

Satanism: Crime, Deviance and Disorders

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Abstract. This article deals with a phenomenon that is often spoken about, reported in the media, but about which very little empirical evidence has emerged over the years. Only a handful of criminologists have addressed this phenomenon. This stems from the belief that supernatural phenomena cannot be researched using scientific methods. However, within the phenomenological paradigm, there is room for engaging informants who report their lived experiences. Scientific opinion, as far as social sciences are concerned, confines spirituality to Theology and Anthropology. The notion of the supernatural should otherwise be confined to private life. Against this background, the authors claim that it is rather a general tendency within the scientific community to either consider the spiritual world as a superstition and a phenomenon not to be engaged in. Spirituality should thus be relegated to private discourse. Therefore, the authors endeavour to shed the light on the topic by defining concepts, presenting typologies from the literature, as well as concerning crime and Satanism. The recruitment strategies, as well as the means of control over the followers, are presented, and then specific crimes, abuse, psychological disorders and spiritual possession are discussed. The goal of this paper is to stimulate researchers to tackle this secretive phenomenon and its criminological connections as the perpetration of crime have often been reported where there was the evidence of rituals. Spirituality is the part of life for billions of people in the world and is it worth to be investigated Perhaps it is rather a lack of interest or even fear that leads to the dearth of research in this area.

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Introduction

One cannot deal with Satanism without engaging metaphysics. Explaining the complexities and the conflicting views of this branch of philosophy becomes evident within Cartesian dualism and the resulting worldviews and epistemology. Descartes' dualism presents a spiritual world of God, angels and demons (supernatural world) and the physical world (natural, materialistic world). It is important to reflect on the worldview and epistemology and whether current scientific methods are adequate to engage the first domain of Descartes or, perhaps, whether the current epistemology is unbiased or not in tackling the vexing issues of Satanism and mysticism. There is an epistemological bias against metaphysical phenomena¹, resulting in the exclusion of spiritual existential experiences from scientific enquiry. This inadequacy in positivism has led to a dearth of theoretical explanations of crime and desistance being the result of spirituality. Satanism and its link to criminal activities has been the subject of discussion in various media. It should be noted that literature regarding Satanism is not unanimous, as various different perspectives exist on the topic

¹ Roelofse C.J, A paradigm shift in pre-theoretical deliberations on crime within spiritual existentialism. *Theologia Viatorum*, 2017, Vol. 41/1, pp. 48–74.

and its relation to crime². Although the link between Satanism and crime is clear (Roelofse, 2016; Petrus, 2008), some gaps within the available literature need to be addressed before continuing with a discussion on the Satanic philosophy, beliefs, practices and crimes it incorporates. Firstly, there is no official crime statistics available³ for the prevalence of satanic related crimes in South Africa. Secondly, very little objective information is available regarding individuals or groups involved in satanically motivated crimes. Most information available originated from the victims and ex-Satanists' personal accounts. The lack of evidence surrounding the phenomenon might be due to the secretive nature of many cults, the difficulty to reliably investigate the deviant groups or organisations, as well as the destruction of evidence of satanic crimes⁴. Keeping the lack of substantiated evidence in mind, this article attempts to interpret and summarise the available literature on Satanism, so that the reader was able to gain a holistic view of the nature, extent and *modus operandi* of Satanism in South Africa.

Background

Dealing with metaphysical and metaphorical perspectives is a challenge that few Criminologists have engaged in. In general, there is either limited interest or agreement that positivistic epistemology cannot engage the transcendental sphere and therefore it is impossible to be engaged. As our worldview influences our epistemology, criminologists should not fall into the trap of exclusive scientism. Concerning the supernatural, Braterman⁵ boldly states: "I argue that this view is misguided and damaging". This expresses a clear bias that is not conducive for scientific objectivity.

Relegating Cartesian dualism to an exclusive monism, natural scientists have reserved the space as the sole guardians of all truth, arguing that all that ,is' and all that ,can be known' is verifiable or falsifiable with the use of scientific method, and that all that cannot be measured in this way is simply opinion, belief, or fantasy. The focus in this monistic view is that "supernatural phenomena" cannot be known and sensibly talked about and hence should be relegated to the private sphere⁶.

² See for instance: Petrus, T. S. 2008. Satanism-related and Witchcraft-related crimes: Possible Interdisciplinary links between Anthropology and Criminology in the study of "ritualistic Crimes". *Acta Criminologica*. 21(2), pp. 139–149; and Perlmutter D, The Forensics of Sacrifice: A Symbolic Analysis of Ritualistic Crime. *Electronic source*: <http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap0902/sacrifice.htm>, accessed: 25.07.2017, p. 1.

³ Lintott M.C., 'n Sosiopedagogiese Perspektief op die Verskynsel van Satanisme. Pretoria: University of Pretoria. MA Dissertation.

⁴ Taub D.E, Nelson L.D, Satanism in Contemporary America: Establishment or Underground? *The Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 34(3), pp. 523–541.

⁵ Braterman P, The natural, the supernatural, and the nature of science. Available at: <https://scientiasalon.wordpress.com/2014/07/14/the-natural-the-supernatural-and-the-nature-of-science/>, accessed: 8.11.2015.

⁶ Beiden, D. 2007. Science and Spirit: One reality, two kinds of knowledge. How can they work together to save the world? Available at: <http://www.tikkun.org/nextgen/science-and-spirit>, accessed: 7.11.2015..

The dogmatic stance on science is what has been referred to as “scientism”, the view held by the majority of constitutional democracies where secular worldviews prevail, relegating spiritual matters to the private domain. The majority of people in the world believe in some supernatural being⁷, and refusal to listen to an alternative view is scientism at its most judgmental level. If one cannot observe deceitful thoughts, can we argue that they do not occur because they are unobservable just like people claim that there are spirits? Dealing with Satanism, one cannot adhere to the dominant epistemology. One needs a phenomenological epistemology that is not vested in the natural sciences. The phenomena involved in Satanism are embedded partly in the metaphysical, while others are within the metaphorical realm. This is evidenced by rituals and esoteric practices invoking supernatural powers. For Satanists the practice of sacrificing⁸ “... is based on acquiring supernatural powers through the blood and life energy of the victims. This is the same belief as in *muti* murders where it is believed that the life energy in the victim’s organs can produce or invoke supernatural powers to achieve some desired purpose”. The role of blood is particularly conspicuous. In Soweto⁹ for example, two teenagers committed murder as they wanted power and wealth. They admitted that they got interested in the occult and started worshipping Satan and performed rituals such as lighting candles and drinking blood.

Definitions of concepts

It is hard to provide an inclusive definition of Satanism. The difficulty in defining the concept stems from the fact that the concept of Satanism differs in a theological, moral, political, sociological and legal context. For example, from a fundamental Christian/Islamic theological perspective, any other practice, different than their own one, is considered satanic. Historically, Satanism was attributed to all ‘heretical’ practices because they deviated from a strict Christian or Islamic belief. Today many non-traditional religions¹⁰, especially those that incorporate occult practices, such as Voodoo, Wicca and Druidism, are associated with Satanism. On the other hand, Anton LaVey, the author of the Satanic Bible and founder of the Satanic Church, defines Satanism¹¹ as: “A religion of the flesh, the mundane, the carnal, all of which is ruled by Satan, the personification of the left-hand path”.

Occult is another term that does not have a single, agreed upon, definition. Occult is derived from the Latin term “occultare”, which means “to hide” or “to conceal”. This means that one has to search for it. It often involves elaborate training, in which the initiated train their disciples. It deals with the esoteric and the matters concerned with the supernatural. Such practices as Voodoo, Santeria and Satanism

⁷ Cf. Roelofse C. J, A paradigm ..., *op. cit.*, pp. 48–74.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁹ Case No: PLI 137/2014. Protea Court Soweto.

¹⁰ Perlmutter D, Investigating religious terrorism and ritualistic crimes. London: CRC Press, 2004, pp. 109–110.

¹¹ Fourie M, “Warriors against evil”, pp. 70–73. Servamus’ Drugs and Occult-related Crime. The facts. The answers. Special Community Edition. Pretoria: SARP Publishers, p. 72.

are considered occult religions^{12,13} (Perlmutter, 2013). Occultists can be defined as a group of individuals who share a common ideology and use supernatural powers or magic to manipulate or influence the world around them.

Constitutional position of Satanism in South Africa

Religious freedom is a constitutional right in South Africa (Act 108 of 1996); these constitutional rights extend to all religions, including Satanism. Satanic rituals or practices are only considered to be illegal if they violate any other existing law¹⁴ within South Africa. This principle would also apply if crime is committed in the name of any other religion. Although religious freedom exists in South Africa, social anxiety surrounding satanic practices and involvement is evident.

“The Satanic Panic”

The so called ‘Satanic Panic’ emerged during the 1980s in the United States and spread over to South Africa in the 1990s. Between 1989 and 1993, white politicians in South Africa warned against the unholy trinity of drugs, Satanism and communism¹⁵ (Dunbar & Swart, 2012: 601). Some literature depicted the Satanic Panic as a type of mass hysteria, where the media and prominent experts advocated caution to the public with regards to Satanism. Heavy metal music, fantasy games (dungeon and dragons) and fantasy books and movies (Harry Potter and Charmed) were said to contain hidden satanic messages of suicide and homicide (Richardson, Best & Bromley, 1991: 49). A new form of child abuse was also introduced during this time, namely Satanic Ritual Abuse. Numerous experts on Satanic Ritual Abuse reported on the thousands of adults who had recovered repressed memories of childhood ritual abuse and torture at the hands of Satanists. These allegations were enforced by clergy, mental health professionals, and law enforcement officers¹⁶. Satanic Ritual Abuse will be discussed in more detail later in this article.

Some literature argues that the Satanic Panic was socially constructed, as it was enforced with little evidence. Many citizens and professionals alike embraced these allegations. Several scholars provide reasons as to why the Satanic Panic was so widespread. First of all, some scholars argue that the survivor stories were so sensationalised by the media that it provided people with the motivation to fabricate these stories for personal gain, such as fame and financial profits¹⁷. The second

¹² Perlmutter D, *The Forensics...*, pp. 5–6.

¹³ Petrus T.S, Satanism-related and Witchcraft-related crimes: Possible Interdisciplinary links between Anthropology and Criminology in the study of “ritualistic Crimes”. *Acta Criminologica*, 2008, Vol. 21(2), pp. 139–149.

¹⁴ Els L, Jonker K, Satanism in South Africa, Pretoria: Amabhuku Publications, 2000, pp. 16–17.

¹⁵ Dunbar D, Swart S, ‘No less a foe than Satan himself’: The Devil, Transition and Moral Panic in White South Africa, 1989–1993. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 2012, Vol. 38(3), pp. 601.

