



Occult-Related Crime and the Policing thereof, through the lens of Cosmology, and
of Socio-Political Factors.

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Signed :

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Abstract

Occult-related crimes are crimes of a spiritual nature, in Africa, the study of these crimes could be approached from the field of African cosmology, which encompasses spirituality, culture, and nature. But these crimes also exist in a socio-political context, as well as an economic one. It is said that modern occult crimes have become entrepreneurial, this is what the Comaroffs (1999) call 'modern occult economies.' The transition from traditional occult practices to modern practices can further be explored through a lens of, deeply rooted belief systems, being hijacked and manipulated by the opportunistic.

This research explores not only traditional African occult crime, but also the Western branch practices and hybrid systems, and it touches on global occult crimes and 'moral panics'. Occult crime is not labelled as such, but as general crimes, but the argument is for the typology of occult crime, for this has implications on police training and investigation, as well sentencing processes in courts. Modern-day panics are described as conspiracy theories, and in the 80s and 90s a significant example of this phenomenon was labelled the 'Satanic Panic', and more recently, it could be argued in the theories of groups like *QAnon*.

Further, the policing of the occult is engaged, specifically in South Africa, through exploring the challenges in policing occult crimes, by general police officers and South Africa's Occult Related Crime Unit (ORCU). Complexities in the South African criminal justice system and the occult, as with legislation and the judiciary, is an ongoing conversation between scholars, and one this research also touches on.

Keywords: Occult Crime, Traditional Occult Crime, Modern Occult Economies, Policing the Occult, Occult Related Crime Unit, General Policing of the Occult, Harmful Occult Practices, African Cosmology, Satanic Panic, *QAnon*.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Research Question

This research explores occult-related crime in South Africa, Africa, and internationally, and the policing thereof. The theme of occult-related crime will be divided into traditional, Western, and what the Comaroffs (1999) call *modern occult economies*, i.e., modern occult-related crime, as entrepreneurship. This will be explored through a socio-political, and cosmological lens. The researcher will further look at the challenges that police officers face in policing harmful occult practices, this will include general policing and specialized policing of the occult. The focus will specifically be placed on the specialized Occult Related Crime Unit (ORCU) in South Africa, through the insights gained from an interview done with the head of the ORCU, Brig. Attie Lamprecht in 2021. We will also explore some of the legislative and judiciary complexities around occult-related crime, specifically in South Africa.

Socio-Political and Cultural Lens

The research question involves, exploring the subject of occult crime and the policing thereof through the lens of socio-political and cosmological elements. In occult crimes, it is argued that cosmological elements encompass religion, spirituality, and cultural aspects.

Occult Crimes

This research will mostly look at South African and African occult-related crime, but it will also refer to international occult-related crime. Certain similarities not only exist between South Africa and Africa but also with South Africa and countries like the U.S specifically. The dual dynamics i.e., South Africa v Africa, West v African also comes into play when the morphing of the traditional, into modern. Occult crime is a global phenomenon, and this research does not only aim to comment on this phenomenon

as a whole, but also on using international references to contribute to a better understanding of South African and African occult-related crime.

Harmful and Non Harmful Occult Practices

Understanding occult crime, one must also look at occultism as a whole (Olson-Raymor 1998 -1990). The Office of Criminal Justice Planning in California (Olson-Raymor 1998 -1990) describes occultism as; “the umbrella term for a wide array of belief systems that involve or use supernatural beliefs and/or powers. Satanism is just one of many such belief systems; it is not the occult, but rather a type of occult belief system” (Olson-Raymor 1998 -1990:2). Going further, occult activity involves the use of secret knowledge of actions and/or rituals connected to supernatural beliefs and/or supernatural powers. Magic, is also a term often used in occultism, it involves the invocation of supernatural powers to control natural forces (Olson-Raymor 1998-1990) or as Ford (2009), a BBC journalist and occultist describes in *The Bible of the Adversary*: “Magick is the art of causing change internally and externally in accordance with the Will” Ford (2009: 10).

The study done by the Justice Planning department of California (Olson-Raymor 1998 -1990) goes further in explaining that occult activity, i.e., Satanic and ritualistic activities, form part of a belief system, and makes it very clear that occultism is constitutionally protected if it does not motivate or require the commission of a criminal act. Here we have similarities as secular countries, governed under Bills of Rights. Veteran occult cop from the San Francisco police department, Sandy Gallant insists that “investigators must shed their personal and religious prejudices when they deal with the occult "lest they tread upon the foundations of the First Amendment” (Gallant Interview with the author, April 3, 1989). He or she is involved either in legally- protected spiritual activity which is beyond the jurisdiction of the criminal justice system, or in illegal criminal activity as defined by law and clearly within the system's jurisdiction.

In South Africa, the right to practice religious and spiritual freedom is protected under our Constitution, but the *Witchcraft Suppression Act 3 of 1957*, seems to still criminalize witchcraft *per se*, i.e. harmful and non-harmful occult practices. This act is still the only piece of legislation on occult practices and has been critiqued on issues of ambiguity of interpretations and unconstitutionality with regards to freedom of religion (Geldenhuys 2016). This act has been under revision by the South African Law Reform Commission (SALRC) under the demand of groups like the Commission of Gender Equality (CGE), South African Pagan Rights Association (SAPRA), and Traditional Healers Association (THO) (SALRC, 2014). This constitutes social problems relating to the governing of the occult.

The ambiguity of the *Witchcraft Suppression Act 3 of 1957* lies firstly in the contradictory way that it criminalizes witch hunting, but also criminalizes witchcraft *per se*, Niehaus (2001), quotes Gotfried Dederen during a discussion on the Ralushai Commission report: “it remains an unresolved riddle how the Witchcraft Control Act would counter witchcraft-related violence while nurturing the very ideologies in which they are rooted” (Ralushai et al, 1996:7). Secondly, it infringes on the rights of freedom of religion, enshrined in the constitution by criminalizing witchcraft, practiced by traditional and Western practitioners in South Africa (Geldenhuys, 2016).

The wording of the act leaves room for misinterpretation, but as Lamprecht (2021, Interview) explains, police officers practice discretion in applying the act, and that occult practices will only be investigated if there is a criminal element to them, and if this can be proven by physical evidence. As Lamprecht (2021, Interview) explains: “Satanism is not a crime, witchcraft is not a crime, believing in ancestral spirits is not a crime, but the moment someone must be hurt in order to contribute to this deity, irrespective of what you believe in, it can be a Christian cult as well, were people can use a Christian bible, to sort of normalize what they are doing, they create a cult movement for example. The moment there are laws that are breached, it is important for our investigators to focus on the criminal element.”

Criminological aspects through Anthropological Research

Occult-related crime, and specifically, African occult-related crime research, are mostly attributed to the work of anthropologists. This research relied on the writings of anthropologists like Evans- Pritchard (1937), Niehaus (2001), Petrus (2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2020), and the Comaroffs (1999, 2004). And even though this is not necessarily an argument for an interdisciplinary discipline between criminology and anthropology, the researcher must acknowledge the bridging between the two fields via data collected by anthropologists on occult-related crime. This research would not have been possible without the priming by anthropologists. Anthropologists make ethnographical and deep studies of the “nature and structure of human communities” (Snyman, 1990:3), and as Petrus (2020) points out: “Crime is a label created in social interaction, ...and only makes sense within the communities in which that interaction takes place... but once created it has both a symbolic and practical reality” (Morrison, 2005:12).

Going further, in exploring occult crime, there is a necessity to understand why there is a demand for ‘magical commodities’ that cannot merely be understood rationally without the context of culture and belief systems, i.e., cosmology. Also, legislative, judicial and executive functions are reliant on the *context* of harmful occult-related crimes. Context, for instance, includes cosmological aspects, studied by anthropologists. These concepts are applied in investigations and sentencing and will be explained in more detail.

Anthropology, further, being the study of cultures, societies, and their development, can also be engaged in overbridging the cultural difficulties between people and systems. This is endorsed by Petrus (2010) when referring to his doctoral research on witchcraft-related crime in the Eastern Cape and its implications for law enforcement policy and practice when explaining researching both the community’s and the police’s attitudes towards witchcraft: “ the perceptions of both sides of each other regarding these cases, illustrated certain dynamics that reflect the need for the application of anthropological knowledge to empower both local communities and the SAPS to deal with witchcraft cases in a constructive manner” (Petrus, 2009:53).

According to Petrus (2010) this should be done through applied anthropology, which is referred to as a branch of anthropology focused on the practical as opposed to the academic. He further quotes Stull and Schensul (1987): “if there is a core element that distinguishes applied social researchers from policy-makers and politicians, it is our continual cry for recognition of the complexity of social phenomena” (Stull and Schensul, 1987:1).

The nexus between culture and crime, or the cultural transmission and how this type of crime gets passed on from one generation to another is part of this research. Petrus (2010) mentions Hayward and Morrison (2005:72) in explaining juvenile delinquent patterns “...delinquent behavior patterns are *culturally transmitted* [their emphasis] down through successive generations ...in much the same way that language and other social forms are transmitted.” This could be applied to occult crimes, and not only by tracking a transmission from one generation to the next, but also following the evolution through time, i.e. from traditional occult crimes to modern occult crimes, being culturally transmitted.

Policing of Occult Crime

The policing of occult crime in South Africa can be divided into policing by the specialized occult-related unit, i.e. the Occult Related Crime Unit (ORCU), general policing of occult crimes and community policing of occult crimes. In Africa the researcher traced occult-related police task units in Uganda and in Tanzania, (Under the Same Sun, 2013) and internationally, the U.S has been training occult specialists as far back as the 80s (Olson-Raymor 1998 -1990) and there are mentions of occult trained task teams in Vanuatu (Rio, 2011) the Nederland (Van Dijk, 2001), Project Violet in the UK, and India (MacDonald, 2009).

Scholars who engaged in the topic of African occult policing are, Pelgrim (2003), Petrus (2009), Jensen and Buur (2004), and the Comaroffs (2004). Most touch on the ORCU, and further explore the challenges faced by general police officers in policing the occult with regards to culture and belief systems. This is what Comaroff & Comaroff (2004) call *culture policing*, or through the *policing of culture*, they also

explore the socio-political aspects of community-style policing and the challenges faced by a democracy torn between culture and secularity.

South Africa's Occult Related Crime Unit

The ORCU in South Africa seems to be one of the oldest and most long-standing occult-related task units in the world and 2022, marks 30 years of occult policing. It has further been hailed by the British press as the only task unit that is dedicated to investigating ritual murder (Dunbar, 2012). The unit was established in 1992 (Petrus et al, 2018) by Col. Kobus Jonker, at that point an investigator in the Murder and Robbery Unit, Eastern Cape. In 2000, Attie Lamprecht, replaced Jonker as the head of the ORCU (Lamprecht, Interview 2021). As Petrus explains (Petrus, Personal communication 2021) specialized units are established due to a specific need, and this was confirmed by Lamprecht (2021, Interview) who confirmed that there was a rise in 1992, then, unexplainable crimes, crimes of ritualistic nature that were not understood and could not be investigated without having specialized knowledge.

This specialized knowledge was not instantly available and applied by the officers of the ORCU, and it would prove to have taken the most part of three decades, of trial and error to reach a more comprehensive understanding of the policing of occult crimes. And this is an ongoing process, in, not only accumulating factual knowledge of occult crimes *per se*, but also receiving training in the *context* of these crimes, via cosmology, culture, and religious aspects. And as the reader will follow going further, it will also show the importance of police officers' personal belief systems in policing of these crimes.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Research methodology refers to the specific tools and processes that the researcher employs to conduct the research inquiry (Babbie & Mouton, 2012:75).

Research Paradigm

Before tools, processes and methods are explored, the researcher would like to touch on the concept of a research paradigm, for this might be a good entry point for a criminological study of crime that contains cultural and spiritual elements.

Understanding this paradigm also concludes the methods used in this particular research. The research paradigm can be understood as the researcher's worldview (MacKenzie & Knipe, 2006), this is thus the perspective that informs the interpretation of the data. The context in which this research will be explored is from a constructivist and interpretive mindset, this allows the researcher to be part of the process of constructing and changing or building the research. This research is further based on building a theory as opposed to testing one.

Occult crime is studied through a subjective lens of culture and cosmology, the reality is created by individuals, cultures, and groups, i.e., knowledge is personal, and it is further created by social understanding. People are constructing their own understanding of the world. It is important to mention how this applies to the researcher herself too, in processing and interpreting the information and research gathered and applying it, therefore being inherently involved in the research. The concept of culture and spirituality goes beyond religion and science and speaks of how people make sense of their world. Reality must be interpreted if we want to know the meaning of events, this can be done through understanding symbols, rituals, and phenomena of occult crimes, interpreted from a subjective point of view.

A note on the researcher's process. The casual way in which the study of occult crime was initially approached, would later be replaced by fear and procrastination, and at a point, questioning the continuation of this research. The weight and impact of the worldwide COVID pandemic also added to this steep journey, by being cut off from personal contact with supervisors and classmates and losing footing in many areas of the researcher's personal life. Unexpected irregularities were often met by the researcher. After grappling with the idea of occult crime, the focus shifted to a specific case study or unit of analysis, the Occult Related Crime Unit (ORCU). But with lockdown and COVID restrictions in place and members of the task team being skeptical of biased reporting and denying interviews, and the head of the ORCU, Lamprecht being deployed to KZN during the looting crisis, the researcher and her supervisor made the call to continue, without any further setbacks in reaching these tasks team members for interviews. The research then shifted back to the crime aspect being the unit of analysis. In the later stages of the research, the head of the ORCU, Attie Lamprecht, agreed to be interviewed.

The study is thus centered around the phenomenon of occult crimes in South Africa, Africa, and internationally, and the policing thereof. This is done through the lens of socio-political and cultural aspects. This study is mainly a desktop study and of literature nature, whereas most of the research has been historical, anthropological and ethnographic, with the added value of an interview done with the head of the ORCU.

The subjective and language-orientated interpretations make for empirical research to obtain qualitative data. Empirical because it is based on observation of the world around us to obtain qualitative data. It will be thick in description and narrative and the goal will be understanding, describing, and meaning. According to Niewenhuis (2007), qualitative research aims 'to engage in research that probes for a deeper understanding of a phenomenon...[and]...to penetrate the human understandings and constructions about it' (Niewenhuis, 2007: 81). Qualitative research also places value on observation from an insider's perspective when attempting to "understand the nature of human experience" (Babbie & Mouton, 2012:53).

Methods

The researcher used existing case studies, literature, and academic articles to gather data on policing, cosmology, and occult crime. Newspaper articles and documentaries also proved to be helpful, specifically in the section on Satanic crimes in South Africa, where a lack of academic articles with regard to the factual aspects of these types of crimes is apparent. An interview with Attie Lamprecht, head of the ORCU, added value and insightful data to the research. Although the initial focus was to interview a few members of the ORCU, circumstances involving the COVID pandemic, and an overall reluctance of ORCU members, or the non-revealing of names of other members, stopped this from taking place. The researcher is aware of numerous articles and organizations, that sketched the ORCU in a bad light, this was also confirmed by Lamprecht (2021, Interview) and the researcher suspects this might have been a reason for the denial of an interview with the former head of the ORCU, Kobus Jonker. Further, Lamprecht (2021) also denied revealing the names of other task members, this could be due to protecting members from publications but also, what could be considered is the sensitive nature of the work these task members are involved in. The singular interview, however, according to the researcher, contributes effectively to this study, seeing that Lamprecht has been the head of this team for two decades. Not only is he a good source of the historical and factual data of the ORCU, but he was also able to comment on the complexities of policing occult crime. A number of themes of relevance to the research topic were explored through a general interview guide, this kept the interactions focused while allowing individual perspectives to emerge (Patton 2002).

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis is the “what” and the “whom” being studied. The “what” research centers around the main unit, occult crime, and the sub-units, being the police and the socio-political and cultural lens through which all the above is interpreted. The “whom” being studied, are the people involved and affected by

these crimes, the police, specifically the ORCU as legal agents, the victims and the perpetrators. Yin (2015) accentuates the importance of drawing a nexus between the main and subunits of analysis.

Research Design

A research design can be defined as a blueprint for the proposed research project as it provides a specific strategy for the researcher to follow in the process of collecting and analysing the data, and interpreting the findings (Babbie & Mouton, 2012).

Research design should further enable the researcher to anticipate what the appropriate research decisions are likely to be and to maximise the validity of the eventual results (Mouton 1996). It focuses on the end product and all the steps in the process to achieve that outcome.

