
culture**

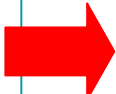




-- High self-esteem  
-- Better-than-average effect  
-- Self-serving attributions  
-- ...  
-- ...  
-- etc.

# Culture and Self

- *Independent mode of self-regulation*
  - Actions are mediated by cognitions about **personal self** (e.g., attitudes, opinions, preferences, etc.)
  - **Instrumental use of social others** as a source of social comparison and/or a target of self-expression
  - Common in North America and Western Europe
- *Interdependent mode of self-regulation*
  - Actions are mediated by cognitions about **social others** (e.g., expectations, needs, desires, etc. of others)
  - **Symbolic participation of social others** in the functioning of self
  - Common in Asia (and perhaps much of non-Western part of the world)

# Culture and Self: A Quick Summary

- **Independence**

-  – Self-enhancement
-  – Promotion
-  – Attitude as a predictor of behavior
-  – Influencing
-  – Self-cognitions
- Personal happiness
- Personal dissonance

- **Interdependence**

- Self-criticism
- Prevention
- Social norm as a predictor of behavior
- Adjustment
- Other cognitions
- Social happiness
- Social dissonance

# Saliience of Self vs. Other Cognition

- Behavioral description study (Kitayama & Uchida)
  - Describe a situation in which you did something to someone you know when he/she is in trouble (or happy)
- Asymmetry in self-other similarity judgment (Kitayama et al., many years ago, cited in Markus & Kitayama, 1991)
  - How similar are you to Tom?
  - How similar is Tom to you?
- “Cognitive size” of self and others (Duffy, Uchida, & Kitayama, unpublished)

# ***“Symbolic Ego-Inflation”***

## Size of “Self” vs. “Other” Circles

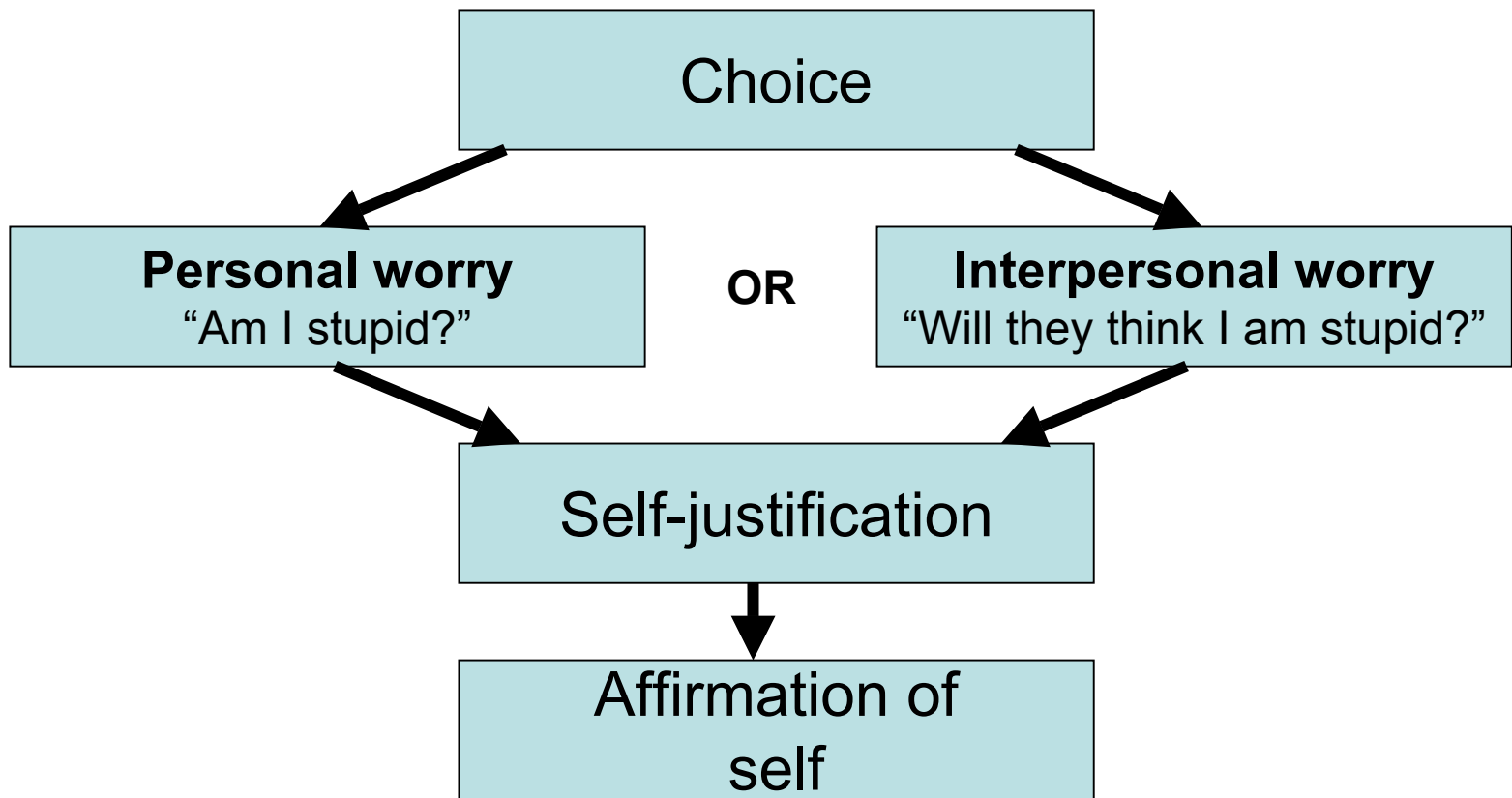
- Average size (cm)