¹⁶ Perrin R.D, When Religion Becomes Deviance: Introducing Religion in Deviance and Social Problems Courses. *Teaching Sociology*, 2001, Vol. 29(2), pp. 144–145.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

explanation argues that professionals became convinced of the pervasiveness of Satanism, thus interpreting more events as having a satanic underlining. For therapists who believe in the practice of Satanism, childhood satanic abuse may become the explanatory framework for psychological symptoms and problems. The third explanation can be specifically related to South Africa. Some scholars suggest that Satanic Panic emerges in countries during a period of great social conflict, thus the fear is believed to be rooted in an institutional crisis (Richardson et al., 1991: 50). These South African scholars attribute the Satanic Panic of the 1990s to the specific anxieties surrounding the loss of power and shifts in the class system of the white South African society, which characterised the end of the Apartheid regime.

In evaluating the evidence on the Satanic Panic, it should be noted that this article does not present Satanism as a fictional phenomenon only fabricated in the minds of the masses, but it purely advocates caution when reviewing the evidence with relation to Satanism and satanic related crimes. In February 2014, the SAPS reported that occult related crimes are on the rise. At that moment the SAPS reported they were in the process of investigating 48 cases of occult related crimes in Gauteng only (*Occult related practices...*, 2014). The statistics provided by the SAPS offers the proof that Satanism and other occult religions constitute an actual phenomenon in South Africa and have actual criminal implications and manifestations. Thus, in the following sections, this article will aim to establish what is known with regards to this ambiguous phenomenon, as well as to reflect upon other occult practices within South Africa.

The Nature of Satanism

Satanism in context

Satanism is identified by various literatures as a religion, others refer to Satanism as a cult or a philosophy, these terms will be used interchangeably throughout the article. In Western society, both individually and collectively "...this religion is widely practiced through Satanic churches, covens, and grottoes". The Satanic belief is monotheistic, meaning the belief in one deity¹⁸. Contemporary Satanists either believe Satan to be a literal being, worshipping him as the personification of evil, as represented in the Christian Bible, while others glorify what he represents, in other words they view the devil as a symbol or an externalisation of human qualities and desires. Other characteristics of the satanic ideology include hedonism and egotism. Basically, Satanists believe that pleasure seeking is the main aim of living and the happiness of the individual is put first, without moral constraints.¹⁹ For example, the founder of the Temple of Set describes the formation of the Church of Satan²⁰, as „a social gesture of outrage against what was felt to be the hypocrisy of conventional society, particularly in terms of its religious values". However, there

¹⁸ Perlmutter D. *The Forensics...*, p. 1.

¹⁹ Perlmutter D, *Investigating...*, pp. 109–110.

²⁰ Taub D.E, Nelson L.D, *Satanism in Contemporary America: Establishment or Underground? *The Sociological Quarterly*, 1993, Vol. 34(3), pp. 523–541.*

is also the belief that by venerating Satan, one obtains spiritual power. In Soweto, South Africa, two teenagers who committed murder²¹, informed investigators that their interest in the occult and Satan worship began by performing rituals such as lighting candles and drinking blood. They desired to acquire power and wealth. According to the accused number one, he got involved in Satanism when he was only 12, in 2010. He was listening to high volumes of rap music and discovered that rappers were talking about Satanism. He also discovered that certain rappers and pop stars in the United States were worshipping Satan and engaged in Satanic practices which led to their success. This desire for power and wealth is then deemed to be achievable through supernatural powers, that can become easily accessible through Satanism. These believers and their philosophy can be equated to the motivation behind *muti* murders that is based on the idea that supernatural powers can be invoked by using human body parts in *muti*²². Roelofse (2014:75) stated:

The entrenched cultural belief by certain sections of the community in the study area, that "muti", mixed with human organs or body parts or the organs on their own, invoke supernatural power that can change or alter the course of events, can be seen as the motivational factor behind "ritual" murders.

Clearly, there is a notion amongst those engaged in Satanic and related practices, that power can be derived from these extraordinary activities.

Typologies of Satanism

Classification of Satanism is equally problematic when trying to define it, as Satanism is culturally specific. However, four general categories have been suggested in literature in order to illustrate the different beliefs within the satanic philosophy (Perlmutter, 2004: 111). However, it should be pointed out that overlapping within these categories can occur, which makes classification even more challenging (Petrus, 2008: 139)

- Religious/Organisational Satanists

Religious Satanism consists of organised groups or churches. Just as Christianity has different belief systems within one religion, so do the Satanic Churches differ in their practices. Religious Satanism is sub-classified, as True Believers like them are seriously committed to the beliefs, ideologies, practices and rituals of the satanic religion (Perlmutter, 2004: 112–113). In a taped interview with Anton LaVey (1986), he stated that the Church of Satan remains within the boundaries of the law and discourages the harm of individuals who did not deserve or wish to be harmed. He stated that the church performs human sacrifices not in a direct way, that is, the destruction of human beings is performed through curses and hexes rather than the physical destruction of a human, as that would be illegal (Taub & Nelson, 1993: 526).

²¹ Case No: PLI 137/2014. Protea Court Soweto. South Africa.

²² Roelofse C.J, Ritual and muti murders amongst the vha-Venda people of South Africa: An ethno-criminological assessment of the phenomenon and development of a new typology. *Acta Criminologica. Special edition: Research and application in Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 2014, Vol. 1..

