
Swapping Recipes for Control

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ABSTRACT: *The comments by Azuma and Kojima are both encouraging and thought provoking. We thoroughly agree that there may be multiple recipes for both primary and secondary control and that a focus on those used in Japan can fill out the picture nicely. We emphasize, in addition, the essential overdetermination of human behavior, and the fact that elements of both primary and secondary control may sometimes underlie the same overt act. Overall, the comments of our Japanese colleagues provide rich food for thought, the proper nutrient for our embryonic model of control.*

While working on our cross-cultural analysis of control concepts (Weisz, Rothbaum, & Blackburn, 1984), we occasionally wondered if we Americans were engaged in yet another act of primary control. We had a fleeting vision of an American ordering fishsticks in a sushi bar, imposing Western habits and concepts where they do not fit. Had we, like the proverbial Mrs. Paul, modified entities delectable in their natural state by pulverizing, molding, and frying so that they fit our own tastes? The encouraging and very thoughtful comments by Azuma (1984) and Kojima (1984) suggest that we have not completely "deep-fried" the Japanese concepts and that the model of primary and secondary control may provide one useful conceptual medium for cross-cultural comparison. Their comments also raise some important issues with respect to the primary-secondary model and cross-cultural psychology generally.

Recipes for Secondary Control

An important notion suggested by Azuma is that in cultures where secondary control is valued and often pursued, a multiplicity of specific forms may have evolved. Following our piscatory analogy, an American first visiting a sushi bar may see raw fish on rice, whereas a Japanese may see a rich array of delicacies, each differing from the others in subtle but very meaningful ways. Similarly, Azuma distinguishes between subtly different forms of yielding, one reflecting secondary control via an enhanced sense of "maturity and self-control"; another, sec-

ondary control via "resigned *akirame*"; and yet another, secondary control linked to feelings of "love and empathy" (p. 970). In his delightful analysis, Azuma demonstrates that each form of yielding carries with it a prototypical aphorism that can be used to reorganize the psychological perceptions of the individual who yields.

We agree with Azuma's point, in general. Our first impression was that the three forms of yielding that he describes closely parallel our notions of interpretive secondary control (controlling one's assertive drives and thus enhancing one's feelings of maturity and self-control), predictive secondary control (resigned *akirame*), and vicarious secondary control (yielding related to love and empathy with respect to a significant other). On further reflection, though, it occurs to us that our perception may be a good example of Azuma's point, that is, subtle differences between various forms of secondary control may be more meaningful to the Japanese than to Americans.

We should add that even from an American perspective, secondary control seems likely to assume a broader array of forms than those we have described thus far. For example, Americans often use humor to help themselves "see the lighter side" of an otherwise painful experience and thereby reduce the aversive impact of that experience. Or selective attention may be used to avoid the painful consequences of dwelling on an unpleasant experience that cannot be altered. If it is true that secondary control is more highly valued and more often sought in Japan than in the United States, it may be that American psychologists have a good deal more to learn from the Japanese about strategies for coping with unpleasant realities that are difficult or impossible to alter.

Recipes for Primary Control

Another key point suggested by Kojima and implied by Azuma is that Japanese and Americans may differ not only in their relative emphasis on secondary control, but also in their preferred pathways to primary control (when they seek it). As Kojima suggests, when the Japanese do seek to modify existing realities they may be more likely than

Americans to choose indirect means of doing so. The rakugo's subtle rebuke of his singing disciple and the advice-giver's use of a third party intermediary are intriguing examples.

Kojima's point also relates to a significant methodological issue, one that poses a challenge for those who seek to operationally define primary and secondary control (cf. Blackburn, 1984; Cameron, 1984). The problem is that both primary and secondary control are defined partly in terms of the aims or intent of the individual actor, and intent is often difficult to discern. It is difficult to see on a videotape, and it may not be accurately or honestly self-reported. Some behavior that may, on the surface, appear to reflect a pursuit of secondary control may actually be motivated primarily by a desire to ultimately modify objective conditions and thus to achieve primary control. One of Azuma's examples may be a case in point. He speaks of the individual who yields to others partly to gain "credibility so that he or she will be supported by elders and peers in more important decision-making situations in the future" (p. 970). From our (Western) perspective, this particular motive represents a pursuit of primary control, a desire to ultimately exert control by modifying existing realities. Its subtlety, though, makes it a good example of what Kojima refers to as indirect primary control, or what might also be termed "backdoor" primary control.

In this connection, we would like to return to one aspect of our analysis that we may not have made sufficiently clear. Azuma suggests that "vicarious secondary control and illusory secondary control are geared to influencing outside events" (p. 970). This does not quite mesh with the concepts as we had intended to define them. According to our definitions, to the extent that behavior is geared to influencing outside events, it reflects a pursuit of primary control. As we suggested in an earlier description of our model (Rothbaum, Weisz, & Synder, 1982), we believe that there are both primary and secondary forms of vicarious and illusory control, as well as predictive and interpretive control. The individual may seek close alignment with powerful others in order to use the strength of those others to influence events (vicarious primary control) or in order to benefit psychologically from the feeling of closeness or oneness with the powerful others (vicarious secondary control). Gamblers may wear "lucky coats" to improve their chances of winning (illusory primary control) or to cultivate a feeling of harmony with the ebb and flow of fate to enhance their ability to comfortably accept *whatever* outcomes

occur (illusory secondary control). To the extent that people aim to influence events, people, circumstances, and so forth, we regard their behavior as a pursuit of primary control; to the extent that people aim to achieve a comfortable accommodation to existing realities, we construe their behavior as a pursuit of secondary control.

Overdetermination and Control

Finally, the comments of Azuma and Kojima serve to remind us of the essential overdetermination of human behavior. Returning to Azuma's example of the child who yields to others in a quarrel, we note that the child does so for a number of reasons: to demonstrate tolerance, self-control, and flexibility; to protect the peace and harmony of the group; and to gain credibility with others so as to have influence in future decisions. As the example illustrates, action is often spurred by multiple motives—some emphasizing primary control; others, secondary control. The in-group-out-group distinction that is so important in Japan adds another layer of complexity. For example, we suggested in Weisz et al. (1984) that Japanese workers may produce at high levels both to sustain a feeling of alignment with their in-group (company and co-workers) and to help their company "win out" over various out-group competitors; here the same action is stimulated by differing goals with respect to in-group and out-group. What all these examples suggest is that real life is rarely so simple as the models we use to describe and explain it.

To conclude, we thank Azuma and Kojima for their very thoughtful and thought-provoking comments. Their comments make rich nourishment for an embryonic model of control and, of course, stimulating fare for all of us who want to know our Eastern neighbors better.

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