



Original Article

Illegal dog-fighting and animal crime prevention in South Africa: A desktop study of the Cape of Good Hope SPCA's anti-dog-fighting community outreach programme in Cape Town

Luvuyo Bomela 

: <https://doi.org/10.62865/grap1k77>

Abstract: Illegal dog-fighting in South Africa is a crime that remains unchallenged within affected communities, putting both dogs and people at risk. Notwithstanding efforts to combat dog-fighting in Cape Town, the practice remains largely unregulated and poorly enforced by animal welfare authorities. To address this gap, the Cape of Good Hope SPCA's (Cape SPCA) anti-dog-fighting outreach programme involves the community through proactive, weekly organized campaigns targeting affected communities. This outreach program aims to train citizens whose intervention can be crucial in providing emergency first aid for dogs by recognizing, reporting, and preventing dog-fighting through various community outreach campaigns. Consequently, community members play a vital role in raising awareness and educating others about the crime of dog-fighting. By conducting a desktop study of the Cape SPCA's website and other relevant sources, this article highlights several key tactics the animal welfare organization has employed to combat dog-fighting in affected communities and help prevent the illegal activity from escalating. With the support of local governance, viz, the City of Cape Town's law enforcement, the Cape SPCA works to integrate local anti-dog-fighting mechanisms to combat the illegal practice in Cape Town. This review aims to demonstrate that this community outreach programme can be proactive and effective in addressing the issue of dog fighting in the city.

Keywords: dog-fighting, pit bulls, green criminology, SPCA, South Africa, Cape Town, anti-dog-fighting community outreach

Introduction: Dog-fighting is an animal blood sport in which two dogs, trained and placed in a small arena, fight each other for entertainment and gambling purposes ¹. The first documented sighting of dog-fighting in South Africa occurred during the colonial period in Cape Town, where it was a social

spectacle at gatherings for Cape households between the 1700s and 1800s ². Nowadays, the practice has become extremely violent, involving other criminal activities like illegal drug trafficking, gang violence, and interhuman violence ¹. Over the last few years, the practice of dog-fighting has drawn public

Graduate Student and Lecturing Assistant (GLA), Department of Sociology, University of the Western Cape Bellville, South Africa. Email: bomela.luvuyo@gmail.com, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7718-6558>

Corresponding Author: Luvuyo Bomela Email: bomela.luvuyo@gmail.com



attention due to an increasing population of pit bulls, which are universally regarded as a threat to public safety ^{3,4}. At the community level, illegal gambling and hype, which is now pervasive across the nation, is fuelled by the practice ⁵. Cape Town mirrors socio-economic disparities, in which rampant youth unemployment, violence, and organized crime are prevalent. Dog-fighting remains a significant issue for animal welfare agents who operate within areas plagued by social disparities, linking the practice to broader socio-economic issues such as poverty, youth unemployment, violence, and organised crime within present-day Cape Town ^{6,7}.

To address the discussion surrounding dog fighting, this article explores green criminology and its relevance to framing the practice in South Africa. Through a desktop study, which includes several publications posted on the Cape of Good Hope SPCA (Cape SPCA) website, such as the anti-dog-fighting report of 2022, and various news reports on dog-fighting during the same year ^{6,8}. This article aims to describe the Cape SPCA's anti-dog-fighting outreach programme and to shed light on the impacts and challenges involved in implementing the programme within affected communities in Cape Town, such as the townships of the Cape Flats – Manenberg, Lotus Park, Mitchells Plain, Gatesville, Flamingo Heights, Fisantekraal, and Khayelitsha, specifically.

Methodology: This article employed a qualitative research method involving a desktop review and analysis of secondary data. Conducting a literature review, this article identified specific key ideas and themes related to the topic of dog-fighting, accompanied by a content analysis of current debates surrounding anti-dog-fighting efforts in Cape Town. The information is highlighted in various online publications by the Cape of Good Hope SPCA, including the *Anti-Dogfighting Report (2021-2022)*, newsletters, and other available datasets ^{6,8}. Emerging data was sourced through a randomized search, consisting of relevant keywords and phrases such as *dog-fighting in Cape Town*, *Cape SPCA anti-dog-fighting report*, *dog-fighting and*

community outreach in Cape Town. Specific criteria were used to select sources that are credible, relevant, and have a publication date, ensuring current information on dog-fighting has been included in the research.

