

# Bullfighting Activities in Spain and Its Prohibition

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**Abstract**—Parties of bullfights are very popular in Spain, as well as in other bullfighting countries. The present work introduces the history of bullfighting and reveals the importance of this activity in Spain from the cultural and industrial perspective. In addition, it examines the current situation of bullfighting through the bullfighting controversy and the prohibition resulting in the bullfighting world.

**Keywords**—bullfights; bullfighting prohibition; anti-bullfighting controversy

## I. INTRODUCTION

Bullfights have a history of centuries in Spain. They tend to be an irreplaceable party in Spain, as well as in some bullfighting countries. At present, this ancient festival is controversial throughout the world. They consider it as an important tradition, a special culture, a national symbol, a source of income, violence towards animals, an impact on modern values, etc. Under such a complicated and intense controversy, how can bullfighting advance more in human history? It is a question that is worth discussing in detail.

## II. THE BULLFIGHTING CULTURE IN SPAIN

### A. History and Development of Bullfighting

The activity of the bulls can be traced back to the Bronze Age. In ancient times, it was done to demonstrate bravery. Roman nobles participated in arena circus shows with aurochs, demonstrating their skills as hunters. The activity appeared during public executions at the time of the persecution and during the gladiatorial clashes.

In the Middle Ages, the lance of bulls was added. In addition, more people became fond of this activity, including Alfonso X El Sabio. According to the chronicle, the bullfighting had more functions, like a celebration when marrying the noble ones, or a celebration of warlike victories, etc.

As for auxiliary instruments of bullfighting, although academic support is lacking, it is popularly believed that it is the Spanish Moors who started the practice with layers to distract the spearing of cattle. From the sixteenth century, the rods appeared, the predecessor of the “Rejón Runs”, which means prick runs.

At that time, European kings and ambassadors were invited to the bullfighting shows during their stay in Spain. In this way, it spread throughout Europe. To distract the cattle, when the nobles were fighting on horseback, pawns

and squires were included to for horses changing or urgent rescue. The pawns and auxiliaries helped to take the bull to the picador, thus facilitating the killing. The cloak work was also evolved and the aesthetic value, acquired.

In the sixteenth century, urban slaughterhouses appeared. The cattle works were developing. The slaughterers began to make the sacrifice in a creative way and thus attracted interest from the public. The activities of that time were documented by the municipal authority, and they were also presented in many oil paintings. In the second half of the same century, in Seville, spectators were built. Then in the seventeenth century, unlike the on-horseback bullfighters, those who were on foot arose with their own style and value. At that time, many bullfighters, instead of being noble, were from village. They were gaining more sympathy and taste from the audience. In the eighteenth century, you could already find all the current elements in the then corridas. There were many famous bullfighters. Later, thanks to the famous bullfighters like Paquiro<sup>1</sup> and Cúchares<sup>2</sup>, bullfighting acquired its definitive structure as what we have today.

In the twentieth century, the decade from 1910 to 1920 is called the Golden Age of bullfighting due to the competitiveness between Juan Belmonte<sup>3</sup> and José Gómez<sup>4</sup>, who contributed a lot to modern bullfighting. After the Spanish Civil War, the bullfighting boom emerged. Many owed it to the figure of Manolete, one of the great bullfighters of Spain. Then follow other bullfighting figures both Spanish and Mexican. After the Tragedy of Linares, that is, the death of Manolete<sup>5</sup>, the rivalry between Dominguín and Antonio Ordóñez played an important role. From the fifties until the seventies, the emergence of many extraordinary bullfighters continued. Among them, it is worth mentioning Manuel Ben fez El Cordobés<sup>6</sup>, who is characterized by his unorthodox and revolutionary style.

<sup>1</sup> Artistic name of Fancisco Montes Reina (1805-1851), bullfighter and famous, a great innovator of the fight, especially in the luck of capes.

<sup>2</sup> Artistic name of Fancisco Arjona Herrera (1818-1868), Spanish bullfighter.

<sup>3</sup> Juan Belmonte Garc ía (1892-1962), called the Pasma de Triana, was a Spanish bullfighter, probably the most popular in history and considered by many to be the founder of modern bullfighting.

<sup>4</sup> José Gómez Ortega (1895-1920), called Gallito and later also Joselito, was a famous bullfighter, a Roma native.

