



# The Anti-ACT: How Organizations Sustain Systems of Psychological Inflexibility

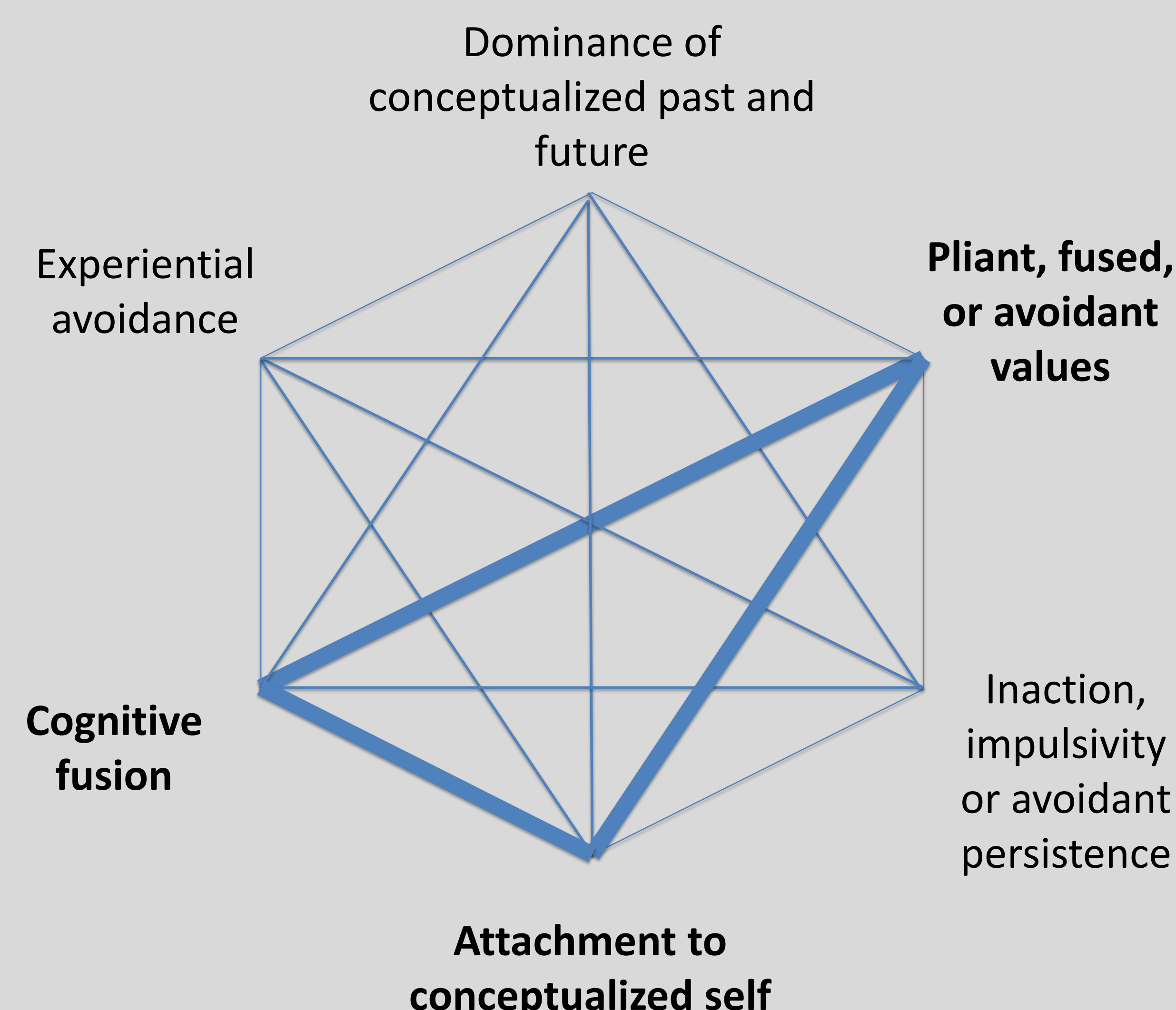
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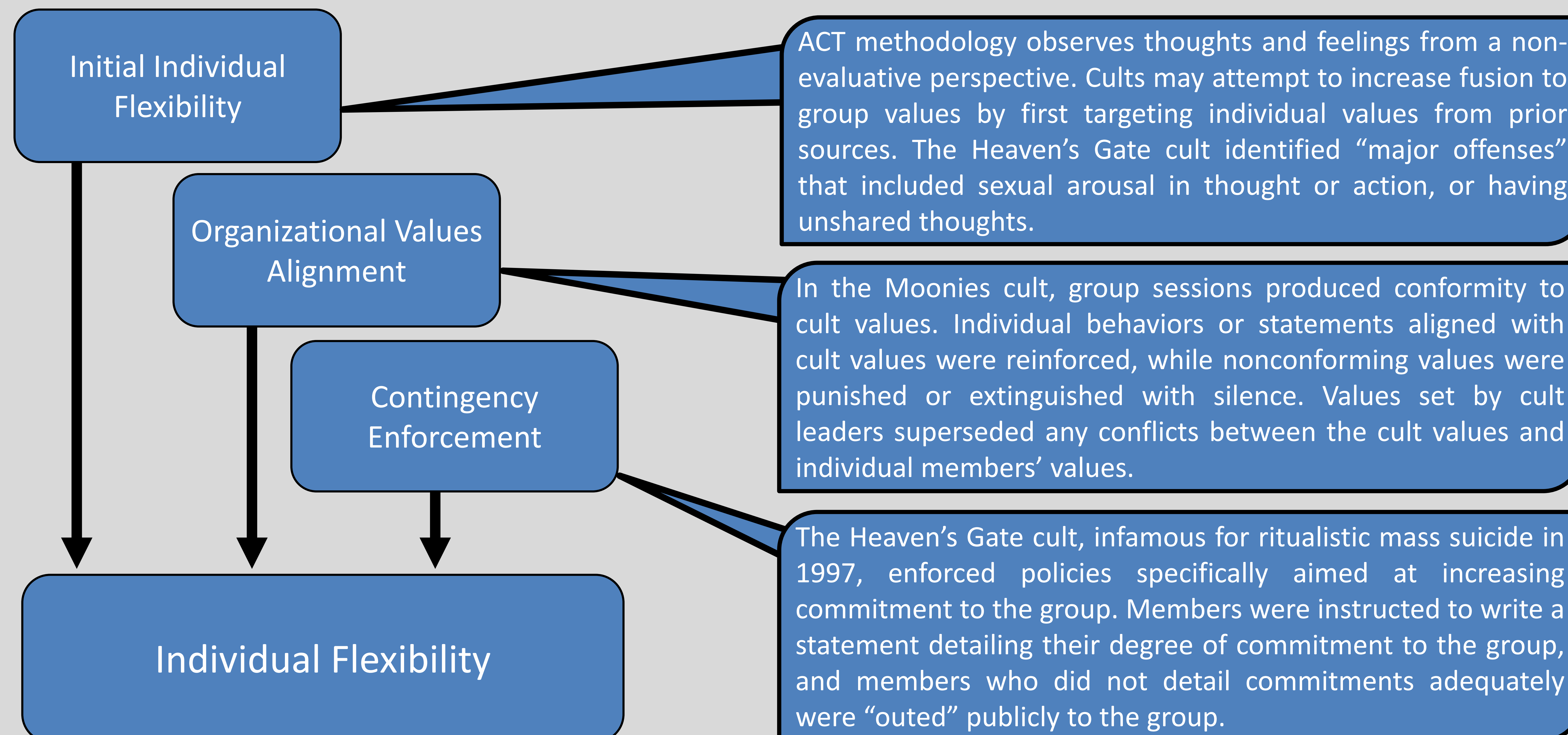
## Introduction