Green criminology and dog-fighting: Green criminology is an interdisciplinary field examining various harms caused by powerful institutions and ordinary citizens to the environment, humans, and non-human animals ^{9,12}. Green harms are numerous and range from everyday incidents to extraordinary cases involving abuse and exploitation of ecological systems, including animal life. Like humans, animals inhabit environments whose well-being is closely linked to their health and safety within a specific habitat, making it difficult to separate environmental harms from the mistreatment of animals ⁹. Despite mainstream criminology's focus on examining harms and crimes involving humans, green criminology aims to address various harms inflicted on non-human animals, *viz.*, 'animals' ^{9,12}.

In a pioneering article published in *Criminology* titled "For a Non-Speciesist Criminology: Animal abuse as an object of study," Piers Beirne ¹³ argues that animal abuse should be included within criminology for several reasons: (i) it signifies actual or inter-human conflict, (ii) it occurs as an object of criminal law, (iii) it is framed as an item of utilitarian calculus to prevent pain and suffering, (iv) it reflects a violation of rights, and (v) it instantiates several oppressions identified by feminism as one interconnected whole ¹⁴.

Other notable scholarly works that followed include Robert Agnew ¹⁵, who discusses animal abuse in *Theoretical Criminology*, Ted Benton ¹⁶, who discusses abuse from the animal's perspective, Geert Cazaux ^{17,18}, who explores animal abuse in relation to feminist perspectives, such as those advocated by Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan ¹⁹, including utilitarianism and rights perspectives put forward by Peter Singer and Tom Regan ¹⁴. These works are influenced by disciplines of sociology (for example, Nibert ²⁰) and social anthropology (for example, Noske ²¹), which

have long-standing traditions in animal discourses¹⁴. Another influential piece of work that has received considerable attention in Beirne's argument in *Criminology* concerns the progression or graduation hypothesis posited by Beirne²², which describes the chronological causal relation between animal abuse and inter-human violence, as thoroughly discussed in the work of Clifton Flynn^{14,22,23}.

Green criminology supports the notion of species justice by arguing that animals should be regarded alongside humans as potential victims of crime^{11,12}. It emphasises that the discussion of dog-fighting should focus more directly on the emotional, physical, and psychological abuse of fighting dogs, recognising them as subjects of study^{10,12}.

Green criminology examines the failures of legal systems and enforcement strategies to provide adequate justice for animal crimes^{11,12}. For example, animal abuse is criminalised in most countries; however, the status of animals as property often takes precedence over their intrinsic value and interests, limiting their chances of legal representation and protection¹⁴. Despite dogs being considered 'property', species justice argues that humans should at least provide proper care for dogs. This involves not only preventing unnecessary suffering by establishing minimum standards of care and banning certain acts of cruelty against dogs, but also by actively promoting their welfare¹².

Dog-fighting underpins the mistreatment of dogs in various settings, each within a context of conditions, regulations, and participants who contribute to the systematic process of abuse and violence in blood sports involving animals^{11,12}. This mistreatment closely resembles Erving Goffman's (1955) idea of front and back stages of social activity, the front staging highlighting the exploitation of dogs in the arena at the hands of humans, while the back emphasises the less visible, or hidden, aspects of animal exploitation and abuse associated with dog-fighting, including the systematic process of preparing dogs for fights through irresponsible breeding practices and

abusive training techniques used to create modern fighting dogs¹⁴.

Typology of contemporary dog-fighting:

Contemporary dog-fighting in South Africa is often seen as a 'poor person's sport,' but supporters come from various social backgrounds and are mostly aware that their actions are inhumane and illegal. Contemporary dog-fighting in South Africa is generally categorised into three main groups: (i) street dog-fighting or fights off the chain; (ii) hobbyists and enthusiasts; and (iii) professional dog-fighting¹. Lockwood²⁴ identifies a fourth category originating from the US, known as professional/street dog-fighting, which involves wealthier individuals engaged in the sport and entertainment who are connected to the dog-fighting fraternity. The three main types of dog-fighting are flexible, with overlaps between the latter two, and there are opportunities for the first two to progress or advance to the next level^{12,25}.

Front stage - subcultural practice and canine killings in contemporary dog-fights:

Like in many countries, dog-fighting in South Africa involves dogs being killed or sustaining injuries^{1,26,27}. Unless dogs have a strong history of past performance or belong to valuable bloodlines, a losing dog is often discarded or left to die with untreated injuries. In this case, a surviving losing dog is perceived as a particular embarrassment to the owner's reputation and their bloodlines. Dogs are killed instantly to destroy evidence, maintain credibility, and avoid the cost of treatment. Dogs that fail to show an adequate amount of aggression or interest in fighting are often used as bait animals, with their mouths tied up to prevent them from defending themselves, resulting in them being sacrificed to another dog intended to be a fighter¹.

In the US, dogs serve as cultural symbols of social status and masculinity, celebrating a gang member's dominance and acting as tools of intimidation for young members joining gangs. By destroying losers in a dog-fighting match, a dog that loses and survives the pit is immediately killed or tortured, as it reflects cowardice on the owner's fighting dogs,

contrasting with attributes of heroism and masculinity. Therefore, dogs are expected to fight bravely like men, and penalties are imposed on dogs that behave cowardly like 'curs'. The act of immediately killing a dog allows the owner to recover some status lost due to the dog's poor performance during a match ^{26,27}.

Backstage– creating a contemporary South African fighting dog:

Contemporary fighting dogs are selectively bred and trained for fights and are regarded as unrelenting in their ability to overcome opponents. Having extremely powerful jaws, fighting dogs can cause severe bruising, deep puncture wounds, and broken bones ^{1,28}. Nonetheless, the American Pit Bull Terrier (APBT) has become the most popular fighting breed in South Africa, and other types of bull and terrier crossbreeds known as 'pit bulls' are also used in dog-fighting matches ^{1,3,4}. Like other dog breeds, pit bulls are viewed as loving dogs due to their remarkable loyalty and the protection they provide to families. The rise of modern dog-fighting marked an era of irresponsible breeders who exploit this human-canine bond by selectively breeding to produce highly aggressive dogs that are intensely driven to attack other dogs. Additionally, dog-fighting involves brutal training methods such as administering anabolic steroids to dogs, tying them to treadmills for extended periods to enhance muscle and stamina, and forcing them to hang onto poles while clenching their teeth to strengthen jaw muscles. Another heinous aspect of dog-fighting is the 'cat mill,' where a dog is tied to a rotating arm while a small animal is caged on a second arm and used as bait, chased by the dog ^{1,28}. Although the intent might not always be to catch the small animal, dogs are often rewarded with the captured animal after training ^{1,25,28}. In South Africa, it is easier to find a bait animal or steal dogs, partly due to the large population of stray dogs and other dogs that are available at no cost to a good home ^{1,3}.

The mistreatment of dogs involved in contemporary dog-fighting goes beyond the fighting ring, as these animals are often denied the chance to lead normal lives. The abuse

inflicted by irresponsible owners is ongoing, and the brutality frequently reflects a life filled with cruelty and violence linked to this practice ^{1,28}. Dogs are kept chained or caged during the day, and when not chained, they are either fighting or being trained to fight. Despite being social animals, fighting dogs are often neglected and receive little socialisation, with limited shelter and exposure to positive stimuli; many live in cramped, filthy conditions. It is rare for dog-fighters to seek professional veterinary care for their dogs after fights, or for procedures like illegal ear cropping and tail docking, which are often performed with dull or unsterilised tools, and without anaesthetic or post-operative medical attention ^{1,28}.