The three major purposes of social research are exploration, description, and explanation (Babbie 2009, Fouché, & De Vos, 2017; Babbie and Mouton, 2012; Singleton & Straits, 2010). This research is exploratory, for it will give insight into a phenomenon where little is known, and where there is a lack of valid information. (Fouché, & De Vos, 2017; Singleton & Straits, 2010). It is also explanatory for its attempts to uncover the reasons behind the occurrence of certain phenomena (Fouché, & De Vos, 2017:96; Babbie & Mouton, 2012).

Sample Design and Size

Sampling in qualitative research is usually non-random and purposeful, and small, as opposed to larger, more random sampling in quantitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The Occult-related Crime Unit is a specialised police unit, and the officers of this unit were specifically targeted for inclusion in the interview sample. Purposive sampling was to be used to identify officers with experience and expertise as occult unit members. It was unclear to the researcher what the size of the unit is, so sampling was to be done according to the availability of unit members. But as discussed in the previous section, circumstances of the pandemic and reluctance of my members to be

interviewed or to release names of co-members, just the one, but the most important interview was conducted with the head of the ORCU, Attie Lamprecht.

Data/Information Collection

Data was collected through academic articles, newspaper articles, official documents, documentaries, and interviews. Interviews were done through physical note-taking, recordings, and videos. The researcher believed that video footage of occult crime paraphernalia, was to be of academic and archival importance for future researchers, but this was denied by Lamprecht (interview 2021), as he explained that these items are often destroyed, as he feels that these items can be dangerous to keep. Video footage and photographs of these items can still be observed on the internet via documentary interviews with Lamprecht and Jonker (previous head of the occult team) and speak of the symbolic use of paraphernalia (Occult Agents-The Spirit of South Africa, 2017; Ozanne, 2016).

Interview Technique

Interviews are either structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. Semi-structured interviews are well-suited for case study research, for researchers can ask predetermined but flexibly worded questions and follow-up questions designed to probe more deeply issues of interest to interviewees. Semi-structured interviews invite interviewees to express themselves freely and to define the world from their own perspectives, not solely from the perspective of the researcher (Hancock, 2006).

A number of themes of relevance to the research topic were explored through a semi-structured, general interview guide. This kept the interaction focused while allowing for the individual's perspective to emerge. This provided for topics and subjects which the interviewer was free to explore in a more relaxed conversational manner, and simultaneously kept the focus on predetermined topics or subjects. Also and in this way, questions about the unit, the ORCU, were simultaneously covered, alongside questions about the unit member himself and his personal experiences. Quin Patton (2002), explains that through this interview technique, there is a chance for other topics to emerge, and this was indeed the case. Through

this interview technique, the researcher also had the opportunity to build a relationship with the interviewee by allowing him to lead a part of the conversation in part, and the interviewer probed the interests of the interviewee, and was, therefore, able to better understand how to build trust, and ensured a better understanding of his personal experiences while still probing for factual data on the unit itself.

Questions and themes were formulated according to the officer's knowledge of the history, mandate, occult crimes, and challenges the unit faces. The researcher also covered the personal experiences, belief systems and possible bias, fears and difficulties, and challenges faced in dealing with harmful occult crimes, society, and the media. The influence of tradition, religion, politics, the judiciary system, and the community was also covered.

The researcher conducted this 70-minute interview online via Microsoft Teams. Written consent from the participant was obtained with regard to these forms of data collection. The data collected were transcribed and securely stored on the researcher's password-protected notebook and on I-Cloud, this also protected the data in case of technical issues involving the researcher's hardware.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

This is a case study and the data being researched is qualitative and empirical. The researcher aimed at understanding patterns, insights, and concepts so that themes can be recorded. A Yin (2018) explains: "Unlike statistical analysis, there are few fixed formulas or cookbook recipes to use as guides. Instead, much depends on a researcher's own style of rigorous empirical thinking, along with the sufficient presentation of evidence and careful consideration of alternative interpretations" (Yin, 2018 :213)

The researcher used the research question, and carefully formulated interview guide as a source to analyse and interpret the data collected. The data were categorised under the relevant themes, i.e. main themes and sub-themes, and novel concepts, patterns, and ideas were further included in the research, while keeping the focus on

the main research question. As Hancock and Algozzine (2006) point out, the fundamental research question at the forefront of the investigative process and summarizing and interpreting information also sometimes means “putting aside less relevant information as well as developing a management system for keeping track of all information that is used or not used” (Hancock and Algozzine, 2006:72).

Yin (2018) makes it clear that the data should be organised chronologically or some other sequence as well, that and the importance of memo writing and diagramming, and how this will help toward a general analytical strategy; “The purpose of the analytic strategy is to link your case study data to important concepts of interest, and then to have the concepts give you a sense of direction in analyzing the data” (Yin 2018: 223)

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Anonymity is defined as no means of identifying participants, not even for the researcher. Confidentiality is the researcher’s commitment not to reveal the identity of the known participant (Babbie & Mouton, 2012).

The researcher emphasized that the professional code of research ethics requires a balanced inquiry; it also has to ensure anonymity and confidentiality as far as possible in the researcher’s dealings with the police officers of the ORCU. In saying this, Brig. Lamprecht, as head of the ORCU, has been interviewed on previous occasions and has linked his name to academic and newspaper articles, and documentaries in his capacity as head of the ORCU. The information sheet explained how anonymity and confidentiality could not be guaranteed and Lamprecht signed this information sheet.

Harm

Gaining informed consent means alerting them to the nature of the case study and formally soliciting their volunteerism (Yin, 2018), this was done via the UCT consent form. The researcher has permission in writing from Lamprecht to use his name in this research. As already been discussed, the professional code of research ethics requires a balanced inquiry. The researcher believes that by carefully weighing up the

cost to the participant versus the importance of the study, she found a balanced inquiry. It is of further relevance to understanding that Brig. Lamprecht is a trained professional and has granted interviews to journalists and academics in the past, and the researcher believes that as a ORCU member, is well prepared in protecting himself from harm. No psychological, physical, or social harm was therefore foreseen.

Chapter 3: Occult Crime

In this chapter, we look at the different aspects of occult-related crime, this will be done in the attempt to avoid telling spectacular stories of the macabre as Cikaway & Gershiere (1998) puts it.

Socio-political and Cultural Aspects

Occult crime is labeled as either Western, traditional, or hybrid systems, and is conflated with elements of not only socio-political factors, but also culture, tradition, and spirituality. These latter three elements are indicators of why the topic of occult-related crime is one, mostly discussed by scholars of anthropology and rarely by criminologists. Traditional occult crime can also be understood, or placed in the context of African cosmology, which underlies the belief and demand system of occult crimes. As Petrus (2007) explains: "Cosmology can be seen as how people make sense of their environment how order is understood, and these involve more than the scientific, it involves spirits and other supernatural beings" (Petrus, 2007:52). When asked about the importance of understanding African cosmology and occult crime in training and the investigation of crime Brig Lamprecht (2021) the head of the ORCU, explained how there are hundreds of years behind ancestral communication, he goes further: "Yes, it is part of the course, the moment people start to gain understanding, they can become more focused on what they are supposed to do."

Factual Criminal Aspects of Occult Crime

Petrus (2009) also makes the point on how occult crime, especially witchcraft, has been studied from a political-economic or post-colonial viewpoint in the past, but rarely for its factual criminal aspects. He goes further "any theory on witchcraft-related crime must have value in an applied context, in order to be practically useful for law enforcement officers who may investigate crimes of this nature" (Petrus

2009: 9). Niehaus (2001) also endorses this idea with the focus on the anthropological aspect and how the anthropological study of witchcraft was sidelined in favour of "...the analysis of politics, economics and the predicaments engendered by apartheid...Witchcraft was deemed to be a component of religion, somehow removed from these concerns and unworthy of serious scholarly investigation" (Niehaus, 2001: 1-2). This research of occult crime is studied in the context of socio-political and cultural factors, but one should first consider the factual aspects of occult crime, i.e. occult crime *per se* to begin with. In investigating this aspect of occult crime, one is contributing to a field, that in turn contributes to data and information essential to investigative and judicial aspects.

Why We Label Occult Crime

Some may argue against labelling, the typology and studying of occult crime, for it is said that these criminal activities only amount to common-law crimes. Meaning, there is no need to label crime under an "occult" typology, for in courts these crimes are charged as general crimes, i.e., murder as opposed to, say multi-killings. This was confirmed by Lamprecht (2021, interview). But Lamprecht also indicated that the occult factor in a crime can prove motive, and that is why he, as ORCU member often testifies in court. For investigative and judicial purposes, occult-related crimes can prove the *mens rea* element of a crime, which refers to the mental state of the criminal. Fault, in the form of negligence or intent, is a prerequisite to being found guilty of a crime, and motive can coincide with intention. Motive can also render a crime lawful, and finally, motive bears weight in the sentencing process (Grant 2018). Lamprecht (2021 interview) also stated that occult crime can be used to establish aggravating or mitigation factors when sentencing is passed. It is also discussed by Botha (2018), that by labelling a crime as occult-related, it could be effective in proving a putative self-defence plea, whereas one subjectively believes that his or her life is at stake, when in fact, objectively, it is not. This might be the case where an alleged witch is harmed by the perpetrator who believed that the witch was bewitching him or her. Lamprecht (2021 interview) confirmed that this might be the case if the reasonable person test is proven, where the reasonable person would have thought in the same manner.

Further, if harmful occult crimes are not recorded as specific crimes but as common crimes it has implications on an investigative level as well, and in collecting and analysing evidence. By not labelling crimes as occult crimes, officers will not be able to understand the full context of a crime, for instance, if a multi-murder case is labelled as murder, the investigation will stop with the murderer. Whereas, there are at least three parties involved in a multi-murder, the ring usually consists of the client, the traditional healer, and the actor, who commits the murder (Labuschagne, 2004; Lamprecht 2021, Interview). According to this research, labelling occult-related crime as such, is hence necessary.

Also, in their research on occult-related gang violence, Petrus-et al (2018) explain that; "The identification of various groups and subgroups believed to be involved in occult-related or ritualistic crimes became a critical factor in criminal profiling and establishing occult-related crime typologies" Petrus-et al (2018:170). Another argument for labelling crimes as occult crimes would be for formal training purposes. As a specialised unit, labelling and the ability of a police officer to recognize when a crime constitutes an occult crime or not, is essential. This was confirmed by Lamprecht (2021 Interview) who states that the ORCU receives formal training in the specialized field of occult-related crime, this is done as Lamprecht explained, to recognize occult crimes as such, but also to demystify what does not amount to an occult crime.

Definitions

The California Office of Criminal Justice Planning used this definition to define occult crime: "Occult crime encompasses ceremonial actions and/or ritualistic acts, involves occult-related behavior patterns, and is motivated by a belief in some occult ideology" (Olson-Raymer, 1989-1990).

In South Africa, the SAPS removed their occult crime indicator website in 2006 due to pressures from human rights groups, but this revealed the objectives for the investigation and prevention of occult-related crime by the general detectives and defined occult-related crime as; "Occult-related crime means any human conduct

that constitutes any legally recognised crime, the modus operandi of which relates to or emanates primarily from any belief or seeming belief in the occult, witchcraft, satanism, mysticism, magic, esotericism and the like. Included in the scope of occult-related crime are ritual, muti/medicine murders, witch purging, witchcraft-related violence, and sect-related practices that pose a threat to the safety and security of the Republic of South Africa and/or its inhabitants” (Wayback Machine, 2004).

Lamprecht (2021, Interview) stated that the mandate of the ORCU today is to investigate any legally recognized crime where the modus operandi is of a spiritual or supernatural nature. This includes Western and traditional occult practices and religious sects. He further emphasized that, even though they are approached by institutions or individuals to solve occult incidences, there has to be a criminal element, as he explained: “We are not going to come in with a wonder wand and now get rid of evil spirits” (Lamprecht, 2021 Interview).

In 2017 Lamprecht, also stated that there was a shift in the unit’s mandate, and they do not only focus on what is referred to as "typical satanic incidents," which refers to harmful Satanism, the Western branch of occult crimes that range from vandalism to ritualistic and sacrificial murder, animal abuse, assault, and sexual offenses. The investigations now include traditional crimes as well, Kempen (2017) quotes Lamprecht; “This section investigates harmful occult-related crime including, but not limited to, witchcraft used to curse others; muti-related offences; sect movements; illegal initiation schools; and witch-findings leading to the assault or death of individuals” Kempen (2017: 11). The mandate is further in line with a report by the South African Law Reform Commission (SALRC 2014) and with research done by Petrus (2008). Legal definitions will further be discussed under the legal and judiciary section.

Occult Crime and the Media

With the revival of the ORCU in 2012, after it went underground in 2003, and with the apparent re-emergence of occult-related crimes in South Africa (Steven, 2013), reporters used phrases like the: “crack down on muti murders and other crimes that may occur during the practising of Satanism, witchcraft and even vampirism”

(Harvey, 2014). Lamprecht (2012, Interview) explained that sketching the unit as “devil and vampire hunters” was far removed from the truth and attracted unnecessary attention. Historically, Kobus Jonker, has also earned the title of the “*Donker Jonker, Duiwelsjagter* and *God’s Detective*.” In occult cases, trial by media is also a factor to be considered, this can interfere with investigations, for these crimes are not always of occult nature (Lamprecht, 2021 Interview) and it might create hysteria and unwarranted pressure for members of the ORCU.

Lamprecht (2021, Interview) shared how challenging the interaction with the media has been for ORCU. In effect, he personally made the decision to take the ORCU out of the public eye, mainly to avoid the effect that sensationalistic reports by the media on occult crime can have on investigations. This was the period when it was said the unit “went underground” in 2003. Lamprecht explained:

“I deliberately took the unit out of the public eye, and until this day I become irritated when the media pick up a story on an occult crime and start running with it. A, it removes the focus from what actually happens there. B, it immediately makes it an occult crime, and it is not necessarily the case, it can be staged, etc. The sensation behind it, is something I believe is not needed and it makes it difficult, and it puts the detectives under a lot of pressure.”

The relationship between the media and the ORCU has been one worth exploring and as previously mentioned, ORCU members have been ridiculed by the media. The intention of this research was, firstly to sketch a history of a, previously notorious task unit, but secondly, for the researcher to set aside her own belief systems and possible bias and explore the evolution of this task unit, through an academic and factual lens.

Chapter 4: African Traditional Occult Crime

The researcher would like to introduce some aspects of traditional occult crime in South Africa, Africa, and globally. This will show what we have learned through the history and mandate of the ORCU, reports by organizations, writings by ethnographers, scholars, and journalists about the development of these crimes through time.

Categories of Traditional Crime

To categorize traditional occult crime in South Africa, one can begin by reading the *Witchcraft Suppression Act 3 of 1957*, which governs occult-related crime. It is based on the *Witchcraft Suppression Act 1895* of the Cape Colony, which was in turn based on the *Witchcraft Act 1735* of Great Britain. In South Africa, before witchcraft was regulated by law the practice was largely regulated and dealt with by the traditional courts. The Witchcraft Act came into force on 22 February 1957. It was amended in 1970 by adding the offense of using witchcraft to harm others or property and the amendment in 1997 served as the abolition of corporal punishment (*Witchcraft Suppression Act 3 of 1957, 1970 & 1997*).

Pelgrim (2004) points out the six different categories of persons who can be found guilty of an offence of crime under the *Witchcraft Suppression Act 3 of 1957*: "a) any person who names or indicates another person as a witch b) a person that uses witchcraft c) any person who approaches a witch doctor to point out a witch d) a person that knows witchcraft and advises others on its use e) any person that attempts to practice witchcraft and, f) individuals who claim to have divination skills (Minnaar, 2001:5)" (Pelgrim 2004: 94)

Petrus (2009), also points out, in his study of witchcraft-related crime in Mpondoland, that witchcraft is used as a general term, but a distinction should be drawn between

witchcraft accusations, assaults, and killings, (i.e., witch-purging and witch-naming), as *reactions to* witchcraft on the one hand, and harming *through* witchcraft or bewitching on the other hand. Harming *through* witchcraft involves crimes like muti-murder, ritualistic killings, and psychic witchcraft. As mentioned earlier, even though the *Witchcraft Suppression Act 3 of 1957* criminalizes psychic witchcraft *per se*, the act is applied with discretion by police officers, and only when a criminal element of harm is involved, that can be proven, will police act (Lamprecht, 2021 Interview).

