

**Whether it's trafficking, cults, or domestic violence/abuse, it's all coercive control**

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# Whether it's trafficking, cults, or domestic violence/abuse, it's all coercive control

## Who is this program intended for?

- Mental health professionals engaged in forensic evaluations and/or counseling, both criminal & civil.
- Officers of the Court (attorneys, masters, judges).
- Law Enforcement specialists (e.g., IPV, fraud, racketeering, human trafficking, hostages, counter-terrorism).
- Custody evaluators in which IPV/CC is an issue.

# Some definitions

**To begin, we should define what is meant in this presentation by the following terms:**

- **Human trafficking**
- **Intimate Partner Violence (IPV, aka “DV”)**
- **Cults**

# What is a Human Trafficking?

**The U.N. defines human trafficking as:**

“Human Trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of people through force, *fraud or deception*, with the aim of exploiting them for profit. Men, women and children of all ages and from all backgrounds can become victims of this crime, which occurs in every region of the world. The traffickers often use violence or fraudulent employment agencies and fake promises of education and job opportunities to trick and coerce their victims.”

# What is Human Trafficking?

A briefer definition of trafficking:

The act of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harboring or receiving a person; By means of e.g. *coercion, deception or abuse of vulnerability*; For the purpose of exploitation, such as sexual exploitation, slavery and forced labor, among others.

# What is a Human Trafficking?

The 3 most common types of human trafficking are:

- sex trafficking
- forced labor, and
- debt bondage

Forced labor, also known as involuntary servitude, is the biggest sector of trafficking in the world, according to the U.S. Department of State. Debt bondage is another form of human trafficking in which an individual is forced to work in order to pay a debt.

# What is a Human Trafficking?

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Sex trafficking disproportionately affects women and children and involves forced participation in commercial sex acts. In the United States, any child under the age of 18 who has been involved in a commercial sex act is considered a trafficking victim. Women and girls make up 80% of the people trafficked transnationally. Yearly, traffickers exploit 1 million children in the commercial sex trade.

# What is Human Trafficking?

Other forms of human trafficking:

- Forced criminal activities (e.g., almost all violent sex offenses by women are committed under orders from a male).
- Forced military conscription, especially of “child soldiers”
- Removal of organs



# Signs of possible Human Trafficking...

- Living with employer.
- Poor living conditions.
- Multiple people in cramped space.
- ***Inability to speak to individual alone.***
- ***Answers appear to be scripted and rehearsed.***
- Employer is holding identity documents.
- Signs of physical abuse.
- ***Submissive or fearful.***

# What is a Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)?

**Formerly known as “domestic violence” (a term now out of use in recognition that it is not necessary for the people to be domestic partners, i.e., live together).**

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is abuse or aggression that occurs in a romantic relationship. “Intimate partner” refers to both current and former spouses and dating partners. IPV can vary in how often it happens and how severe it is. It can range from one episode of violence that could have lasting impact to chronic and severe episodes over multiple years. [CDC]

# What is a Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)?

IPV can include any of the following types of behavior:

- **Physical violence** is when a person hurts or tries to hurt a partner by hitting, kicking, or using another type of physical force.
- **Sexual violence** is forcing or attempting to force a partner to take part in a sex act, sexual touching, or a non-physical sexual event (e.g., sexting) when the partner does not or cannot consent.

# What is a Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)?

IPV can include any of the following types of behavior:

- **Stalking** is a pattern of repeated, unwanted attention and contact by a partner that causes fear or concern for one's own safety or the safety of someone close to the victim.
- **Psychological aggression** is the use of verbal and non-verbal communication with the intent to harm another partner mentally or emotionally and/or to exert control over another partner.

# What is a Cult/HDG?

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An ideological organization held together by charismatic relationships and demanding high levels of commitment.

# What are “cultic dynamics” and “cultic relationships”?

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The most important feature distinguishing destructive cults or HDGs from other organizations that may be “high demand” (e.g., the military) is the presence of cultic dynamics and cultic relationships.