<sup>5</sup> Manuel Laureano Rodríguez Sánchez (1917-1947), better known as Manolete, was one of the great bullfighters of Spain in the 1940s.

<sup>6</sup> Manuel Ben fez Pérez (born in 1936), better known as El Cordobés, is a famous bullfighter from the 1960s, who brought an unorthodox acrobatic and theatrical style to the bullring.

Then, in the decades of the seventies and eighties, the bullfight spread outside of Spain, even to the United States.

Nowadays in Spain, a great diversity in bullfighting style can be found. In addition, the nationality of the bullfighters is not limited to Spain, nor is the presentation of bullfights limited to their country of origin.

### *B. The Bull as a Symbol of Spain*

Normally, bullfighting, like flamenco dancing, is considered one of the most important emblems of the country.

As mentioned, bullfighting has a long history in Spain and used to play a very prominent role in Spanish culture. Since the Middle Ages, people used the running of bulls and bullfights on different celebrating occasions, whether at weddings or real and aristocratic births, or at religious festivals, such as the canonization of saints or the blessing of temples and cathedrals. Therefore, with its long existence and its striking presentation, it can be said that bullfighting is deeply rooted in Spanish culture and ideology.

Until now, this tradition maintains its popularity. Each year millions of tourists from other parts of the world visit Spain, and most of them want to know and witness this bullfighting tradition. Spain has more than 400 bullrings, where more than 5000 screenings are organized each year. In addition, the celebration of the San Fermín festival, which takes place from July 6 to 14 in Pamplona, attracts the attention of the world every year, especially the running of the bulls and the bullfight. Although it is dangerous, many people, many foreigners included, prefer to take the risk to experience such a lively and exciting occasion.

It is also a very mentioned theme in the literature. This special celebration inspired many writers from Spain and other countries, including Federico Garc í Lorca<sup>7</sup>, Miguel Hern ández<sup>8</sup>, Hemingway<sup>9</sup> and Alberti<sup>10</sup>. The novel *Sangre y Arena* by Vicente Blasco<sup>11</sup> is one of the best known of this theme in China. In addition, four films have been made based on the novel. Apart from this Spanish novel, we can't overlook the one of Hemingway: *The Sun Also Rises*. This novel presents a very detailed description of the party in Pamplona and shows his love of this activity. Thanks to this American novel, the San Fermín festival became well known and popular outside of Spain. The concept of bull can also serve as a good material for art, both painting and music. It is

<sup>7</sup> Federico Garc í Lorca (1898-1936) was a Spanish poet, playwright and prose writer, also known for his skill in many other places. Ascribed to the so-called Generation of '27, he is the most influential and popular poet of twentieth-century Spanish literature.

<sup>8</sup> Miguel Hern ández Gilabert (1910 -1942) was a poet and dramatist of special relevance in twentieth-century Spanish literature.

<sup>9</sup> Ernest Miller Hemingway (1899-1961) was an American writer and journalist, and one of the leading novelists and short story writers of the 20th century.

<sup>10</sup> Rafael Alberti Merello (1902-1999) was a Spanish writer, especially recognized as a poet, member of the Generation of '27.

<sup>11</sup> Vicente Blasco Ib áñez (1867-1928) was a Spanish writer, journalist and politician.

not difficult to find the image of bulls in the works of Picasso, Goya, etc.

The bull retains many deep and typical senses. It is closely related to adventure, history, celebration and fight, meanwhile, it can symbolize courage, tragedy, war, death, or it can mean cruelty, barbarism, torture, and inhumanity<sup>12</sup>. It is considered as a Spanish living culture. Throughout the time, bullfighting is no longer a single sport. As Federico Garc í Lorca says, the festival of bullfights is the most cultured one in the world<sup>13</sup>.

Currently, bullfighting is still very representative of Spain. In China, when referring to Spain, we usually say the country of the bulls. As for the news, especially sports news, it is very common to use a metaphor, that is, instead of saying the name of the athlete, use the word "bullfighter".

In sum, the bull has already become a very important and accepted symbol, both in Spain and outside of this country. As Rafael Alberti says, "nobody can bend it, nor can anyone kill it, because it is the all of Spain".