This does not mean that a person performing harmful psychic witchcraft cannot be charged, this will be discussed further under the psychic witchcraft topic.

But largely, the only witchcraft-related case that holds up in court, as a stand-alone crime charged under the Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1895 is 'witch-naming,' an occult crime as a reaction to witchcraft. The other witchcraft-related crimes, like muti- and ritualistic killings and witch huntings are charged under general crimes, like murder and assault. But as mentioned before, one must understand the importance of labeling it as witchcraft-related or occult crime, for it can be used to prove the *mens rea* aspect of the crime. The *mens rea* aspect of a crime is the mental and psychological aspect of the criminal deed and is divided into intent and motive, whereas *actus rea* is the physical element of a crime.

The different categories of traditional occult crimes that are relevant for this research are; psychic witchcraft (black magic), witch-hunting, muti-murders and ritualistic killings.

Psychic Witchcraft

As previously mentioned, psychic witchcraft is a crime under the *Witchcraft Suppression Act 3 of 1957*, only, if it can be proven and causes criminal harm. Let us look closer at these two factors, but first, we must again consider that we are dealing with a crime that sprouts from "mystical means" and will be a challenge to prove.

Lamprecht (202, Interview) explains that the ORCU will launch an investigation when proof of paraphernalia to harm another, or threats to harm another through psychic

witchcraft is discovered. This may include dolls made of another person with the intent to harm, or letters/emails written to another person can be lodged as proof. The Ralushai Commission's (Ralushai et al, 1996) report on witch-huntings in the Northern province, also mentions how psychic witchcraft was proved in a criminal case, where an alleged witch was caught naked in the bewitched individual's yard (State v Netshiava, 1990). Even though one needs to apply the principles of African cosmology to gain insight into the context of a case where someone is found naked on someone else's property, but, this explains how a psychic or spiritual threat posed to an individual, can be investigated as soon as a physical component is added.

This specific form of criminal psychic witchcraft must be distinguished from non-harmful occult practices, for criminal witchcraft is synonymous with black magic which "involves the belief in and practice of tapping and using this [mystical] power to do harm to human beings or their property"(Mbiti, 1969: 199). Petrus (2009) defines it further: "This form of magic specifically involves witchcraft, which consists of both psychic witchcraft, which is the ability to manipulate spiritual or invisible agents (familiar) to harm others, and sorcery, which involves the use of medicines to cause harm" Petrus (2009; 54).

Here are more examples of psychic witchcraft practices, explained from a cosmological viewpoint, practised by the witch (*igqwirha/mulo*) and the sorcerer (*umthakathi*) or familiars. Niehaus (2001), an anthropologist, whose research of the occult in the South African Lowveld stretches over a decade, comments in detail about the animal quality of traditional occult practices. He explains that witches and familiars are both from the human and animal realm: "They exist simultaneously in the village and the forest, but are not fully part of either realm (Niehaus 2001:46). He also explains how witches catch, tame and train familiars to carry out their wishes, it is understood that a great intimacy develops between a familiar and a witch (Krige & Krige 1965). In Pauw's (1994) research of the Xhosa people he writes; "Black magic is basically used in two ways, the use of medicine, and the keeping of familiars or associates to use them detrimentally (Pauw, 1994: 128). In other cultures, like the Tsonga and Pedi the witch transforms into the familiar after a complex series of transformations (Junod 1966 ; Minnig 1988), and vice versa, this is the case of the

Kgaga where familiars become people and “change shape and metamorphose into human form” (Hammond-Tooke 1981:99).

A few examples of familiars are the Lighting Bird or *Impundulu*, who can destroy one’s health by sitting on the victims’ chest, the Tokolosi or *uThikoloshe*, a dwarf-like cross between an animal and a human who rapes and causes infertility in women. The Snake of Women or *Inyoka Yabafazi* and Snake of Men or *Inyoka Yamadoda*, who kills through sexual relations, the Baboon or *Imfene* destroys livestock. The Cat or *Impaka* who kills infants and, the Living Dead or *Isithunzela*, or *Dukwane* used for manual labour. The herbalist can also place evil spirits or *Amafufunyana* into a person (Petrus 2007; Pelgrim 2003).

Psychic Witchcraft and the Justice System

“One of the outstanding problems of the lawgiver in Africa is the treatment of witchcraft in criminal law” (Ralushai et al, 1996).

Another factor of psychic witchcraft that is dealt with in the justice system, is that of the reaction against witchcraft, whereas the previous discussion was in relation to the practice of witchcraft by witches. The justice system has frequently dealt with witch-purging of witches, as a reaction to witchcraft and bewitchment. The belief in witchcraft, as a constitutional right to freedom of religion, should be considered in terms of protecting oneself or one's community from a bewitchment threat. Botha (2018) argues that the spiritual realm of crime and violence may not always be proven, but has real consequences; “the sincere belief in some instances unfortunately also leads a person to commit crimes in order to protect themselves or others against occult powers, it is certainly also part of our legal landscape” (Botha 2018: 457). And as Pelgrim (2003) argues “you can’t prove it, and can’t disprove it” (Pelgrim, 2003: 49), and this constitutes a judiciary challenge, not yet solved.

Mavungu (2000) states that “traditional courts agree that witches do exist, whilst formal courts say witches do not exist” this is also discussed in the Ralushai Commission Report (Ralushai et al, 1996). Jensen and Buur (2004) also confer in their paper on everyday policing and the occult; “the courts are unwilling or

incapable of dealing with witchcraft, suspicions of witchcraft appear to have no legal channels of expression” (Jensen and Buur 2004 :199).

Further, in formal courts, one cannot use "bewitchment", or the belief in witchcraft as a self-defense plea on grounds of defending one's life or property from an illegal threat. Neither for what constitutes a *non-compos-mentis* defense, for this would lead to the authorities denying the religious and spiritual belief systems of most of the South African population if it is seen as such (Botha, 2018). Although "bewitchment," could possibly be used as a putative self-defense justification, where an individual subjectively believes his or her life is in danger, when, objectively, it is not. But "bewitchment" might be considered in sentencing, as a mitigation factor or in other cases as aggravating circumstances (Lamprecht, 2021 Interview). This has previously been discussed in explaining why occult crime should be labelled as such in relation to motive, whereas in this conversation the nexus is drawn between the judiciary and the acknowledgment of psychic occult crime.

The complexities of belief systems and culture, juxtaposed with governance by a secular state are apparent here. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa it is stipulated that citizens should be protected against all forms of violence and simultaneously guarantees every person's right not to be discriminated against based on religion, conscience, or belief. This could further be explained through these two concepts; cultural relativism; which refers to liberal values of freedom and equality and, secondly, civic rationalism; which is the understanding of culture without judgement (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1999). In a culturally diverse country, haunted by colonization, one can only imagine the colossal task of integrating opposites into the justice system.

Witch Hunting/Purging

“Evil is very intimate” (Jensen & Buur, 2004: 196).

Witch purging, is, ironically, the most common occult-related crime in South Africa, the researcher refers to it as being ironic due to the fact that witch purging is seen as an anti-occultist crime, i.e., a crime as a reaction against the occult and practicing

thereof. At this point, the researcher will differentiate between witch killings as a believed threat to a person from a spiritual viewpoint and witch killings as a socio-political construct. Ritchken (1987) argues that African witchcraft is not about magicity, but about moral and social order, value, and material equity. To give the reader an idea of the scope of witch hunts in South Africa, the researcher will give some background on the Ralushai Commission.

The Ralsushai Commission

The Department of Safety, Security and the Office of the Premier, commissioned an inquiry in March 1995, into the Witchcraft killings that occurred between 1985 and 1995 in the Northern Province. During the violent witchcraft-related turmoil during the 1980s and 1990s, the government was “compelled to intervene and established the Ralushai Commission of Inquiry into Witchcraft Violence and Ritual Murders” (Petrus 2004: 4).

The official investigation, headed by Victor Ralushai, documented 312 witchcraft-related killings in the Northern Province between 1985 and 1995 (Ralushai et al, 1996). The commission states here that these figures may not be reliable, for it is suspected that out of fear of victimization witchcraft killings are not reported as such. Reikje Pelgrim (2003) a researcher for the “Crossing Witchcraft Barriers in South Africa” program reports in her paper on *Witchcraft and policing: South Africa Police Service attitudes towards witchcraft and witchcraft-related crime in the Northern Province*, that statistics show that, between 1998 and 2001 witchcraft-related cases has increased from an estimated 50 cases per year to over 1300 a year. Pelgrim (2003) however does not refer to the source of this statement. The commission states the importance of reliable statistics, that statistics on witchcraft-related crime should, on a more regular basis be submitted to the MEC for Safety and Security (Ralushai et al, 1996). But academics comment on the noticeable spike in witch purging over this period. The Comaroffs (2004) speak of the spectacular rise, of witch burnings during the 90s, and how these killings have “intensified dramatically in the postcolonial period” (Comaroff & Comaroff 2004: 514). Petrus (2009) comments on how “South African state has never really taken this phenomenon

seriously, at least not until the brutal violence of the 1980s and 1990s" (Petrus, 2009:2).

A few pinnacle moments in South African witch-hunts movements took place, during the "anti-witchcraft movement" of 1986 and soon after the 1994 elections. After the 1994 elections, with democracy in place, youthful comrades commenced a 'moral clean-up' of that which was not part of the new, including witches, and other vulnerable members of the community. These people were targeted and found refuge at police stations: "entire witch communities emerged at these police stations"(Pelgrim 2003: 86). This was also confirmed by Lamprecht (202, Interview). The Ralushai Commission (1996) reported: "The Province [and by implication the countryside in general] continued to burn. Something had to be done and fast" (Ralushai 1996). The Comaroffs (1999) also point out that these hunts were to "cleanse the countryside of malevolence. Singing freedom songs, they marked Nelson Mandela's release from prison with a furious spate of witch burnings" (Comaroffs 1999:62). Petrus (2009) goes further in explaining; "The goal was liberation, not only politically in the sense of destroying apartheid, but also culturally, in the sense of destroying those cultural symbols of anti-community values. Once this was achieved, the millenarian vision of a utopia could be realised" (Petrus, 2009: 153)

This follows the "anti witchcraft movement" in 1986 Brooklyn Trust Land, Mapulaneng, where a group of 800 men identified witches and punished them by sjambokking them, killing 3 of the 8 witches. Between the months of April and May 1986, this escalated to 150 people being accused of being witches and attacked by youths in the Mapulaneng district of Lebowa (Ritchken, 1987). Ritchken (1987) goes further in explaining the 1986 revolt: "It is a revolt against a society that is no longer able to support them"(Ritchken 1987: 1).

Witch-hunting movements can be traced all over Africa: "witch-cleansing movements possess a strong millenarian dimension. They announce the imminent revitalization of society and give hope of a morally regenerated life and a new order free of all tensions" Bonhomme (2013: 2).

Two concepts discussed by the Ralushai Commission (Ralushai et al, 1996) were, legal universalism and cultural relativism, whereas the first has to do with prosecuting those who take the law into their own hand by killing alleged witches, and the latter has to do with the criminalization of witch finding by the government, which is incompatible with African belief. The Comaroffs (1999) description reads "a tension between two impulses: (i) civic rationalism, expressed in a call for liberation through education and for a more rigorous response to witch-related offenses, including a possible reinstatement of the death penalty; and (ii) a frank, even assertive cultural relativism" Comaroff & Comaroff (1999: 285).

Cosmological features of Witch Purging

To further understand witch hunting, and how the numbers in this occult crime have risen in modern times, one must understand the traditional concept of social balance: "All sacred things must have their place...if they were taken out of their place...the entire order of the universe would be destroyed. Sacred objects, therefore, contribute to the maintenance of order in the universe by occupying the places allocated to them" (Levi-Strauss, 1966: 10).

Evans- Pritchard's study among the Azande (1937), consistently shows that a relationship exists between witchcraft and sorcery beliefs and the prevailing cosmological system inherent in the society, this cosmological system, can range from supernatural entities to the microcosm of community members interacting with each other. These dynamics range from economic, political, sexual, and power aspects in society, and the purging of witches can be considered symbolic in safeguarding moral order and protecting the traditional social status quo.

Reikje Pelgrim (2003) further explains how witch purging, is perceived from a socio-cosmological viewpoint:

“witch-purging practices could be regarded as part of an intricate system of maintaining social balance. The Tshilwavhusiku VhaVenda have a traditional world-view in which nature, culture, the living and the dead are perceived as one entity. Within this cosmology, social order is regarded as the highest virtue. Stability and social balance are believed to be all- important. Consequently, all beliefs and related behaviour are traditionally intent on either maintaining social stability or on restoring it. Sin and evil are concepts that are used to refer to actions that disturb social equilibrium” (Pelgrim 2003: 130).

Pelgrim (2003) also speaks the cosmological concept of life force: “By bewitching a person his/her life force can be eaten, and as a result that person will become weak or ill or even die” (Pelgrim 2003: 41). This life force should be understood as more than physical, it also points to social aspects like power, sexual relations, wealth and general good luck. This is also referred to as *eating* someone’s energy. Petrus (2007) comments further on what this means. The increasement of wealth for one person, has to be at the expense of another, and witchcraft fulfills a specific function, it is the mechanism through which misfortunes could be explained and is almost always the malevolence of one individual that was the cause of someone else’s misfortune (Olivier, 1981: 81; Pauw, 1994: 128; Petrus, 2009: 60-61). If there is an unexplainable misfortune, someone has to take responsibility, either by admitting to the bewitchment or being pointed out by a diviner. Comaroff & Comaroff (2004) refers to the *standardized nightmare of the group*, a cultural process of inversion of community ethics.

Witch Purging as a Social Construct

“Witchcraft has both an ethical and a social rationality” (Comaroff & Comaroff 2004: 518).

We now look at the social factors which influence witch-hunting. Knauff (1985) explains; “Symbolic projections can block social processes from people’s awareness and actors can manipulate witchcraft accusations to maximise their own self-interest in ways that contradict what they say or honestly believe”(Knauff 1985:351).

The conversation around witch-hunting as a socially and politically constructed tool, is a frequent one, and violent witch purging reached its climax in the 80s and throughout the 90s. In days of old, finding a witch was very rarely a case of murder or assault. For instance, in the findings of Evans-Pritchard (1937) of the Azande people, accusations of witchcraft were handled with care, communication, and at worst, countermagic. Niehaus (2001) also indicates, that Krige and Krige (1965) documented 50 witchcraft accusations among the Lobedu in the 1930s and noted that witches were only forced to leave the area if they were suspected of having harmed a number of people. And further, Sansom (1972) observed that during the 1960s witchcraft accusations, in the full sense of public denunciation, hardly ever occurred in Sekhukhuneland. It seems that the witch hunt has become a popular tool to destroy that, which seems to threaten the mob on a mere social/political level as opposed to a spiritual one. This gives new meaning to what is meant with an anti-social event, and what is popularly accepted as one.

Jensen and Buur (2004) takes the issue further and talks about how witchcraft accusations speak of class differences and local confrontations and it “transforms global challenges and issues into locally intelligible forms,” this being possible because “witchcraft forms part of a lived semantic universe within the occult that provides a constant subtext for understanding everyday life “(Jensen and Buur, 2004:197).

Petrus (2009) also refers to Evans-Pritchard (1937), who makes two important points about witchcraft, the one is that witchcraft can explain events that are otherwise unexplainable and, that the belief in witchcraft could provide victims with a rational cause. It is also apparent that witchcraft accusations are very intimate, and victims are usually neighbours, colleagues, or next of kin. This view is also supported by Jensen and Buur (2004). Petrus (2009) strengthens the narrative by referring to African cosmologies as conceptualized in terms of hierarchical frameworks that represent “cosmic totality” and quotes Crafford (1996) who compares this totality with family ties, and anyone who threatens this harmony is considered evil. Going further, accusing an individual who poses a threat to society, or a person might be

done too easily, for as Pelgrim (2003) explains that witchcraft is “built on central premises that cannot be questioned” (Pelgrim, 2003: 37).

Mesaki (2003), describes witchcraft as “as manifested in everyday conversation, gossip or a way of speaking and means of handling day-to-day ambiguities or means of allocating responsibility, branding scapegoats for misfortunes, eliminating rivals and competitors etc. It also explains, rationalizes and makes plausible accusations out of envy, jealousy, greed, hatred, rivalry, vengeance or misunderstanding or misinformation, strained relations, political and economic frustrations etc. (Mesaki, 2003: 132-138).