# What is a Cult/HDG?...and how might this apply to IPV and trafficking?

- **Rigid hierarchies**
  - Flawless/divine leader
  - Inner circle (second tier) that typically hides information from “general” membership (third tier)
- **Downward flow of information and power**
  - Criticism and dissent are ignored (best case) or punished (worst case)
  - Lack of accountability
  - Decision-making is consolidated at the top
- **Rigid boundaries; “outside” is demonized**
- **Use of thought-control themes and processes (to be delineated)**

*Most HDGs fall into one of these categories:*

- **Religious**
  - Bible-based
  - Fundamentalist (Christian, Jewish, Islamic, etc.)
- **Political**
  - Revolutionary (Left, Right, Anarchist/Libertarian)
  - Christian Identity movement (often hybrid)
  - “Freemen” (anarcho/anti-government)
- **Marketing** (e.g., multilevel marketing, often incorporates religious or “New Age” beliefs and practices)



*Most HDGs fall into one of these categories:*

### **Therapy/Pseudo-therapy**

- Bible-based
- Fundamentalist (Christian, Jewish, Islamic, etc.)
- **“New Age”**
- **Hybrid**
  - Self-help/religious
  - Political/therapeutic
  - Religious/political

Most common: fundamentalist Christian and/or Bible-based HDGs.

# What is a Cult/HDG? – Charisma and High Demands

- *Charisma* refers to a spiritual power or personal quality that gives an individual influence or authority over large numbers of people. Hence, a cult is characterized by an ideology, strong demands issuing from that ideology, and powerful processes of social-psychological influence to induce group members to meet those demands.

# Cultic Processes...how might this apply to IPV and trafficking?

Presence of Themes/Processes in HDGs (from Robert Jay Lifton)

1. Milieu control.
2. Loading the language.
3. Demand for purity.
4. Confession.
5. Mystical manipulation.
6. Doctrine over person.
7. Sacred science.
8. Dispensing of existence.

## Dr. Robert J. Lifton's Eight Criteria for Thought Reform

### **1. Milieu Control**

*This involves the control of information and communication both within the environment and, ultimately, within the individual, resulting in a significant degree of isolation from society at large.*

### **2. Mystical Manipulation.**

*There is manipulation of experiences that appear spontaneous but in fact were planned and orchestrated by the group or its leaders in order to demonstrate divine authority or spiritual advancement or some special gift or talent that will then allow the leader to reinterpret events, scripture, and experiences as he or she wishes.*

### **3. Demand for Purity.**

*The world is viewed as black and white and the members are constantly exhorted to conform to the ideology of the group and strive for perfection. The induction of guilt and/or shame is a powerful control device used here.*

## Dr. Robert J. Lifton's Eight Criteria for Thought Reform

### **4. Confession.**

*Sins, as defined by the group, are to be confessed either to a personal monitor or publicly to the group. There is no confidentiality; members' "sins," "attitudes," and "faults" are discussed and exploited by the leaders.*

### **5. Sacred Science.**

*The group's doctrine or ideology is considered to be the ultimate Truth, beyond all questioning or dispute. Truth is not to be found outside the group. The leader, as the spokesperson for God or for all humanity, is likewise above criticism.*

### **6. Loading the Language.**

*The group interprets or uses words and phrases in new ways so that often the outside world does not understand. This jargon consists of thought-terminating cliché, which serve to alter members' thought processes to conform to the group's way of thinking.*

## Dr. Robert J. Lifton's Eight Criteria for Thought Reform

### **7. Doctrine over person.**

*Member's personal experiences are subordinated to the sacred science and any contrary experiences must be denied or reinterpreted to fit the ideology of the group.*

### **8. Dispensing of existence.**

*The group has the prerogative to decide who has the right to exist and who does not. This is usually not literal but means that those in the outside world are not saved, unenlightened, unconscious and they must be converted to the group's ideology. If they do not join the group or are critical of the group, then they must be rejected by the members. Thus, the outside world loses all credibility. In conjunction, should any member leave the group, he or she must be rejected also.*

*From Captive Hearts, Captive Minds: Freedom and Recovery from Cults  
and Abusive Relationships [my emphasis]*  
*Madeleine L. Tobias and Janja Lalich*

The similarities between cultic devotion and the traumatic bonding that occurs between battered individuals and their abusers (e.g., IPV, pimp-prostitute relationships) are striking. An abused partner is generally made to submit to the following types of behaviors:

