



Internet in The Function of Promotion of Bestiality: Profiling Zoophiles

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Abstract: The Internet is an inseparable part of contemporary man's everyday life. The catalog of positive sides of this global information system, which encourage the development of creativity, is inexhaustible. Simultaneously, many negative aspects of the Internet in the context of breach of security, exposure to inappropriate content and promotion of bestiality exist. Therefore, in this paper we pay special attention to zoophilia, a specific disorder from the domain of paraphilia, which includes a sexual preference for animals with ethical and harmful consequences for health. According to the available data from the digital space, it is noted that this disorder affects a significant number of individuals. It is a very complex and sensitive disorder, which requires a multidisciplinary approach, including a psychopathological approach that would explore the symptoms, nature and factors (hereditary, organic and social) of pathological conditions and processes in these individuals. With tendency that this scientific paper represents an adequate reaction to make this disorder more visible, as part of preventive programs before the late manifestation, we applied methods: quantitative and qualitative content analysis, comparative analysis (reaction to zoophilia) and descriptive and analytical statistics. The goal is to recognize zoophilia as a disease and bestiality, that is, inhuman behavior, which requires an effective response from the social community.

Keywords: Internet, paraphilia, bestiality, zoophilia, profiling.

Introduction

In the hierarchy of human needs, the libido occupies one of the key places, where it symbolizes the energy of the sexual drive. Human nature itself is often unfathomable and unpredictable, and accordingly human sexuality is quite complex, broad and varied in terms of the stimuli that cause desire in individuals. It is normal for a human being, the object of desire that sexually attracts/takes over him, is another human being, with fulfilled criteria of mutual physical and mental maturity for establishing close relationships. However, there are people who have a disorder of sexual preferences, which directs them to atypical objects of desire, and their behavior some instances is even illegal and harmful to themselves and/or others. Within this group, characterized by paraphilia disorders, the category of individuals w to prefer animal species, called zoophiles, stands out.

Paraphilias include sexual arousal towards atypical objects, situations and/or target groups (for instance, children, animals, corpses...). Certain sexual activities that seem unusual to another person or a health professional do not constitute a paraphilic disorder just because they are unusual. Certain individuals may have paraphilic interests without meeting the criteria for a paraphilic disorder. Namely, not all forms of attraction are paraphilias - they only become so when they are the only way of sexual satisfaction. Dozens of paraphilias have been described, while some are rarely represented. Affected persons may have more than one paraphilic disorder, and these persons may also have significant personality disorders (antisocial, sadistic, narcissistic...), further complicating treatment procedures (Bjelajac, 2020). In individuals who exhibit such behaviors, obsessive sexual needs or fantasies dominate, which causes significant disturbances or deficiencies in the social, work, or living environment.

Sexual contact with animals (SCA) is called zoophilia or bestiality. This topic has been present in numerous cultures since the ancient times, and attracts the attention of researchers for a long time. It consists of specific antisocial/psychopathological actions, which most often results in the stigmatization

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of the perpetrators and the abuse of animals. Zoophilia is generally speaking, a psychosexual defect that mainly affects adults, in such a way that they become obsessed with desire to have sexual relations with particular animals. Its causes and conditions are hard to determine, as to why a human being determines animals as objects of sexual desire, which also applies to the prevalence in the general population. The prevalence is difficult to determine, therefore, because those who have this paraphilia usually do not admit it and because the Internet we use (surface web) is only a small part of the Internet, the tip of the iceberg, which displays millions of visits to an incalculable amount of zoo sex content. There is also another part, which is not visible, and which represents the bottom of the iceberg (dark web), which is accessed in a difficult way. The dark web offers its users anonymity, while they cruise through "hidden" pages, where you can find all the worst things you can think of, including the most depraved bestiality of zoophiles.

It must be taken into account that the aforementioned practices are punishable by law in several countries due to animal abuse. Maintaining sexual relations with animals can also cause the transmission of serious diseases, the occurrence of sexually transmitted infections such as venereal lymphogranuloma and other changes that can cause major problems in the quality of life of a person, as well as of other people with whom he comes into contact. Likewise, during the act, physical injuries can occur, both to the person and to the animal, as well as behavioral changes after copulation. Because of all the above, the profiling of zoophiles is a matter of social importance, not only in the domain of suppressing this unacceptable and incriminated antisocial behavior, but also from the aspect of early detection of these persons and their treatment with professional help. Furthermore, the psychotherapeutic treatment of individuals affected by this paraphilia is hampered by shame and/or fear of social judgment. Consequently, a complex approach is necessary to solve this problem, with a focus on the de-erotization of the object of sexual desire and redirecting the individual's sexual preference to a socially acceptable object.

Human nature and paraphilic disorders

The term paraphilia refers to sexual pleasure and passion resulting from fantasizing and unusual sexual behavior. People who exhibit such behaviors are dominated by obsessive sexual needs or fantasies that cause significant disturbances or deficiencies in the social, work, or living environment (Bjelajac, 2020). These are patterns of sexual behavior in which desire, arousal, or pleasure are largely dependent on atypical elements, although this does not necessarily imply pathology. Paraphilias that are also recognized in the Fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychological Association (DSM-5) are exhibitionism, fetishism, frotteurism (touching or rubbing against people who do not want it), pedophilia, sexual masochism (humiliation or suffering), transvestite fetishism (wearing clothes of the other sex) and voyeurism (observation of another's sexual activity), while other paraphilias include zoophilia, necrophilia, and gerontophilia.

Zoophilia causes strong emotional reactions and debates both in scientific circles and in public. Academic research and reliable statistical data are generally scarce because zoophilia and bestiality are generally considered rare and unworthy of serious research or debate. The lack of research can be a consequence of different legal regulations, disinterest of scientists due to the taboo that accompanies this topic, complex data collection, resentment and misunderstanding of society, etc. The development of information and communication technologies and the Internet made it possible to examine the psychosocial characteristics of zoophiles much more easily than before. The reason for this is the anonymity of people with zoophilic interests, tendency for avoiding judgment, belonging to the zoophile sub-culture on the Internet, and connecting with people with the same interests in closed communities away from the public eye (Williams and Weinberg, 2003). Internet pages allow them to discuss on different forums with people with similar paraphilic disorders, but also to exchange pornographic materials. Although zoophile websites and online communities attract zoophiles as well as those who visit these sites out of curiosity, it is still unclear what the motivations are for using this type of pornography. Science is faced with the task of determining those motives. It is similar with other forms of paraphilia (pedophilia, necrophilia) and one of the goals of this paper is to contribute to that field. Several studies have investigated the motivation for consuming pornographic material, which could reveal predisposing psychological factors for its use and possibly underlying behavioral problems (De Souza and Baltieri, 2016, 144). The fear of stigmatization and social alienation of zoophiles suggests that they stick to secrecy and isolated groups with similar interests, which can negatively affect their psychological health and depression (Maratea, 2011).

What are the motives that lead a certain person to enter into sexual relations with animals have not been precisely determined and defined so far. As with other paraphilias, science has not answered this question clearly. Numerous factors have been investigated; one of the dominant ones is the lack of

a sexual partner. Miletski (Hani Miletski) researched paraphilias; one of the topics she dealt with was zoophilia and bestiality. In her studies, she examined the motives of the sexual orientation of zoophiles. She viewed sexual orientation from three aspects (Miletski, 2017):

- affective orientation - who or what we are emotionally attached to;
- sexual fantasy orientation - with whom or what we fantasize about having sex;
- erotic orientation - with whom or with what we prefer to have sex.

The results of several studies conducted by Miletski showed that sexual attraction and expression of love are two basic motives for sexual affection towards animals. Most of the respondents had sexual fantasies before the first sexual act with an animal, and the most obvious sexual fantasy is seeing others having sex with animals. Some respondents feel jealous if their animal has a relationship with someone else. Most of the respondents consider themselves zoophiles because they justify their relationship with an animal as an act of love, while a smaller part of the respondents consider themselves bestialists considering that they have a relationship with an animal only for sex. Also, the majority of respondents stated that they do not want to stop having relations with animals, stating that this is their sexual orientation and that they like it (Miletski, 2017).

Other research indicates that bestiality and zoophilia represent a specific psychiatric disorder. Wochner and Klosinski studied 1502 aggressive children and adolescents and found that 25 were zoosadists. These were exclusively boys, dominated by those aged 13, 17 and 18, which could be related to puberty problems, social restrictions and proving masculinity. Compared to a control group of "just aggressive" patients, zoosadists can be diagnosed with organic brain damage due to pregnancy or childbirth complications, harsh and tough parenting, and the absence of a positive father figure (Wochner and Klosinski, 1988).