Witch Purging Cultural Policing, the Community

The Comaroffs (2004) discuss the idea of “policing culture and culture policing,” a concept of community policing through cultural or moral rules, and this can be understood in witch purging as a form of cultural policing. Coming from the discipline of anthropology, they encourage the conventional justice system to look beyond the status quo of policing, to understand what is happening in communities where witch purging occurs. Law and policing can be challenged and might have to adapt and change over time, and this is where the concept of the occult, cosmology, and culture come in direct opposition to the current justice system. From a logical perspective, one only sees the criminal aspect of the crime, i.e. witch purging, in the form of murder or assault, instead of understanding that which is underlying on a social level.

The Comaroffs (2004) further look into communities legitimizing violence, i.e. witch-purging through culture, and therefore claiming the role of policing culture in the constant strive to find equilibrium in society. Understanding community policing in traditional occult-related crime is an important part of the puzzle of the occult and the justice system. The Comaroffs (2004) refer to three different scenarios when it comes to violent community action against “alleged perpetrators of magical evil”, they are; a) vigilantism, as the revenge of people who contravene their norms b) revenge; poor against the rich, young against old, male against female and, c) cultural policing directed at these held to threaten the well-being of the community.

Jensen and Buur (2004) go into more depth and investigate the concept of vigilante groups as people that inspires fear, and whom the community needs protection from. Witchcraft violence can hence be interpreted as a form of religious terrorism.

The right of culture cannot be claimed if violent, or if it constitutes a threat of another's safety and security of his or her physical person. Violence, if unlawful is a crime in South Africa. But here our system can run into the ambiguous aspect of spirituality, the law and crime. A violent act, i.e. witch-purging can be argued to be lawful, for it was done out of self-defence. Life overrides culture, but herein lies the contradiction and loophole in a system that does not have the tools to deal with cosmological and supernatural concepts; the witch hunters can argue, that he or she is protecting his or her physical or material safety. In other words, if one's culture, means believing that a witch can threaten your life, it should be considered by the courts. But psychic bewitchment is one that cannot be proven in court, and in the same breath, if the courts deny the cultural belief of psychic witchcraft, they are denying the actor's right to freedom of belief, and hence plays a role in culture policing in the form of vigilante groups. But community policing is also often used as a tool for the jealous, and calculated. It remains a complex subject.

Muti-Murders

Another traditional occult crime is muti-murder, which involves the killing of persons for the purpose of harvesting body parts to make magic potions (Minnaar, 2003; Petrus, 2007). "Muti-murder is defined as a murder in which body parts are removed from a live victim for the sole purpose of using the victim's body parts medicinally. These body parts are then often mixed with other ingredients or used alone to make a medicine called muti. Muti is a Zulu (umuthi) word meaning medicine" (Labuschagne 2004: 191).

Statistically, muti-murders are difficult to capture because it is not recorded as such, but as general category murder, but through Labuschagne's (2004) personal communication with Jonker (2002), the previous head of the ORCU, it is estimated that muti-murders range between 15 and 300 a year. Both Petrus (2008) and Labuschagne (2004) indicate the challenges involved in the forensic analysis of

possible muti-murders, seeing that decomposed bodies and animal predator activity makes it difficult to prove the initial mutilation processes, cancelling out any proof of muti-related death. It is also important to recognize that murders of this kind need 12 indicators, plus the autopsy report for it to be labelled as such (Lamprecht, 2021 Interview).

Petrus (2008) explains some cosmological aspects, by relating muti-murders to 'witchcraft-related' murders, can be misleading, since muti-murders may be more closely associated with sorcery than with witchcraft, where the bewitchment is done via medicine.

Minnaar (2003) also indicates muti-murders are often categorised as 'ritual murder' (Mihalik and Cassim, 1992; Ralushai *et al*, 1996), this, it is argued, is an inaccurate statement, for the killing of the victim and removing of the body parts are not ritualised and the ritualistic aspect may only occur sometime after the murder has occurred. This is also confirmed by Labuschagne (2004) who was the commander of the SAPS's Investigative Psychology Unit, and who has been involved in 30 cases of muti-murder. He further points out: "For law enforcement agencies it is imperative to be able to distinguish between muti-murders, cult-related murders, sadistic murders, serial murders and other typologies of murder that may involve mutilation, but which may require different approaches when conducting an investigation" (Labuschagne 2004: 192). Labuschagne (2004) points out that the key differences in distinguishing between different criminal actors lie in either group related mutilation (cult murders), broader belief systems (as in the case of muti-murders) and that which has to do with the individual psyche of a person (serial killers). He argues that investigative psychologists or behavioural investigative analysts in such circumstances, might compile misleading offender profiles (Keppel & Birnes, 2003).

Petrus (2008) also argues that muti-murders can mistakenly be associated with Satanic crimes, whereas it is traditional in nature, and not Western. He goes further in explaining that there are similarities in the modus operandi of both crimes and refers to Garret (2004) Perlmutter (2004) and Minnaar (2003), whereas the key organs of an individual are removed, these are more often the head, genitalia, and

heart. The key difference is that with Satanic crimes there is clear evidence of ritualistic activity when removing these body parts, and this can be seen through certain paraphernalia on the crime scene, whereas with muti-murders there, are nothing on the scene to indicate a ritualistic offering. Investigators are likely to find only the corpse of the victim with its organs removed. Also in ritualistic killings death is intended, whereas, with muti-murders, the main objective is the harvesting of body parts. Labuschagne (2004) explains that with muti-murder, even though it may be ritualised at some point, it also is not a sacrificial act in the sense of appeasing a god or deity. Further, in muti-murder, unlike in Satanist murder, organs are removed while the victim is still alive because of the belief that the muti produced from those organs will be more potent if they are taken from a live victim. Muti-murders are associated with an African context, while Satanist murder is predominantly found in white European contexts (Faure, 2003).

There are, however, other scholars who argue that muti-murders have a ritualistic component. De Jong (2015) from the Department of Languages and Cultures, African Studies, Ghent University, Belgium refers to Gulbrandsen (2012). He explains how, by removing body parts of a living person, informs the ancestors about the sacrifice, and removing the body parts whilst the victim is still alive, as its scream will alert the ancestors, is an indication of a ritualistic crime.

Lastly, we look at the belief or cosmological aspect behind these occult crimes, and the researcher juxtaposes the motive with the belief by using data gathered by Labuschagne (2004). To attract women to your business, the motive, one will obtain breasts, which contain fat, and is considered very lucky, which is the belief. The belief behind harvesting the genitals of a man and woman is, again, luck and used for virility purposes. The belief behind the power of blood is an important ingredient in muti and may be collected by cutting the throat. The atlas bone is considered to be powerful, since the belief is that the circulatory system and nervous system run through the atlas bone, and it is the pivotal link between mind and body. The motive behind obtaining hands is to attract business, hand symbolically beckons customers and hands also symbolizes the taking of money from customers. Fat, taken from the stomach, or area of kidneys, is considered lucky and is often a staple ingredient in

muti, the motive. Urine and sperm are also considered to bring luck. The skull protects members of one tribe from another tribe by burying an enemy victim's head in the village and brains may be used to improve intelligence. The tongue: is used to smooth the path to a girl's heart. Eyes are believed to give farsightedness and the Adam's apple is believed to silence a witness intending to testify against the client (Labuschagne 2004 :197)

Muti-Murders and the Justice System

As previously mentioned by the researcher, occult crimes are treated as general crimes by the justice system. But the dynamics surrounding muti-murders serves as an example of why occult crimes should be treated as such, as Labuschagne (2004) argues, if a muti-murder is investigated and tried as a common murder, the justice system is only dealing with one party to this crime, the person who commits the murder, as opposed to, at least 3 parties. This involves the murderer, the traditional healer or "secret sangoma" (a term used in personal communication in 2002 by Labuschagne by a traditional healer Credo Mutwa) who ordered the killing and harvesting, and the customer or client.

Ritualistic/Sacrificial Killings

Ritualistic killings are worth classifying as a type of traditional occult crime in itself, and, even if one argues that muti-murders are ritualistic, there are still important differences between muti-murder and ritualistic or sacrificial murder. The latter is practiced in belief systems such as Satanism, voodoo, or other African beliefs, is intended as pure sacrificial (Minnaar, 1998; Olivier, 1990). Petrus (2008) further explores the definition of ritualistic crimes and quotes Garret (2004 : 63) "any criminal activity that has a ritual attached to it" and Perlmutter (2004) who views ritualistic crime as "most often attributed to practitioners of occult ideologies such as Satanism, Palo Mayombe, Brujeria, etc ...[R]itualistic crime is defined as any act of violence characterized by a series of repeated physical, sexual and/or psychological actions/assaults combined with a systematic use of symbols, ceremonies and/or machinations. Crimes entailing ritual violence are generally referred to as cult or occult crime" (Perlmutter 2004: 3).

Petrus (2008) also states that confusion does not only exist between the difference between multi-related crime and ritual crime, but also the identification of ritualistic crime as purely Satanic (Blood 1989), which excludes traditional ritualistic crime. An example of the traditional sacrifice involves, appeasing a deity by sacrificing a human, or human's as Labuschagne (2004) explains when referring to Minnaar (1998) and Prinsloo and Du Plessis (1989). Venda virgins were sacrificed to the crocodiles in the Fundudzi Lake or thrown into the Tshatshingo Whirlpools as offerings to ancestral spirits for the good of the community. De Jong (2015) mentions African kinship and traditional sacrificial murder and cites De Minnaar, Offringa and Payze: "kings would ordain the murder of a young child and bury its bones with the crops. As the boy's bones would grow, the crops would grow simultaneously and the king, as protector of its subordinates, would secure the continuation of the community" (De Minnaar, Offringa & Payze, 1992: 21; De Jong 2015: 12)

The question remains, what classifies as traditional African ritualistic killings in South Africa and Africa today? This theme is discussed in more detail in the chapter on *Modern Occult Economies*, but it is sufficient to mention the sacrificial murder of children, as is the case in child sacrifices in Uganda.

How Africa influences International Occult Crime

In Europe and the UK, to date, the most well-known case that involves African occult crime is the case of *Adam* (2001). Dunbar (2012) engages the case of *Adam*, where the torso of an unknown African boy was found in the Thames River in London in 2001, indicating a mixture of traditional South African occult in the form of multi-murder and Nigerian Voodoo. This crime was responsible for a wave of fear of 'voodoo rituals,' involving children and animal sacrifices that were being performed across the United Kingdom. It was later established by the, then head of the Investigative Psychology Unit of the South African Police Service, Gerard Labuschagne, who was contacted by the Detectives from the London Metropolitan Police Service for assistance, that the circumstances appeared to be similar to a ritual practiced in Western Africa called 'Obheh.' This was established after the Labuschagne consulted with Credo Mutwa, a traditional healer, in 2002

(Labuschagne 2004). The *Adam* case was also discussed by Lamprecht (2021, Interview) and according to Lamprecht, officers from Scotland Yard involved members of the ORCU in gaining more insight into the African or South African aspect of this occult-related crime.

States with colonial histories have both Western and traditional occult practices or, what is referred to as, hybrid spiritual systems. Such hybrid systems will involve either a mixture of Satanism (Western) or Western religion, with traditional African occultism like witchcraft. In an African context, so argues Petrus (2009), the Judaeo – Christian framework that introduced the entity of Satan, was intertwined with traditional African conceptions of evil. Combining different cultural and religious belief systems is known as cultural spiritualism (Olson-Raymer, 1989-1990). The latter is widely practiced in the US, especially by people of Afro - Caribbean descent. For instance, Santeria and Palo Mayombe are American occult practices and examples of cultural spiritualism. Both of these have traditional African belief structures from the Congo and Nigeria combined with elements of the Catholic faith,(Olson-Raymer, 1989-1990).

Certain gang subcultures in the US have been reported to be based on African occult rituals and practices as found in MS-13 “the most notorious and feared gang in the US, and part of this profile is due to its members’ use of occult rituals and practices in their activities (Petrus-et al, 2018:173). The Latino gangs show how beliefs related to traditional mainstream religious systems, such as Santeria, Voodoo, Brujeria or Pala Mayombe, also referred to as cultural spiritualists, a syncretic belief system that involves Western and African, or Mexican practices, i.e.Congo, South-Western Nigerian Yoruba Tribe, and the Aztec tribes, that are mixed with the Catholic faith. An example of sacrificial murder based on Pala Mayombe is found in the Matamoros killings, where the remains of 15 bodies were found alongside magical literature, ritual objects, and a *nganga*, the cauldron of sacrifices Pala Mayombe (Introvigne 2016). Cultural spiritualism is also found in certain gang subcultures in South Africa, with a syncretic mix of African witchcraft and Satanism, this will be discussed in the chapter on *Western Occult Crime*.

These types of hybrid systems are further explained by Comaroff & Comaroff (2004): "Indigenous ideas of witchcraft and healing have come to live easily with Christianity, even though they were demonized by colonial missions. The African occult is an evanescent hybrid of iconography and ideology, of signs and practices." (Comaroff & Comaroff , 2004:520)

African occult practices have spread across the world and as mentioned before, international police, have, in the past reached out to the ORCU. This strengthens the argument for the ongoing research of harmful occult-related practices in South Africa, and the ongoing functioning of the ORCU.

Chapter 5: Western Occult Crime

Satanism

In his book, *A Social History of Satanism*, Massimo Introvigne (2016) defines Satanism accordingly:

From the perspective of social history, Satanism is (1) the worship of the character identified with the name of Satan or Lucifer in the Bible, (2) by organized groups with at least a minimal organization and hierarchy, (3) through ritual or liturgical practices. (Introvigne 2016: 3)

He further states, that his definition does not distinguish between groups that perceive Satan as real or symbolic. This, in itself, is usually the line between harmful and non-harmful Satanism. Whereas atheistic Satanism involves a symbolic interpretation of Satan, and theistic Satanists, believe in Satan as a deity, and this latter group is labelled as traditional, religious, or cult Satanists. In certain instances, they worship Satan as the 'Evil One' described in the New Testament of the Christian Bible. The latter Satanic cults, are often connected to criminal Satanic activity. The researcher would further like to add the 'Lone Wolf,' a single actor, which is not discussed by Introvigne, but often appears as a criminal Satanic practitioner.

For the purpose of this research, only theistic Satanism will be explored, for this is the branch of Satanism that can lead to criminal practices.

International

The Politics of Satanism

An example of the branch of theistic contemporary Satanism would be *The Order of Nine Angels* (ONA). The ONA has been described as a U.K.-based Nazi, Satanist occult group (Counter Extremism Project, 2022). The group's leader, Myatt, became

the bodyguard of the neo-Nazi British movement leader, Colin Jordan in 1969, and in 1998 Myatt publicly converted to a radical form of Islam. It is said that this movement consists of approximately 2000 members, which makes it the biggest theistic Satanist group globally. The ONA awaits their 'Antichrist', an entity named 'Vindex', who is believed to lead the struggle against the 'Magians', a name used in the neo-Nazi culture for Jewish and Christian people (Introvigne, 2016). Introvigne (2016) goes further in conferring that the assault or rape of civilians [i.e., non-Satanists] is allegedly a part of the habitual practice of the group, but there is no way of verifying this.

The ONA website states that they seek "the breakdown and downfall of existing societies and to replace them with new tribal societies". And according to Counter Extremist Project, the ONA support violent jihadist terrorism, in line with their accelerationist philosophy for the destruction of the current world order (Counter Extremist Project, 2022). Acceleration philosophy calls for armed resistance via lone wolves, in the name of the hastening of an inevitable societal collapse (Gartenstein-Ross et al, 2020).

The *Misanthropic Luciferian Order* (MLO) is a Satanic occult order founded in Sweden in 1995 and later renamed, the *Temple of the Black Light*. Their teachings involve the creation of and returning to the state of the 'Big Chaos', and by opening up dark portals, this chaotic state is invoked. This is done by all means necessary, including violent crime. The order claims that misanthropy and contempt for society, are essential parts of true Satanism, and they go further by exposing themselves to real danger, hate, battles, and death to strengthen their identification with the 'Dark Gods.' The *Temple of the Black Light* publicly admits, that they practice rituals to punish and kill their enemies, either physically or through spells (Wayback Machine, 2013). One of the original members of this order, Nödteidt killed a randomly selected gay man, Josef Ben Meddour, in 1997, in what became known as the "Keillers Park Murder" in Göteborg. Police found paraphernalia of the MLO in his house and a confession was made by Nödteidt and his accomplice "Vlad", that the killing was meant to be sacrificial (Introvigne, 2016).