- \* early verbal and/or physical dominance,
- \* isolation/imprisonment
- \* fear arousal and maintenance
- \* guilt induction
- \* contingent expressions of "love"
- \* enforced loyalty to the aggressor and self-denunciation
- \* promotion of powerlessness and helplessness
- \* pathological expressions of jealousy
- \* hope-instilling behaviors
- \* required secrecy

## Themes/Processes in cults (from Margaret Singer) – How might this apply to IPV and trafficking?

- Keep the person unaware of what is going on and the changes taking place.
- Control the person's time and, if possible, physical environment.
- Create a sense of powerlessness, covert fear, and dependency.
- Suppress much of the person's old behavior and attitudes.
- Instill new behavior and attitudes.

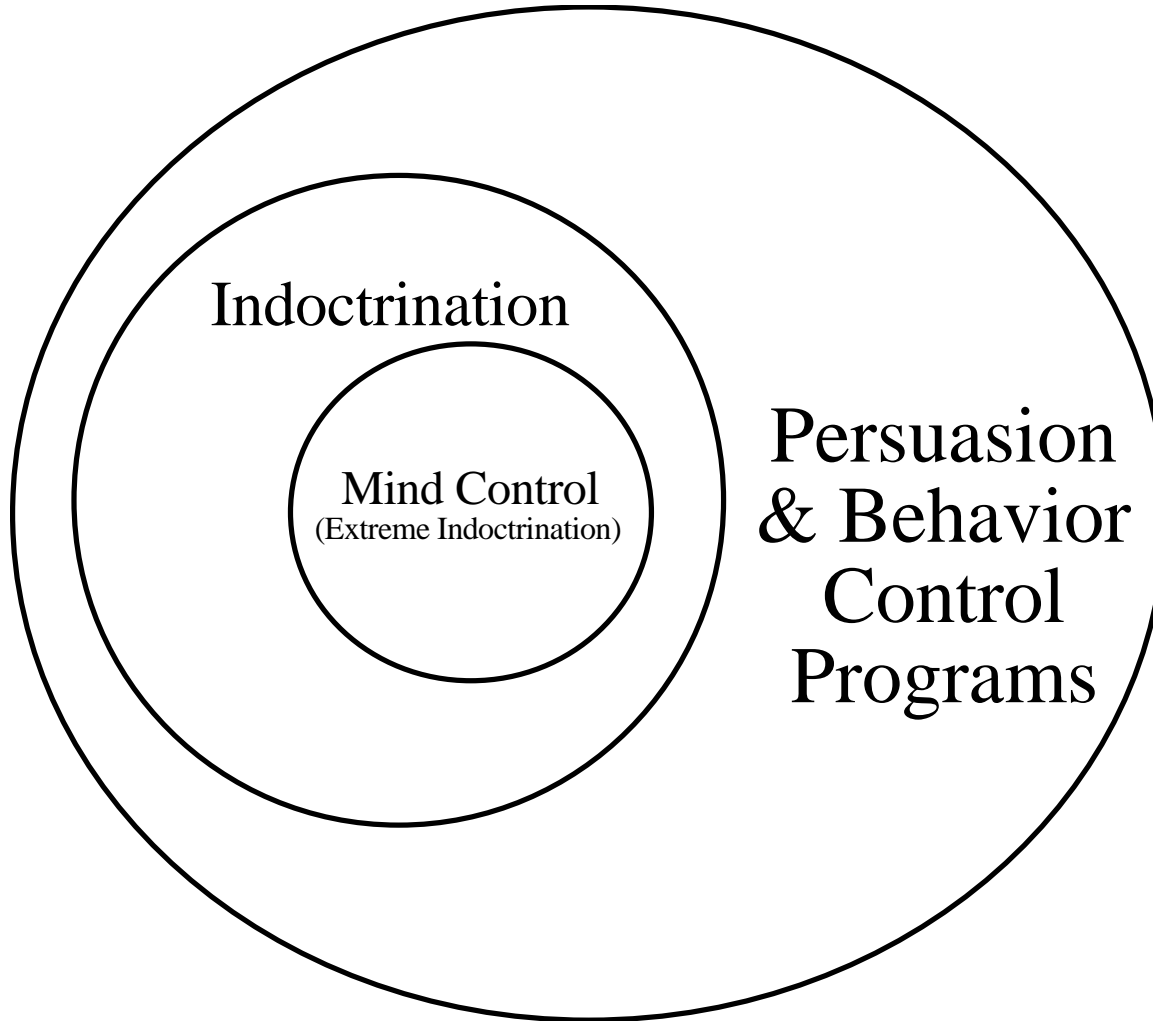


## Themes/Processes in cults (from Michael Langone) - How might this apply to IPV and trafficking?

1. Dependency (on the group, on the leader).
2. Debilitation (of physical, emotional, intellectual functioning).
3. Dread (of the “outside” world, of consequences of leaving the group (“exit costs” and induction of phobias)).

These processes occur in cults and in other cultic relationships, such as abusive marriages (couples), in trafficking, in gaslighting, etc.

## Indoctrination & Extreme Indoctrination (Mind Control or “Brainwashing”)



# What are “cultic dynamics” and “cultic relationships”?

“Cultic dynamics” refers to the use of the following processes of deception and undue influence:

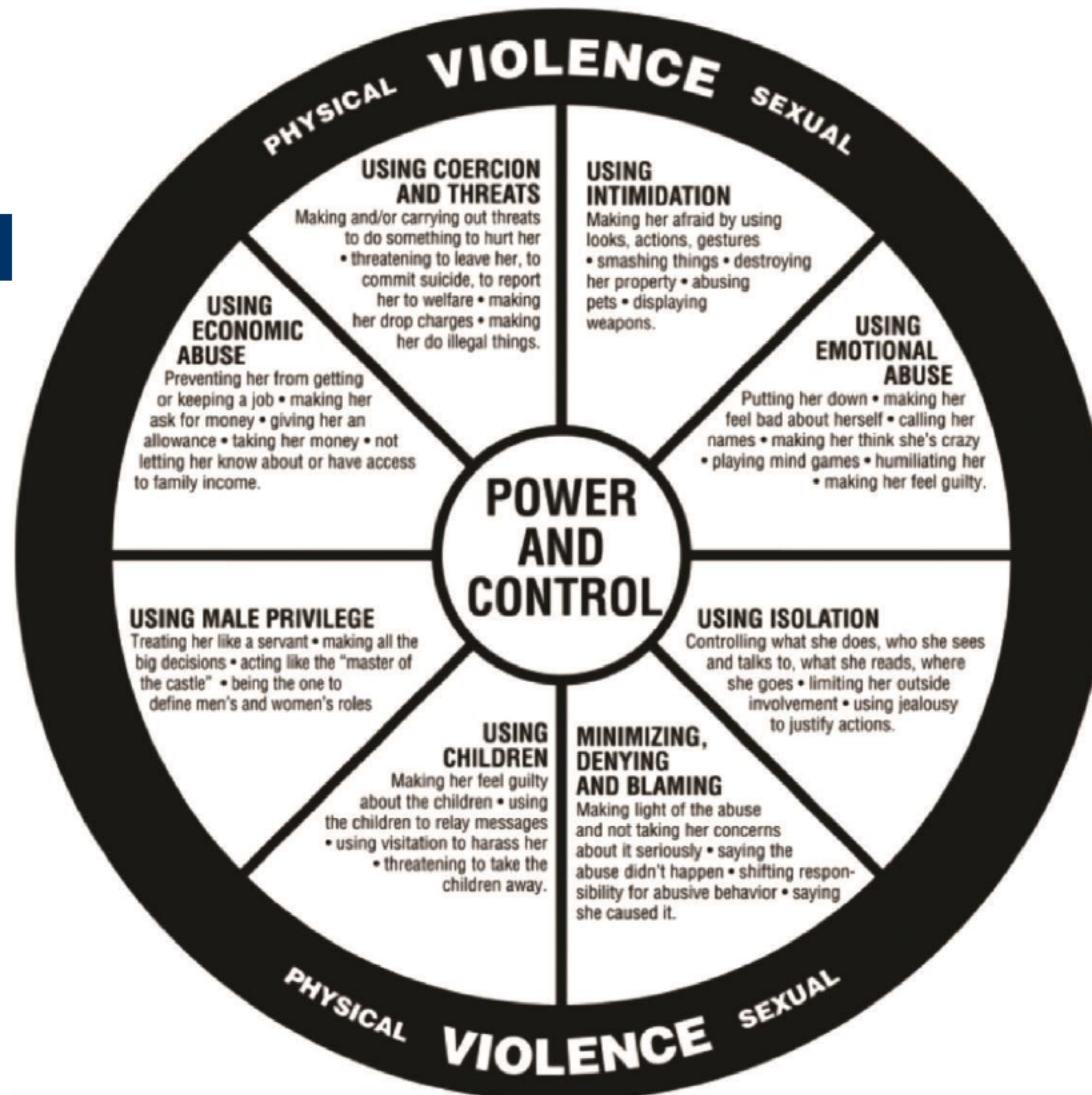
- Love-bombing (similar to “grooming”)
- Induction of quasi-hypnotic states (e.g., sleep/food deprivation, repetitive rituals, production and utilization of ASCs).
- Circular logic
- “Gaslighting”
- Isolation
- Black & White thinking
- Us vs. Them thinking
- Hidden agendas
- Pyramid structure (power flows in one direction)