	US	Japan
Self	3.64	2.31
Others	2.39	2.34

- % of subjects who drew larger circles for the self than for others
  - US 100%
  - Japan 41%

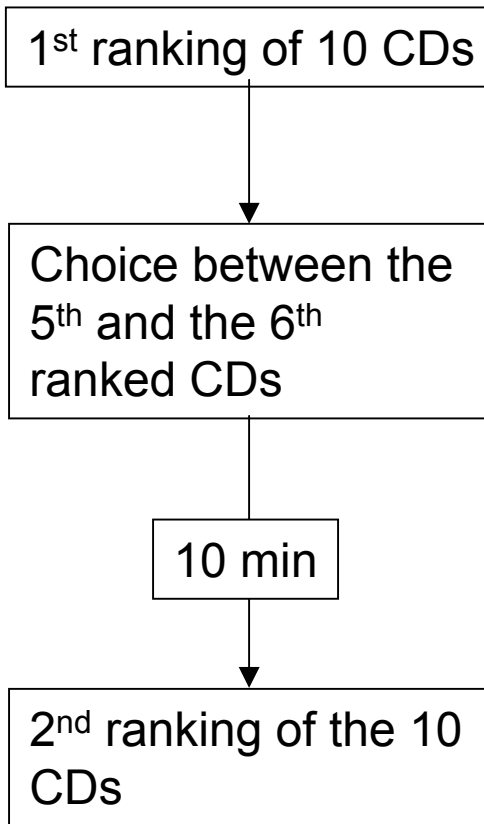
# Consequences of Choice

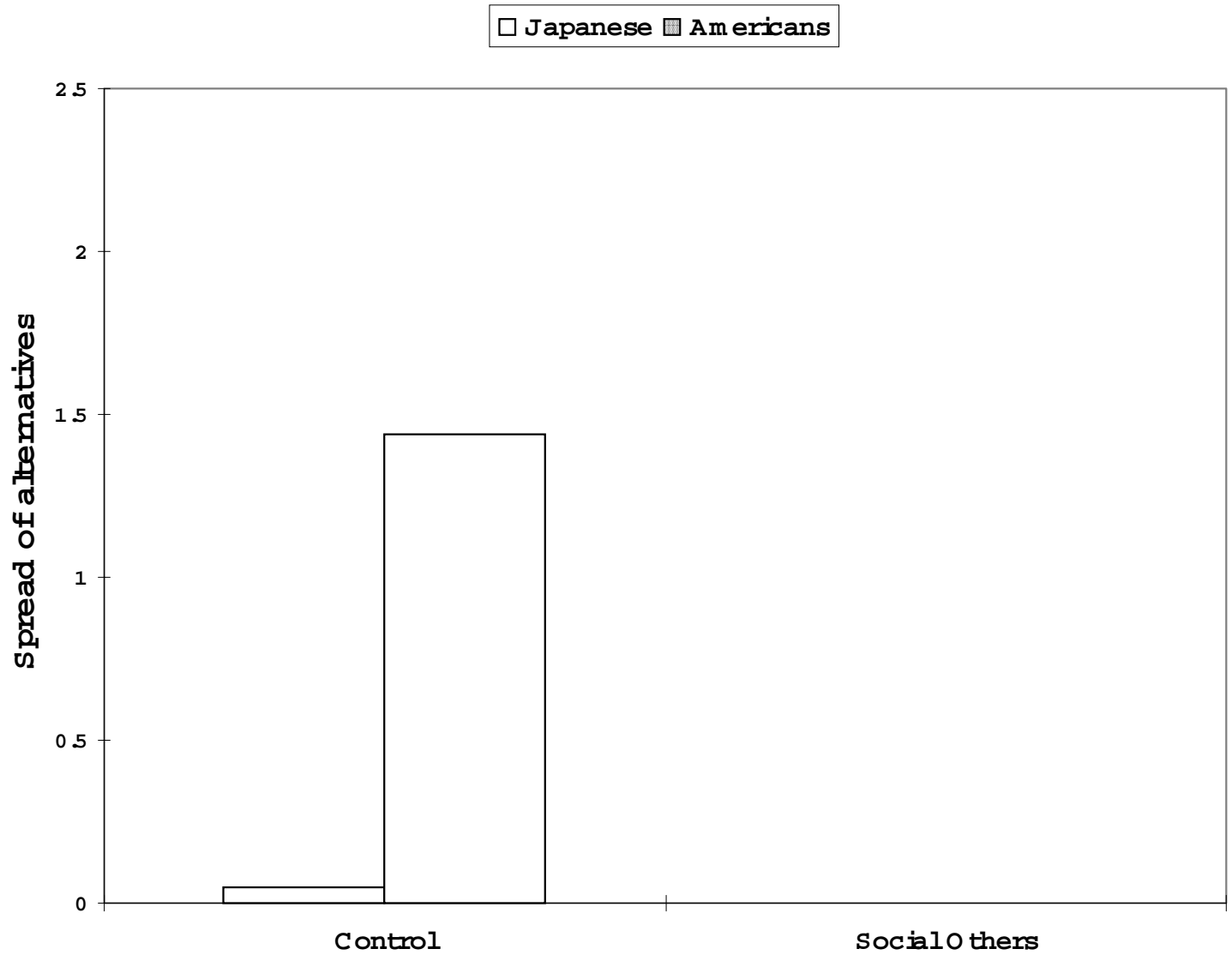
## Two Types of Dissonance



# Procedure

## Free choice dissonance paradigm (Brehm, 1956)

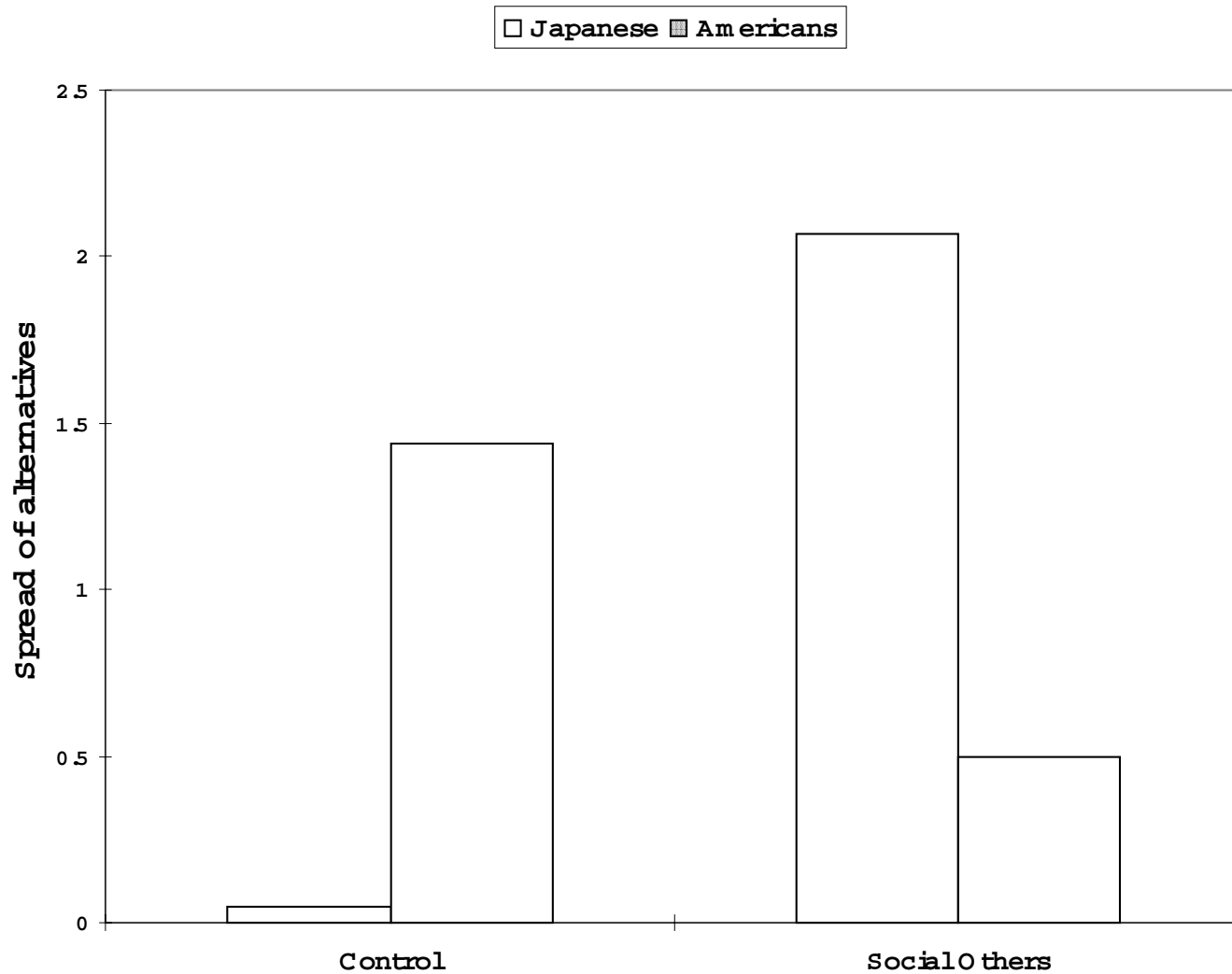




**Study 4 from Kitayama, Snibbe, Markus, & Suzuki (2004).  
*Psychological Science*, 15, 527-533.**

**FIG .5. The different features that resulted  
in significant main effects in Experiment 2.**

*Note:* Each of the features in a composition gave effects in the same direction (high or low) on a semantic dimension as the other features in the same composition.



