Overview - Social Exclusion
Previous research (Williams, 2007, for a review) has found that being socially excluded can increase negative moods, and impact relational/basic needs.

Relational/basic needs include feelings regarding one’s sense of belonging, how much control one has in life, one’s self-esteem, and the degree that life has a meaning and purpose. Exclusion has been found to “threaten” these feelings, or in other words, experiencing exclusion has been found to lower feelings of belonging, control, meaningfulness of life, and lessen one’s self-esteem.

Williams, Cheung, & Choi (2000), found that social-exclusion via a computer game created similar ramifications to mood and basic needs, as did face-to-face exclusion.

They called the game they created “Cyberball” and it consisted of tossing a ball to other players in the game. Participants believed they were playing against other real participants, but the game was fully computer controlled and participants would be randomly selected to either experience inclusion (receive 10 out of 30 throws from the computer players) or exclusion (receive 3 out of 30 throws from other players).

Research Question
Given the research findings in the areas of social exclusion as well as posture, the present study explored if adopting a powerful posture would buffer against the negative ramifications of social exclusion (by boosting things such as self-esteem) or, if a powerful posture would heighten the experience of social exclusion by increasing awareness and vigilance to social-threats.

Experiment 1
- 91 participants – Cyberball game used to manipulate inclusion.
- 2 (include vs. exclude) x 2 (forced to hold dominant vs. submissive posture for duration of the game), study design
- Mood: Assessed via items based used in Zadro, Williams & Richardson (2004); bad-good, sad-happy, tense-relaxed, included-rejected (reversed), angry-calm, unconfident-confident, Cronbach’s α = .85.
- Higher score = more positive mood.
- Relational needs: 12 Likert-style items from Zadro et al. (2004), with average score across items used.

Interaction: F(1,79) = 5.49, p < .021
F(1,79) = 1.26, p = .265

Results and Conclusions
- Experiment 1: Posture and exclusion status did impact mood and relational/basic needs.
- Participants who were excluded had significantly more negative mood, and had lower relational need scores (e.g., felt less feelings of belonging and control) compared to those who were included.
- Posture did moderate this for mood, with those participants holding a “dominant” posture feeling significantly lower mood, compared to excluded participants who were holding the “submissive” posture. This interaction was not found for mood.
- Experiment 2: It was found again that posture and exclusion status did impact mood and relational needs.
- Unlike Experiment 1, only needs were impacted by being included vs. excluded, without taking posture into account.
- When looking at the interaction between posture and exclusion status, both mood and needs were significantly impacted, with lowered moods being felt when holding a “dominant” posture and being excluded vs. “submissive” posture and being excluded. The same interaction was found for mood.
- Future research is needed to further explore how and why posture has this negative effect on those who are socially excluded, and if other factors that boost self-esteem and confidence may buffer the negative effects of exclusion, or hurt the individual, much like was seen for posture.

As a paper...

References: