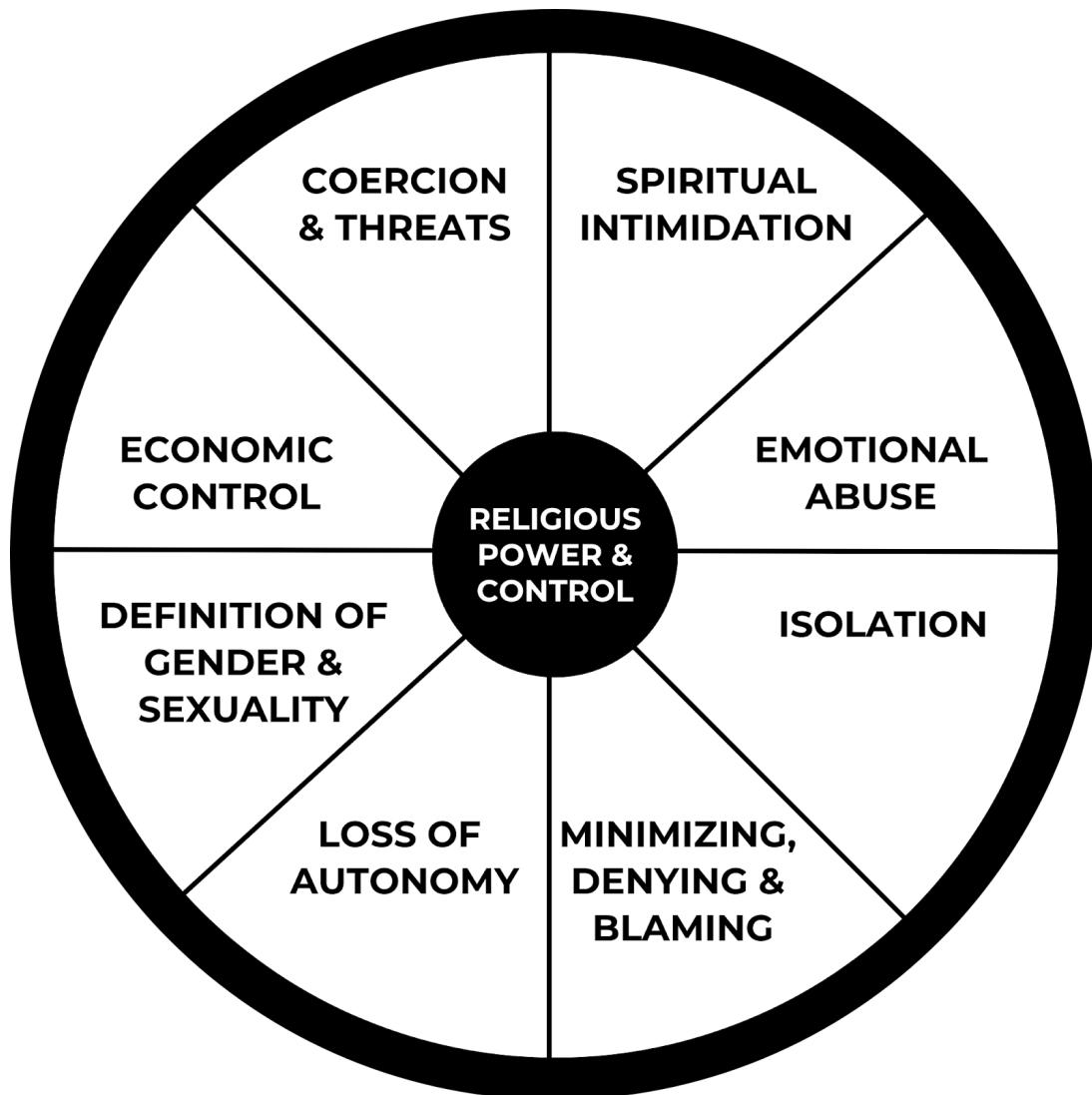


# THE RELIGIOUS POWER & CONTROL WHEEL

*Adapted from The Duluth Model (1993) Power and Control Wheel; Domestic Abuse Intervention Project.*

The Power & Control Wheel was created by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project as a tool for understanding the power and control dynamics at play in abusive relationships. Below is our adapted version of the Power & Control Wheel in the context of religious abuse.



## **COERCION & THREATS**

- Fear of punishment, God's wrath, eternal torment
- Abandonment and exclusion by the group
- Temptation, spiritual warfare, possession, etc.

## **SPIRITUAL INTIMIDATION**

- Leaders claim divine appointment & authority
- Elitist treatment and lack of leadership accountability
- Forbiddance of questioning the group's ultimate truth

## **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

- Shaming for not meeting unrealistic expectations
- Emotional suppression and invalidation
- Villainization of self-love
- Terminology like “sinful”, “prideful”, “selfish”

## **ISOLATION**

- Limited access to outside supports
- Control of information and media access
- Propaganda dehumanizing, mocking, & inciting fear of outsiders

## **MINIMIZING, DENYING & BLAMING**

- Spiritual bypassing and gaslighting
- Denial of mistreatment or any unintended impacts
- Justification of abuse based on divine order
- Blaming members for their own suffering (victim-blaming)
- Required forgiveness & reconciliation

## **LOSS OF AUTONOMY**

- Suppression of intuition & critical thinking
- Required reliance on the group for all needs
- Denial of privacy & individual agency
- Required submission to authority

## **DEFINITION OF GENDER & SEXUALITY**

- Rigid and/or binary gender roles & expectations
- Shame & exclusion for non-conformance
- Patriarchy, subjugation of women
- Pathologizing of queer identities, fear mongering

## **ECONOMIC CONTROL**

- Required financial investment from members
- Demands of total trust in divine provision
- Restrictions on education & employment of women
- Shaming for “worldliness” or enjoyment of material things