Bestiality and zoophilia are often associated with other violent acts of the individual. Many studies have shown "a significant relationship between animal abuse and interpersonal violence, including domestic violence as well as social violence" (Alleyn and Parfitt, 2019). One reason for this association is that in some cases of domestic violence, abusers inflict injuries on animals in order to exert control over their victims. On the other hand, violence between family members and acts of violence witnessed by children can be a significant indicator of children's violence against animals, which is also manifested through zoophilia.

Zoophilia as paraphilic disorder

Zoophilia is a special form of paraphilia in which a person experiences sexual pleasure in a relationship with an animal. There is no agreement in the scientific and professional literature about what is considered zoophilia. Even the name itself causes numerous disagreements and debates among experts, about which we will present our opinion in the remainder of the paper.

Sexual behavior with animals includes various activities such as masturbation, anal intercourse (Peretti and Rowan, 1983), exhibitionism, voyeurism (McNally and Lukach, 1991). There is no uniform understanding of the different forms and classifications of zoophilia. Different terms can be found in the literature to explain the unnatural relationship between human and animal. Some of these terms are zoophilia, zoophilism, bestiality, zooerasty, bestiosexuality, etc. One of the classifications of zoophilia that is accepted in the literature and tries to prevent and avoid the existing terminological confusion is based on the classification of necrophilia as one of the paraphilic disorders. This classification ranks all shades of zoophilia from the least harmless behavior to the most criminal (Aggrawal 2011, p. 74). It includes the following categories of zoophilia (Aggrawal, 2009):

- Category I: Zoophiles do not use animals for sex at all but are only so-called role players. They express the desire that their partners in real life behave or imitate animals. The partner is reduced to the status of an animal as a symbol of showing authority and dominance.
- Category II: This category includes romantic zoophiles who keep an animal as a pet for psychosexual stimulation but do not engage in sex with animals.
- Category III: A category that includes zoophilic fantasies without actual sexual intercourse (masturbation in the presence of an animal, zoophilic voyeurism and exhibitionism).
- Category IV: Tactile zoophiles who experience sexual excitement by touching, petting or caressing an animal or its erotic parts.
- Category V: Zoophile fetishists who keep animal parts, especially fur, and use this as a fetish for their zoophilic activities.
- Category VI: Sexual pleasure comes from sadistic activities with an animal, such as torture (zoosadism). People of this class use animals for sexual excitement without actually having intercourse

with them.

- Category VII: This is the first category in which there is sexual intercourse between man and animal. Although they have sexual relations with people, these people would not refrain from sexual relations with animals if they were given the opportunity. There is no emotional connection between man and animal, but they use the situation in which they find themselves without the presence of other persons (shepherds, gamekeepers, etc.).

- Category VIII: This category includes "classic" zoophiles. They do not enjoy sexual relations with humans and prefer animals for relations. However, they can have sex with both humans and animals. In this sense, they differ from zoophiles from category X, who can only have sex with animals. These are people who show emotions towards animals, do not hurt them and do not cause them pain, and they manifest their love through sexual intercourse with the animal.

- Category IX: A special category of zoophiles that is related to necrophilia as a special form of paraphilia. These people are also called necrozoophiles because they have to kill an animal to have intercourse with it (necrozoophiles). They are, however, capable of having sex with live animals, but the need to have sex with dead animals is so great that they have to kill animals to have sex with their cadavers (Hickey, 2006).

- Category X: Sexual intercourse is possible only or mainly with animals, with the practical complete exclusion of human partners. Sexual activity with animals can occur due to the unavailability of suitable human partners or as a form of sexual experimentation. In such cases, the use of animals is not always the preferred method of achieving sexual arousal.

The classification of zoophilic disorder is important for therapeutic treatment, although it is quite complicated to obtain data on the history of zoophilic behavior in the earlier period of life due to feelings of shame, resentment or fear of sanction. Persons classified in the first five categories can undergo therapeutic treatment aimed at modifying and correcting behavior, while zoophiles from the other categories would have to be treated with more rigorous forms of treatment such as various pharmacological medications (Saleh and Guidry, 2003; Codispoti, 2008).