Ownership of pit bulls in South Africa is not restricted, and owning a pit bull in Cape Town has become the new trend, evidenced by an increase in dogs daily within communities engulfed with gang violence and crime ^{3,4,6}. The pit bull's popularity in dog-fighting sports within specific areas of the city has increased the ownership of such dogs, where the unfortunate outcome involves dogs being used in informal street dog-fighting ⁶.

The Animal Protection Act and enforcement efforts in South Africa and Cape Town:

For many years, dog-fighting in South Africa was not recognised as an animal welfare and rights issue until the enactment of animal laws during the 1960s, followed by the rise of pit bulls in the 1970s ^{3,4,29}. Although this period was characterised by an apartheid system of racial segregation and discrimination that enforced separate development in the country, the government passed this primary law regulating animal protection, which is still enforced today ^{4,30}.

Dog-fighting is classified as a crime under the Animal Protection Act (APA) no. 71 of 1962, and forms part of a broader framework of animal laws that regulate unlawful acts, including negligent and intentional actions described in the Act ^{30,31}. This statute emphasises animal violations applicable to all forms of animal blood sports, including dog-fighting and dog-racing. The Act plays a key role in prohibiting certain violent acts against

animals, such as ill-treatment, negligence, torture, maiming, cruelty, beating, kicking, and frightening dogs^{30,31}. A person found guilty of involvement in dog-fighting faces a fine of up to R80,000 and/or 24 months' imprisonment, resulting in a criminal record^{3,6,31}.

Besides the South African Police Service (SAPS) and prosecutors, the NSPCA primarily enforces the Act, which grants inclusive powers to any SPCA, including the Cape SPCA, when authorised by a magistrate to enter and inspect premises, make arrests, and/or seize animals³⁰. Since 2021, the Cape SPCA and the City of Cape Town's law enforcement have collaborated in a joint effort to eradicate dog-fighting within the city; a partnership that combines both organisations' strengths, with the SPCA enforcing the Animal Protection Act and law enforcement enforcing city by-laws^{6,31,32}. Dog-fighting in South Africa often goes unnoticed by law enforcement, and laws prohibiting the practice are shockingly under-enforced¹.

Being a highly secretive enterprise makes it extremely difficult for the SPCA and other investigative professionals to infiltrate, as those involved go to great lengths to conceal their activities and avoid detection by law enforcement¹.

Notwithstanding that prosecution of dog-fighting falls outside the normative criminal justice framework, South African courts face limitations due to (i) the high costs of legal representation and litigation, and (ii) a broad lack of capacity in terms of specific legal, technical, and scientific knowledge and expertise, alongside practical issues and a lack of interest in facilitating such litigation^{1,30}.

A case that highlights both the successes and challenges of law enforcement involves a successful raid on an active organised dog-fighting operation in Atlantis by the Cape SPCA anti-dog-fighting task team, which includes the city's Animal Control Unit. Despite the raid resulting in the arrest of three suspects, including the property owner, all of whom were criminally charged with animal fights under the APA in 2021, the case

remained pending in the Atlantis Magistrates' Court⁶.

Having examined dog-fighting in relation to existing literature and the relevance of green criminology in framing the practice in South Africa, the second half of this paper explores the impacts of anti-dog-fighting community outreach and its challenges as a proactive solution to combat the illegal practice in specific areas of Cape Town.

Discussion

Cape SPCA's anti-dog-fighting outreach in Cape Town: A multitude of political actors in Cape Town evoke notions of community, such as policymakers at national, provincial, and local levels who frequently refer to it, and it forms an integral part of bodies endorsed by the government, including community policing forums (CPF) and community participation³³.

Community participation in animal crime prevention in Cape Town is contingent on democratic practice, which ideally requires the involvement of ordinary people engaged in the affairs of planning, governance, and overall developmental programmes at local or grassroots levels³⁴. In contrast to horizontal solutions that require community members to resolve their own problems, the anti-dog-fighting outreach programme illustrates a vertical solution to crime prevention that links community life with decisions made from the top down³⁵.

The Cape SPCA promotes community spirit through proactive weekly outreach programmes focused on mobilising local communities via education and awareness campaigns held at various hotspot areas around Cape Town. Proactive weekly outreach programmes adopt a soft approach that employs non-aggressive methods aimed at preventing dog-fighting within the city^{6,8}.

