

# WITCHCRAFT

## (Arm Yourselves with the Word)

### Leviticus 19:31

Do not turn to mediums or necromancers (*one who practices necromancy, or a sorcerer, or a wizard*) ; do not seek them out, and so make yourselves unclean by them: I am the Lord your God.

Necromancy – Communicating with the spirits of the dead in order to predict the future or black magic, etc.

### Exodus 22:18

You shall not permit a sorceress to live.

### Leviticus 20:27

A man or a woman who is a medium or a necromancer shall surely be put to death. They shall be stoned with stones; their blood shall be upon them.

### Revelation 21:8

But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.

### 1 Samuel 15:23

For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king.

### Leviticus 20:6

If a person turns to mediums and necromancers, whoring after them, I will set my face against that person and will cut him off from among his people.

### Galatians 5:19-21

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity,

sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

### **2 Chronicles 33:6**

And he burned his sons as an offering in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and used fortune-telling and omens and sorcery, and dealt with mediums and with necromancers. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger.

### **Revelation 22:15**

Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

### **Isaiah 8:19**

And when they say to you, "Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter," should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living?

### **Deuteronomy 18:9-12**

When you come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord. And because of these abominations the Lord your God is driving them out before you.

### **Acts 19:19**

And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver.

**Micah 5:12**

And I will cut off sorceries from your hand, and you shall have no more tellers of fortunes:

**1 Chronicles 10:13-14**

So Saul died for his breach of faith. He broke faith with the Lord in that he did not keep the command of the Lord, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance. He did not seek guidance from the Lord. Therefore the Lord put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.

**2 Kings 21:6**

And he burned his son as an offering and used fortune-telling and omens and dealt with mediums and with necromancers. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger.

**Leviticus 19:26**

You shall not eat any flesh with the blood in it. You shall not interpret omens or tell fortunes.

**Revelation 18:23**

And the light of a lamp will shine in you no more, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more, for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery.

**Deuteronomy 18:14**

For these nations, which you are about to dispossess, listen to fortune-tellers and to diviners. But as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you to do this.

## **2 Kings 17:17**

And they burned their sons and their daughters as offerings and used divination and omens and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger.

## **2 Kings 23:24**

Moreover, Josiah put away the mediums and the necromancers and the household gods and the idols and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might establish the words of the law that were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the Lord.

## **Jeremiah 27:9**

So do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your dreamers, your fortune-tellers, or your sorcerers, who are saying to you, 'You shall not serve the king of Babylon.'

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Since early times, people have sought supernatural experiences God did not endorse. The nations that surrounded the Promised Land were saturated with such practices, and God had stern words for His people concerning any involvement with them. Deuteronomy 18:9–12 says, "When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord."

God takes witchcraft very seriously. The penalty for practicing witchcraft

under the Mosaic Law was death (Exodus 22:18, Leviticus 20:27). First Chronicles 10:13 tells us that "Saul died because he was unfaithful to the Lord; he did not keep the word of the Lord and even consulted a medium for guidance."

In the New Testament, "sorcery" is translated from the Greek word pharmakeia, from which we get our word pharmacy (Galatians 5:20, Revelation 18:23). Witchcraft and spiritism often involve the ritualistic use of magic potions and mind-controlling drugs. Using illicit drugs can open ourselves up to the invasion of demonic spirits. Engaging in a practice or taking a substance to achieve an altered state of consciousness is a form of witchcraft.

**There are only two sources of spiritual power: God and Satan.**

Satan has only the power that God allows him to have, but it is considerable (Job 1:12; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 20:2). To seek spirituality, knowledge, or power apart from God is idolatry, closely related to witchcraft. First Samuel 15:23 says,

*"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry."*

Witchcraft is Satan's realm, and he excels in counterfeiting what God does. When Moses performed miracles before Pharaoh, the magicians did the same things through demonic power (Exodus 8:7). At the heart of witchcraft is the desire to know the future and control events that are not ours to control. Those abilities belong only to the Lord. This desire has its roots in Satan's first temptation to Eve: "You can be like God" (Genesis 3:5).

Since the Garden of Eden, Satan's major focus has been to divert human hearts away from worship of the true God (Genesis 3:1). He entices humans with the suggestions of power, self-realization, and spiritual enlightenment apart from submission to the Lord God. Witchcraft is merely another branch of that enticement. To become involved in witchcraft in any way is to enter Satan's realm. Seemingly "harmless" modern entanglements with witchcraft can include horoscopes, Ouija boards,

Eastern meditation rituals, and some video and role-playing games. Any practice that dabbles in a power source other than the Lord Jesus Christ is witchcraft.