Another international case worth mentioning is that of Charles Manson. Introvigne (2016) describes Manson as the archetype of the criminal Satanist, but it is made clear the Satanic label was more centered around sensationalist media reporting. The traces of Satanism in the Manson crimes were scares, but as Introvigne (2016) explains, Manson inspired a whole new generation of juvenile subculture Satanists. The "Manson Family", as coined by the media, was described as a petty thieving hippie group, but later committed crimes hailed as cult crimes of political and Satanic nature. Messages written in blood on the crime scenes included words like "political piggy" and "helter skelter" which was used "to designate a clash between white and African Americans, a civil war that would ultimately destroy the United States" Introvigne (2016: 342). It was also further established that Manson was under the protection of the extremist racist group, *Aryan Brotherhood* to ensure his protection in prison. Going further, Introvigne (2016) refers to Bugliose, the state prosecutor in the Manson trials, who explains that the "Manson Family," killed rich white people in an attempt to make it look like the crime was committed by Afro-American radicals, this was done in an attempt to induce a racial war between blacks and whites. This was denied by Manson, and ironically, associated himself with the incarnation of Christ. Introvigne (2016) further explains, that Manson attended gatherings, like those held at the Spiral Staircase, where Satanic ritualistic activities took place. Introvigne (2016) believes this was in fact, a location of the Solar Lodge group in California inspired by the ideas and teachings of occultist, Allister Crowley.

In light of the recent uprise in the media and social platform globally in terms of Satanic ritual abuse (SRA), the researcher would like to add a section on the *Temple of Set*, a Satanic group that was indicated in the first wave of allegations of SRA between 1987 and 1989 at a pre-school operated by the Army Presidio in San Francisco US. They also had connections to Neo-Nazism. These allegations, even though dropped, alarmed politicians about the connection between high-ranking military officers and child abuse. The Criminal Investigation Division of the US Army released a report verifying the involvement with the Temple of Set and certain officers. The information of this report would later become part of a legal battle in the confusion between non-harmful and harmful Satanic practices (Introvigne, 2016).

Satanic Ritual Abuse of children is still classified by some as either a symptom of the 'Satanic Panic,' where members of Satanic groups were seen as victims of anti-Satanist hysteria or an actual network of global underground criminal activity, involving children.

Theistic contemporary Satanic groups, like the ones discussed, and others including *The Society of the Dark Lilly*, *The Joy of Satan*, and *The Oder of the Left-Hand Path*, have connections with neo-Nazism or right-wing extremism. Prof Feldman from the UK Centre for Analysis of the Radical Right, comments on how Left-Hand Path Satanism promotes the idea of human culling and refers to these types of organizations as a social Darwinist idea of the strong dominating the weak, in this case through sacrifice (BBC News, 2021).

Moving from political, to cultural-spiritual aspects of Satanism. Introvigne (2016) classifies the *Beast of Satan*, a group of organized Satanists in Italy, as "Satan the Criminal" in his book. Sacrificed bodies were discovered in nearby woods in 2004, and this led to the re-opening of other murder cases gone cold, which was also linked to this group. The sacrifices, it was admitted by members, were necessary to usher in Satan's new Aeon. These murders were not connected to political ideologies, and as Introvigne (2016) confers, the Beasts of Satan were purely practicing their belief. They worshipped Satan, they performed human sacrifices, they kept a group organized, although loosely, with a set of rituals for nine years.

The research now turns local and explores the influence of Western occult-related crime in South Africa.

South Africa

Satanism, Culture, and Politics

In South Africa, a few high-profile cases have been linked to Satanism, and these types of crimes are different from traditional crimes in the fact that one cannot detect the occult aspect of the crimes as easily as in multi-murders or witch purging. This is due to the fact the bodies are not mutilated as with multi-murders as such, and the

belief behind the motive is not always as clear as with witch-purging. The western-styled occult crimes further differ from traditional crimes, in the fact that they are more often committed by whites, and historically more often by Afrikaners. This could be attributed as a reaction to the 'Satanic Panic', a moral panic that took hold of, mostly white Nationalistic Afrikaners who lost their footing in the 'threat' of a new democracy. One can compare this reaction, or counterculture, to a similar narrative of uber-morality, in Introvigne's (2016) book on the Social History of Satanism. Introvigne (2016) attributes an "oppositional or contrarian subculture" (Introvigne, 2016: 9) to the Roman Catholic church, by incorporating a rival to the ultimate good (God) i.e. Satan.

Satanic-related high-profile cases in South Africa include serial killer Gert van Rooyen and his accomplice, Joey Haarhof (1988 -1990). The couple committed suicide in 1990 before their arrest could take place. They were implicated in murder and paedophilia involving at least 5 underaged girls in South Africa between 1988 and 1989. Gert van Rooyen's son, Flippie van Rooyen testified that the couple practiced Satanic rituals involving the girls and, further that his father was involved in an international paedophile ring. This could not be verified. (Wikimedia Foundation, 2010)

Maurice Smith (1997) was convicted of murder, by decapitation of a homeless man and he claimed to be a South African Satanic high priest (Mail and Guardian, 2002) In a documentary by Ozanne (2000), Smith further claims to have been delivered from Satan with the help, of the then, head of the ORCU, Kobus Jonker. Morne Harmse (2008), who killed a classmate and harmed others in a frenzied attack with a katana sword, reported to the Krugersdorp prison psychiatrist, MM Molefi-Litheko that he had seen a ghost in a field on a farm who instructed him to become a Satanist. Kobus Jonker, the previous head of the ORCU, and criminologist Irma Labaschagne were involved in this case (La Grange, 2009).

The case of Dawn Orso (1992), is specifically relevant as South African occult crime case, whereas the two accused teenagers, Angelique Orso and her 18-year-old boyfriend Lawrence van Blerk, claimed possession by the devil as defence in the murder of Angelique's mother Dawn. In this case, the court claimed that demon possession can be possible, the judiciary thus confirmed the possibility of possession, but found their actions too goal-oriented to be involuntary. (Falkof, 2016). Falkof (2016) adds a political dimension and argues that whereas, traditional occult crime self-defence pleads, have not been recognized by the law, in this case, the court was willing to consider the plead for the Western-orientated branch.

We now take a look at how religion is classified as occult type crimes.

Satanism and Religious Cults

Another conflation is that of the Christian religion and Satanism, in such a way that the claim of occult crime can either be that of a religious cult or Satanism, this is apparent specifically in the Lotter (2008) and Electus per Deus's case (2005).

Olson-Raymor (1998) reports that contrary to belief, the terms *occult* and *cult* are not interchangeable. It is explained: "Occultists use or have secret knowledge of actions and rituals connected to supernatural beliefs and or supernatural powers. Cultists espouse a religious belief system that deviates strongly from the traditional faiths accepted by society" (Olson-Raymor 1998 -1990: 5)

The following two South African cases show the fine line between, a case labelled as Satanic, or as a religious cult crime. The Lotter case (2008) proves to be a mix of Western and traditional occult elements, and religion. It involved the murder of parents by their two children, who were said to be under the influence of the daughter, Nicolette Lotter's boyfriend, Mathew Naidoo, who referred to himself as the "third son of God." Nicolette Lotter claimed that she was bewitched and was possessed by the *tokoloshe* but was delivered by Naidoo. Naidoo further claimed the

murdered father was worshipping Satan. Occultism was offered as a mitigation plea in sentencing, but it was denied (Rondganger, 2021).

The Overcomers through Christ or *Electus Per Deus* Killings (2012) has been the topic of many conversations after the recent documentary on Showmax, "Devilsdorp" (2020). *The Electus Per Deus* group was formed by Cecelia Steyn, who claimed to have been a victim of Satanism, haunted by demonic possession and psychic attacks by Satanist witches. Charismatic styled Christian organizations got involved in delivering Steyn from her demons, but she herself later formed her own religious groups, i.e. *Overcomers through Christ* and later, *Electus per Deus*. She recruited men and women from the same organization, which were previously committed to delivering her from evil. But Steyn's group turned criminal, a series of crimes including serial murders (this involved killing one of their own members and a priest) were committed. Footage and evidence in court show this group's ideologies shift from Christian cult ideologies to that of what seems like a Satanic movement. Geldenhuys (2020) describes Cecilia Steyn, as a cult leader who used psychological programming to control her members, he compares her to Charles Manson, whereas both these groups' leaders were never present when the crimes were committed.

In the 2021 interview with Lamprecht, he explained how the accused of religious cult crimes, often plea "programming" as a defence. According to Lamprecht, this aspect can be offered as a *non-compos mentis* defence plea, whereas the accused would be sent for evaluation to establish if he or she is fit to stand trial. Going further, the element of programming can be used to prove motive. Geldenhuys (2020) uses three examples of mass religious cult-style cases, where psychological programming played a role in mass suicides and deaths. The Jonestown massacre in Guyana, where approximately 900 people, including children, died in 1978 after drinking cyanide-laced punch at the order of cult leader Jim Jones. In South Africa, the Seven Angels Ministries (2018) a sex cult, also performed armed robberies and was responsible for the killing of 5 police officers. The Hawks and the National Intervention Unit and Tactical Response infiltrated the Seven Angels Ministry and the role players were identified arrested and charged (Mail & Guardian, 2018). In Uganda, the Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God

(1980-2000) was behind 924 people being killed through poisoning, strangulation and fire on 17 March 2000. The New York Times described these deaths as mass murder and not as suicides (Fisher 2000).

Satanic or Christian cults both fall under the mandate of the ORCU, as Lamprecht (2020, Interview) reported, and he went further in explaining the involvement of the ORCU in the prosecution of the “Doom Prophet,” Lethebo Rabalago, from Mount Zion General Assembly Limpopo. Rabalago used insect repellent on members of his congregation and claimed it to have healing properties for people with AIDS and cancer.

Satanism and Traditional African Occult Crime

Petrus-et al (2018) argue that in South Africa, Satanism, and its relationship to crime, are also influenced by the African cultural context. These scholars link Satanism to the South African youth gang subcultures, which follow a specific modus operandi that involves the use of identifiable satanic symbols and paraphernalia at crime scenes, but what separate these gangs from the previous high profile cases, is the synthetic mix of African witchcraft practices and Satanism. In 1997, a Northern African group, that combined theistic Satanism and witchcraft, settled in Maseru, Lesotho, and according to an interview done by Petrus with Van Zyl (2017), a functional therapist at the Auksano Christian Trauma Therapy Centre, this subculture rapidly spread to certain parts the Free State. This is further discussed by Phillips & Maritz (2015) in their research on Free State youth gangs that include the Dickies, Dogs of War (DOW), Triple 6 (666), Born to Kill (BTK), International Junior Portuguese (IJP) and Natural Born Killers (NBK). The idea of the power that the occult can bring, the violence that ensures one gang’s domination over another, and ritualistic practices, used as rites of passage seem to fit the gang culture perfectly: “Given the propensity for gang formations to employ ritual behaviour, it is not surprising that many gangs link occult beliefs and practices (themselves highly ritualised) to their activities” (Petrus et al, 2018: 175).

Chapter 6 : Modern Occult Economies

This research now turns to the evolution of occult crime across time, not only from an African and South African perspective but also from a global one. The researcher will look at how certain aspects of the traditional occult are being hijacked by modern occult entrepreneurs, which produces a market for 'modern occult economies' as coined by the Comaroffs (1999). Modern occult economies will also be discussed, from an African and Western perspective, from a traditional cosmological perspective and also a social-political and economic one, the latter referring to a free market, which opens doors to those who strive to find new ways of making money.

And by further glimpsing into the popular culture, the research might suggest that certain cultural phenomena, can be compared to the 'moral panics' of the 80s and 90s. The latter being, the 'Satanic Panic' scare, which will be discussed in the last chapter, this refers to mass hysteria, springing from a moral threat to a community, plagued by social and political uncertainty. The modern-day panics that the researcher is referring to, are conspiracy theorists. *QAnon*, is an example of such a group, that engages the worldwide web, to spread tales of the ultimate antagonist, Satan, more effectively than before. These modern-day panics are briefly explored, and how it has also morphed into occult crimes and occult economies. But first the African perspective.

An African Perspective

"New situations demand new magic" Evans-Pritchard (1937:513)

The discussion so far has been on African traditional and Western occult crimes, and it is necessary to differentiate between traditional as a term for 'African' and traditional in referring to 'older'. This will give the reader insight into the concept of modern occult crimes. Modern occult crimes are usually based on cultural beliefs of traditional occult crimes, and one can argue that these belief systems are being hijacked by occult entrepreneurs. On the topic of modern occult crimes, Lamprecht (2021, Interview) mentioned, that syndicates and occult driven crimes for pure

monetary and power gains, have been there since he joined the task unit, and he feels that people are now becoming more aware of it.

In their book, “Magical Capitalism,” the Comaroffs (2018) explain occult economies as, arcane modes of producing value, putatively at work behind more conventional modes of generating wealth. This can further be understood as to how old secret belief systems, are engaged in a modern context, to obtain wealth, and for the purpose of this research, illegally. Modern occult crimes, or economies, are thus rooted in pre-colonial African traditional occult crime: “retooling culturally familiar technologies as new means for new ends” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999: 284).

This highlights the recognition of traditional occult practices and the existence and influence of this on modern occult economies; “Historians speculate that the practice of and reverence for witchcraft and its muti or juju variants has been in the region since antiquity and formed part of the social fabric of many pre-colonial African societies (Under the Same Sun 2013: 3). It further speaks of how culture and belief, which form part of African cosmology, form the basis of the ongoing phenomenon of occult crimes. This can explain demand, through the lens of belief.

Belief and Demand

The Comaroffs (1999) paint a picture of why there is a need for an occult market, and they ground it in socio, political and economic factors, as does De Jong (2015): “the specific exigencies of urban living – problems with finding employment, navigating the local bureaucracy, gaining access to educational opportunities, acquiring property and establishing local security – result in these aspects of urban life being realised as negative qualities that demand the magical intervention of *dingaka* [traditional healers]” (De Jong 2015:19). Also, Evans (1993), who did a case study on court records of on muti-murders in Swaziland between 1970 and 1988, found that 30% of the cases study showed that the main causes for muti-murder were to obtain luxury goods, and to boost business. This research would like to suggest that, even though the motive of occult crimes is monetary and keeping up with the demands of a modern world, we still find that it is the belief, that creates the

need for occult commodities. As opposed to general crimes, there is thus an added dimension to these types of crimes.

With modern occult economies, which are mainly divided into; body part and blood trafficking, muti-murders and ritualistic killings, the parties hold an important key to realize not only motive but also, need or belief. These crimes usually involve a fourfold party dynamic; the party with the need, the party with the knowledge of magic, the doer or actor that commits the violent crime, and the victim. One can understand why the actor, the party that commits the physical crime, would act, out of pure monetary intent, a common motive. Body parts can fetch around \$500 and \$1000 on the black market (Schule 2013; Labuschagne 2004), and this price has certainly increased over the last decade. There is no need to connect any symbolic concept to this party, except for investigation purposes. As for the traditional healer, there might be a real belief in the efficiency of magic or it might be a scam, but where the continuous demand lies, is in the belief system of the client. One would not pay for blood or body parts if there is no real belief that it works. And this is where spirituality, as a cosmological concepts, can explain a criminological aspect of crime. The politician, the businessman, the chief who wants to empower his "medicine horn" to enlarge political powers, respect, and influence (De Jong, 2013) are also believers, as are the cash-in-transit criminals who feel protected by muti, for they truly believe that it makes them invisible to the police.

Magic, Causation and the Criminal Justice System

"Possibly such signs are hidden to culturally blind observers such as ourselves and, in learning about this complex web, we fear becoming entangled" Jensun & Buur (2004:199).

If one wants to understand the flipside of the occult crime coin, i.e., witch-hunting, it is necessary to understand, magicity and causation. As Kanu, a professor at the department of religious studies at University of Nigeria writes: "Man in African ...comes into the world as a force amidst forces and interacting with forces" (Kanu 2013:551). Misfortunate events are not explained only by the scientific dimensions,

of say, sickness or accidents, but the question is further asked, who caused the event, what force was at work? People can manipulate systems, events and destiny through magic and harmful witchcraft is often the presumed first cause of misfortune (Comaroff & Comaroff 2004).

