Methodology of Cult Groups

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Definition of a Cult

Cults are defined by a movement, religion or philosophy. However, the very definition of a cult can cause problems as there are various ways to describe these organisations. According to the Oxford Dictionary's definition, a cult is:

(1) 'A system of religious veneration and devotion directed towards a particular figure or object.

(1.1) A relatively small group of people having religious beliefs or practices regarded by others as strange or as imposing excessive control over members.' [1]

From this definition it is understood that a cult is a totalitarian society, or a high demand group, that demands total allegiance. The group becomes all-consuming and adherents often undergo a personality transformation and neglect family, former friends, studies and interests.[2] The same controlling dynamic can exist in virtually any group in society. They can be guised as a political, religious, mystical, therapy styled self-help group, or a commercial enterprise. History has shown that cults can be very large (the Nazism movement) or small. The cults can greatly affect populations and can cause seemingly innocent people to become entrenched in criminal activities that are performed as parts of cult rituals. Ultimately, a cult is an organisation that utilizes obvious characteristics of Abusive Systems: dominant leader, in-house secrets, and one-way communications.[3] The differences between cults and other religious/spiritual groups can be further explained by Ernst Troeltsch. He states that religious or spiritual groups can be classified into three areas:

1. **Church** – The Church holds unwaveringly to the historical teachings of orthodoxy, not seeking special between-the-lines revelation.

2. **Sect** - The term 'sect' from the Latin 'secta' which means an 'organized church body', it is in turn sourced from the Latin 'sequi' meaning 'to follow' and is often used as 'way of life', or 'class of persons'. The word 'sectus' also means 'to cut or divide'. According to letusreason.org, the term 'sect' can and is sometimes exchanged for the term 'cult'. A sect can refer to a religious denomination, a group of people that broke from another greater body of religion to form their own. It can variously be to reform and go back to the truth or to further deviate from it.

3. **Cult** – A group of people fervently following a specific person's interpretation of a religious or spiritual doctrine. In may include groups that are spiritual in nature and surrounds a leader, or a group which denies or misinterprets essential religious doctrines.[4]

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[1] 'Definition: cult', *Oxford Dictionaries*, (Oxford University Press, 2019), <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/cult>.

[2] 'What Is A Cult?', *Cult Information & Family Support Inc.,* (2006).

[3] 'What Are the Consequences of Cultism?', *Reference: Social Science*, (IAC Publishing, 2019) <https://www.reference.com/world-view/consequences-cultism>.

[4] Troeltsch, E., *Die Soziallehren der Christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen,* Tubingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr, 1912 (English translation 1931), Section "Cults".

Development of a Cult Group

Cults can emerge for various reasons. It may be due to a person's (or group of people's): i) personal philosophical point-of-view which is conveyed in a charismatic and convincing manner; ii) an 'experience' of a spiritual nature which others believe, or have also 'experienced'; iii) an ideological pursuit of an 'utopian' society by forming an intentional community; iv) or a disenchantment of certain mainstream religious churches due to the promotion of a modern, progressive theology. The result is that some people unwittingly transfer their faith onto a group they believe better reflects their true values/beliefs. [5] Certain historian and theological figures state that the manifestation of 'case and effect' can also generate the 'Perfect Storm' to create a cult group. 'Causality', according to philosopher and theologist Thomas Aquinas, is best described as "a web of interrelated events whereby each event is connected to each and every other event directly or remotely." The act of Causality throughout in history have led to a multitude of cult groups to arise from pivotal shifts in societies attitudes, significant events, or evolving moral standards. Examples are:

- **Terrorist Groups**
  - throughout history terrorist groups have emerged as: i) a protest against a country's dominance or ruling power, ii) an act of Socialist/Communist rebellion, iii) an attempt of National liberation, iv) a form of religious, cultural, or political protest, or v) a form of brutal State Rule by Terrorism.[6]

- **Devil worshippers – Vampires - Black Witches**
  - emerged after the Catholic Church in the 15th Century had interpreted witchcraft as 'a bond with Satan in order to work against God'.[7] Devil worshippers/Vampires/Black Witches' cults were driven 'underground' while innocent people were tried and executed for witchcraft throughout Europe. The Renaissance changed the power structure of the Church as New Worlds and scientific advancements were discovered.

