

*Essays on
Controlling Processes,
1996*

Edited by
Laura Nader

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Preface

In 1994 the Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers published the first set of *Essays on Controlling Processes*. In the introduction to that first issue I described the concept of controlling processes as dealing with processes of control that emphasize the importance of ideas or beliefs as dynamic components of power, a concept that encompasses knowledge of how central dogmas are made and how they work. The essays in this 1996 volume speak to many of the same issues focusing on power as means—principally the manner in which individuals and groups are influenced, and persuaded to participate in their own domination.

As the papers show, the domains of influence and persuasion are often multi-sited. They are found in the law, in the work place, in university dormitories, in museums, on Native American Indian reservations, and are generally ubiquitous. Because of the interpenetrating qualities of hegemonic controlling processes, the concept of resistance has been recognized as important, requiring an ever more careful and critical eye to understand when resistance is resistance and how it matters.

There are some pragmatic insights in this collection of papers: culture easily impacts on a fragile or vulnerable mind, and hegemonic influence often limits our imagination. Furthermore, the importance of ideas as dynamic components of power often emanates from their appearance in clusters or interlocking systems. Institutions of entrenched power and privilege are supremely aware of the power of complex cultural codes. The essays in this volume speak to the processes of entrenchment.

Laura Nader
Berkeley, California
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