- Traditional/Intergenerational Satanists

Traditional Satanists are known to be highly organised, global and secret cult networks. They are said to be involved in a variety of crimes, such as arson, ritual abuse, sexual abuse, incest, kidnappings, child pornography, ritual murder and mutilation, and even cannibalism²³. Traditional Satanists are also sub-categorised as True Believers, however, they are extremely dedicated to their faith and represent the extremists among the satanic followers. Traditional Satanist worships Satan as the evil being represented in the Christian Bible. Their religious practices include blood rituals, animal and human sacrifice and a variety of sexual sadistic rituals²⁴. (Perlmutter, 2004: 114–115)

- Self-Styled Satanists

Self-Styled Satanists either practice their religion alone or belong to a small, loosely organised group. They may be sub-classified as dabblers, people who are intermittently involved in occult practices, or real criminals, people who use the occult to justify their criminal behaviour. Real criminals are not committed to the satanic belief system, but rather to criminal action. Religious Satanists are often discomfited by the actions of Self-Styled Satanist, as they create a negative image of the, already controversial, religion. Self-Styled Satanists are involved in crimes such as child molestation, animal mutilation and homicide. Their crimes usually conform to their self-inverted ideologies and incorporate a satanic ritualistic element²⁵.

Empirical studies suggest that offenders committing satanic crimes almost always had a history of antisocial behaviour, even before their involvement in the occult. To these offenders Satanism is a symptom and not the cause of their criminal behaviour²⁶. The example of a Self-Styled Satanist is Richard Ramirez, also known as the „Night Stalker“. Ramirez spray-painted satanic graffiti on the victims' homes and displayed a satanic pentagram on his left hand during his trial. He was sentenced to death in California, for committing 13 murders, as well as a number of other felonies, including rape and home invasions²⁷

- Youth Subculture Satanists

Youth Subculture Satanists are similar to Self-Styled Satanist, however, their interest in Satanism is often temporary and may not involve criminal activity. Youth Subculture Satanists are sub-categorised as True Dabblers and they are usually introduced to Satanism through the media, television, movies and music. These young people either return to more traditional belief systems or they are recruited by one of many satanic groups or churches. Common crimes among these types of Satanists include vandalism, arson, grave desecration, animal mutilation, school violence and sometimes murder²⁸. In June 2000 in Chiavenna, Italy, three teenage Satanist girls murdered a nun²⁹. One of the girls declared to her interrogators: „We decided to go

²³ Perlmutter, 2004, *op. cit.* p. 114–115.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 114–115.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 115–116.

²⁶ Taub & Nelson, 1993, *op. cit.* p. 526.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 526.

²⁸ Perlmutter, 2004, *op. cit.* pp. 125–126.

²⁹ Kennedy, W.H. 2006. Satanic Crime: A Threat in the New Millennium. Available at: <http://www.whale.to/c/sataniccrime.pdf>, accessed: 17.09.2015.

for a nun because she was the opposite of us. We believe in Satan". The nun was selected for this brutal act because she was against Satanist beliefs (Kennedy, 2008).

Hierarchy of the satanic faith

The structure within Satanism is hierarchical, usually with anonymity at the top levels. Often, those high in the hierarchy of the cult are also prominent figures in their ordinary lives (Petrus, 2007: 119–120). Some cults are divided into groups, known as circles. Each circle has a High Priest or Priestess who exercise authority over the members of the group. The desire for control and being venerated, even worshipped, is evident amongst the leaders in the satanic cults. Susan Atkins, responsible for the murder of the actress Sharon Tate, was recruited by LaVey. Later, she joined the infamous Charles Manson group. He, according to Kennedy (2006), was worshipped by his followers both as Jesus and Satan and Susan Atkins played the role of a seductive vampire in this group. Ritual murder may be justified by some groups as a necessary rite of passage, in order to obtain a higher rank within the hierarchy (e.g. priest) (Petrus, 2007: 229). The following Satanic hierarchy has been identified in South Africa:

- Brotherhood of the Ram

They are apparently the highest order within the satanic religion. Their function is to oversee that the followers comply with the rules and that the secrets within the religion are not revealed. The brotherhood is often feared by other members of the satanic cults, as they are believed to be responsible for the disappearance of members when the rules are disobeyed. They also ensure the financial well-being of the organisation. The financial means to support the organisation is obtained through the involvement in illegal activities, such as pornography, drug dealing, arms smuggling and prostitution. The Brotherhood of the Ram keeps the identity of their members secret. These members are usually wealthy and some hold powerful positions or obtain a high status within the community (Servamus, 2000: 80) (Jonker, 1991: 46–48).

- Order of Darkness

The Order of Darkness is also known as Satan's knights. These individuals are said to do research on Christian churches and their reverends. The members' goals are to corrupt the churches values from within, especially the reverends. In his book, Jonker³⁰ describes a case of a man and women who visited people's houses, spreading the 'word of Satan', in order to convert new members. In the United States anyone can become a member of a Satanic group by paying an enrolment fee, the South African process of members-selection are more secretive and exclusive and specific information in this regard is scant³¹.

- Sons of Satan

These members are considered to be ordinary disciples of Satan and are at the bottom of the hierarchy. They have a keen interest in the occult and often practice

³⁰ Jonker, K. 1991. *Satanisme — 'n Realiteit*. Pretoria: Sigma Pers.

³¹ Els L, Jonker K, *Satanism in South Africa*. Pretoria: Amabhuku Publications, 2000, p. 66.

magic. They are sought out by other members of the hierarchy as potential members³², and afterwards are recruited into the higher echelons and covens.