- **Yoga and 'spiritual healing' practices led by Swamis or Gurus**
  - emerged after the establishment of British East India Company (17th Century) and the British Imperial rule of India (19th Century)[8].

- **Mormonism - Seventh-Day Adventist Church - Exclusive Brethren**
  - emerged from the Second Great Awakening that involved Protestant religious revival during the early 19th century in the United States amongst Baptist and Methodist congregations. It was American colonials' response to forging its own identity after splitting from British Rule.

[5] Corney, P., 'The future of evangelicalism in Australia', *Ethos Magazine*, (30 December 2014), <petercorney.com/2014/12/30/the-future-of-evangelicalism-in-australia/>.

[6] Zalman, A., 'A list of terrorist groups by type: From pre-modern to present day', *Thought Co.com*, (25 May 2019), <https://www.thoughtco.com/terrorist-groups-a-list-of-terrorist-groups-by-type-3209111>.

[7] Kreis, S., 'Lecture 6: Europe in the Age of Religious Wars, 1560-1715', *History Guide: Lectures on Early Modern European History*, (2002), <historyguide.org/earlymod/lecture6c.html>.

[8] Peter Marshall, P., 'The British Presence in India in the 18th Century', *B.B.C: British History*, (17 February 2011), <www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire_seapower/east_india_01.shtml>.

- Ku Klux Klan
    - emerged after the American Civil War by veterans of the American Confederate Army. Their aim was to preserve the slave industry and maintain the ideology of White Supremacy.[9]

- Hermetic Orders
    - emerged after a spate of significant archaeological discoveries were unearthed, and increasing tourism within the Egyptian, Ancient Greek, Ancient Rome, and Middle Eastern region between the late 1800s through to the 1930s.[10]

- Thule Society/Neo-Nazi groups
    - emerged after WWI by a German war veteran in 1919. The Study Group for Germanic Antiquity and preservation of "purebloods" was in response to the increasing migration of Jews[11] into central Europe regions since the late 1500s.

- U.F.O faiths
    - emerged after World War II and during the Cold War tension between U.S.S.R and U.S.A in their bid to be victorious in the 'Space Race'. The pioneering efforts of rocket testing, spaceship developments, and the excessive secrecy surrounding the launches and space flights[12] led to people claiming that the world was being visited by aliens in Unidentified Flying Objects.

- New Age groups
    - emerged post-World World II "baby boom" due to a shift in moral standards, civil rights, and the enjoyment of liberal lifestyles to the extreme[13] (ie. psychedelic drugs, casual sex, less regimented routines, lift in rationing of goods, etc).

- Separatists Buddhist groups
    - emerged in the late 20th Century after the Gelug school split from the traditional Buddhist teaching methods of 'Lamrim' (Tibetan: "stages of the path")[14] and their Buddhist leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The conflict and unrest within the Buddhist religion had been brewing since His Holiness the Dalai Lama was forced into exile from Tibet in 1959.

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[9] 'Ku Klux Klan', *Southern Poverty Law Centre website*, (2019), <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/ku-klux-klan>.

[10] Champion, T., 'Beyond Egyptology: Egypt in 19th and 20th Century archaeology and anthropology', *The Wisdom of Egypt: Changing Visions Through the Ages*, London, UK. UCL Press, (2003), <https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/28787/>., p 162.

[11] 'Philosophy', *Thule Society*, (24 June 2019), <https://thulesociety.nfshost.com/>.

[12] Llewellyn J., et al, 'The Space Race: The Cold War', *Alpha History*, (2018), <https://alphahistory.com/coldwar/space-race/>.