Revelation 22:15 includes witches in a list of those who will not inherit eternal life:

*"Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood."*

**We don't need to fear Satan's power, but we should acknowledge it and stay away from it.**

First John 4:4 says, *"Greater is He who is in you, than he who is in the world."* Satan can create much havoc, harm, and destruction, even in the lives of believers (1 Thessalonians 2:18; Job 1:12–18; 1 Corinthians 5:5). However, if we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, there is no power that can ultimately defeat us (Isaiah 54:17). We are overcomers (1 John 5:4) as we *"put on the whole armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes"* (Ephesians 6:11). When we give our lives to Christ, we must repent. This repentance should include renouncing any involvement with witchcraft, following the example of the early believers in Acts 19:19.

Isaiah 8:19 says, *"When someone tells you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?"* When we follow those words to their logical conclusion, we could also ask, "Why seek any power apart from the source of all real power? Why seek spirits who are not the Holy Spirit?" Witchcraft and its many counterparts promise spirituality but lead only to emptiness and death (Micah 5:12; Galatians 5:19–21). Only Jesus has the words of life (John 6:68).

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# **Witchcraft Beliefs Around the World: An Exploratory Analysis<sup>1</sup>**

**Boris Gershman<sup>2</sup>**

**American University**

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## **Abstract**

Beliefs in witchcraft, defined as an ability of certain people to intentionally cause harm via supernatural means, have been documented all over the world, both recently and in the distant past.

Guided by the key themes from the literature, our cross-country analysis focuses on the following four issues:

- 1) the role of witchcraft beliefs in maintaining conformity and self-governance,
- 2) their relationship to social capital, psychological well-being, and world outlook,
- 3) the link between witchcraft beliefs, innovation, and economic development,
- 4) exposure to misfortunes as a factor in sustaining witchcraft beliefs.

We examine 60 characteristics and establish the following patterns.

- First, witchcraft beliefs are substantially more prevalent in countries with weak institutions and low quality of governance.

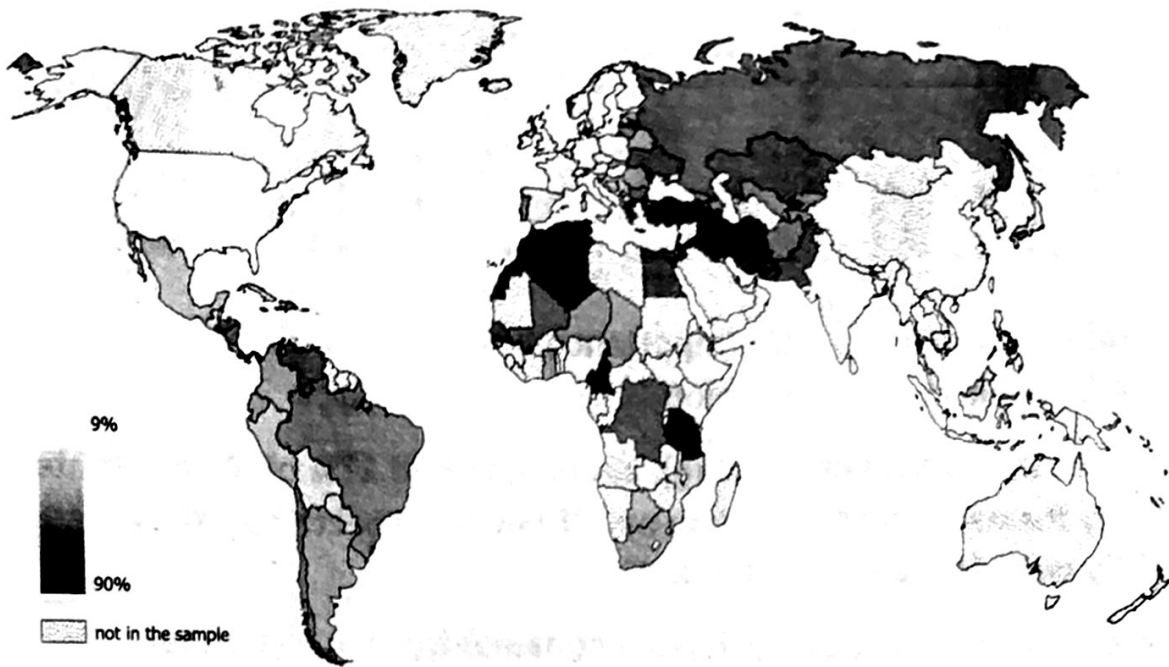
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<sup>2</sup> Department of Economics, American University, 4400 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20016-8029 (e-mail: boris.gershman@american.edu).