Calendar

Each group within different occult practices has their own calendar of significant events. The events significant to Satanists are largely based on the position of the moon. Satanism also has its own established holidays such as Marriage to the Beast, as well as eight Satanic Sabbaths. The examples of these significant events include, among others, every Friday the Thirteenth, All Hallows Eve, winter and summer solstices.³³

Satanic Modus Operandi

Satanic Rituals, Ceremonies and Sacrifices

There is little detail available about satanic rituals, as very few have been witnessed, and information regarding rituals is usually obtained from victims or ex-Satanists. One of the authors observed an empty water reservoir in Polokwane, used as a satanic grotto with a pentagram drawn on base and numerous places of burnt material and extreme sexual graffiti on the walls. Later on it was closed by the local municipality, by welding bars over the opening. Only basing on the pentagram and the possibility of burnt offerings it can be assumed that some rituals took place in the grotto. From some reports the following can be shared in this regard. A satanic ritual consists of thirteen steps, during which the altar is set up in a specific way. During rituals the satisfaction of human desires are usually the focal point and rituals often include orgies and other forms of promiscuity. During these rituals the loyalty of members is reinforced by drinking of each other's blood.³⁴ (Els & Jonker, 2000: 211-213)

Satanic ceremonies are seen as the time of joy within the coven. The ceremonies usually involve sacrifices as a tribute to Satan. Night of the Animals is an example of a satanic ceremony³⁵; the ceremony lasts for three weeks and is performed so that the individual could gain foresight into the future (Els & Jonker, 2000: 228–229).

Sacrifices within the satanic belief involve blood. Animal and human sacrifices are often incorporated in rituals and celebrations. The blood of a victim is the focal point of satanic rituals as Satanists believe that the life force and energy of an individual or animal is stored in the blood and that the energy is released at the time of an individual's or the animal's death. The energy released by death can then be appropriated by a member participating in the sacrifice. It is believed that human sacrifices release a great amount of energy and circles are drawn around

³² *Ibid.*, p. 66.

³³ Lintott M.C., 'n Sosiopedagogiese Perspektief op die Verskynsel van Satanisme. Pretoria: University of Pretoria. MA Dissertation, 1993, pp. 59–62.

³⁴ Els L, Jonker K, *op. cit.*, pp. 211–213.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 228–229.

victims to contain that energy³⁶ (Richardson et al., 1991: 55–56). Human sacrifice can either be voluntary (a person offers him/herself to Satan) or an involuntary victim. A sacrifice can either take the form of a blood sacrifice or a burnt offering. To offer your life by being voluntarily killed, self-death or suicide³⁷ are seen as the highest sacrifice to Satan.

Recruitment

Research suggests that converts to Satanism or other occult practices tend to possess many similar characteristics, for example young, unmarried, middle-class, and educated³⁸. For instance, Charles Manson describes the people he recruited “...attractive females suffered from deep-rooted psychological problems and took rebellious stances against their parents and the consumerist economy. They all used illicit drugs as part of their counter-culture lifestyle”. (Kennedy 2006: 19). Two arguments can be found in literature to explain this statement, firstly stating that cults target specific victims, and secondly that specific characteristics can cause certain individuals to be drawn to occult groups. The views regarding recruitment can be loosely organised into left- and right-wing perspectives.

- Right-wing perspectives on recruitment

Many right-wing writings suggest that cults are inherently evil. They argue that if this evil is evident in all cults, then no rational or sane person would choose to join a cult. Given such an assumption, some theorists suggested that cult members are brainwashed, seduced, manipulated or hypnotized by cult leaders, where others suggested that members are forced into the cult against their will.³⁹ Satanic cults can use party events in order to recruit members, specifically the youth. Young people are invited to the parties where alcohol and drugs are freely available. Sexual orgies and sexual assault are also common at these parties. The parties can be used to seduce or blackmail new members to become involved in Satanism or to find victims for satanic rituals⁴⁰. Other forms of recruitment found in literature include the abduction of runaway or homeless children, purchasing children on the black market, or operating an orphanage or foster home in order to gain access to children, some reports of preschools involved in Satanism have been publicised⁴¹. Satanic recruitment has been linked to trafficking, as some interviews with traffickers revealed the selling of children to satanic cults. Speculations of satanic cults kidnaping the victims from rural areas, street children and prostitutes have been made in South Africa⁴², however,

³⁶ Richardson, J. T., Best, J. & Bromley, D. G. (Eds) 1991. *The Satanism Scare*. New York: Walter de Gruyter, Inc. p. 56.

³⁷ Els L, Jonker K, *op. cit.*, pp. 228–235.

³⁸ Perrin R.D, pp. 138–139.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 34–152.

⁴⁰ Els L, Jonker K, *op. cit.*

⁴¹ Richardson J.T, Best J, Bromley D.G (Eds), *The Satanism Scare*. New York: Walter de Gruyter, Inc., 1991. p. 56.

⁴² Gould C, Richter M, Palmery I, Of Nigerians, albinos, Satanists and anecdotes: A critical review of the HSRC report on human trafficking. *SA Crime Quarterly* 32, 2010,

little specific evidence exists in support of these kidnappings and recruitment practices.

From the right-wing perspective⁴³, arguments arouse that since the cult member does not exercise free will to join the cult, they also do not have the free will to leave the cult⁴⁴.