The outreach programme aims to educate community members on how to recognise and report crimes such as dog-fighting before they happen, as well as to train them in basic

animal husbandry, humane care, and pet treatment⁸.

In 2022, the SPCA undertook over 20 projects that helped build new relationships and trust between local communities and the animal welfare organisation⁶. Some examples are highlighted in Table 1.

The Cape SPCAs' anti-dog-fighting outreach programme focuses on educating children [6]. Campaigns target children for four main reasons: (i) at community level, children are often brought to dog-fights by spectators, forcing them to grow up being exposed to a culture of violence within dog-fighting subcultures; (ii) certain gangs use dog-fighting as a tool for indoctrinating young recruits into gangs by giving them a puppy to train for fights from an early age; (iii) certain primary school children have been exposed to dog-fighting,

children, by law, are exempt from extreme punitive measures, such as arrest and criminal charges applicable to adults^{6,8,30}.

The Cape SPCAs' anti-dog-fighting outreach programme focuses on educating children [6]. Campaigns target children for four main reasons: (i) at community level, children are often brought to dog-fights by spectators, forcing them to grow up being exposed to a culture of violence within dog-fighting subcultures; (ii) certain gangs use dog-fighting as a tool for indoctrinating young recruits into gangs by giving them a puppy to train for fights from an early age; (iii) certain primary school children have been exposed to dog-fighting, with some having the experience of running their own fights; (iv) dog-fighters often take advantage of the criminal justice system by targeting children into dog-fighting activities, as children, by law, are exempt from extreme punitive measures, such as arrest and criminal charges applicable to adults^{6,8,30}.

Table 1. Cape SPCA Anti-dog-fighting Outreach campaigns in 2022.

| Affected areas in Cape Town | Community Outreach Programme |
|--|---|
| Fisantekraal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted in July Educational drive focusing on the impacts of dog-fighting Dipping and deworming 48 dogs Collection of two dogs |
| Lotus River | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted in September Consisting of an educational drive focusing on impacts of dog-fighting – handing out dog-fighting brochures to attendees SPCA helped with dipping and deworming dogs, including free sterilization |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Khayelitsha T3-V3, Khayelitsha Cite B Gatesville Flamingo Heights Manenberg Mitchells Plain | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted in October Educational drive focusing on the impacts of dog-fighting Dipping and deworming 247 dogs in total – 23 animals sterilised Collection of 14 animals, including dogs |

with some having the experience of running their own fights; (iv) dog-fighters often take advantage of the criminal justice system by targeting children into dog-fighting activities, as

Anti-dog-fighting Community outreach dilemmas in Cape Town: Excluding the impacts of anti-dog-fighting outreach campaigns within Cape Town, integrating a soft approach as a crime prevention strategy of dog-fighting faces two possible major dilemmas^{1,8}. On the one hand, effective implementation of anti-dog-fighting outreach must contend with broader social, political, and economic constraints that plague specific areas of Cape Town^{6,36,37}. The second related issue concerns the ineffectiveness of crime prevention strategies at a local community level, especially in areas engulfed by crime and violence^{33,34}.

The SPCA operates in many hotspot areas in Cape Town, characterised by socio-economic challenges, such as poor living conditions, high crime rates, and social unrest in these areas, which are known for gangsterism and violence⁶.

Before democracy in 1994, apartheid established a system of 'separateness' based on racial segregation and discrimination that forced people to live and develop separately³⁰. The implementation of apartheid legislation

significantly affected how communities in South Africa were defined, especially within local township environments³⁶. Apartheid laws, such as the Population Registration Act of 1950, classified individuals as 'coloured,' while the Group Areas Act compelled them to reside in separate communities, like urban ghettos such as Manenberg on the Cape Flats³⁶.

For example, Manenberg is one of several housing projects between the 1960s and 1970s for those forcibly defined as 'coloured' who were removed from areas proclaimed white by the Group Areas Act³⁶. In addition, apartheid legislation such as the Pass laws, the Migrant labour system and Job Reservation laws also contributed to laying the foundation for gangsterism in Cape Town³⁷.