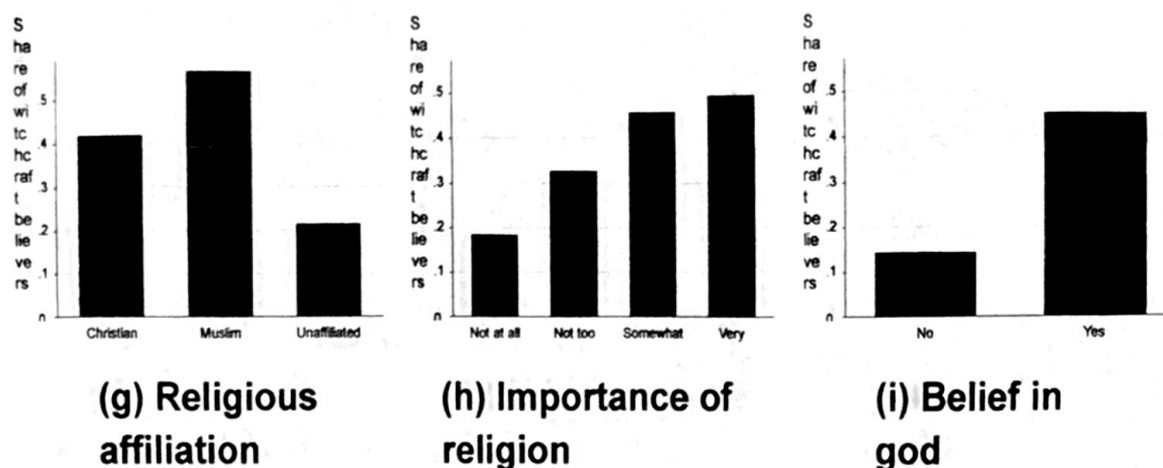
- Second, they are strongly positively correlated with measures of cultural conformity and in-group bias.
- Third, witchcraft beliefs are associated with the erosion of social capital manifested in low levels of trust and other antisocial attitudes and behaviors.
- Fourth, people in countries with more widespread witchcraft beliefs display lower levels of life satisfaction, diminished sense of control over life and self-efficacy, along with a higher degree of fatalism.
- Fifth, witchcraft beliefs are negatively related to creative culture and metrics of innovative activity.
- Sixth, there is a nonlinear, inverted-U relationship between standard metrics of economic development and the prevalence of witchcraft beliefs.
- Finally, there is mixed evidence on the role of exposure to misfortunes in promoting witchcraft beliefs. These patterns are robust to accounting for continental fixed effects and a number of potentially confounding characteristics, and are generally consistent with existing views on the costs and benefits of witchcraft beliefs in societies.

**Figure 1: Witchcraft beliefs around the world**



**Figure 1 maps the country-level prevalence of witchcraft beliefs around the world, computed as a fraction of “yes” answers to the above question in the total number of responses. Strikingly, the prevalence rates cover almost the entire possible range varying from 9% in Sweden to 90% in Tunisia, with a mean of 43%. Overall, a simple calculation based on the adult population data yields close to a billion believers in just the 95 countries in the sample, most certainly an undercount due to the sensitivity of the witchcraft question for at least some respondents.**

**Figure 2: Socio-demographic correlates of witchcraft beliefs.**



**Notes:** In the sample of panel (g), about 62% and 27% of respondents identify themselves as Christian and Muslim, respectively, while slightly over 10% are “unaffiliated”

**Overall, 95% of witchcraft believers consider themselves either Christian or Muslim.**

The relationship between witchcraft beliefs and religion is illustrated in the third row of figure 2. Although the bivariate correlation implies that the prevalence of witchcraft beliefs is higher among Muslims, this pattern is driven by cross-country differences. As shown in columns 6-8 of table 1, accounting for country fixed effects, that is, effectively comparing Christians and Muslims within countries where they coexist, there is no statistically significant difference in the prevalence of witchcraft beliefs between these two groups. Religiously “unaffiliated” individuals, including atheists and agnostics, are less likely to believe in witchcraft relative to Christians (based on model specifications of columns 6 and 7) and Muslims (based on re-estimating these models after setting Muslims as the reference religious affiliation).