### III. THE ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF BULLFIGHTS IN SPAIN

The bullfights are the second show of Spain after football. It is logical that there are many related industries that support them. For example, cattle ranching bulls, transportation of bulls, the doctor, the maintenance of beef, tourism, business in the vicinity of the bullrings, the making of costumes for bullfighters, bullfighting schools, bullfighting magazines, etc.

In Spain, raising a bull is expensive. In fact, according to the president of the Union of Breeders of Spain, Carlos Miura, 90% of the farms have problems to obtain benefits. Normally, bulls eat a lot, about seven kilos of feed every day, which means two euros per day. "There is no better attended species than the fighting bull. Its care is comparable to that of race horses" says Miura. Before selling a bull, which worth from 500 euros to 20,000, people need to take care of it for about five years, with about 5,000 euros in cost. Furthermore, a large investment is required in land, time, capital, etc. That is why Jos é Luis Castro, member of the National Association of Shepherd Managers, reveals that the benefits are not always obtained.

Apart from food, the cost of labor also has to be taken into account. The average salary is around 1000 to 1200 euros, meanwhile, the monthly salary of livestock employees is a little bit higher, which varies between 1200 and 1500 euros, because it is a profession without fixed office hour. A farm can rear a few hundred animals with workers of between two and ten workers or so. In this case, the

<sup>12</sup> Concha Caballero: "Toros y Literatura" [online], El Pa í. Available on the web:

[http://elpais.com/diario/2010/04/17/andalucia/1271456529\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/2010/04/17/andalucia/1271456529_850215.html) [query: February 8, 2012]

<sup>13</sup> "Cultural Heritage of Bullfighting III Bulls and Literature" [online], Livestock Breeders of Lidias Unidos, European association of bullfighting bulls. Available on the Web: [http://www.ganaderoslidia.com/webroot/literatura\\_taurina.htm#top](http://www.ganaderoslidia.com/webroot/literatura_taurina.htm#top) [query: February 8, 2012]

maintenance of the cattle costs 7000 euros per year. The price of a bull is, of course, more expensive than that of another bovine. The cheapest ones cost 1200 euros and the most expensive, 60000 or 100000. In addition, it takes a lot of investment in the field and work offer ability.

Transportation of wild cattle is a very influential factor in the final performance. To move from the natural place of production to the bullring, trains are used to be the ideal choice due to the infrastructure development, but it has now been replaced with trucks. As bulls are high-priced animals, it is necessary to pay more attention to their safety. It charges about 90 cents per kilometer. And the salary of the transporters depends on the time, the tradition and the way. The busiest period is in the winter, when the bullfights are held frequently.

As a traditional Chinese saying, the dress is worth a lot, both for the people and for the Buddha. The bullfighter's dress in the bullfight is called a suit of lights because of its illuminated effect when reflecting the light. In the bullfighting world, the bullfighters capture the attention of the spectators through their posture, their ability, as well as their lightening suit. It is an art in making bullfighting costumes. The costumes, which are well made and complicated, cost quite a lot. The costumes can be purchased in the local stores, and by Internet also. However, because of the reduction of the bull runs, the trade faces great difficulty to continue.

As we have mentioned, bullfighting is the second most important show in Spain, a huge number of people head for the bullrings to witness it. It is said that bulls are the black leg ham in all cultural activities. With this motive, the nearby bars and restaurants receive the greatest number of visitors throughout the year, which is a boost in their economy.

The bull runs not only bring clients to restaurants, but also bring food material and meat. Because of its special character, meat of bull is very different from the one they buy in street butchers. They charge up to 12 euros for a succulent oxtail in a restaurant, although they sell to the markets of supplies with only 60 cents a kilo. It is the most ecological and best quality meat on the market, so it is usually sold in delicatessen or gourmet stores.

In summary, many commercial opportunities are hidden behind the brave animal. Tradition needs support from different parts of society. Through this spectacle, many people earn their bread<sup>14</sup>.

#### IV. THE CURRENT BULLFIGHTING SITUATION IN SPAIN

##### A. Influence of the Crisis

The bullfights already exist in Spain for several centuries, even to this day, still face more and more obstacles to continue their development.