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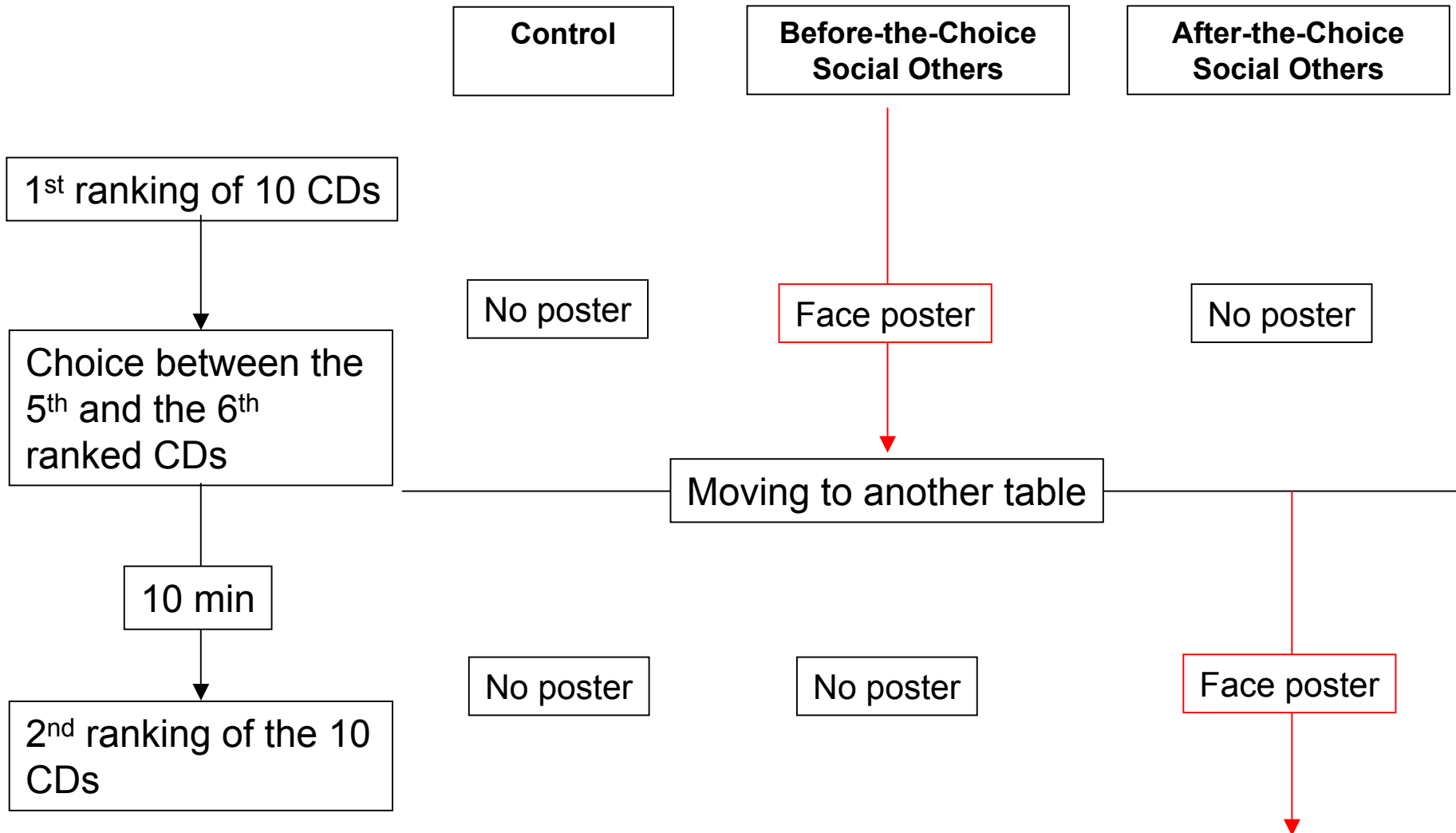
# Dissonance: Personal vs. Interpersonal

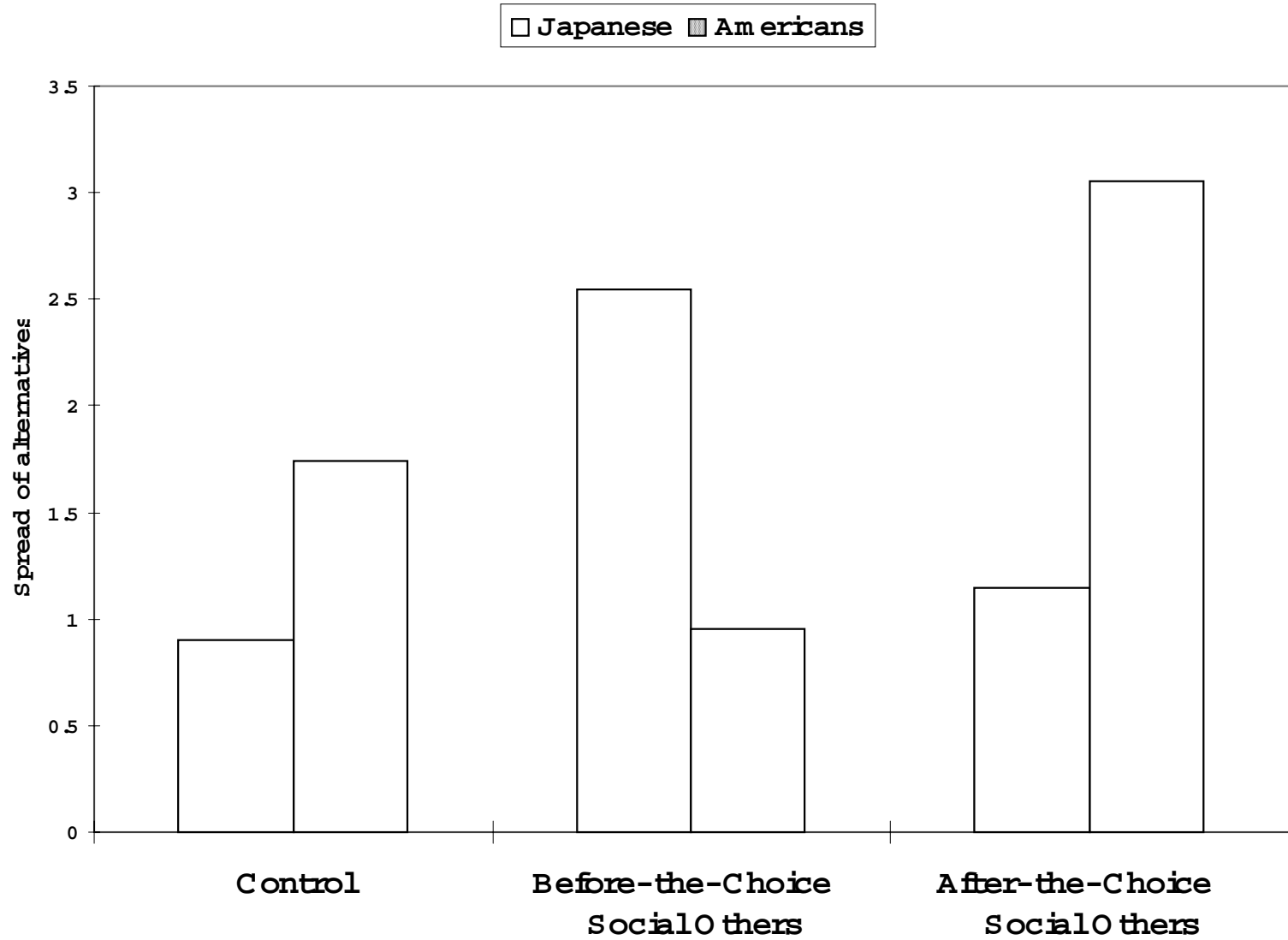
- **The psychological presence of *social others during choice***
  - Impairs the development of one's own preference for Americans
    - Self is constructed as *independent*
    - Others are used *instrumentally*
      - as a source of social comparison
      - as a target of self-expression
    - If social others become available ***after the choice***, Americans will justify their choice even more.