Petrus (2007) touches on causation in his PHD study on Witchcraft in the Eastern Cape, and quotes Forde (1954); "Africans, in the same way as Europeans, have appreciated and successfully based their routines of living on principles of causation linking events, on the logical implications of ideas, and on an understanding of mechanical and organic process.' (Forde, 1954: x-xi) and he goes further in explaining that unlike Westerners, their theory of causation incorporates a much wider field than a scientific theory of causation and incorporates magic. Evans-Pritchard (1937) also found that, among the Azande, witchcraft forms a rational theory of causation, this is operating in conjunction with witchcraft in manipulating natural forces to cause misfortune.

Petrus (2007) goes further in explaining how cosmology is the subjective approach to nature, through the actions of spirits and other supernatural forces, as opposed to a scientific, mechanistic or operational model, as in the Western world.

Our criminal justice system functions according to the rational mechanistic model, based on Western principles. This research has highlighted ambiguities in the lawmaking and the courts, when dealing with matters of the occult, and it is an ongoing challenge, specifically for an African country previously colonized. The literature studies also showed the importance of police officers, being equipped and trained, to process and deal with reports of witchcraft-related crimes, not only as officers of the law but also as servants of communities. An ongoing study and recognition of belief and magicalities, in the case of occult crimes, will prove to be helpful.

A Political Viewpoint

The Comaroffs (1999) further speak of occult economies, as a phenomenon noticeable in, but not exclusive to post-revolutionary states, like post-apartheid South Africa, in what they call “the deployment of magical means for material ends” (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1998: 279). This could be interpreted through the concept of a continent and its people, freed from the shackles of colonialism and Apartheid, but not from economic hardship. Whereas the promised distribution of wealth, to the previously oppressed, is not actualized, and this amounts to the striving towards ‘quick fixes’. This concept was revisited by these anthropologists in 2018: “where the collapse of authoritarian regimes had been accompanied by an uneven infusion of liberal freedoms, freedoms long deferred” (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2018: 2).

The question is posed as to why these modern occult economies spike after revolutionary action, and Gluckman (1959) is further cited, in what he calls ‘the magic of despair.’ This is where local meets global, and the glimpses of the vast riches, of not only fellow statesmen but also others around the world, are experienced by those who believe that only the magical can achieve what seems out of reach. Under the Same Sun (2013), a charity organization whose mandate focuses on occult crimes involving people with albinism (PWA), quotes the witchcraft expert Mesaki (1993): “the tenacity of beliefs [in witchcraft] becomes greater as economic and social crises offer fertile ground for such beliefs and practices. Given the general economic crises in the region, particularly the inequalities and inequities arising from it, witchcraft practices have increased and many anthropological studies have recorded an ensuing trade in body parts of PWA in Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia amongst others” (Mesaki, 1993: 10-21).

McCrary (2014) uses a powerful description by Bernault (2006) to explain how Africa keeps pace with foreign standards of life and explains how Ugandans are driven to facilitate them in any way they know how child sacrifice offers one dramatic form “of integration of Africa in the world’s economy and the commodification of the human body” Bernault (2006:207).

The Comaroffs (1999) also argue that most who draw upon modern occult economies are young. And youth, not being able to reach riches, still caught up in political struggles, will turn to occult economies, that are “ways of producing immense wealth and power—against all odds, at supernatural speed, and with striking ingenuity” Comaroff & Comaroff (1999: 284). In the Comaroff’s 2014 paper, they comment on the young, being blocked by the hardening materialities of life, and how the promise of the occult “produce new forms of consciousness” (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2014: 17).

Ritual murder, the sale of body parts, the production of zombies, pyramid, financial and cult schemes are listed by the Comaroffs (1999) under these types of crimes. The case of a man, caught in a shopping center, trying to sell a pair of eyes, (Reuter, 1996) is further used as evidence of how street children were becoming the target of these occult entrepreneurs, who sell body parts to use in potions for fertility, success in business and luck in love. The Mmabatho case (1995) in the Northern province is also mentioned, where dismembered corpses were found in the casino freezer. These are said to be “not-quite-human transactions in the corporeal, the conflation of prophecy and profit, potent magical technologies and mysterious modes of accumulation” (Comaroff, 1999: 281; 282). Occult economies are similarly seen in Latin America in the 1990s where mass panics spread about the theft and sale of the organs of infants and youths (see, e.g., Scheper-Hughes 1996), the Comaroffs (1999) even go as far as saying that, body part trafficking is seen as the new imperialism, in extending the power of a state through these types of economies.

What further ties in with politics, is globalization, and interconnectedness is making people aware of economic developments around the world: “the world that saw the rapid ascendance of finance capital, a world in which unfettered market forces and entrepreneurialism were held to be the alchemic key to abundance” (Comaroff & Comaroff 2018: 2). This statement could be interpreted as the promise of opportunity through the free market, and globalization creates larger opportunities for the trade of occult commodities. This is due to the fact that the demand comes from other, more wealthy countries, and as with wildlife crimes, Africa can keep up with products, otherwise difficult to obtain. Occult crimes are moving at supernatural

speed, so say the Comaroffs (1998), instant riches and power are offered, through “eating” the life force of another, at a considerable price.

The continent of Africa is in the spotlight with regards to occult-related crimes. The tension between a deeply spiritual people, and the integration of these belief systems, into crimes of this nature, speak of the contamination of culture.

From the Traditional to the Modern

“And new organic theories to account for the hidden forces driving the moral and material economy of wealth creation, many of them decidedly unorthodox in repurposing old knowledge to fresh ends” (Comaroff & Comaroff 2018: 11)

“Whatever their putative powers, witches cannot escape history.” (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2014: 19).

De Jong (2013) touches on the development from the traditional to the modern when speaking about how once, only the chief possessed the right to perform ritualistic killings through human sacrifices to protect the community. De Jong (2013) goes further in saying the interpretation of ritual murders as senseless and irrational, however, is of relatively recent date. Before African chiefdoms were subjected to white administrative and legal authority, ritual murders did make sense to those who practiced it. He cites Gulbrandsen (2012) “magical potencies [had] to some extent broken free from their control and integration within hierarchical social orders” (Gulbrandsen 2012: 292). This refers to how the occult is now available for anyone to practice. This could be true in both traditional villages and urban areas, where recipes, rumours and stories of how magic is concocted, and from what, are spread quickly and wide. There is a sense that the good of the community is being replaced by hyper-individualism. This concept of the individual taking as much as he can for himself, by ‘eating’ or selling another’s life force is synonymous with modernity.

Going further, as mentioned before, the global demand for these magical commodities is an important aspect of the understanding of the modern context of these crimes, as globalization enables interconnectedness, previously unheard of:

“We reiterate yet again that the traffic in human organs is neither new nor restricted to South Africa; that there is now a global economy in body parts” (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1998: 291).

Global Satanic Sex Rings and Modern Conspiracy Theories

Clients of by-products of the black arts can be found around the globe. International communication systems like the “dark web” make it possible to exchange unlawful business across borders. The Western branch of the occult that seems to have a lot of international interest is Satanism; the fast-growing interest in Satanism is manifesting itself as a feature of the millennial moment everywhere, from the east coast of Africa to the west coast of America (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1999). And again, the researcher must stretch the importance of the distinction between what is understood as harmful and non-harmful Satanism, for Satanism in itself is a legally recognized practice.

In this day and age, conspiracy theories are part of global popular culture. But even the ‘Satanic Panic,’ from the 80s and 90s is a phenomenon that can be categorized under the global conspiracy theories branch. It is what academics call a ‘moral panic’ and today this, it might be argued, continues into a modern time crisis, relevant to current affairs. Conner and MacMurray (2021) compares the *QAnon* movement to the US Satanic Panic of the 80s but refers to it as an online cultural phenomenon (Conner & MacMurray, 2021:1), and as they explain, ideas of panic spread more easily in a time where greater connectivity, via the internet is possible. The Internet played a crucial role in spreading the *QAnon* conspiracy theory in ways not found within traditional media, as in the days of the ‘Satanic Panic.’ Another factor that could be ascribed to the spread of *QAnon* theories might be suggested as the influence of a worldwide pandemic. Worldwide lockdown regulations and deaths, had an impact on most people, but there were some who developed a deep mistrust of systems and institutions. The influence of political powers can also be attributed to the spread of conspiracy theories. To obtain political power is one of the main motives of occult crimes, in a traditional African sense, power is gained by muti, or sacrificial killings, in a Western sense, one can play the ‘folk devil’ (Cohen, 1972) off

against the 'saviour', ie., the politician, which still engages the belief systems of people, and is hence considered a powerful political tool.

QAnon (2017) is a right-wing conspiracy theorist group and is said to be a spin-off of the debunked Pizzagate theory, whereas a pizza restaurant in New York was said to have been an entry point for a child sex trafficking ring. Edgar M. Welch (2016) was later arrested in his attempt to investigate this claim, ammunition and weapons were found in his possession. *QAnon* places Donald Trump at the centre of a project called "Storm," whereas Trump is ordained by God to combat the 'deep state.' This deep state represents a cabal of elites, including politicians, celebrities, and billionaires who form part of an alleged Satanic paedophile ring, which also harvests blood from children, called adrenochrome (Friedberg, 2020). Adrenochrome is a chemical compound produced by the oxidation of adrenaline and is, for the purposes of occult crime, mostly harvested from the ritualistic killing of children, which releases adrenaline that is said to have a powerful impact on the user, it further serves as a youth elixir (Conner & MacMurray, 2021). The tagline *#childlivesmatters* is based on the adrenochrome harvesting theory.

Connor & MacMurray (2021) speak of how *QAnon* plays into "the simplistic moral binary of good and evil. Thus, to be a *QAnon* believer is to frame one's self as being on the side of the highest good (Connor & MacMurray 2021: 6). But what is striking about the *Qanon* group is the underlying notion of anti-Semitism, which in effect, ironically connects them to the Neo-Nazi style Satanist groups, as previously discussed. And again, we come across the two sides of the occult crime coin, the devil worshippers, and the anti-occultists, committing occult crimes. There are scholars and organizations that label *QAnon* as a right-wing extremist group, and it is said that this group has contributed to the radicalization of several people into notable criminal acts or acts of violence (CTC Sentinel, 2020) and: "has played a significant role in promoting physical acts of violence—including multiple murders and the attack on the United States Capital on 6 January 2021" (Connor and MacMurray 2021:1).

This is consistent with a May 2019 report by the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, which details the increasing influence of anti-government, identity-based, or fringe political conspiracies, including *QAnon*, on motivating criminal or violent activity (Amarasingam & Argentino 2020). A South African man, Paul Furbe was indicated as one of the main role players in spreading the *Qanon* theory (Connor and MacMurray 2021).

Moving away from the political context, we come across a crime committed in the name of *QAnon*, based on spiritual belief aspects alone. A father killed his two children after he claimed he had been "enlightened by *QAnon* and Illuminati conspiracy theories "receiving visions and signs revealing that his wife possessed serpent DNA and had passed it onto his children" and that by killing them he was "saving the world from monsters" (Hernandus, 2021).

This concludes the socio-political question around the debunking of moral panics and conspiracy theories. But from a criminological viewpoint, however, one must consider that, if there is a possibility for the demand for adrenochrome, it is worth studying, and as the Comaroffs (1999) puts it: "The devil's disciples were rumored to travel far and wide, fueling their accumulation of riches with human blood" (Comaroff & Comaroff 1999: 295), and, "Satanism is high-octane witchcraft. It is more international" (Comaroff & Comaroff 1998: 292).

We now look at modern occult crimes through the African traditional lens, namely the ritualistic killings of children in Uganda and the harvesting of the body parts of PWA, specifically in Tanzania.

Africa

The Sacrifice of Children in Uganda

"Children are sacred and their body parts contain power believed to be either strengthen the effectiveness of traditional medicine or to address socio-economic misfortunes" (Bukuluki & Mpyangu 2014:16)

“Blood sacrifice is largely regarded as the most powerful method of appeasing the gods in numerous cultures and religions worldwide” (Newton, 1996: 104)

Uganda is known to have recognized cases of child sacrifices, and there has been a surge since 2006 (McCrary, 2014). But, there is “no independently verified information on the exact number of children ritually murdered each year” (UNICEF, 2009). The unreliability of occult crime statistics can be due to the highly sensitive nature of these types of crimes, as well as the fact that many children go missing, and some of these cases are said to be sacrificial, these cases go cold and unsolved.

Here we find a nother occult-related police task unit; The National Task Force against Child Sacrifice in Uganda. This unit defines child sacrifice as the “harmful practice of removing a child’s body parts, blood or tissue while the child is alive which often results in death. These body parts, blood or tissue are worn, buried or consumed in the belief they will benefit an individual or community” (Bukuli & Mpyangu 2014:12). Child sacrifice is very closely related to muti-murders, but they are more often seen and classified as a separate occult crime, mostly because of the sacrificial elements, in obtaining blood, from someone youthful.

Fairytales, Blood and Modern Standards

“Sacrifice acts as a form of exchange with the gods, a sort of currency in an age before the establishment of a monetary system. In modern parlance, sacrifice was a way of doing business.” (McCarthy, 1969: 176)

Bukuli & Mpyangu (2014) comment on how the element of harvesting blood from children are separated from the harvesting of body parts. According to the report on sacrificial murder in Uganda by the organization Kids Rights (2014), the term witchdoctors use for the ‘business’ of sacrificing children is ‘Big Blood.’ The blood obtained from a child is seen as powerful because it is not contaminated. Bukuli & Mpyangu (2014) refers to the value of blood obtained from a ritualistic killing and quote John S. Mbiti, in his book *Introduction to African Religion* (1977) “In African

societies, life is closely associated with blood. When blood is shed in a sacrificial context, it implies that human or animal life is being given back to God who is, the ultimate source of all life” (Mbiti 1977: 63-66).

It is argued that child sacrifice is a modern occult crime and as Bukuli & Mpyangu (2014) explain, tales in Uganda about children being sacrificed were only fairy tales once, and part of Ugandan cultural mythology and not an actual practice as in modern times. They go further in quoting a Ugandan traditional healers focus group discussion: “On our side as traditional healers our culture does not allow us to sacrifice human beings. Even when carrying out rituals you are not supposed to touch human blood (Men’s Focus Group Discussion, Oyam District, Northern Uganda, 2010).

McCrary (2014) a student-researcher who was simultaneously holding an intern position at the Uganda Human Rights Commission, writes in her research on child sacrifice in Uganda that these sacrifices come from external forces outside, other countries, and traditions and are not traditional to Uganda and McCrary (2014) further refers to a statement from Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda 2009 that *human* sacrifice is not directly linked to traditional practice, but they do confer that sacrifice is part of a common phenomenon within African indigenous religious and cultural practices. This might be in the form of animal sacrifice or other practices.

McCrary (2014) also confirms what this research has been pointing out and that is, that the search for wealth, exacerbated by ever-increasing globalization, and the economic growth in Uganda, contributes to this modern occult economy. She goes further: “With increased pressure for financial prosperity, child sacrifice is one method of acquiring these deep desires of the psyche for some Ugandans, integrating traditional methods with modern standards” (McCrary, 2014: 32). Child sacrifices is thus seen as a modern occult economy.

Traditional Medicine

The demand for the body parts or blood could be further ascribed to the practice of traditional medicine. If one looks at the Comaroffs' (2018) definition of occult crime, as arcane modes of producing value, i.e. using traditional practices, it is necessary to look at the age-old culture of traditional healers and medicine. Traditional practices in Africa and South Africa are generally used for legitimate purposes, it is the preferred way for the majority of Africans to deal with physical, mental and spiritual ailments. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines traditional medicine as "the sum total of knowledge, skills and practices based on the theories, beliefs and experiences indigenous to different cultures that are used to maintain health, as well as to prevent, diagnose, improve or treat physical and mental illnesses. As Bukuluki (2006) explains:

"It has medical and cultural significance, as well as the inaccessibility of much of the population to modern health care, has facilitated its continued and thriving existence. It is estimated that about 80% of the population in developing countries, such as Uganda, have its health care needs met through the traditional medicine sector" (Bukuluki, 2006: 7).