<sup>14</sup> Guerrero, Carmen. "Through the big door of the economy: bullfighting is art, tradition and feeling, it is also business and work, it is leaving the skin and blood in the sand and winning the daily bread." [Online], *Epoca* 1308 (Aug. 22, 2010): p20. [query: December 26, 2011]

The economic crisis of 2008 has imposed a heavy blow on Spain. On January 31, 2012, Eurostat<sup>15</sup>, after an investigation in December 2011, published a report on unemployment in Europe, indicating that the unemployment rate in Spain has risen to a new summit—22.9%. This number is the highest among the 17 investigated European countries, which is double of the average rate. Currently in Spain, 5.3 million people are unemployed. The worst thing is that the unemployment rate of young people between 16 and 24 years old reaches 51.4%.

All the Spain is under the shadow of the crisis. In this case, the bullfighting world can't escape from this storm neither. As the unemployed population has been accumulating, an obvious drop is noticed in the number of spectators of bullfights. In several Spanish cities, some bullfights are forced to suspend, and even cancel; as a result the demand for bulls reduces. A farmer reveals when he is interviewed by a Spanish television, that the total cost of raising a bull, which includes feeding, practice, is about 10 thousand euros. In the past, between 80 and 100 bulls were born annually. However, now the demand for bulls goes down a lot, only about thirty. For farmers, there is no other way out but control the birth of bulls with medicines<sup>16</sup>.

The crisis has closed the door to bull merchants, however, on the other hand, has also opened a window for the business of the bullfighting suit, but instead of new ones, it is kind of second-hand business suits. Anyway, if the whole country is in the darkness of economic crisis, who would have the moral to spend money on a celebration like the bullfight?

##### B. The Critics against Bullfights

Throughout the human history, ideology has undergone numerous changes. In the last centuries, everything develops faster and faster. Thoughts and values vary widely from generation to generation. Therefore, many old values and traditions, which have although last so long that they seemed to be alleged and even natural, now are facing challenges and suspicions to continue their existence. In the twentieth century, the rights of minor and weak groups gained more respect, for example, the rights of women, of blacks and of minor races. In 1824 in England, it had been created the first protective society of animals of the world - The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)<sup>17</sup>. After so many movements for human rights, nowadays, people start paying attention to the rights of animals.

Since the 19th century, attempts of putting an end to bullfighting are calling attention to the public. There is a lot of news against the torture of animals in the press. In the

<sup>15</sup> Eurostat (Statistical Office of the European Communities) is the statistical office of the European Commission, which produces data on the European Union and promotes the harmonization of the statistical methods of the member states.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.233.com/syyy/Read/20100210/1041426.html> [query: February 18, 2012]

<sup>17</sup> Antxon Olabe: "The Debate on the Bulls" [online], Blog Naidier. Available on the Web: [http://www.naidier.com/ateneo/articulo\\_blog.asp?id=218](http://www.naidier.com/ateneo/articulo_blog.asp?id=218) [query: December 24, 2011]

decade of the 90s, in England, tens of thousands of people demonstrated against the painful conditions of transporting cows and sheep to other parts of Europe, which turned out to be a tragedy, because one person was hit by trucks and died. These years, anti-bullfighting movements never fail to enter in the public eye. Many Spaniards, especially young people, participate in different campaigns to defend the rights of the bulls. For example, from time to time, they gathered in the bullrings of Madrid lying in a "SOS" shape, naked and painted in fake blood. The manifestos, of course, are not limited to the European continent. On February 5 of 2012, one hundred anti-bullfighting people from Anima Naturalis, an animal protection organization, met in Mexico to show their rejection of this bloody tradition. In order to be more striking, they all laid on the ground in the bullrings, disguising as wounded bulls.

There is no doubt that more movements will be provoked similar to those mentioned situations. Nor is it hard to understand why this show has caused so much criticism. Spain has fully incorporated the democratic European and the values of the Enlightenment. As modern values spread throughout the world, it is obvious that cruel bull runs will become an even more general offense.

### *C. The Prohibition of Bullfights*

The future of the bullfighting tradition has not only caused a sensation in the midst of animal protection but has also provoked attention from the authorities. For the present, the bull feast is in front of many threats of possible prohibition.

Canarias was the first Autonomous Community to prohibit bullfighting. In the distant 1991, the local law of Protection of Animals was approved, that discarded the bloody shows with animals, including the bullfights. People made the prohibition come true without any difficulty because this show was not deeply rooted in the archipelago. However, it must be borne in mind that cockfighting has survived with certain restrictions, because cockfights were rooted in different parts of the islands<sup>18</sup>.