[13] Paese, M., 'The Counterculture Movement', *History, Pop, Rock and Roll*, (2019), <https://www.thehistoryofrockandroll.net/the-counterculture-movement/>.

[14] 'The Lamrim Tradition', *Jangchup Lamrim website*, (2016), <https://www.jangchuplamrim.org/lamrim-tradition/>.

The development of Cult groups comprises of several sequential stages, firstly starting with an enigmatic leader. The usual stages of development are as follows:

1) A person with a charismatic yet narcissistic persona (cult leader) begins by creating their own reality (ie. aliens, God, the Devil, Shiva, tantric sex).

2) The leader will convey to others of this new reality and promote the 'benefits' of the new group. Through constant talks and promotional materials (via social media platforms, health and/or spiritual festivals, etc.), the leader will coerce several members of the public to join him/her and form a small group (though they would deny it is a cult).

3) The cult will usually base itself on an isolated farm or a 'health retreat', and the cult leader has imposed a form of self-censorship (ie. cult followers will go Hell if they leave).

4) The cult leader makes a rule preventing their faithful members from associating with the outside world.

5) The cult leader makes increasing demands for the followers to turn over all their worldly possessions. A small donation is required by the leader at initial meeting by the demands for larger and larger amounts finances and assets grows during the person's involvement with the cult.

6) The cult leader gives his/her inner circle of followers are a 'higher status' recognition within the organisation (ie. only they hold the keys to the kingdom).

7) Members of the cult leader's 'inner circle' start speaking of stories about the greatness of their cult leader. Some of the cult followers have already been conditioned from the time they were children to accept that their cult leader is: "the resurrection of Jesus Christ", "able to speak to aliens", "the Superior Race", or "immortal because of drinking blood and cannibalism".

8) To prevent cult followers having time to engage in critical thought or constructive debate about the cult's philosophies and dubious activities, the cult leader assigns meaningless tasks to keep everyone busy. For this reason, long sermons, 24hrs chanting/meditation sessions, all day unpaid house-keeping chores at the spiritual retreat, or interminable work shifts are embedded as part of the cult rules.

9) The cult group by now is a well-established micro-community. However, it needs more members to keep money flowing into the organisation. The cult leader will demand cult followers to recruit new converts into the fold. This has the double advantage of picking up new disciples and (even if that doesn't always work) the mere act of recruiting will further cement the commitment of those already in the fold.

10) To maintain the attendance and devotion of the cult followers, the leader will: prophesise of a future "Happening" (ie. the world will end at 10:33 hrs on the 15th July in 2024); and/or claim to be receiving "Visions" or "Messages" from a Higher Deity. Cult leaders will often speak to their followers convincing the group about how special they are because they are "The Chosen Ones" and only they will: know the truth, be blessed, reach Nirvana, be made immortal, be welcomed in Heaven, help the Devil to overthrow Heaven, be a member of a superior race, or receive salvation.[15]

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[15] Mason, S., 'How to start a cult: Become a god by starting your very own religion', *Psychology Today*, (14 June 2009), <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/look-it-way/200906/how-start-cult>.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder

According to the DSM-IV, "Many highly successful individuals display personality traits that might be considered narcissistic. Only when these traits are inflexible, maladaptive, and persisting and cause significant functional impairment or subjective distress do they constitute Narcissistic Personality Disorder."[16] A vast majority of cult leaders have been diagnosed with Narcissistic Personality Disorder. They believe that they are "special" individuals deserving of a status above everyone else in society. Due to these feeling of self-entitlement cult leaders will often demand complete respect, unquestioning trust, full attention, loyalty and obedience[17] from their followers. Being the centre of attention and worshipped by a submissive group of people only feeds a cult leader's ego and encourages their dominance.[18] Narcissism and the 'destructive cult leader personality' can be best defined as "a pattern of traits and behaviours which signify infatuation and obsession with one's self to the exclusion of all others, and the egotistic and ruthless pursuit of one's gratification, dominance and ambition".[19]

For a person to be diagnosed with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (N.P.D) they must meet five or more of the following symptoms:

- Has a grandiose sense of self-importance (e.g., exaggerates achievements and talents, expects to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements).