Although there are studies that show that people who have sexual relations with animals consider bestiality and zoophilia as a sexual orientation and not punishable behavior, in most developed countries such forms of behavior are sanctioned. Legislation differs from country to country and there are conflicting opinions whether animal protection should be a constitutional category or whether it should be regulated by legal and bylaws (criminal, misdemeanor). Animals do not have legal capacity; only people can be the subject of basic rights and freedoms and only people have a right to dignity. Today, in Europe, basic human rights are simultaneously protected at the country level, by the European Union and the European Convention (Cassel, 2016). The results of a study that was carried out in 15 European countries (Hungary, Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland) and which examined the legal status of animals and the criminal law regulation of zoophilia, are quite contradictory. The study investigated whether certain forms or all actions with animals are punishable and whether the possession and distribution of pornographic material with animals is punishable.

According to the obtained results, the criminal legislation of the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland is the most complete in assessing and sanctioning zoophilia. At the other end of the ranking list are Hungary, Italy and Slovenia because their criminal law does not include special sanctions in cases of zoophilia. In 5 out of 15 countries, animal protection is listed in some form as a constitutional category, and the Swiss legislation is the most complete. In Sweden, it is forbidden to show content with elements of animal cruelty in the media. There are also legal provisions against videos or recordings made using other technical means that depict violent acts or threats to people or animals, which are directed at minors. In many cases, illegal images of animal violence also violate the law. Most legislations give animals a special status, not considering them just things and objects, but state that they are living beings that perceive the world around them with their senses. The situation in which a sexual act with an animal cannot be considered abuse is most often disputed because there are no physical injuries. In those cases, the question of the dignity of animals was raised. Some countries, although they do not mention the dignity of animals in their constitutions or laws (with the exception of Switzerland), take it into account when they sanction cases motivated by zoophilia that do not result in animal injury. The dignity of animals is one of the main arguments of those in favor of strict sanctions against zoophiles (Vetter, Boros and Ózsvári, 2020, 9). Common in most legislations is the term animal welfare, which has also found application in our legislation. Domestic legislation is much more advanced than most EU countries. "The Criminal Code of the RS in Article 269 provides for the crime of Killing and abusing animals, which seeks to criminalize all behavior that endangers animals (murder, injury, torture or other abuse). Animals do not have clearly

and unequivocally established rights and freedoms like humans, and therefore the notions of deprivation of life, physical injury or torture of animals cannot be analogous to those of humans. Therefore, it was necessary to introduce acts into our legal order that will remove these doubts by prescribing what can and cannot be done with animals" (Ristivojević and Bugarski, 2014, 2). This article of the criminal law was elaborated in the special [Law on Animal Welfare \(2009\)](#), which protects animals from all negative forms of behavior of individuals or companies that harm the welfare of animals. This law was created as a result of harmonization of Serbian legislation with European legislation within the EU accession process. Animal welfare, which is regulated by this law, refers to animals that can feel pain, suffering, fear and stress. In Article 5 of this law, animal abuse is defined as "any treatment or failure to treat animals that intentionally or negligently causes pain, suffering, fear, stress, injury, violates the genetic integrity of the animal and causes death, including physical and psychological abuse". Physical abuse also includes sexual violence. Article 7, paragraph 1, prohibits the abuse of animals, while paragraph 24 states that it is forbidden to "kill, abuse, and incite an animal to aggressiveness and unnatural behavior for the purpose of producing films, advertisements, and other works on filmstrips, videotapes, and other carriers of images and sounds, as well as to put into circulation, rent and publicly show such films, commercials and other works". Therefore, we see that certain behaviors are sanctioned even though the sanctions according to this law are primarily monetary. Of course, the part related to sexual abuse of animals is regulated by law, but we cannot be satisfied with the fact that zoophilia and bestiality are not mentioned anywhere, and that there are no criminal sanctions for this type of concrete behavior towards animals.