# What are “cultic dynamics” and “cultic relationships”?

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A “cultic relationship” exists when, usually in the presence of cultic dynamics, the recruit begins to identify with the cult leader and/or members, and actively engages in ongoing efforts to suppress any doubts and protect (or enhance) the relationship with the cult leader and/or members.

As some ex-member put it: You learn how to brainwash yourself.

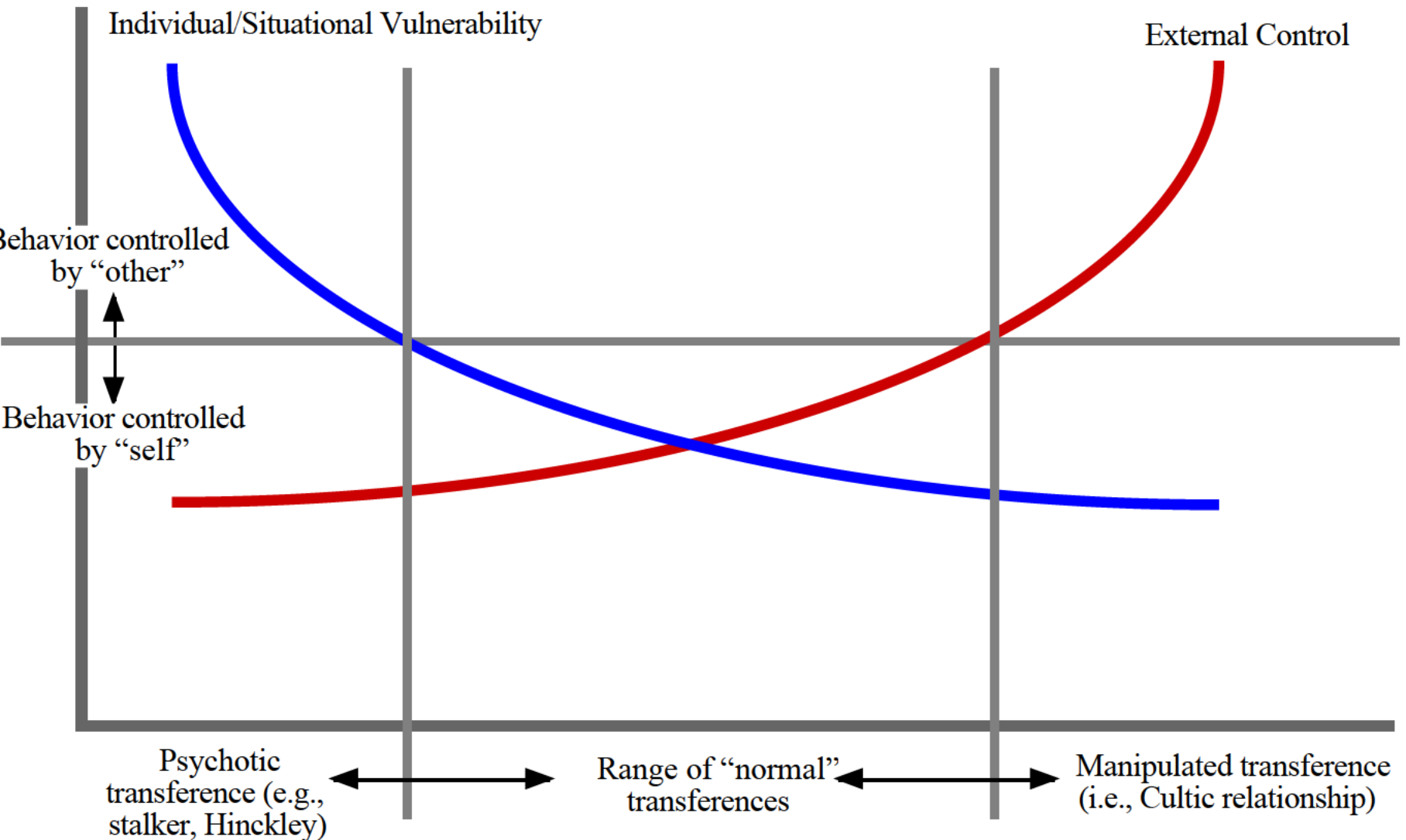




## Continuum of Influence & Persuasion

	<u>Education</u>	<u>Advertising</u>	<u>Propaganda</u>	<u>Indoctrination</u>	<u>Thought Reform</u>
<u>Focus of body of knowledge</u>	Many bodies of knowledge, based on scientific findings in various fields.	Body of knowledge concerns product, competitors; how to sell and influence via legal persuasion.	Body of knowledge is explicitly designed to inculcate organizational values.	Body of knowledge centers on political persuasion of masses of people.	Body of knowledge centers on changing people without their knowledge.
<u>Direction &amp; degree of exchange</u>	Two way pupil-teacher exchange encouraged.	Exchange can occur but communication generally one-sided.	Some exchange occurs but communication generally one-sided.	Limited exchange occurs, communication is one-sided.	No exchange occurs, communication is one-sided.
<u>Ability to change</u>	Change occurs as science advances; as students and other scholars offer criticisms; as students & citizens evaluate programs.	Change made by those who pay for it, based upon the success of ad programs by consumers law, & in response to consumer complaints.	Change based on changing tides in world politics and on political need to promote the group, nation, or international organization.	Change made through formal channels, via written suggestions to higher-ups.	Change occurs rarely; organization remains fairly rigid; change occurs primarily to improve thought-reform effectiveness.