- Left-wing perspectives on recruitment

Left-wing theories assume that a person acts with degrees of rational choice and recognises the powerful role of social influence. These scholars argue that not all individuals recruited into Satanism are rebels or troubled, rather that the occult recruits are the religious seekers who play an active role in their own conversions. Some people experience an internal and unexplainable interest in the supernatural. Informal training is provided through literature that is readily available on the Internet. Once the seed is planted through curiosity, it grows and many will seek out guidance⁴⁵ to further their interest in Satanism.

Several reasons are proposed as to why certain people convert to Satanism: Satanism provides a feeling of identification, power to take control of circumstances, relief from feelings of social alienation, and a religious atmosphere without the behavioural responsibilities required by traditional churches. Other reasons for the appeal of Satanism include the opportunity to rebel or escape from a family-value system, often perceived restrictive. Some converts into Satanism already see themselves as evil or are inclined toward deviant behaviour such as promiscuity, sadism, or masochism, therefore they readily identify themselves with Satanism, because their behaviour is tolerated or even encouraged (Taub & Nelson, 1993:527).

Satanism and crime

The relationship between Satanism and crime is clear, since Satanism is based on a fundamentally violent philosophy which views ritualised acts of violence as an acceptable act of sacrifice in the name of Satan (Petrus, 2008: 143). Little research on the link between Satanism and crime has been conducted in South Africa, in contrast to the United States, where several studies proposing this link have been conducted. Most of the literature on Satanism in South Africa has been written by Kobus Jonker (the former Occult Unit Commander and also an active writer about Satanism). Some scholars critiqued Jonker's writings, as he approached satanic crimes from a largely Christian perspective and provided little objective or scientific evidence on the topic. Despite Jonker's Christian bias, his findings correlate with the findings of studies conducted in the United States. Ritual homicide, ritual child abuse and blood rituals appear to be common features in Satanism-related crime in the United States, Britain and South Africa (Petrus, 2008: 143) This article has outlined various types of possible crimes related to Satanic practices. In addition to the aforementioned criminal activities, one crime in particular will be highlighted, namely Satanic Ritual Abuse.

⁴³ Perrin R.D, pp. 134–152.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Satanic Ritual Abuse

Satanic Ritual Abuse (SRA) is an extreme form of abuse, which mostly involves children. This type of abuse includes the physical, emotional, sexual and spiritual torture of an individual by an organised cult. SRA is applied in order to gain power over the victim and enforce complete loyalty and obedience from that victim. Children of 6 and younger usually are the preferred victims for these satanic cults, as it is easier to instil the values of the faith into the child. Cases have been documented, involving the rape of girls between the age of five and twelve during the “marriage to Satan” rituals. These rituals are apparently performed to ensure the girls return to the coven as women. Some satanic rituals involve abortions, in which a woman is impregnated and later forced to abort the foetus. The foetus will be consumed by the members as part of a ceremony or ritual.

Abuse can also be used to disrupt the victim’s bonds with their family and build ties with the satanic cult. These bonds are exploited later in life. Children abused at an early age are said to be released back to their biological parents or guardians and to be recruited in their teens back into the cult, where they take part in abuse of other young children, thus continuing the recruitment cycle and abuse⁴⁶. Victims of ritualistic abuse mostly live in a state of fear and experience psychological difficulties long after the abuse took place⁴⁷ (Jonker, 2001: 30).

Satanism, Deviant Behaviour and Psychological Disorders

A study⁴⁸ conducted on satanic involvement in high schools in the United States revealed a link between the involvement of teens in satanic and anti-social behaviours. The study showed that 46 percent of teens involved in Satanism also claimed to use cocaine frequently. Swatos⁴⁹ also found a correlation between teens involved in the occult and other antisocial behaviours, such as marijuana use, alcohol consumption, being arrested for deviant behaviours, truancy from school, dropping out of school and for girls falling pregnant at a young age. This data tend to be generally consistent with some clinicians’ claims that Satanism forms part of an antisocial behavioural constellation.

Other evidence for the link between anti-social behaviour and Satanism can be found in a statement by Colonel Attie Lamprecht, the head of the Occults Unit in South Africa⁵⁰. Lamprecht advised parents and guardians to be on the look-out for signs that their children are actually experimenting with satanic groups. These

⁴⁶ Ridchardson et al. 1991, *op. cit.*, pp. 54–55.

⁴⁷ Jonker K, The identification and understanding of occult practices relevant to child abuse. CARSA, 2001, Vol. 2(2), pp. 30–33.

⁴⁸ Swatos W.H, A Research Note on Exploratory Survey Data. *Review of Religious Research*, 1992, Vol. 34(2), pp. 161–169.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁵⁰ Occult related practices on the rise. 2014. . *Electronic source*: <http://www.sanews.gov.za/southafrica/occult-related-practices-rise-saps>, accessed: 23.04.2018.

signs include severe rebelliousness, low self-esteem, drug abuse, animal mutilation, increased hatred towards specific people or activities, change in friends, body markings and unusual interest in books or movies with occult themes. Some of these warning signs can be associated with psychological disorders, such as depression or anti-social behavioural disorder. The link between psychological disorder and Satanism can again be explained twofold. Firstly, that satanic involvement is a symptom of existing psychological disorders, and secondly, involvement in Satanism can cause psychological distress and disorders. An illustration of the latter can be found in the development of Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) in occult members or victims of SRA.