There are an estimated 650,000 registered traditional healers, and a further estimated 3 million in practice in Uganda, where an unknown percentage of these partitioners are involved in the darker arts (Kids Rights, 2014 ; Bukuluki, 2006). Traditional medicine fits people's explanations that are culture-bound (Bukuluki 2006) and (Bukuli & Mpyangu, 2014) go further when referring to George Foster (1998) who confers that traditional medicine stems logically from etiologies that people recognize. Traditional healers are also said to explain the culture and the relationship with the living and the dead, i.e. supernaturally-originated illness and misfortune (Bukuluki, 2006). There are manipulations of these traditional practices in the use of 'magic' (which is seen as a neutral concept, up until the intention is applied, i.e. good or bad) through witch doctors which often render it criminal. What research on the occult shows, is that people believe in traditional medicine, they have faith in the fact that it works. Here lies the opportunity for a modern occult

economy, in the entrepreneurship of the witch doctor, who is feared, but also have supernatural powers that can change a person's life.

Muti – Murder of People with Albinism (PWA)

“This is a new belief, made up by the witchdoctors, it's a business” (Schüle 2013).

Judith Schüle (2013) who did her fieldwork in the rural northwest of Tanzania between May and June 2009 reports that between 2006 and 2009, 54 killings of people with albinism have been reported according to the secretary of the umbrella organization of the people with disabilities in Tanzania. Mswela (2017) who researched violent attacks against persons with albinism in South Africa, also mentions a July 2015 report, compiled by Under the Same Sun (UTSS) Canada and Tanzania (2013), which documented 148 killings and 232 attacks on people with albinism across 25 African countries. These statistics include survivors of mutilation, persons with albinism seeking asylum, incidents of violence against persons with albinism, and the desecration of graves. Tanzania is responsible for the majority of killings and attacks of PWA, but there are occult related cases in South Africa as well.

Looking at the traditional concept of albinism, Schüle (2013) mentions the work of Langercrantz (1979) who divides beliefs about albinism into regions; western Africa where the albino was created by “God,” central Africa where it is said that an albino is a *nkisi* person, an incarnation of a water spirit in human form, and in east Africa tradition speaks the albino being “the child of a ‘spiritual agency’, the dignity of which may vary from that of the Supreme Being down to the Satan; usually, this being is to be found among the malevolent agencies” (Langercrantz 1979: 75). It is also said that people with albinism stem directly from Faro, one of the deities responsible for the creation, and therefore have powerful *nyama*, vital life force, energy, or power.

People with albinism are further seen as “zerzeru” or ghosts, spirits who harass the living, for they live in limbo between the living and the dead (Schüle 2013). Schüle (2013) also further explains that it is believed that people with albinism disappear, they don’t die, and that children with albinism have been killed or abandoned for they are seen as bad omens.

But, just as they are marginalized and avoided, they are believed to be extremely good luck ‘charms.’ Fishermen weave their hair into fishnets and use their flesh as bait, and miners are said to use people with albinism’s body parts to find gold. (Schüle 2013, UTTSS 2013). Mswela (2017) also points out how albinism is seen as a curse and good luck at the same time.

The traditional belief systems of the tribes of Sukuma, Digo, and Senegal, indicates a longstanding culture of marginalizing, fear, and confusion of and about PWA, but is also apparent that traditionally PWA was not used to gain riches, this seems to have developed over time into a typical modern occult economy. As the UTSS (2013) reports states; “Witchdoctors propagate the beliefs that the body parts of PWA can bring wealth and good fortune. This teaching is arguably an attempt to cash in on the historical beliefs and traditions that de-humanize PWA” (UTSS 2013: 8).

Rumorscapes, Culture and Capitalism

Schüle (2013) further coins the idea of *rumorscapes*, i.e. the spreading of ideas that PWA are a necessary ingredient in magic potions that generate wealth. She accentuates how this rumour is a new phenomenon, and it does not come from traditional cosmology, and she argues that these imaginaries do not necessarily feed on local or traditional systems of belief but emerge out of modernities and “particular economic contexts and therefore are not embedded in cultural affiliation but rather bound to for instance certain professions and markets” (Schüle 2013:5). She goes further in saying that; “it is not a problem of tradition, but one of ‘modernity’ and the globalizing market at large” (Schüle 2013:29). It “suddenly came from nowhere and seems to have been the result of a kind of marketing exercise by witch doctors, who

are feeling the same economic pinch as everyone else around the world” (International Red Cross 2009: 11; Schüle 2013:12).

She further speaks of modern economies that are not *culturally* affiliated with tradition, but spring from markets. But the Comaroffs (1999) argues that capitalism is not in opposition to culture, it is culture. Culture inflated with globalization, politics, and modernity is still culture. In a sense, the Comaroffs (1999) might open up an argument that there is still a cultural aspect to modern occult crimes, even though it seems only monetary based. Cosmology is about culture, spirituality, how people make sense of their world, and it changes over time. Modern cultural aspects involve, that people are now seen as commodities, products. The sacrifices are not to the gods for healthy crops or protection or freedom, but for riches. The report from UTTSS (2013) speaks of the interplay of myth, tradition and capitalism, and how the previous two concepts are taken advantage of in the name of capitalism. But, the shift to a pure monetary gain from these crimes, identifies it as a modern-day occult crime.

Shüle (2013) shines a light, on the customers of these sinister “commodities,” those who use witchcraft to tap into and maintain fortunes in the free market; “[t]he albino fetish has creatively emerged from an exchange between agents representing two very different value systems: that of a localised patriarchal, agro-pastoralist community with its power source vested in male elders, and that of comparatively young miners in new settlements tied to global value chains.” Shüle (2013:7). The report by UTTSS (2013) also refers to miners who use the body parts of PWA, particularly bones of PWA in their trade, they wear the bones as amulets or bury them at the preferred site of hitting gold. UTTSS (2103) also reports a similar phenomenon has been recorded among fishermen on Lake Victoria in Tanzania who use the hair of PWA to improve their catches. Politicians, businessmen, and influential people from all over the globe are said to have the resources to pay for “magic.”

The role of the witchdoctor, as the provider of bones and body parts, is an important one, and as UTTSS (2013) points out, the witchdoctor capitalizes on people’s belief

of the potency of witchcraft, they create the product or physical aspects of witchcraft such as amulets and potions, and their word is often seen as the "ultimate truth, and he is important for understanding how witchcraft appears to adjust to the human needs of every generation and thereby remains relevant" (UTTSS 2013:3).

The bones of people with albinism are seen as an "exclusive product", because of their rarity, and body parts are sold at high prices. "Senior police officers in Dar es Salaam said a complete set of albino body parts – including all four limbs, genitals, ears, tongue and nose – was fetching the equivalent of 75,000 US dollars" (International Red Cross 2009: 5 ; Schüle 2013).

The Victims

The impact that these crimes have on victims, the few who survive, is severe. According to Kyampisi Childcare Ministries, "many of these child survivors are carrying with them serious and disturbing life scars and injuries which include complete genital mutilations, castration, deep wound stabs, missing tongues, ears, as well as emotional and psychological scars that need lifetime healing" (Kids Rights Report 2014:3).

If one looks at the legal frameworks that protect children internationally and in Africa there are; the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) (2010) , the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations (Rights, 1948), the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (Assembly, 1989) and The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) (1999).

On a national level Uganda has; The Constitution of Uganda, The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2009 and The Witchcraft Act 1957, designed to protect individuals and children, but these laws are also referred to as blunt instruments and that resources and criminal prosecution depend largely on funding which is not available (Kids Rights 2014).

With regards to the killing of PWA, Mswela (2017), who argues for the human rights aspect of these ritualistic killings in South Africa, refers to the Constitutional case of *Carmichele v Minister of Safety and Security* (2001) that confirms that the state has a duty to protect PWA. Further the Constitution, in section 12(1)(c), specifically protects the right to be free from all forms of violence 'from either public or private sources,' section 12(1)(d) addresses the right not to be tortured in any way, while section 12(1)(e) provides for the right not to be treated or punished 'in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way'.

Even with these structures and bills in place, their application will still depend on resources, but the rights of victims, especially the most vulnerable, should be prioritized.

Chapter 7: Policing and the Occult

In this chapter, we turn to the policing of the Occult, specifically in South Africa, and as mentioned in the introduction section, policing of the occult will be divided into two main sections, general policing of the occult, and specialized policing thereof, i.e., the Occult Related Crimes Unit (ORCU) South Africa. The researcher will use information collected, not only from academic and media material but also from data collected via an interview done with Attie Lamprecht, the head of the ORCU.

The Occult Related Crimes Unit (ORCU)

The ORCU was established in 1992 (Petrus et al, 2018), although there are reports on the unit's functioning, since the early eighties (Kemp, 2015; Steven, 2013). Brig. Attie Lamprecht has been fronting the occult task team for over two decades and succeeded Kobus Jonker, who resigned in 2000 (Lamprecht 2021, Interview). The ORCU was said to be disbanded in 2003, but in 2013 in an interview with Lamprecht, he confirmed that the unit was never disbanded, but merely went underground (Steven, 2013), this was confirmed by Lamprecht (2021, Interview). There were rumours that the unit was disbanded because of the pressures of Human Right Groups and non-harmful occult organizations like South African Pagans Rights Association (SAPRA) and the Traditional Healers Organization (THO), but Lamprecht confirmed that the removal of the ORCU was to 'take it out of the public eye' (Lamprecht, 2021 Interview).

This task unit has been a controversial one, whereas one of the perquisites in joining the unit was to be of Christian faith, and some scholars argue that the unit was a reaction to South Africa's 'moral panic', dubbed the "Satanic Panic." The argument was, that policing of the occult by the ORCU was infringing on the right of Freedom of Religion and Belief, enshrined in Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights of the Constitution, this applies to both Western and African occult religions or belief systems. This was due to the controversial bill governing the occult i.e. the *Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1957* that, still, today, as previously mentioned, outlaws divination and witchcraft

per se. This is also discussed by the Comaroffs (2004): "By mid-1998, the recently established Occult-Related Crimes Unit of the South African Police Services had set up a national workshop on the forensics of occult-related crime scenes. But questions were raised about the constitutional status of the unit: did not its very existence presuppose the illegality of the cultural convictions of many citizens?" (Anon, 1998; Anon, 1999; Comaroff & Comaroff, 2004: 515).

The unit's mandate was also initially focused on Satanic crimes and very seldom were traditional African occult crimes investigated. Going further, indicators of possible harmful occultists were described in moral terms relating to Christianity and Nationalism. Examples of these indicators from the SAPS website, are: "child has interest in computer", "depression", "child dyes hair black" and "drapes hair across left eye" (Wayback Machine, 2004).

The media has played a role in scrutinizing the ORCU, and taglines like; "Donker Jonker," the "Hound of God" and "Devil Hunters" to "Vampire Investigators," were used to describe the ORCU and its members (Lamprecht 2021, Interview; Gevisser, 1995; Kemp, 2015). It seems like thirty years of occult policing tells a narrative of more than just crime.

Modernization of the ORCU

The narrative formed around this team, since it was founded under the Apartheid government, has been one of socio, political and spiritual challenges. And with the rise of democracy and the establishment of the Constitution, things have changed. The challenges mentioned above have mostly been addressed by Lamprecht and his team. Lamprecht (2021, Interview) made it clear how the ORCU has evolved from a previously Christian, or as he puts it, non-inclusive task team, to one that respects the freedom of religion and belief enshrined in the Constitution. As Lamprecht (2021, Interview) stated:

"Basically, the practices refer to crime. Satanism is not a crime, witchcraft is not a crime, believing in ancestral spirits is not a crime, but the moment someone must be hurt in order to contribute to this deity, irrespective of what you believe in, it can be a

Christian cult as well, were people can use a Christian bible, to sort of normalize what they are doing, they create a cult movement for example. The moment there are laws that are breached, it is important for our investigators to focus on the criminal element.”

The team’s mandate has also shifted towards policing of all occult-related crime in South Africa, traditional, Western, cults and hybrid systems, and he is committed to re-address and redefine the ORCU. But Lamprecht and his team are also aware of what is being written about the team, and he divides them into, what he calls “the good, the bad, and the ugly.” In understanding where the misconceptions about the mandate and functions of the team lie, it has the ability to empower the team in working towards transparency and debunking of myths about the ORCU. Lamprecht went further and mentioned that previously, organizations, like South African Pagan Rights Associations (SAPRA) have lodged an investigation against the ORCU at the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), the ORCU has in the interim, involved members of SAPRA to help in investigations. SAPRA members have also approached the ORCU in cases flagged as possibly harmful by SAPRA members (Lamprecht, Interview 2021).

The claim of the unconstitutionality of the ORCU was directly linked to the criminalization of witchcraft by the *Witchcraft Suppression Act 1957*. This is related to the policing of non-harmful occult practices, Lamprecht (2021) highlighted the importance of how police officers have to use their discretionary power, not only in investigating only harmful occult crimes, meaning it must amount to a legally recognised crime, and also only crimes that leave a trace of physical evidence. This has been previously discussed under the section on psychic witchcraft as an occult crime.

Mandate and Operations and Training of the ORCU

According to Lamprecht (2021, Interview) the SAPS national instruction, reflects how the ORCU operates. It is a confidential document, and it regulates investigations and is responsible for the structuring of the framework in which the unit operates. It specifically ensures that there is no abuse of their positions as investigators, this

might be due to “their own agendas.” Lamprecht (2021, Interview) further explained that this document first and foremost, instructs detectives to put their own personal belief systems aside when policing the occult, and focus on the criminal element. The danger of policing from personal belief systems can create a bias or fear, which will interfere with the duties of detectives and will ultimately have an effect on prosecution of criminals.

As opposed to general police officers, detectives of the ORCU are specifically recruited by the provincial commissioner and the ORCU has officers in every province who receive, what he calls “additional information.” This refers to training not only ORCU members but also general police officers. Lamprecht (2021, Interview) also mentioned that most detectives of the ORCU are recruited from other departments and that the ORCU training is usually a ‘top-up’ course, where skills are utilized only when necessary. He himself is part of the SAPS Missing Person Unit. He referred to detectives as being “activated” in the assistance of occult crimes, and then returning to their original mandate. The detectives he referred to here are from units like the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigations (DPCI) HAWKS, and the Psychology Investigation Section, who receive additional training. He also stated: “The mandate sometimes becomes a little bit grey” (Lamprecht, 2021 Interview).

Lamprecht (2021, Interview) also spoke of cross-referrals within the organization, i.e., the Family Violence, Child Protection, and Sexual Offences Unit. He used an example where forensic workers will approach the ORCU when a child is sharing information that they feel might be connected to occult-related matters. The ORCU would then investigate the case and give indicators.

On the subject of specialized training of the ORCU, Lamprecht (2021, Interview) indicated that the occult-related crime courses are closed courses registered with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The Human Resource Development Training of the SAPS are the custodians of the course, they use operational experts as well as guest speakers. The experts Lamprecht referred to here are mostly academics. They also study court cases in occult-related matters where cases were

prosecuted successfully and where investigators made mistakes. International video material is also utilized. The course is designed as a top-up, on s basic training like crime scene investigations course and it is specialized.

In terms of the historical controversial image of the ORCU, the unit strives to be informed about what is said about the ORCU on media platforms. There are still organizations who “want to close down the unit with all might and power because they lack knowledge of what is actually happening” and he goes further “at the end of the day, we need to create understanding” (Lamprecht, 2021 Interview).

Lamprecht (2021, Interview) went further:

“This course is neutral and teaches police officers to put their own belief systems aside, only focus on what is in front of you. To demystify the issues of magic, because in many instances it is far removed from magic. The person might believe in magic, but it is irrelevant for the purposes of the investigation.”

Lamprecht made an interesting remark with regards to the perquisites of attending the course, not only do the detectives need to be experienced at some level, but there is also an internal screening process, i.e., detectives are psychologically profiled to ensure that they are emotionally balanced. Another reason for the screening is to ensure that individuals, who are as he puts it, “are obsessed with the occult” are identified and weeded out: “What happens after that, if you lose your neutrality as a detective, it just becomes dangerous when it comes to the investigation of crime” (Lamprecht, 2021 Interview).

When asked about cross-border exchanges between the ORCU and other police departments who deal with occult matters Lamprecht stated that: “There are places in the world that empower investigators, they also reached out to South Africa in the past and they still do from time to time.” Here he mentions Scotland Yard in the case of Adam, previously discussed, and he mentions the sharing of information with countries like Botswana, Zimbabwe and Uganda.

Belief Systems and the ORCU

“It is a lonely place, harmful occult-related crime investigations” (Lamprecht, 2021 Personal Communication)

The theme of personal belief systems and policing organically found its way into this research. Most academic literature related to the policing of the occult also researches the potential bias of police officers in their duties. One can divide the question of belief systems and policing into two sections, firstly, the effect one’s beliefs can have on policing, and secondly how the belief, or spirituality of a member of this specific task team can serve as a protection mechanism in dealing with investigations of the harmful occult.