<u>Structure of persuasion</u>	Uses teacher-pupil structure; logical thinking encouraged.	Uses an instructional mode to persuade consumer/buyer.	Takes authoritarian stance to persuade masses.	Takes authoritarian & hierarchical stance.	Takes authoritarian & hierarchical stance; No full awareness on part of learner.
<u>Type of relationship</u>	Instruction is time-limited: consensual.	Consumer/buyer can accept or ignore communication.	Learner support & engrossment expected.	Instruction is contractual: consensual	Group attempts to retain people forever.
<u>Deceptiveness</u>	Is not deceptive.	Can be deceptive, selecting only positive views.	Can be deceptive, often exaggerated.	Is not deceptive.	Is deceptive.
<u>Breadth of learning</u>	Focuses on learning to learn & learning about reality; broad goal is rounded knowledge for development of the individual.	Has a narrow goal of swaying opinion to promote and sell an idea, object, or program; another goal is to enhance seller & possibly buyer.	Targets large political masses to make them believe a specific view or circumstance is good.	Stresses narrow learning for a specific goal; to become something or to train for performance of duties.	Individualized target; hidden agenda (you will be changed one step at a time to become deployable to serve leaders).
<u>Tolerance</u>	Respects differences.	Puts down competition.	Wants to lessen opposition.	Aware of differences.	No respect for differences.
<u>Methods</u>	Instructional techniques.	Mild to heavy persuasion.	Overt persuasion sometimes unethical.	Disciplinary techniques.	Improper and unethical techniques.

# Cultic Relationship





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