DID is defined as the presence of one or more distinct personalities in an individual, DID can develop by the suppression of extreme traumatic events. When joining a satanic cult, an individual must destroy their old self in order to create a new self. Through this process, the development of DID may take place⁵¹. Similarly, there are numerous cases of victims of SRA who were diagnosed with DID later in their life, one well-known example is Michelle Smith, whose tribulations are reflected in her autobiography, *Michelle remembers*. The book tells the story of a woman enduring ritual satanic abuse, which resulted in the development of DID. The book was published in 1980 and was co-written by Canadian psychiatrist Lawrence Pazder and his psychiatric patient, Michelle Smith (who later became his wife). This was the first book written on the subject of SRA and is an important part of the debate regarding SRA and „recovered“ memory⁵².

Other Occult-Related Crimes in South Africa

Satanism is not the only the occult-related belief held by South Africans. Various traditional African cultures contain the elements of occult practices, such as the Venda python dance and different rituals that include drinking of blood from a slaughtered animal⁵³. As with Satanism, these practices should only be deemed illegal if they violate the laws of South Africa and are against indigenous practices in the country. One of the most serious challenges facing law enforcement in post-apartheid South Africa is the escalation of the so called “witchcraft-related crimes”. An increase in the occurrences of witch killings and *mutior* medicine murders has been reported since the 1990s⁵⁴ in South Africa (Petrus, 2008: 143–144). Witch killings occur in the context where an individual is accused of using magic to hurt other members of the community; these killings tend to be more common in rural areas. When a person is accused of being a witch, the community imposes their own form of justice on the individual, which is fatal in most cases. The person who kills the witch is usually considered to be a hero in the community. This hinders co-operation

⁵¹ Els L, Jonkker K, *op. cit.*, pp. 259–260.

⁵² Traub C.M, Defending a diagnostic pariah: validating the categorisation of Dissociative Identity Disorder. *South African Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 39(3), pp. 347–356.

⁵³ Niehause I, Mohlala E, Shokana K, *Witchcraft, Power and Politics*. Cape Town: Pluto Press. 2001, p. 43.

⁵⁴ Petrus T.S, Satanism-related and Witchcraft-related crimes: Possible Interdisciplinary links between Anthropology and Criminology in the study of “ritualistic Crimes”. *Acta Criminologica*, 2008, Vol. 21(2), pp. 139–149.

from the community in the police investigation, as the suspect is protected by the community. *Muti* murders are associated with sorcery, a kind of witchcraft that causes harm to an individual through *medicine* or tonics. It is believed that medicine made from human body part is more potent than those made from other sources and substances. *Muti* can also be used for other reasons, such as financial prosperity, successful business practices, or fertility. *Muti* murders, as witch killings, also hold a unique challenge to law enforcement officers, as the community might be hesitant to assist the police in the investigation, for the fear of retaliation from the sorcerer. Whether these practices should be discussed in the same domain as Satanism, is open to debate. The real relevance and link is the commission of crime when these practices are performed and the policing thereof in a culturally diverse society.

Spiritual possession

Many authors have reported on the phenomenon of spiritual possession. This is not confined to African, Aboriginal and Eastern writers, but the authors from the West have mentioned that issue as well.

Okawa⁵⁵ (2008) writes:

Spiritual possession can be the cause of illnesses, mental disorders or even crimes, but this phenomenon is not being treated appropriately, since modern medicine and science do not recognize the existence of spiritual possession. Though the blasphemous, and insulting nature of words is a fact... and she also spoke in unusual languages, previously unknown to the patient.

Another case reported by MacNutt (1995:23) is also relevant. He stated that he prayed for a lady that has been in a mental hospital for 12 years, diagnosed with schizophrenia. *"After two hours of prayer for healing and deliverance, the glazed look in her eyes left and she was able to converse in a normal way. Several weeks later the doctors recognized a dramatic change in her behavior and released her from the hospital"*.

A youth from Soweto⁵⁶ reported his experience in the following way; he said he felt as if he was burning up and was transported to a desert where it was extremely hot. Then he started digging for water, he dug deeper and deeper and as he was about to drink the water, he came back to the scene. That is when he realised that his act of digging in the desert was actually his stabbing action on one of the deceased. The question remains: Can this be explained scientifically? Can a person become possessed and kill someone or is this purely a figment of the imagination?

Quo vadis

Perlmutter⁵⁷ calls for the suspension of western values in order to deal with satanic and occult related crimes. Roelofse (2017) reacted to this, stating that "... it is an interesting stance as the original western construction of the metaphysical

⁵⁵ Okawa.

⁵⁶ Case No: PLI 137/2014. Protea Court Soweto. South Africa.

⁵⁷ Perlmutter D, *The Forensics ...*, p. 1.

world was based on Biblical principles. These have already been suspended. Her call is now to suspend the current secular paradigm for a new spiritual one, in which occult practices can be explained". Having secularised the Western world, she calls for the reintroduction of a spiritual approach to these crimes.

Roelofse (2017) calls for the development of Criminological Philosophy and a consequent relevant epistemology, in which supernatural phenomena can be engaged. He recommends scientific enquiry on how particular worldviews, acknowledging the spirit world, influence behaviour.

Such questions as how a secular or spiritual worldview acts as desisting or precipitating motivational dimensions in crime, should be philosophically debated and given direction to research, in order to formulate a theory. Furthermore, do different religions have a different impact on their followers and what effect does it have on desistence or predisposition?