Visible and dark side of web in the context of zoophilia

The Internet is an unfathomably large digital space. It seems perspicuous to the average user, because search engines such as Google, Yahoo, or Bing, in fractions of a second, list the results for the given search term, and for the most popular Internet services, there are also applications for almost every existing operating system for every device. However, even from its beginnings, and especially in this iteration of the Internet, that visible and transparent part of the Internet represents only a small part of that colossal global network, and therefore frequent comparisons are made with icebergs, where only the tip is above the water, while the rest, both in massiveness and in depth far below the surface. Hence the distinction between the visible web and the invisible is often referred to as the dark part of the Internet, Dark Net or Dark Web. Although most of the everyday access to the Internet occurs in the surface part of the Internet, which is subject to stricter control, which is mostly carried out through search algorithms that do not display search results for certain terms, the Dark Web occasionally comes into the public spotlight, most often when some criminal network or illegal activities are exposed, like in the case with Silk Road, an online marketplace where a wide variety of illegal products, from weapons to hard drugs such as heroin or cocaine, could be purchased, and payment was made in cryptocurrencies to avoid detection by the financial authorities. Silk Road operated smoothly from 2011 until 2013, when the FBI arrested the site's founder and owner Ross William Ulbricht and seized the website. (see more: [Bjelajac, 2022](#)). Of course, that particular site was the most famous and popular. Its discovery led to raising the level of awareness of the existence of the dark side of the Internet, but similar sites still exist on the Dark Net. With them, there is also a wide variety of content, some of which are the most strictly prohibited, such as child pornography, snuff pornography, and which is the subject of this paper, zoophilia. The dark side of the Internet cannot be accessed through conventional browsers and search engines, but a particular encrypted system is used, such as the Tor network (The Onion Routing Network). The US Navy initially developed this technology, and for some time was its exclusive user, for the needs of protected and secure communication. Later, the technology moved to open source, and thus its use began for these purposes as well (see more: [Frankenfield, 2022](#)). The technology is still functional today, and is used to access hidden sites, forums and other internet forms in a secure way, and most zoophile content is accessed in this way.

Although the largest number of sites dedicated to bestiality is located in the depths of the Dark Web, people with zoophilic tendencies can satisfy their urges even on the visible part of the Internet. Below we provide an overview of the availability and interest in zoophilic content on the visible side of the Internet that can be accessed by conventional means. A total of 1,839 searches for the given term "zoo sex" were performed on the Google search engine in a period of 30 days, from February 16th, 2023 to March 12th, 2023. The following chart shows interest over time in that period.

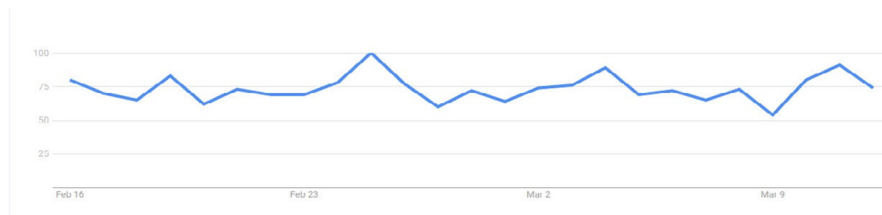


Figure 1. Google search for term „zoo sex“, worldwide interest over time in period 16.02.2023-12.03.2023. (source: Google Trends)

The graph represents the curve of the number of searches per day, while the vertical axis shows the sums of daily searches for that term. There were not more than 100 of them in one day in the period in question, but, at the same time, there were more than 50. When we talk about the geographical distribution, we can see it in the following illustration.



Figure 2. Google search for term „zoo sex“, worldwide interest per region, in period 16.02.2023-12.03.2023. (source: Google Trends)

On the map that can be seen in the illustration, the countries with a higher number of searches are marked with a darker color, and as we can see in the list, out of 74 countries in which this term was searched, Serbia is in fifth place. The Google Trends service also offers a list of searches for related terms in the same subject period, which included 24 queries, and the terms included are “animal sex”, “zoo porn”, “dog sex”, “horse sex”, “zoo tube”, “zoo porn”, as well as numerous other variations that include animal names with the word sex, porn, or porno. In the period in question, there were 1204 such searches for terms related to the term “zoo sex”. By searching for the term “zoo sex” on the Google search engine, you can find about 90 sites with bestial content, and almost every one of these sites offers its own list of links to sites with similar content. The filters built into Google’s search engine remove the largest number of results, and the actual number of sites with zoophile content is immeasurably higher, and it should be emphasized that Google only searches the visible part of the Internet and does not go into the Dark Web, where most of the zoophilic sites, forums and other internet forms dedicated to this paraphilia are located. According to modest estimates, there are tens of thousands of sites with bestial content, where there are several thousand video clips and photos of sex with animals, which are usually divided by categories, and the categories are usually by the types of animals involved in sexual relations.