- Research supports the use of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) in addressing wellness challenges within organizations (Bond et al., 2006; Hayes et al., 2006).
- However, few reports examine how organizations (cults, political groups, etc.) engage in practices that support or decrease psychological flexibility in their members.
- We provide an *interactional flexibility* model to examine how organizational values may lead to deleterious psychological outcomes for individual members even while promoting organizational goals.
- Specifically, we use cults as a historical example of how psychological inflexibility is maintained.

## ACT Model



## Interactional Flexibility Model



## Discussion

**Interactional flexibility** represents the spectrum of *conflict* or *alignment* between individuals and a given organizational milieu. Within the model, four relationships are possible:

1. Value alignment: An individual and the organizational milieu have shared values and can maintain flexibility.
2. Forced alignment: A reduction of individual flexibility occurs: **Fusion with organizational values** (in conflict with personal values) or **attachment to a conceptualized self** as defined by the organization.
3. Limited conflict: There are poorly defined or eclectic values present; Or, poor contingency enforcement of values-based rules within the organization produces minimal effects on flexibility.
4. Escape: To maintain flexibility, an individual leaves the organization or is terminated. An individual may also stay and remain in conflict.

## Future Research

- The interactional flexibility model may serve to enhance future research concerning the application of ACT within organizations.
- Individual flexibility and time-series data assessments would provide further support for interactional flexibility.
- Experimental work will measure flexibility prior to and post initial organizational membership.
- Future work will examine the conditions under which fusion with values, or a conceptualized self, promotes inflexibility and how organizations might focus prevention interventions.

See authors for list of references.