Arguments should not simply be based on spiritual paradigms, but should attempt to uncover the lived experiences of people who are existentially influenced by a spiritual worldview. Through a phenomenological approach, making enquiry into the lived experiences of people, philosophical and theoretical perspectives can and should be developed.

Conclusions

Satanism is a mysterious conviction, surrounded by secrets and misperceptions. It poses a unique challenge to law enforcement, as it is often associated with horrific crimes and bizarre actions, as well as motivations. When dealing with satanic-related crimes, investigators must not approach the scene from a subjective point of view and exert caution not to introduce personal biases. Satanism is not a criminal offence, rather the actions of some Satanists result in criminal behaviour. An individual is labelled a molester, because they engaged in abusive acts with children which, in turn, is against the law. One cannot say that Satanists engage in abusive acts because they are Satanists. Although the satanic theology might encourage deviant behaviour, satanic influences do not change the fact that an individual chose to commit a crime out of their own free will, or because of their specific conviction. To get involved in satanic ritual abuse one needs to make certain decisions and have the mental element or *mens rea* to pursue this course of action. In some cases, pathology and mental disorders are related to satanic rituals, but from scholarly articles it is clear that Satanists are not mentally disordered. However, their endeavours can lead to a mental disorder.

In addition, very little research has been conducted⁵⁸ in order to, for instance, look at the spiritual world and how it can influence criminal behaviour. Degrees of evil seem to be present in occult, mysticism and Satanism. "Often motivated by a particular belief, people can commit crimes, and even a serious crime such as a murder. A paradigm shift in the social sciences is necessary to do research on the influence of the spiritual world on human behaviour"⁵⁹, Roelofse (2016: 241). In some

⁵⁸ Roelofse C. J., Satanism, The Occult, Mysticism And Crime: Perspectives On The Inversion of Christianity. *Internal Security*, 2016, Vol. 8, Issue 1.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

abnormal psychology and psychocriminology books, academics and researchers leave Satanism out of the discourse as there is not enough evidence to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that it exists and influences people negatively. However, scholarly debate is urgently needed, as every so often one reads of a serious crime, where the perpetrator's actions and motives are linked to Satanism and mental disorders.

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Streszczenie. Artykuł poświęcony jest zjawisku, o którym często się mówi i relacjonuje w mediach, ale które przez lata zostało poparte niewielką ilością dowodów empirycznych. Zaledwie garstka kryminologów zajmuje się tym zjawiskiem, co wynika z przekonania, iż zjawiska nadprzyrodzone nie mogą być badane metodami naukowymi. Jednakże, w ramach paradygmatu fenomenologicznego, istnieje możliwość korzystania z informatorów, którzy relacjonują swoje doświadczenia życiowe. Jeśli chodzi o nauki społeczne, opinia naukowa ogranicza duchowość do teologii i antropologii. Pojęcie zjawiska nadprzyrodzonego powinno ograniczać się do życia prywatnego. W związku z tym, autorzy artykułu twierdzą, że w środowisku naukowym jest to raczej tendencja ogólna polegająca na uznawaniu świata duchowego za przesąd i zjawisko, któremu nie należy poświęcać uwagi. Duchowość powinna zatem zostać zepchnięta do dyskursu prywatnego. Dlatego też autorzy artykułu starają się rzucić światło na wyżej wymienione kwestie i podejmują próbę zdefiniowania pojęcia i zaprezentowania typologii literatury, przestępczości i satanizmu. Autorzy przedstawiają strategie rekrutacji, sposoby kontroli zwolenników, omawiają konkretne przestępstwa, nadużycia, zaburzenia psychiczne i kwestię posiadania duchowego. Celem artykułu jest zachęcenie badaczy do zajęcia się tym tajemniczym zjawiskiem i jego kryminologicznymi powiązaniem, jako że popełnianie przestępstw często jest zgłaszane tam, gdzie istnieją dowody na występowanie rytuałów. Duchowość jest częścią życia miliardów ludzi na świecie i dlatego warto ją badać. Być może brak zainteresowania lub nawet strach prowadzi do braku badań w tym zakresie.

Резюме. Статья посвящена явлению, о котором часто говорят и о котором сообщают СМИ, но которое в течение многих лет было подкреплено небольшим количеством эмпирических доказательств. Лишь немногие криминологи имеют дело с этим явлением, а это вытекает из убеждения, что сверхъестественные явления не могут быть изучены научными методами. Однако, в рамках феноменологической парадигмы, можно использовать источники, которые сообщают о своем жизненном опыте. Относительно общественных наук, научное мнение ограничивает духовность теологией и антропологией. Понятие сверхъестественного явления должно ограничиваться личной жизнью. В связи с этим авторы статьи утверждают, что в научном сообществе это скорее общая тенденция признать духовный мир суеверием и явлением, на которое не следует обращать внимание. Поэтому духовность должна быть вытеснена в сферу частной беседы. Следовательно авторы статьи пытаются экспонировать вышеупомянутые проблемы и определить понятие, представить типологию литературы, преступности и сатанизма. Авторы представляют стратегии вербовки, способы контроля сторонников, обсуждают конкретные преступления, злоупотребления, психические расстройства и проблему одержимости. Целью данной статьи является побуждение исследователей заняться этим загадочным явлением и его криминологическими связями, поскольку часто сообщается о совершении преступлений в тех случаях, когда имеются свидетельства ритуалов. Духовность является частью жизни миллиардов людей во всем мире, и поэтому ее стоит изучать. Возможно, отсутствие интереса или даже страх приводит к нехватке исследований в этой области.

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