In 2009, a Popular Legislative Initiative (ILP) was proposed, that is, a plan initiated by the people to reject bullfighting. In the end, this plan got a support of 180000 signatures in Spain. This starts a great discussion. Then people put on both sides of the balance the rights of animals and the validity of a cultural manifestation so rooted in the history of the Spanish people.

There are also defenders of the bullfights festival, who insist on emphasizing the importance of bullfighting as a national identity and cultural heritage. In addition, they indicate the existing tolerance towards many other types of violence in the world.

After the aforementioned Popular Legislative Initiative, another one was proposed in Catalonia, in which more than

<sup>18</sup> "Canarias was the first community to ban bulls in 1991" [online], News from rtve.es, July 27, 2010. Available on the Web: <http://www.rtve.es/noticias/20100727/canarias-was-first-community-prohibit-bulls-1991/342132.shtml> [query: February 27, 2012]

250,000 signatures were gathered. Between 70 and 80% of the population declared their rejection to the bullfights. Thus, tradition is losing its land when facing against the modern value<sup>19</sup>.

In 2010, the Catalan Parliament, by 68 votes in favor and 55 against, approved the Popular Legislative Initiative calling for the abolition of bullfights in the community. The majority of nationalist deputies leaned for the yes, and the socialists opted mainly for the no. The law already entered into force on January 1, 2012.<sup>20</sup>

In addition, it is worth mentioning the attitude of the past president of the Govern, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. "I would not have banned the bullfighting feast in Catalonia," he said when he was asked about the anti-bullfight debate that shook Catalonia and indicated that if he had been a deputy in the Catalan parliament, he would have voted "no"<sup>21</sup>. Whatever the president might say, the defenders of the Good of Cultural Interest criticized him a lot in this polemic, that is to say, the bullfighting tradition, commenting that Zapatero does not like bulls. As President of the Government, he has the obligation to support the most important cultural tradition in Spain. Be that as it may, in reality, he never went to the bullfights, nor did he receive bullfighters in Moncloa, as he had done with other collectives<sup>22</sup>.

On September 25, 2011, La Monumental, a bullring of Barcelona, celebrated its last bullfight. Since then, it was time to say goodbye to the bullfights. At that time, as the bullfighting industry was suffering from negative criticism, the bullfighters, who were once wild stars from all over the country, had taken off their lightening suits one after another, incorporated into other professions. In the past the country had thousands of bullfighters, but now in Spain there are only a few hundred. Bullfighter was a noble profession in Spain, because being a professional bullfighter requires years of practicing the ability.

Today, the famous bullfighters of Catalonia have moved for invitations to other bullrings in Madrid or Andalusia. Most of them are forced to change their profession. among whom, some find their new place in security companies serving as a guardian in supermarkets, banks, and super warehouses, others work as private bodyguards. Some traders prefer to employ bullfighters as their private bodyguard, because in this way the image of their company

<sup>19</sup> "Bullfights, debate on the possible prohibition in Catalonia" [online], ecologismo.com. available on the Web: <http://www.ecologismo.com/2010/03/09/corridas-de-toros-debate-sobre-la-possible-prohibicion-en-cataluna/> [consultation: December 20, 2012]

<sup>20</sup> "Catalonia prohibits bulls" [online], El País, July 28, 2010. Available on the Web: [http://elpais.com/elpais/2010/07/28/actualidad/1280305017\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/elpais/2010/07/28/actualidad/1280305017_850215.html) [consluta: 27 de February 2012]

<sup>21</sup> "Zapatero: 'I had not banned the festival of bulls in Catalonia'" [online], El Confidencial, January 4, 2011. Available on the Web: <http://www.elconfidencial.com/espana/zapatero-fieta-toros-entrevista-crisis-paro-20110104-73213.html> [query: February 28, 2012]

<sup>22</sup> "Zapatero does not like bulls" [online], opinion on madriario.es, March 5, 2010. Available on the Web: <http://www.madriario.es/2010/Marzo/opinion/alvaro-ballarin/183793/alvaro-ballarin.html> [consultation: February 28, 2012]

can be improved considerably<sup>23</sup>. It is a pity that for survival, the brave fighters of the past need to fight with the thieves using what they learned during years in the bullfighting school. Anyhow, bullfights are in the transformation from a reality to a story. In this case, what could the bullfighters have done? Nobody knows.