In our digital/virtual world, we encounter programs every day that lead many individuals to be fascinated by criminal behavior and in those same individuals develop an interest in what causes people to commit such acts. Deviant behaviors, related to disorders that are socially conditioned, harmful and unacceptable, because they deviate from established standards and norms, are known as social pathology. Under social deviations in social pathology we include those types of individual and group behavior that result in the appearance of socially destructive, pathological and delinquent behavior. In a broader sense, we mean all those cases that cause a social reaction due to the threat of universal social values (Bjelajac and Filipović, 2022a). The development of the Internet, and the positioning of the Internet as one of the main preoccupations of modern man, has brought new opportunities for satisfying socially unacceptable, or even directly criminal urges. Before the Internet, people with inclinations to sex with animals could not satisfy their urges in a simple way, especially those people who are excited by sex with animals, but are not direct participants in sexual relations with animals, but satisfy their urge by watching. While people with a penchant for conventional pornography could find pornographic magazines or films

relatively easily, people with various paraphilias, including bestiality, found it incomparably more difficult to find such materials. What is also important, they could not do this while remaining invisible, mobile, and with multiplied presence. Before the Internet, such pornographic materials were obtained through communication with other paraphiles, such as zoophiles. However, with the advent and enormous spread of the Internet, it became easier to find and access these contents, which directly influenced the increase in the number of people with zoophilic tendencies who do not directly participate in sexual relations with animals, but observe and, as a rule, enjoy themselves by consuming and contents. In this sense, we can divide people involved in the chain of bestiality on the Internet into three categories:

- Participants - those persons who have sexual contact with animals, whether male or female, and who can be seen having sex with animals in videos or photos available on the Internet, very often for money they receive from producers and distributors of zoophile content;

- Observers - those persons who generally do not have direct sexual contact with animals, but primarily satisfy their needs by watching bestial content on the Internet, whether they have ever experienced SCA or not, and in this category we note the greatest expansion as a result of the development of the Internet and the availability of bestial content on internet, and the fact that these people most often do not achieve SCA does not reduce the risk of a potential SCA at an opportune moment, and who, in addition to zoophilia as a paraphilic disorder, also have other paraphilias as comorbidities, such as voyeurism and exhibitionism;

- Distributors – persons who put zoophile contents into circulation, i.e. make them available for users, who are often producers/creators of those contents, and can but do not have to be zoophiles themselves. The majority of distributors are in this business for profit, and do not suffer from paraphilic disorders, but a number of distributors who are also creators of the content they distribute suffer from the bestial disorder. Naturally, if we consider that zoophilic pornography is only one of the pornographic niches, it often happens that distributors, i.e. operators of web sites, have other types of pornography in their offer, and if we are talking about Dark Net sites, that offer also includes pornography related to for other paraphilias, such as pedophilia, necrophilia, sexual sadism, fetishism, etc.

The numbers we arrived at by researching the visible part of the Internet do not seem large, especially when compared to the number of sites with conventional pornography. However, since most of the content and Internet traffic related to bestiality is located deep in the Dark Web, we can conclude that the prevalence of this content is immeasurably greater. Also, sites dedicated to such contents, which cause the greatest number of people deep repulsion and disgust, cannot earn from advertising stemming from the number of visits, so they are mostly located behind paywalls, i.e., in order to access such contents, the user must pay a large amount of money, usually in cryptocurrencies. The Internet itself already offers anonymity, which encourages sexually deviant people to consume content that corresponds to their sexual preferences, and the Dark Web, most often reach by using the Tor network, provides even more anonymity, for all the parties involved, users and operators of the web-sites where criminal contents are often found. Therefore, the efforts of states, societies, and international organizations should be focused on acting against distributors of bestial content. Out of everything we mentioned before, it is clear that this job is not at all easy and that while one distributor is removed, several new ones appear, but this must not be a reason for passivity in acting against this dangerous and unnatural phenomenon, which, in addition to mental and moral risks, also carries enormous public health risk, starting from the transmission of zoonotic viruses, through various bacteriological infections, up to the increased risk of penile cancer as a consequence of SCA.

Significance of zoophile profiling

It is very difficult but also very important to profile people with zoophilic disorder. “The issue of profiling in criminal investigations is quite complex and not easy to define, which is why it contains a lot of ambiguities but also underestimations. Profilers are individuals / experts who are able to construct the psychological profile of the perpetrator but also the victim. They strive to be close and / or identical to their characteristics in real terms. Profiling begins on a solid scientific basis, but during this process intuition and imagination begin to prevail. An experienced criminal investigator thinks about the perpetrator of a crime permanently, and when he gathers all the facts about him, he selects them in his mind in different ways. After that, he begins to imagine a person, sees him more and more clearly and forms an image of him, making reasonable predictions about how that person will react in certain specific situations” (Bjelajac and Filipović, 2022b). As part of law enforcement teams, they use their knowledge, intuition and experience to reconstruct a crime from start to finish and create psychological profiles of potential suspects (Bjelajac, 2022). Criminal profiling is a forensic technique that predicts personality patterns, behaviors and