Personal belief systems of police officers and the possible bias this can create can also be discussed through the lens of the “Satanic Panic.”

The “Satanic Panic” and the ORCU

When we aim to track the history of a specialized task unit in the SAPS, that has been active for merely three decades, we need to factor in ongoing change on an organizational front. This also paints a picture of the historic and the new. The establishment of a specialized task unit in the SAPS is dependent on a need or a threat. The accumulation of occult crimes or at least the reporting of such during a specific historic period in South Africa would explain how this task unit came about (Petrus 2021, Personal Communication). And the question arises if this threat of occult crime was real or part of a ‘moral panic’?

The ORCU in South Africa has been operating since the early 80s but was officially established in 1992 and some scholars have argued that the establishment of the unit came as a response to the “Satanic Panic.” Falkof (2010) states that between 1984 and 1994, South Africa was in the grip of considerable change and explains how South Africa’s Satanism scare took hold in the latter half of this chaotic period.

This was a time when substantive political changes were in the offing in South Africa (Dunbar, 2012).

Dunbar (2012) further confers that the phenomenon of 'Satanic Panic' was an imagined threat of Satanism and signified the occurrence of a moral panic. She makes reference to the work of Stanley Cohen (1972), who coined the term 'moral panic' in 1972. For Cohen (1972), 'moral panics' emerge around 'folk devils', whereas in times of uncertainty, crisis and social anxieties are heightened and may coalesce around the symbolic figure of the 'folk devil', i.e. Satan.

During a time of drastic political, religious, and social changes in society as Falkof (2012), explains "the Satanism scare revolved around fears of a large-scale conspiracy of evil that mostly involved white youth." (Falkof , 2012: 754), Falkof (2010) also illustrates the attention that Satanism was receiving during South Africa's very own 'Satanic Panic'. She reports that between 1989 and 1992 there were 90 – 100 archived articles on Satanism per year in South African newspapers. It is against this broader social background that one can argue that the need for a specialized task unit, in response to the state of panic, emerged.

Being of Christian faith as a prerequisite for joining an occult-related police task team could be seen in the US as well. In America, certain federal occult specialist occult cops, had a similar mandate; "that a fundamentalist version of Evangelical Christianity was widespread among cult cops was proved by the fact that the most successful publication in their subculture was *File 18 Newsletter* that frequently featured articles by evangelical preachers" (Introvigne, 2016). It would appear that after 1994, with the establishment of a constitutional democracy that guaranteed a variety of human rights including the right to freedom of religion, the mandate of the occult task team was to shift. In an interview with Kempen (2017), Attie Lamprecht also acknowledges this phenomenon and states that the ORCU was refining its investigative processes and much has changed since people were affected by the 'Satanic Panic.' Today, the ORCU members receive formal training, in line with the spirit of the constitution, to serve as police officers of a secular government.

The question of personal belief systems and the policing of the occult is also integrated in the training sessions of the ORCU. The courses are designed to, first and foremost uphold the constitution through training officers to ensure that their own personal judgment or beliefs do not discriminate against anything that they do not agree with. The test is to ask the question, that if the personal belief system of the suspect is removed, if it is still a crime, and If no, there is no case, no matter how bizarre the circumstances. (Lamprecht, 2021 Interview) This corresponds to reports on occult training from the offices of the Office of Criminal Justice Planning, State of California (1989-1991), and it is further confirmed by Brig. Lamprecht (2021) that the ORCU does liaise with international occult departments.

This team is said to have become one where the focus of the investigation is on crime, and where personal belief systems only play a role with regards to spiritual protection for the officers themselves if they wish it so.

Belief Systems as Protection

“Your judgment as a detective will be clouded if you take the angle that, it is rooted in the supernatural, magic, there are dark forces at hand, I cannot go close to that crime scene. Although the supernatural is very real, it is not something to be scared of, it’s about where you see yourself in the investigation” (Lamprecht, 2021 Interview).

The second concept of belief systems and policing in the spiritual realm involves the idea of the protection of police officers. Lamprecht admitted that his source of protection lies in his strong personal convictions, as a religious man, he feels, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually able to do his job. One cannot judge or imagine the importance of spiritual security in dealings with harmful occult practices. He went further in explaining that some officers are atheists, some find solace in psychology:

“That is why there is no discrimination of who can attend the course, the protection you have for yourself will be your own issue. If you go on a horrific crimes scene where a child was murdered in a sacrificial way, and go off the crime scene, yes, we can debrief each other, but somewhere, somehow you must have a source of backup that can assist you, whether it’s a solid family, whether it’s your own belief system, that is really up to the investigator at the end of the day. And that is also why it is important that we need people of sound psychological stance and emotional stability” (Lamprecht, 2021 Interview).

This statement also speaks of the importance of debriefing officers: “It is important that we need people of sound psychological stance and emotional stability” (Lamprecht 2021). Lamprecht thus encourages police officers of the ORCU to build on a secure structure of support, being it faith or spirituality, a strong family bond, or anything else to help them feel secure in dealing with spiritually threatening crimes, and he goes further to say that some officers do not have the capacity to deal with occult type crimes, where others are unaffected.

This protection or psychological strength is needed, due to the spiritual and physical intimidation that comes from criminal parties involved in harmful occult-related crime. The task team has lost members in the past due to fear and in some cases suicide. This is also one of the challenges that Brig. Lamprecht (2021) mentioned, recruiting, and keeping members seems to be an ongoing issue, as much as 50% of recruited members will quit after a year: “because they’ve seen and experienced things that they didn’t even knew existed” (Lamprecht 2021, Interview). Going further, the need for psychologically stable officers is important, for intimidation by these occult criminals, makes for new crimes, crimes that could be added to the charge sheet (Lamprecht, 2021 Interview).

The ORCU’s should be considered as one of the most longstanding, if not the oldest Occult Task Unit globally and it is here to stay. “All I can say is we are kept busy. Sometimes it goes down a little bit, I normally say to the detectives, that is just where a breath is taken, be prepared, because you might receive a lot of cases during the next month” (Lamprecht, 2021 Interview).

At last, this unit, is headed by a man whom the researcher personally has a great deal of respect for, that investigates and fights crime, without prejudice, with strong spiritual convictions, for this realm of crime, is among other things, a spiritual warfare.

General Policing and Occult Crime

On a local and international level, we find writings by scholars, books, and official police documents, which speak of the effect that, the personal belief systems of general officers have on their duties, specifically when it comes to the occult. In South Africa, we distinguish general police officers from members of the Occult Related Crimes Unit (ORCU), and in this section, we touch on general police officers.

Pelgrim (2003), Petrus (2009), Jensun and Buur (2004) and the Comaroffs (1999) did extensive research on policing and the occult and it is clear that the bigger part of South African police officers believes in traditional witchcraft. The Comaroffs (1999) further refers to the Ralushai Commission's investigative report on witchcraft, which states that the majority of African police officers believe in witchcraft, making them reluctant to intervene when suspects are attacked (Ralushai et al. 1996:63).

"Off course I believe in witchcraft, I am African," Pelgrim (2003:115) states here that these are the type of remarks received from police officers interviewed in her research *Witchcraft and Policing in the Northern province*, police officers also feel caught up in a system whereas they feel restricted in their freedom to believe in witchcraft; "when I am on duty, I am not allowed to believe in witchcraft" (Pelgrim 2003, personal communication, Detective Inspector Sibasa of the Louis Trichardt SAPS).

Lamprecht (2021, Interview) further remarked how general police officers would be relieved from the investigation of a witchcraft-related crime, merely because these officers are native to the area and personally know the Sangomas in the area, too scared or reluctant to deal with the case. In this case, the ORCU officers, from

outside would step in, but the ideal would be that; "At the end of the day, it is merely a support function to detectives to make sure that the investigators are not intimidated and they don't back off from the investigations of serious crimes" (Lamprecht, 2021 Interview).

Pelgrim (2003) also notes that general officers who investigate witch findings or witch huntings are labelled as traitors in protecting witches and are shunted by communities, which makes it even more challenging to investigate cases. The following statement sheds some light on a controversial act, previously discussed by the researcher: "Black South Africans consider the Witchcraft Suppression act as illegitimate, because they believe that the white Apartheids government introduced it as yet another form of racial oppression" (Pelgrim 2003: 95). Going further, the fear of being bewitched themselves is a real threat to many of these officers.

But it seems like the ORCU is now, not only recruiting members for the ORCU, according to Lamprecht (interview 2021), but general police officers are now also being trained to deal with occult matters, without joining the ORCU : "We also empowered more investigators, in the past, there was only a handful, now on a national level every province has people who receive additional information, and these are normal detectives, general detectives, after that they will return to their original mandate" (Lamprecht, 2021 Interview). And as Lambrecht further explained, there are cases where general police officers prefer to handle occult cases themselves, this will be supported by the ORCU, under supervision. This will give the specialized members a chance to share information and knowledge of these types of crimes with general officers, and further ensure that the investigation process is not compromised. This research further suggests frequent training on occult matters for general police officers.

Diviner Detectives

In terms of the recognition of the African cosmological system by the police in policing occult crime, we turn once again to the Comaroffs (2004). In *Policing Culture and Culture Policing*, they sketch an alternative to general policing in dealing with the

occult via the novel concept of the diviner detectives. They were named by the national media as "one of the few success stories in a police force that has almost collapsed under the strain of democracy" (Comaroff & Comaroff 2004: 531).

Sergeant S. P. Moshupa and Inspector Jackson Gopane, policemen who also act as Sangomas, are said to have the ability to address "both sides" culture and crime by "crossing into the spiritual world" (Kiley 1997: 2) and here "the forensic and the oracular, scientific investigation and social diagnostics, become one" (Comaroff & Comaroff 2004: 531). The Comaroffs further refer to the objectives of the Indigenous Knowledge Systems Program, a parliamentary initiative to "protect and promote indigenous knowledge within a legal framework, and harness indigenous technology in rural development and international trade" (Phalane 1998, 5). Policing of the occult in Africa has the potential for novel ideas, build on traditional concepts.

Conclusion

As previously mentioned, occult-related crime is a theme, subject, and phenomenon explored by anthropologists, and the researcher has found no academic literature on occult crime by criminology scholars. The factual crime elements have been explored by looking at the modus operandi of these criminals, and the physical elements of these types of crimes were touched on, which enables one to classify them as occult crimes and not only as general crimes.

This research has also looked at the socio-political, cosmological, and economic aspects of occult crime, and cosmological encompasses cultural, spiritual, and social factors. The aim is to help the reader understand that these factors cannot exist separately from occult-related crime. The researcher engaged different scholars, who approach occult crime from different angles, and the aim was to juxtapose all these factors together to see a bigger picture of this phenomenon. This unfolded organically through the last two years of research.

Going further, we also sketched a broader view of different branches of the occult, to offer some sort of a blueprint of categories of occult crimes, aiming to identify the 'hot spots' in South Africa, Africa and globally. And not only was it important to recognize the prejudice against non-harmful occult practices in the past, and draw a clear line between what constitutes harmful and non-harmful occult practices, but it is also important to distinguish between, the cultural, and factual criminal differences between Western, African/traditional and hybrid systems. Here we deal with themes like occult crime *per se*, on the one hand, and the context in which it occurs. The understanding of the context and belief systems of occult crimes is a necessity in investigations by police officers. And even though occult-related crimes are not labelled as such, the typologies do serve an important purpose in the criminal justice system, i.e., in sentencing processes.

Africa is seen and recognized, as the continent with the biggest numbers of occult-related crimes, and in South Africa, crimes like muti-murders and witch-hunts have

reached numbers, nowhere else to be found in the world. Certain African countries have further been labelled for specific types of occult crime, i.e., Uganda for its high cases of child sacrifice, and Tanzania is known for the ritualistic killings of people with albinism (PWA). This research touched on Africa as a whole, specifically focusing on where these types of crimes happen, and why they happen there specifically. And going further, through the lens of socio-political and cosmological principles, one might get a better understanding of why these crimes happen, what the belief systems and demands for these "magical commodities" are. We also looked at African occult influence on international crimes.

The Western branch of the occult has been explored in South Africa, internationally and the modern 'moral panics' of our times, became a part of the conversation, not only as a cultural phenomenon but also as a conspiracy theory spreading like wildfire in a time of a pandemic. This involved a theory of elitists, of the 'New World Order', ordering the blood of children from all over the world. The line between the sacred and the contaminated is blurring, and the opportunistic politician, businessman, or occult criminal might be tapping into the deep belief systems of people without having any themselves. The Comaroffs (1999) predicted a time of the occult

entrepreneur, very cleverly a decade ago, coining 'modern occult economies'. This research strived to go a step further and add the cosmological aspect to the socio-political and economic explanation of these modern occult economies.

The researcher might further suggest the importance, of acknowledging the polarization of the West and Africa and attempt a paradigm shift from the scientific rational mindset to one where the supernatural is seen as part of everyday life. This, for the sake of understanding the 'why' behind the demand of occult economies. This is also important for legislative and judiciary purposes, whereas these institutions are running into challenges when attempting to govern spiritual matters from a purely scientific perspective.

And as the courts attempt to balance the right to religious freedom and culture with the right to be protected from violence, specifically in the cases of witch-huntings, one branch of the criminal justice system seems to have some control over the

complexities that arise from occult-related crime; the Occult Related Task Unit of South Africa (ORCU). This could be due to the fact that this unit has been functioning for three decades, and in time, through many trials and tribulations, it has been purged from elements that caused the team to be less functional. The aim of this research was to sketch a factual narrative based on the operational and crime aspects of the occult by the ORCU. This unit is often mentioned by scholars, but there was gap in a thicker description of this specialized team. The research focused on the challenges of policing the occult, but it also engaged with the team leader of a South African Police task unit, Brig. Attie Lamprecht in clarifying decades of bad publicity and confusion around this team.

And finally, occult crime is here to stay and it will keep on evolving. What makes these types of crimes dangerous, is the fact that it connects to an important part of being, belief systems. This research looked at occult crime and the policing thereof through a socio-political and cosmological lens, and it proved, that the web of occult crime and all the parties involved, including the police officers, legislation and judiciary, including the criminal, have a common denominator; belief systems. This can be engaged, hijacked, or seen as a stumbling block, or protection in executing duties.

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Appendices

Appendix One: Certificate of Approval for Ethical Clearance



Faculty of Law: Research Ethics Committee

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Certificate of Approval for Ethical Clearance

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR/SUPERVISOR: EVAN DER SPUY	ETHICS REFERENCE NUMBER: L0179-2021
STUDENT: MARCIA SCHOLTZ - [SCHMAR190]	ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE: 15-JULY-2021
FACULTY: LAW	APPROVAL EXPIRY DATE: 14-JULY-2022
DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC LAW	
PROJECT TITLE: Towards a history of the Harmful Occult-related Task Unit as a specialised police unit within the SAPS.	
PURPOSE OF RESEARCH: Mini Dissertation to obtain a Master's Degree in Criminology. This research wishes to a) map the history, current mandate, and functions of the Harmful Occult-related Task Unit as a specialized police unit in South Africa and b) go on to investigate the challenges relating to the policing of harmful occult-related crimes.	
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL	
This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol.	
<p>Modifications To make any changes to the approved research procedures in your study, please submit a formal "Request for a Modification" to the REC Administrative Office. You must receive ethics approval before proceeding with your modified protocol.</p> <p>Renewals Your ethics approval must be current for the period during which you are recruiting participants or collecting data. To renew your protocol, please submit a "Request for Renewal" form before the expiry date on your certificate. You are responsible for submitting this by at least 2 months prior to the expiry date of clearance date issued.</p> <p>Project Closures When you have completed all data collection activities and will have no further contact with participants, please formally notify the REC: Law as well as your supervisor where applicable.</p>	
Certification	
This certifies that the University of Cape Town Law Faculty's Research Ethics Committee has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Cape Town Research Regulations Involving Human Participants.	
<p>pp</p> <hr/> MSDIANE JEFTHAS REC: LEAD REVIEWER	

Appendix Two - List of Acronyms

CGE	Commission of Gender Equality
MLO	The Misanthropic Luciferian Order
ONA	The Oder of Nine Angels
ORCU	Occult Related Crime Unit
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Association
SALRC	South African Law Reform Commission
SAPRA	South African Pagan Rights Association
THO	Traditional Healers Association
SRA	Satanic Ritual Abuse