- Is preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love.

- Believes that he or she is "special" and unique and can only be understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people (or institutions)

- Requires excessive admiration.

- Has a very strong sense of entitlement, e.g., unreasonable expectations of especially favourable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations.

- Is exploitative of others, e.g., takes advantage of others to achieve his or her own ends.

- Lacks empathy, e.g., is unwilling to recognize or identify with the feelings and needs of others.

- Is often envious of others or believes that others are envious of him or her.

- Regularly shows arrogant, haughty behaviours or attitudes.[20]

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[16] 'The personality disorders', New England Institute in Religious Research, (2006), <neirr.org/psychissues/Personality_Disorders.htm>.

[17] Guy, F., 'Pathological narcissism and the cult leader', *Crime Traveller Online Resources: Researching Crime and the Criminal Mind*, (July 2015), <https://www.crimetraveller.org/2015/07/pathological-narcissism-cult-leader/>.

[18] Ibid.

[19] 'The personality disorders', New England Institute in Religious Research, (2006), <neirr.org/psychissues/Personality_Disorders.htm>.

[20] Bressert, S., Personality: Narcissistic Personality Disorder, *Psych Central*, (20 April 2019), <https://psychcentral.com/disorders/narcissistic-personality-disorder>.

Recruitment Strategies in Cult Groups

There are many reasons that students and other individuals would get involved with a cult. The need for friendship, acceptance and validation are among the top reasons that people choose to get involved with a cult.[21]

We all have needs. One of our strongest needs after food and shelter is the need to belong. Psychologist Abraham Maslow's lasting and most significant contributions to Human Sciences is known as the "Hierarchy of Needs." In his quest to understand human motivation and the pursuit of happiness, he formulated a list of basic human needs that had to be fulfilled for maximum psychological health.[22]

Through Maslow's interviews and studies, he came to categorize a hierarchical list of needs that need be fulfilled for increasing life satisfaction:

1. Physiological needs (homeostasis, food, water, sleep, shelter, sex)

2. Safety needs (personal security, emotional security, financial security, health and well-being, safety needs against accidents/illness and their adverse impacts)

3. Social belonging (friendships, intimacy, family)

4. Self-esteem (getting recognition, status, importance, and respect from others)

5. Self-actualization (mate acquisition, parenting, utilizing abilities, utilizing talents, pursuing a goal, seeking happiness)

6. Transcendence (by this later theory, one finds the fullest realization in giving oneself to something beyond oneself — for example, in altruism or spirituality. He equated this with the desire to reach the infinite[23]).
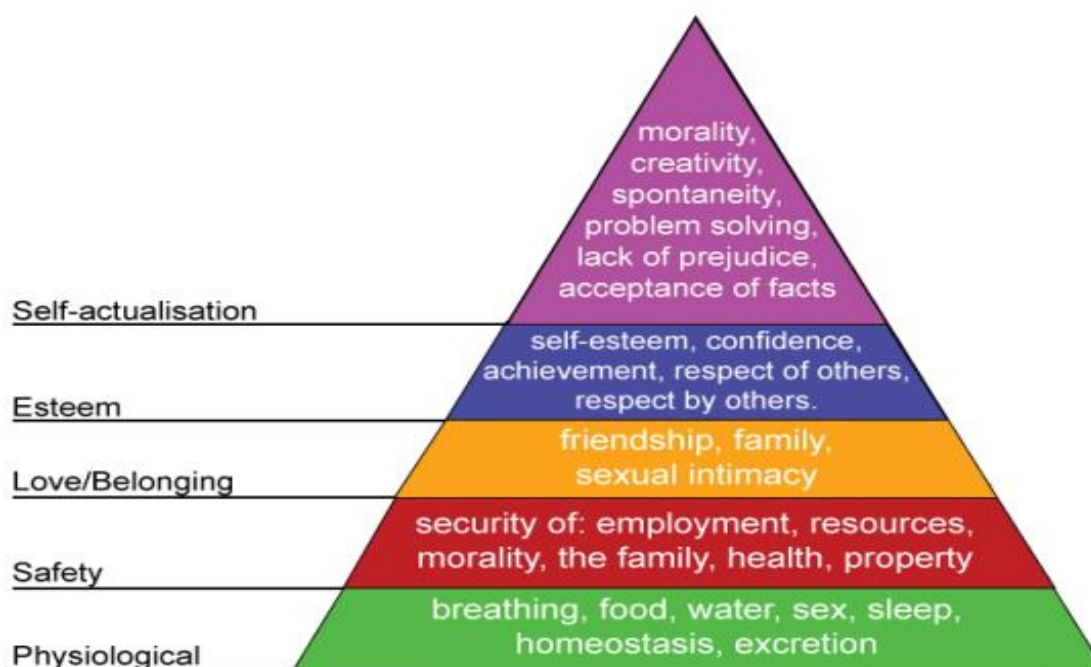