demographic characteristics of offenders. This technique gives the user insight and a better understanding of the perpetrator's characteristics of a crime or offense. It is significant from the aspect of predicting certain forms of behavior in order to prevent them from occurring. The prediction of certain criminal acts, among which zoophilia is certainly one, contributes to the creation of adequate prevention programs that will be directed at the risk group or individual. Today, profiling has found significant application in all spheres of science and technology. The growth of the Internet has brought the automatic collection of data on each individual that can be easily generated and sublimated, creating a profile of that person with all his habits, needs, interests, desires, behavior patterns, demographic characteristics (gender, age, education, occupation, marital status, place of residence). This data is used to predict the behavior of individuals and groups, their interests and preferences. It is similar with people who are prone to paraphilias and therefore to zoophilia. Numerous scientific research aimed at gathering more data and information based on which it would be possible to create profiles of criminals and predict their behavior. By sublimating the results of a large number of research we have listed in this paper, certain conclusions can be drawn that point to the profile of a person prone to zoophilia, regardless of which category of zoophiles that person belongs to. Zoophiles use Internet to connect with other zoophiles (26.6% to have casual sex, 17.7% for dating, and 17% to exchange pornography). Connections are easiest to be established in countryside, where zoophilia clusters. In fact, there are village communities of zoos where explicit sharing of animal sexual partner(s) (28%) and/or voyeurism (30%) serve as bonding ritual. Over 40% of zoophiles are reluctant to meet other zoos in person, since they view them as "weird", pointing to phenomenon of internalized stigmatization due to having non-normative sexuality (Sendler and Lew-Starowicz, 2017). It seems that the common feature that connects people suffering to this disorder is related to the reluctance to make friends and dating peers during the adolescent period. Therefore, the sexual energy of a mature young person is channeled to another object in a substitutive way, due to the impossibility of access and the barrier to the real object of desire. This zoophilic practice is particularly visible in isolated and hard-to-reach rural areas, where human contact is limited and access to domestic animals is relatively easy. Therefore, the choice of SCA in these circumstances is situational, mechanical, as an alternative for the lack of normal peer intimate relationships. Unlike people from rural areas who fulfill their sexual fantasies in the described way, individuals from urban areas who suffer from this disorder usually fulfill their sexual fantasies indirectly by watching zoo sex content on the Internet. Many visitors to these platforms are actually "unfulfilled zoophiles", who enjoy voyeurism and exhibitionism, watching others. Zoophiles are most often people who come from dysfunctional families in which separation, the presence of domestic violence with elements of abuse (physical, psychological and sexual) and neglect, with episodes of animal abuse have been recorded. In a study of 171 men who committed bestiality, 29.8% reported committing it with a group of men, and 70.2% reported doing it alone. The same study found that 62% had sex with multiple animals, while 38% always used the same animal and 14% said they had sex with an animal once, 15% said they did it monthly, and 39.5% said they did it weekly or more (Zequi et al., 2012). Due to the impossibility of obtaining valid data from zoophiles on a voluntary basis, some research are based on data obtained from zoophiles who committed a crime and were therefore legally prosecuted. The data obtained in this way contributed to the profiling of zoophiles and their easier detection. According to one of the studies with arrested zoophiles (Edwards, 2019) it was shown that almost one third (31.6%) of sex offenders with animals also sexually abused children and adults, while 52.9% of sex offenders against animals in the earlier period committed crimes with elements of violence, property crimes and abuse of psychoactive substances and alcohol. According to the same study, 72.5% of incidents involved an animal that lived with or was known to the perpetrator, 27.6% of offenders had sex with more than one animal or multiple sexual interactions with the same animal. When we talk about personality characteristics, we can conclude that these are people who have low intellectual potential, a pronounced sense of guilt, shame or fear of social judgment, with a feeling of rejection and a lack of empathy, prone to alienation and social exclusion, a lack of trust in themselves and others, a feeling insecurities and problems in social functioning. Poor hygiene habits usually affect poor health and zoophilic disorder itself can be comorbid with other diseases and conditions such as brain aneurysm, neurological disorders and psychoses (Marshall, 2007).