Before each bullfight used more than one hundred people, and the Catalan bullfighting group had a few dozen personnel. With the present ban, at least a thousand people fell into unemployment.

Barcelona has two bullrings, one of which has been suspended due to its aging construction. Now it is converted into a commercial center. The other, despite the government ban, maintains its original construction. Be that as it may, it will be occupied for other uses, for example, for circus shows or for books or furniture exhibitions.

Bullfights are a popular tradition but controversial at the same time. This can be demonstrated by a Gallup survey in 2002, in which 68.8% of Spaniards had "no interest" in bullfighting, while 20.6% had "some interest", and only 10.4% showed "much interest". In the survey, a great variety was estimated from generation to generation. That is, one half of those over 65 years old were amateurs, comparing to only 23% of those were surveyed between 25 and 34 years old. In 2006, Gallup revealed that 72.10% of Spaniards were not interested, on the other hand, only 7.4% very interested. In Catalonia, more than 80% did not have any interest.

There is an inclination that the number of people who are interested in being Spanish bullfighters is decreasing. It is probable that under such phenomenon, more prohibitions of bullfighting occur and more controls were imposed on the shows. After the declaration of Barcelona as an anti-bullfighting city, a law prohibiting new bullrings came into force in the northeast of Catalonia. In 2007, TVE, the Spanish national television, began to enroll bullfighting shows as R-grade programs, that is, since then children under the age of 14 were not allowed to see these bloody programs<sup>24</sup>. With so many anti-bullfighting measures, it is logical that in the future there will be fewer young fans of the national activity. The bullfighting shows may still be attractive for a large number of spectators, but with so many discussions, the television preferred to broadcast other sporting events that wouldn't include violence, such as football.

In short, the bullfights are suffering from public criticism and the torture of increasing restrictions. The bans are killing the national activity, which is giving up its noble place to a modern, democratic and humanistic society.

## V. BULLFIGHTING IN OTHER COUNTRIES, AND ITS CURRENT DEVELOPMENT

Bullfighting activities are not limited to a single country. In addition to Spain, there are several countries where bullfighting is also practiced, although they may be a little different from what is presented in Spain. In Europe, you can find bullfighting in Spain, France and Portugal. And in Latin America, it is practiced in Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, as well as Ecuador.

### A. Bullfights in Other European Countries

1) *Bullfights in France*: Bullfights were introduced from Spain to France at the beginning of the 18th century. Today, in the Gallic country, the bullfights are held from February to October, in Spanish or French style. They are only suspended in the winter.

It is estimated that about a thousand bulls die annually in France. The main bullfighting center in the country is Nimes, a Roman and classical city. There is a training school for local bullfighters, which was founded about twenty years ago. The bullfights also located in other cities, but all in the south of the country.

In 2011, the French Government declared bullfights intangible cultural heritage. According to the report presented by the National Observatory of Bullfighting Cultures in the presence of the Ministry of Culture, bullfighting is a "significant aspect of history", it is a "live show" and consisted of "the nucleus of numerous local festivals"<sup>25</sup>.

However, in France controversy cannot be escaped either. In most parts of France, bullfighting is considered a degrading spectacle and is prohibited. In 2008, a law was implemented so that children under 15 years of age do not attend bullfights<sup>26</sup>.

2) *Bullfights in Portugal*: The bullfights in Portugal are as old as those in its neighboring country. However, there is a difference between them, that "rejón" (to fight a bull on horseback) is more important in Portugal than in Spain. From 1836, they covered the bull horns and prohibited the killing of bulls in the bullring, with the exception of the city Barrancos, located on the border with Spain. In fact, although they do not kill them in the view of the spectators, it does not mean that the bulls do not suffer. After the bullfights, they put the bull in a dark room, and then a butcher enters to end his torture. This last act, as the people indicate, causes more suffering to the bull, because the butchers usually take several hours or even days to arrive.