Image: Maslow Pyramid of Hierarchy of Needs

[21] Henke, D., 'Cult Recruiting Methods', *The Watchman*, (2019), <https://www.watchman.org/articles/cults-alternative-religions/cult_recruiting-methods/>.

[22] 'Abraham Maslow', *The Pursuit of Happiness*, (2018), <https://www.pursuit-of-happiness.org/history-of-happiness/abraham-maslow/>.

[23] Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, (3 April 2019), <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow%27s_hierarchy_of_needs>.

'This means that in order for motivation to occur at the next level, each level must be satisfied within the individual themselves. Furthermore, this theory is a key foundation in understanding how drive and motivation are correlated when discussing human behaviour. Each of these individual levels contains a certain amount of internal sensation that must be met in order for an individual to complete their hierarchy. The goal of Maslow's Theory is to attain the fifth level or stage: self-actualization'.[24]

In certain times of life, we are more vulnerable than others. These times are usually to do with any major change in our lives such as: travel, grief, leaving school, uncertainty about the future, divorce etc. It is when we have an emotional need that we become more easily manipulated. Usually a healthy support network of family, friends and community would provide the resources to fill the void created by a traumatic sense of loss. The need may be that of emotional support, crisis accommodation, guidance and information, or just a 'friendly ear' to communicate concerns. When these healthy support networks are absent a cult can provide a counterfeit 'help-network' in its place. David Henke states that cult's help-network and retreat programs are 'counterfeit because the effect is destructive in the long run. The relationship becomes one-way after the recruit is assimilated into the cult. A healthy relationship, or network, is two-way where accountability and truth are present. A cult will use "love bombing" as a means of recruiting people'.[25] Love bombing is an all-pervasive expression of caring for the individual and others. It sounds like the Christian concept of agape love. It is not the same. In a cult the love stops when the individual is being corrected. Love bombing also becomes a tool to keep people in the cult.[26] The thought of losing the powerful sense of being loved by the group can dissuade the doubter from leaving. The person who hungers to know more about a deity, a belief system, or the Bible, may be attracted to a such a group'.[27] Jeanne Mills, a former member and early defector from the Peoples Temple cult stated:

> "When you meet the friendliest people you have ever known, who introduce you to the most loving group of people you have ever encountered, and you find the leader of the group to be the most inspired, caring, compassionate and understanding person you have ever met, and then you learn that the cause of the group is something you never dared hope could be accomplished, and all of this sounds too good to be true… it probably is too good to be true!"[28]

Successful cult recruitment by the use 'love bombing', does not take long. It is often used by cults and target the vulnerable, especially people with little money, social support system, and/or backpackers travelling alone.[29] At the Byron Bay Transport Interchange, an ashram recruiter can convince a new visitor to the Northern Rivers region to join their cult within 20 minutes. Cult recruiters showing public displays of compassion and friendliness to a vulnerable person 'down on their luck', can easily coax that

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[24] *Cult Watcher Handbook*, (2018) Cult Information & Family Support Inc Press, p 4.