Despite the transition to democracy in 1994 and South Africa adopting a world-class constitution promising the fundamental right of freedom from all forms of injustices within society, Cape Town continues to present a bleak picture of local segregation, crime, and gang-related violence aggravated by a failing system of urban governance and crime control policies within the city^{30,38}.

Notwithstanding that crime prevention is precisely viewed as a form of legitimate governance, it is rather problematic when defined in these terms, as such initiatives are typically driven by specific socio-economic goals aimed at ensuring 'a better life for all'³⁴.

Community participation is compelled to contend with larger power structures, market forces, and policies over which there is little control, exemplified by the ineffectiveness of community-based crime prevention programmes, especially within socio-economically disadvantaged communities³⁵.

This intervention often makes unrealistic demands on already depleted resources within poor communities, suggesting a need for communities to strengthen linkages with external and more powerful institutions³⁵. As a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO), the Cape SPCA is not funded by the government,

reflecting a dire need for aid and quality interventions, even for the most vulnerable in society^{1,7}.

Another major obstacle facing crime prevention programmes in poor and crime-ridden areas is the lack of trust within many such communities; the lack of cooperation among community members affects crime prevention³⁵.

The COVID-19 pandemic worsened existing economic hardship in Cape Town. According to a report by the Dullah Omar Institute at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) titled "The Socio-Economic Rights Impact of Covid-19 in Selected Informal Settlements in Cape Town," the lockdown in South Africa made it harder for people to access basic amenities and essential needs⁷. With most vulnerable populations struggling to meet their basic survival needs, how should we begin to consider the concerns of our companion animals?

Concluding Remarks: I argue that dog-fighting offers a valuable and insightful perspective for understanding animal and human suffering in South Africa. The anti-dog-fighting outreach programme in Cape Town exemplifies a proactive approach to preventing animal crimes in communities affected by them.

This article has reviewed several social scientific studies on dog-fighting, including various SPCA publications focused on the practice in South Africa and Cape Town specifically. Sources provide insight into the context and complex nature of modern dog fighting, animal welfare, law enforcement strategies, and anti-dog-fighting outreach campaigns in 2022.

Adopting a green criminology perspective that considers animals as non-human agents highlights a range of harms and crimes committed by humans against dogs. This approach reflects various types of contemporary dog-fighting in South Africa, with differences in organisation, practice, and motivation. Despite these variations, dogs

confer status across all levels, especially in informal street dog-fights in Cape Town.

This article exposes the abuse of dogs both publicly and privately, revealing irresponsible ownership linked to dog-fighting activities. It provides an overview of animal laws designed to regulate dog-fighting in South Africa, and specifically in Cape Town, emphasising their importance and the enforcement challenges posed by the highly secretive nature of the crime. It has highlighted various inconsistencies within South Africa's criminal justice system and courts that fail to offer sufficient protection to animals affected by this illegal practice.

Through a desktop study, this article examined the Cape SPCA's anti-dog-fighting outreach programme, as well as the potential impact of animal crime prevention efforts in specific areas affected by dog-fighting in Cape Town, such as the Cape Flats. This review has shed light on the effects of anti-dog-fighting outreach in Cape Town, as well as discussing potential challenges in implementing crime prevention strategies at the community level and proactive weekly outreach programmes specifically within Cape Town.

Research has shown that dog-fighting is not an isolated problem, as it is linked to wider social, political, and economic issues in the post-apartheid era, such as poverty and youth unemployment, which act as pathways for violence and crime that persist within certain marginalised communities in Cape Town.

There is a gap in research on dog-fighting in South Africa that future studies could fill. However, a word of caution is necessary as research involving participant observation is largely restricted by current ethical and legal regulations. Consequently, studies focusing on cultural explanations of dog-fighting or links between organised crime and dog-fighting may be unwarranted, as they could pose risks to researchers and those involved in dog-fighting. Nonetheless, future research should aim to gather expert insights from those working in animal welfare and law enforcement regarding dog-fighting cases.