## Cocktail party effect—Version 2

- Facilitates the development of one's own preferences for Japanese
  - Self is constructed as *interdependent*
  - Others *symbolically* complete the self
  - Unless social others are available before and during the choice, Japanese will not justify their choices. Even though social others become available ***after the choice***, it will be too late!

# Procedure



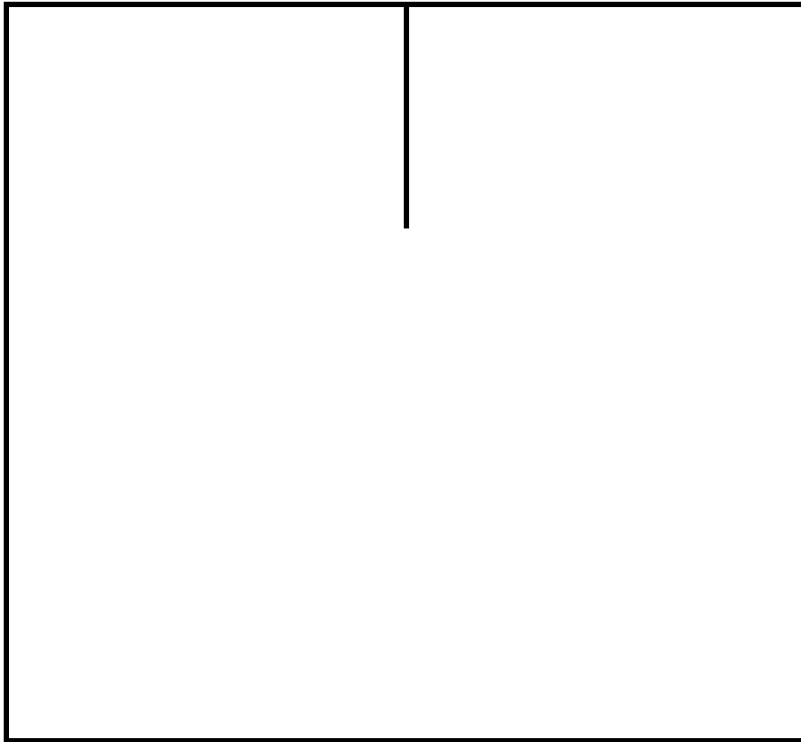


**Kitayama and Imada, unpublished**

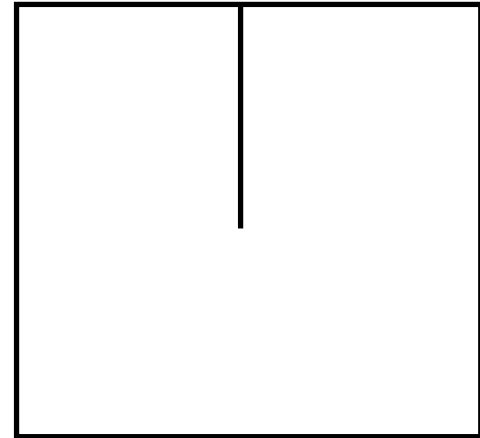
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- *Interdependent mode of self-regulation*
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  - **Symbolic participation of social others** in the functioning of self
  - Common in Asia (and perhaps much of non-Western part of the world)
- *How about non-social cognition?*
  - *Attention:*
    - *Focused on a goal-relevant object*
    - *Dispersed over the object and its context*
  - *Framed Line Test (FLT)*