[25] Flesher, L., and Lindsay, L., 'Love Bombing', *Rational Revelation*, (2005), <www.rationalrevelation.com/tr/lovebomb.html>.

[26] *Cult Watcher Handbook*, (2018), Cult Information & Family Support Inc Press.

[27] Henke, D., 'Cult Recruiting Methods', *The Watchman,* (2019), <https://www.watchman.org/articles/cults-alternative-religions/cult_recruiting-methods/>.

[28] 'What Is A Cult?', *Cult Information & Family Support Inc.,* (2006), <www.cifs.org.au/ourmission.php>.

[29] Roberts, G., 'Byron's sect appeal', *The Australian,* (11 April 2007), <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/inquirer/byrons-sect-appeal/news-story/>.

person to engage in a 'new way' of living. Recruiters remind vulnerable person that they are surrounded by an uncaring society, and that the 'cruelty and wickedness' of society is the reason why the person has found themselves 'lost'. Recruiters convince the vulnerable that they need to be healed/rescued and that that their group will provide shelter, food and assistance.[30] To an ill-informed outsider these 'spiritual self-help retreats' seem to be the best place if a person wants to 'be one with nature', 'help serve others', and/or 'find the answers to life's true purpose'. Thereby, when joining a cult, the recruit feels that they are doing their part to help others and themselves.

[30] Roberts, G., 'Byron's sect appeal', *The Australian*, (11 April 2007), <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/inquirer/byrons-sect-appeal/news-story/>.

Thought Reform Programs in Cult Groups

According to Steven Hassan, human beings are made up of for elements: behaviour, information, thoughts, and emotions. His research implies that 'if we can control one of these elements in a person, the other elements tend to follow. If we control two of these elements the other elements will almost certainly follow. If we can control all these elements at once, a person is swept away.'[31] Cult leaders are acutely aware of this. Cult leaders instruct that all new recruits commence with their 'programs' immediately upon arrival. These 'programs' are merely an abusive thought reform program and a guise to control of the four elements of their followers from first moment of contact with the cult organisation. If the person knew of these conditions before being recruited, they would not allow or give consent for another person to carry out a thought reform program that takes away personal freedom.

Clinical psychologist Dr Margaret Singer points out the six conditions for an abusive thought reform program:

1. Gaining control over a person's time, especially his or her thinking time, and physical environment.
2. Creating a sense of powerlessness, fear, and dependency in the recruit, while providing models that demonstrate the new behaviour that leadership wants to produce.
3. Manipulating rewards, punishments, and experiences in order to suppress the recruit's former social behaviour and attitudes, including the use of altered states of consciousness to manipulate experience.
4. Manipulating rewards, punishments and experiences in order to elicit the behaviour and attitudes that leadership wants.
5. Creating a tightly controlled system with a closed system of logic, wherein those who dissent are made to feel as though their questioning indicates that there is something inherently wrong with them.
6. Keeping recruits unaware and uninformed that there is an agenda and a process to control or change them.[32]

According to the Cult Information & Family Support Incorporated of Australia,

'cult involvement has more to do with control and manipulation than with religious dogma, and that they operate by targeting new recruits using coercion. They isolate new members from family and friends, control their behaviour and information while at the same time using organised peer pressure tactics and simplistic black and white thought processes to gain control of the mind'.[33]

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[31] Hassan, S., *Combatting Cult Mind Control*, (1988), Park Street Press, p 65.

[32] 'About CIFS: CIFS' Mission', Cult Information & Family Support Inc., (2014), <www.cifs.org.au/ourmission.php>.

[33] *Cult Watcher Handbook*, (2018), Cult Information & Family Support Inc Press, p 3.