Recommendation: Future research could focus on evaluating laws and policies aimed at addressing the issue of dog-fighting. Research could also include a comparative analysis of multi-agency responses to dog-fighting, involving organisations such as the SPCA, Cape Town City Law Enforcement, and the South African Police Services (SAPS) within affected communities nationwide. It could further explore comparative links between South Africa's legal systems and external legal frameworks in Africa. Additionally, research could examine the uniqueness of unconventional sports in comparison to conventional sporting activities. Moreover, it could compare community outreach efforts across different communities where dog-fighting occurs. The possibilities are many.

References

1. Geldenhuys K. The NSPCA: Dogfighting SA's dirty little secret. Friends Dog 2018. <https://www.friendsofthedog.co.za/dogfighting-sas-dirty-little-secret.html> (Accessed on Jul 20, 2023).
2. Worden N, Van Heyningen E, Bickford-Smith V. Cape Town: The making of a city: An illustrated social history. Uitgeverij Verloren; 1998. ISBN: 90-6550-161-4.
3. NSPCA. National Council of SPCA Annual Report. South Africa: National Council of SPCA; 2022. <https://nspca.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2022-NSPCA-Annual-Report.pdf> (Accessed on Jul 20, 2023).
4. Swart S. Pit bull attacks in South Africa - a historian sheds light on the issues. The Conversation 2022. <https://theconversation.com/pit-bull-attacks-in-south-africa-a-historian-sheds-light-on-the-issues-195666>. (Accessed on Mar 22, 2023).
5. Van Sittert L, Swart S. *Canis Familiaris: A Dog History of South Africa*. South Afr Hist J 2003;48:138–73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02582470308671929>.
6. Cape SPCA. Anti-dogfighting Annual Report. City of Cape Town: Cape of Good Hope SPCA; 2021-2022. <https://nspca.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2022-NSPCA-Annual-Report.pdf> (Accessed on May 29, 2023).
7. Cape SPCA. The Socio-Economic Reality of Animal Welfare in Cape Town. Hosp News - Mob Clin 2021. <https://capespca.co.za/hospital-news/mobile-clinics/myra-the-socio-economic-reality-of-animal-welfare-in-cape-town/> (Accessed on Jul 11, 2025).
8. Cape SPCA. Dog Fighting Outreach Programs. Insp News 2022. <https://capespca.co.za> (Access date: Jun 21, 2025)
9. Beirne P, South N. Issues in green criminology. Routledge; 2013. ISBN-13: 978-1-84392-219-3.
10. Kalof L, Taylor C. The Discourse of Dog Fighting. *Humanity Soc* 2007;31:319–33. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016059760703100403>.
11. Nurse A. Green criminological perspectives on dog-fighting as organised masculinities-based animal harm. *Trends Organ Crime* 2021;24:447–66. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12117-021-09432-z>.