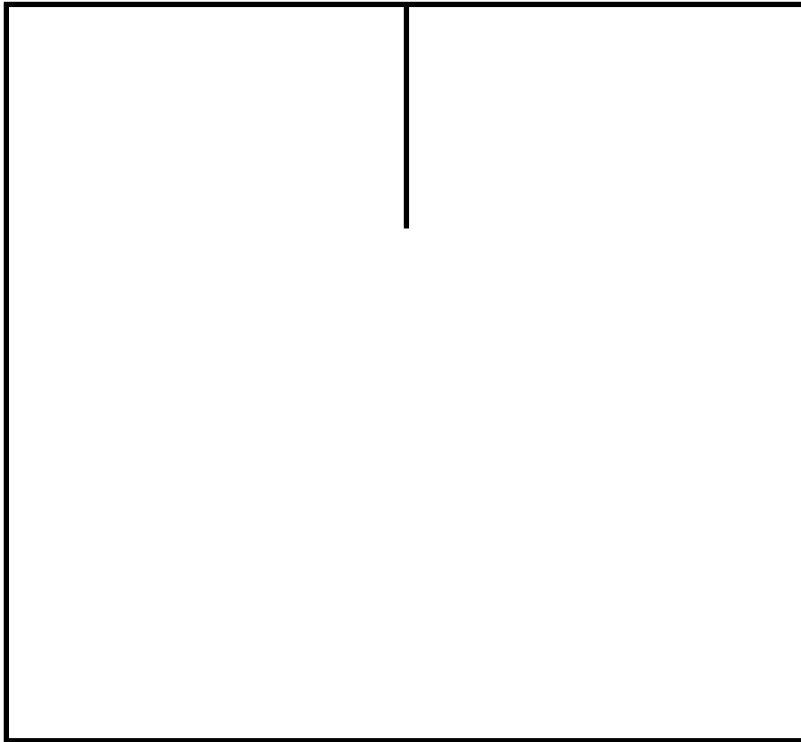
# Absolute judgment



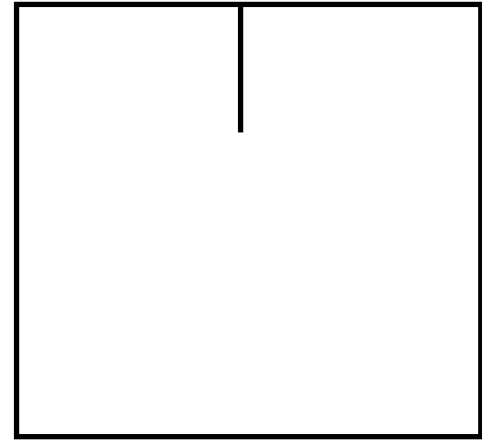
**Same length**

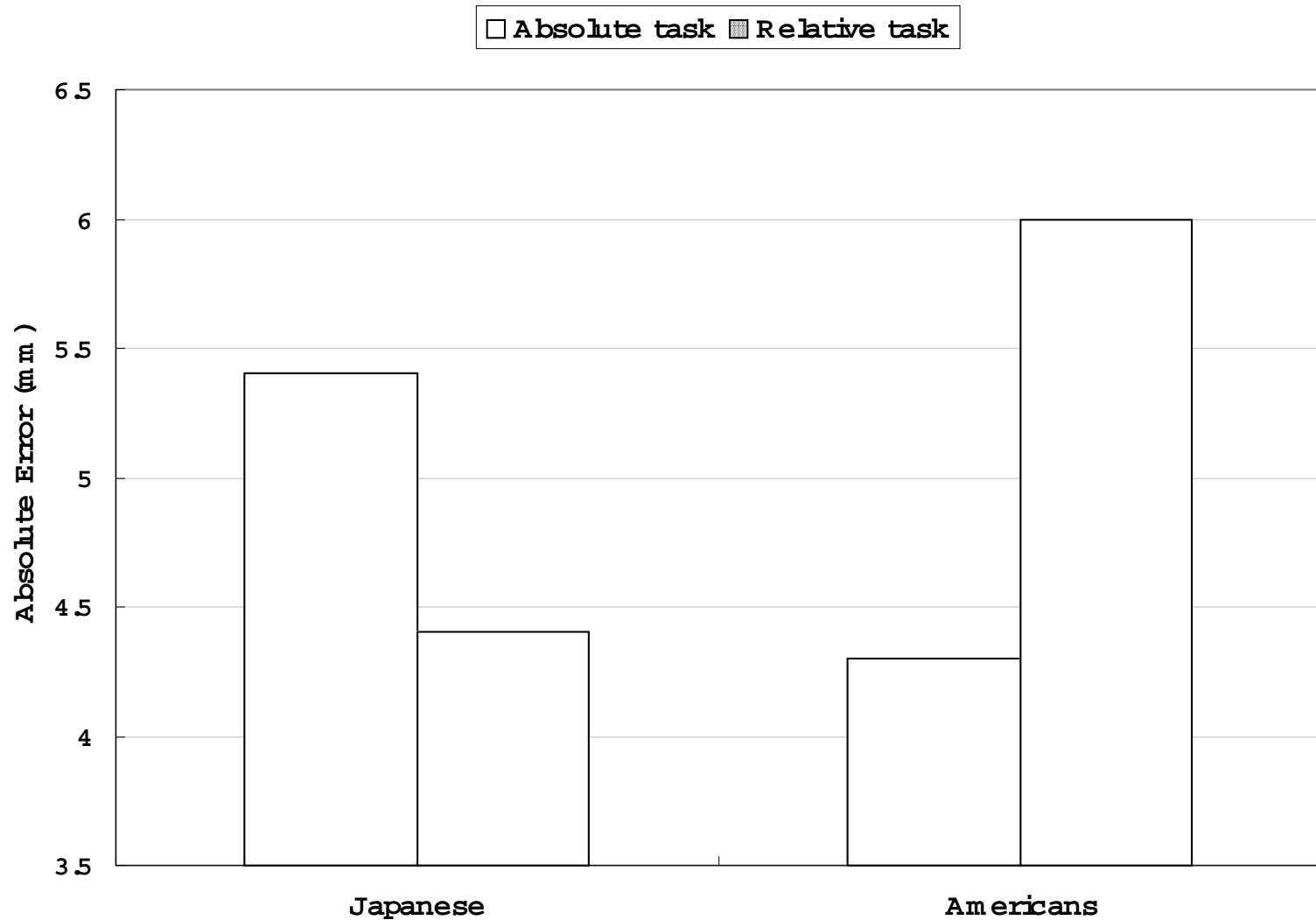


# Relative judgment



# Same proportion





**Study 1 from Kitayama, Duffy, Kawamura, & Larsen (2003).  
*Psychological Science*, 14, 201-206.**

# Implications for Survey Research

- Behavioral/implicit/less blatant questions
  - Cross-cultural effect size
- More non-verbal, “holistic”, “pattern-based” measures
  - Social diagram drawing task
  - FLT
- Questions about self vs. social others in assessing, say, social norms, community involvement, etc
- Use, effect, and validity of proxy reporting
- Individual-based vs. group survey
- Social context
  - Role and “biasing” effects of interviewers
    - Social desirability
    - Activation of different representations
    - Potentially quite serious because these effects are often unconscious
  - Use of the “others’ eyes” manipulation in social survey (cf. Couper, ISR, U of Michigan)

# Thanks!

Shinobu Kitayama  
Research Center for Group Dynamics  
Department of Psychology  
The University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

[kitayama@umich.edu](mailto:kitayama@umich.edu)