The recording of all data related to the characteristics of zoophiles contributes to the timely detection of these persons as well as the application of adequate treatment measures, which can be medicinal or therapeutic, depending on which category of zoophiles we are talking about.

Discussion

There are few studies dealing with zoophilia and mostly they give conflicting results. So far, two groups of researchers with different views regarding the phenomenon of SCA have been distinguished.

The first group of researchers, (Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin, 1948; Peretti and Rowan., 1982). suggests that “zoophilia is predominantly ego-dystonic and that its origins have a dysfunctional background”. Another group of more modern researchers (Beetz, 2004; Miletski, 2001; Earls and Lalumiere, 2009) advocates the point of view that “not all people with zoophilia have a dysfunctional background and that they do not experience frustrations due to their experience with SCA”. The contemporary point of view, compared to the traditional one, explains that the affected persons prefer sexual contact with animals as their sexual preference.

In support of this, the fact that there are no agreed positions on zoophilia in the scientific community is also indicated by the fact that this phenomenon was not classified as a mental disorder until the third edition of the APA's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders (DSM-3). In the DSM-5, zoophilia is listed in the section “Other Specified Paraphilic Disorder” which refers to “repeated and intense sexual arousal involving . . . animals’ and causing significant stress and impairment in social, occupational and other important areas of functioning” (APA, 2013). Furthermore, this behavior is not treated as normal if it becomes ego-dystonic and harmful. Simultaneously, if a certain country's legislation prescribes it as such, it can be a misdemeanor or felony, so there can be various legal consequences for persons suffering from this disorder.

In any case, we should unequivocally define ourselves in relation to this phenomenon despite the evident contradictions. First, zoophilia is a serious disorder/disease characterized by a kind of psychopathic behavior. Second, this disorder leads to criminalized treatment of animals and has legal implications in many jurisdictions, due to animal abuse and crimes against nature. Third, zoophilia cannot be treated as an unimportant community health problem, which isolates and marginalizes the individual exposed to this problem without a comprehensive treatment plan. Fourth, the Internet, as the largest global information system, should be denied the right to promote and affirm anti-social and bestial content, which is contrary to social norms. Fifth, since an animal cannot consent to sex, SCA should be treated and legally regulated as pedophilia, making no distinction between the sexual abuse of children and the sodomization of animals, however problematic and unpleasant that may be.

Conclusions

Bestiality and zoophilia are unjustifiably neglected by the scientific and professional public considering that they represent a serious health and social problem. The lack of more research and valid data is no justification for neglecting this topic. The fact that 2% or even 10% of the population at least sexually fantasizes about animals calls for an urgent response from society. It is necessary to open a public and professional discussion on the topic of bestiality and especially on animal abuse. Our research has shown that the problem of zoophilia is much bigger than official data portrays. The easy availability of the Internet and covert communication, visiting sites in the visible part of the Internet, and especially on the Dark Web, indicate the seriousness and spread of this form of paraphilia. As with other paraphilias, bestiality and zoophilia represent a serious problem that is most often characterized by disorder and psychopathic personality traits, in most countries it is criminalized by criminal legislation, negative implications for the social life of the individual, consequences for the health and well-being of animals, which requires a multidisciplinary approach to this problem. Sexual relations with animals they expose people to various health risks and often cause physical harm to the animal involved in sexual intercourse.

Resulting from everything stated above, the collection of data on zoophiles is the basis of valid and necessary profiling, the goal of which is the early detection of these cases and persons with paraphilic disorders. Profiling allows us to create adequate preventive measures in order to prevent the manifestation of this form of behavior. In addition to numerous conflicting views, it is also necessary to harmonize legal regulations and precise incrimination that will recognize zoophilia, as well as pedophilia, as a criminal offense. Controlling the Internet and the content displayed on it is one of the best preventive measures in order to prevent the spread of zoophilia and zoophilic pornography. The indecisive and indifferent attitude of society, the scientific and professional public towards this form of paraphilia must be changed in the direction of greater engagement of experts of different profiles, but also of other state authorities, the media, non-governmental organizations, animal protection societies and other relevant entities.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, Ž.B., B.M. and A.M.F.; methodology, Ž.B.; supervision, Ž.B.; formal analysis, B.M. and A.M.F.; writing—original draft preparation Ž.B., B.M. and A.M.F.; writing—review and editing, Ž.B., B.M. and A.M.F. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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