12. Walliss J. Crimes against non-human animals: Examining dog fighting in the UK and the USA through a green criminology perspective. *Social Compass* 2023;17. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.13087>.
13. Beirne P. For a nonspeciesist criminology: Animal abuse as an object of study. *Criminology* 1999;37:117–48. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.1999.tb00481.x>.
14. Sollund R. Animal abuse, animal rights and species justice. In the American Society of Criminology 69th Annual Meeting, Atlanta, 2013. https://www.academia.edu/29538382/Sollund_Animal_Abuse (Accessed on Aug 24, 2023).
15. Agnew R. The causes of animal abuse: A social-psychological analysis. *Green Criminol.*, Routledge; 2017, p. 83–116. eBook ISBN: 9781315093390.
16. Benton T. Rights and justice on a shared planet: More rights or new relations? *Theor Criminol* 1998;2:149–75. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480698002002>.
17. Cazaux G. Legitimizing the entry of 'the animals issue' into (critical) criminology. *Humanity Soc* 1998;22:365–85. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016059769802200403>.
- [18] Cazaux G. Beauty and the beast: Animal abuse from a non-speciesist criminological perspective. *Crime Law Soc Change* 1999;31:105–25. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1008347609286>.
19. Donovan J, Adams CJ. Beyond animal rights: A feminist caring ethic for the treatment of animals. 1996. ISBN: 978-0826408365.
20. Nibert D. Animal rights/human rights: Entanglements of oppression and liberation. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers; 2002. ISBN: 978-0742517769.
21. Noske B. Speciesism, anthropocentrism, and non-Western cultures. *Anthrozoös* 1997;10:183–90. <https://doi.org/10.2752/089279397787000950>.
22. Beirne P. From animal abuse to interhuman violence? A critical review of the progression thesis. *Soc Anim* 2004;12:39–65. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156853004323029531>.
23. Flynn CP. Understanding animal abuse: A sociological analysis. Lantern Books; 2012. ISBN: 978-1590563397.
24. Animal Fighting. *Shelter Med. Vet. Staff*. 1st ed., Wiley; 2011, p. 441–52. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119421511.ch27>.
25. Harding S, Nurse A. Analysis of UK dog fighting, laws and offences 2015. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325673922_Contemporary_dog_fighting_law_in_the_UK
26. Evans R, Gauthier DK, Forsyth CJ. Dogfighting: Symbolic Expression and Validation of Masculinity. *Sex Roles* 1998;39:825–38. <https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1018872404355>.
27. Kalof L. Animal Blood Sport: A Ritual Display of Masculinity and Sexual Virility. *Sociol Sport J* 2014;31:438–54. <https://doi.org/10.1123/ssi.2014-0051>.
28. Abusing the Human–Animal Bond: On the Making of Fighting Dogs. *Psychol. Hum.-Anim. Bond*, New York, NY: Springer New York; 2011, p. 321–32. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-9761-6_19.
29. PBFSA. History of the Pit bull Federation of South Africa. *Pit Bull Fed South Afr* 2022. <https://newsite.pbfsa.co.za/history-of-the-pit-bull-federation-of-south-africa-pbfsa/> (Accessed on Aug 20, 2023)
30. Wilson AP. Animal Law in South Africa: "Until the lions have their own lawyers, the law will continue to protect the hunter." *Derecho Anim Forum Anim Law Stud* 2019;10:35. <https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/da.399>.
31. NSPCA. Guide to Animal Protection Legislation for the South African Police Services (SAPS) 2019. <https://nspca.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/SAPS-Guide.pdf> (Accessed on Jul 11, 2024).
32. Animal Keeping By-Law 2021. <https://capespca.co.za/services/inspectorate-department/animal-keeping-by-law-2021/> (Accessed on Jul 11, 2024).
33. Jensen S. Claiming Community: Local Politics on the Cape Flats, South Africa. *Crit Anthropol* 2004;24:179–207. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308275x04042652>.
34. Williams JJ. Community participation: Lessons from post-apartheid South Africa. *Policy Stud* 2006;27:197–217. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442870600885982>
35. Emmett T. Beyond community participation? Alternative routes to civil engagement and development in South Africa. *Dev South Afr* 2000;17:501–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03768350050173903>.
36. Salo E. Negotiating gender and personhood in the new South Africa: Adolescent women and gangsters in Manenberg township on the Cape Flats. *Eur J Cult Stud* 2003;6:345–65. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13675494030063005>
37. Standing A. The threat of gangs and anti-gangs policy. *Occas Pap* 2005;116. <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/98758/PAPER116.pdf> (Accessed on Jan 6, 2023).
38. Samara TR. Cape Town after apartheid: crime and governance in the divided city. U of Minnesota Press; 2011. ISBN: 978-0-8166-7000-0.

Acknowledgements: I wish to thank Kala Bopape, Motlatsi Khosi, and Rainer Ebert, who were very helpful in providing constructive feedback on the different versions of this paper.

Author Contribution: The Author conceived the idea, wrote the manuscript, and checked the manuscript meticulously.

Conflict of interest. The Author declares that there is no conflict of interest in this study.

Funding: None

Data Availability: All data are included in the article.