For a cult to successfully take root within a community it appears that three behavioural practices are deemed essential. These are:

1. Cult followers thinking in terms of *us* versus *them,* with total alienation from *them* (mainstream society).

2. The intense, though often subtle, indoctrination used to recruit and hold members. The indoctrination techniques include:
   a) subjection to stress and fatigue
   b) social disruption, isolation and pressure
   c) self-criticism and humiliation
   d) fear, anxiety, and paranoia
   e) control of information
   f) escalating commitment
   g) autohypnosis to induce peak experiences

3. The charismatic cult leader. The constant theme arising from cult leaders is that "outside the cult all is evil and threatening; inside the cult is the special path to salvation (or to their True Master if a Satanist/Vampire) that can only be found through the cult leader and his teachings".[34]

Other behaviours exhibited by cult group members are:
   a) They believe that theirs is the only truth.
   b) They are forbidden to have anything to do with ex members.
   c) They are not allowed to disagree with or question the beliefs of the group.
   d) They are not allowed to read literature other than their own publications.
   e) They often believe "the end justifies the means." Therefore, lying and misrepresenting themselves to the public is allowed if it furthers their cause.
   f) They have secret beliefs that are withheld from outsiders and new members.
   g) Their main agenda is recruitment and group growth.

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[34] 'French law makes cult's brainwashing a crime', *Concordat Watch*, (2001), <www.concordatwatch.eu/topic-47668.834>.

Criteria for Psychological Totalitarianism in Cult Groups

Totalitarianism is defined as an "imposing a form of government in which the political authority exercises absolute and centralized control over all aspects of life, the individual is subordinated to the state, and opposing political and cultural expression is suppressed".[35] The American psychiatrist, Robert Lifton (whose research focused on the study of genocide and Human Rights), devised an eight point criteria which orchestrates the methods cult leaders use to gain and maintain total control over their members. Lifton's 1961 research publication *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism: A Study of Brainwashing in China* has become a classic text in the field and continues to serve as a fundamental guide in the debriefing of former cult members.[36] Lifton suggests that the eight steps regularly utilised by totalitarian cult leaders are:

1. Milieu Control:

   "We control what you experience, and how you experience it."

2. Loading the Language:

   "Our own special language helps you to think the way we want you to think."

3. Mystical Manipulation:

   "We'll make sure our system works for you – even if we have to fake it."

4. Sacred Science:

   "It's true because we say it's the Truth."

5. Demand for Purity:

   "Only those good enough can 'get it'".

6. Confession:

   "We promise we won't use your past against you… really …"

7. Doctrine Over Person:

   "When your facts don't match our Truth, your facts are wrong."

8. Dispensing of Existence:

   "The Truth is worth more than life, especially an outsider's life."[37]

[35] 'Totalitarianism', *The Free Dictionary sourced from American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 5th Ed., (2016), <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/totalitarianism>.

[36] 'Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism: A Study of Brainwashing in China', *Books: Amazon.com*, (2019), <https://www.amazon.com/Thought-Reform-Psychology-Totalism-Brainwashing/dp/1614276757/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1480907424&sr=8-1&keywords=lifton+thought+reform>.

[37] Robinson, S., 'The Basics – Lifton's eight criteria of thought reform', *Open Minds Foundation.org*, (5 December 2016), <https://www.openmindsfoundation.org/the-basics-liftons-eight-criteria-of-thought-reform/>.

In 1975, sociologist James A. Beckford, listed the six behavioural characteristics that enables cult groups to gain totalitarianism of new followers:

1. **Historicism** (identifying historical events as relating to the outworking of the cult's revered God/deity/'Higher Force' purpose)

2. **Absolutism** (conviction that cult leaders dispense absolute truth)

3. **Activism** (capacity to motivate members to perform missionary tasks)

4. **Rationalism** (conviction that cult doctrines have a rational basis devoid of mystery)

5. **Authoritarianism** (rigid presentation of regulations without the opportunity for criticism)

6. **World Indifference** (rejection of certain secular requirements and medical treatments).[38]

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[38] 'Jehovah Witnesses', *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, (12 July 2019), <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jehovah%27s_Witnesses>.

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