<sup>23</sup> Wang Fang: "Spanish Matador has only a few hundred people left", *Global Times*, April 22, 2011. Available on the Web: [http://travel.huanqiu.com/culture/2011-04/1646443\\_2.html](http://travel.huanqiu.com/culture/2011-04/1646443_2.html) [query: February 18, 2012]

<sup>24</sup> "Spanish TV Says No to Bullfighting" [online], *Time*, August 22, 2007. Available on the Web: <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1655075,00.html> [consultation: February 28, 2012]

<sup>25</sup> "Fancia, always without complexes: declares the bulls cultural heritage" [online], *general del Diariocrítico.com*, April 23, 2012. Available on the Web: <http://www.diariocritico.com/general/266776> [query: March 10, 2012]

<sup>26</sup> "Bullfights in France" [online], *general of Viajeafrancia.com*, May 17, 2009. Available on the Web: <http://viajeafrancia.com/corridas-de-toros-en-francia/> [query: 27 April, 2012]

## B. Bullfights in Latin America

The bullfights were introduced to the Latin American continent during the colonization of Spain. Annually, some ten thousand bulls die in the bullring of Latin American countries, including Mexico, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela. Most of the bullfighting activities in Latin America take place from November to February, but they also take place in other months of the year. As many countries suspend bullfighting in winter, many Spanish, French and Portuguese bullfighters travel to Latin America, in order to participate in the bullfights.

1) *Bullfights in Mexico*: It is believed that Mexico is the most important bullfighting country in Latin America, and even of the whole world, because more bulls are killed in this country. It is estimated that about nine thousand bulls are killed per year in the Mexican bullring. According to the World Society for Animal Protection, Mexico has the largest taurine audience after Spain. Thousands of bullfights are presented in Mexico every year. In some areas of the country, this festival is an economic source, due to the visit of foreign tourists and Mexican locals.

Mexico is the second country in terms of the number of bullrings after Spain and has the largest bullring in the world. It's called Plaza Mexico. It is located in Mexico City with a capacity of 40,000 people. It was inaugurated in 1946.

Both in Spain and France, it is forbidden for children under 16 to attend bullfighting shows, but in Mexico, there is no age limit for spectators. According to the law, children can attend bullfighting shows under the supervision of their parents. In addition, it seems that there is no age limit for bullfighters. Michelito Lagravere Peniche is a Mexican and world bullfighter, who started fighting in 2008, when he was only ten years old.

Like what happens in other bullfighting countries, it is logical that great controversy has been provoked, not only because of the adolescent bullfighter, but also due to the suffering of the animals. Animal protectors in Mexico also organize anti-bullfighting demonstrations from time to time, so that people realize the cruelty aspect of this tradition. The Mexican pollster Parametr á conducted a survey in 2009, in which 88% of Mexicans were against the government support of bullfighting.

2) *Bullfights in Colombia*: Colombia might be the second country most fond of bullfighting among the five Latin American countries. The bullfighting tradition began in the 16th century. The first bullfights were organized to celebrate the arrival of the new Spanish viceroy or other special events. When the country gained independence from the hand of Spain, they also celebrated it with bullfights.

At present, the bullfighting industry has developed such that there are at least 86 permanent bullrings, more than 30 bull ranches and eight bullfighting schools in different places within Colombia. The bullfights are organized every year in January and February, but as time goes by, the number of bullfighting shows is less and less.

Although since 1984 there is a national animal protection law, bullfighting, fight of roosters and coleus has immunity by Article 7. In addition, without mentioning any sanctions, the law has no practical utility.

In 2004, with the support of the president, came into force a national law that regulated the bullfighting industry and declared bullfighting as "an artistic expression of human". There were other political attempts to prevent any law that tried to put an end to bullfighting activities in the future. This also caused many anti-bullfighting reactions. Colombia is now a Latin American country that has the most municipalities against bullfighting activities.

3) *Bullfights in Ecuador*: According to historical documents, in the distant 1576 there was already bullfighting in Ecuador. This activity may have begun as early as the year 1551. Today, Ecuador has 25 permanent bullrings and at least 32 bull ranches, as well as 2 bullfighting schools in Quito and Riobamba.

In Ecuador there is no law on the protection of animals that prohibits violence against animals. However, in some municipalities such as Cuenca and Guayaquil, efforts can be seen to ban this activity. Also, in 2008, a taurine television broadcast ban was imposed between 6:00 am and 9:00 pm, although it is not yet fully implemented.

A survey of opinion was conducted in 2008 by the CEDATOS company, indicating that 74% of the inhabitants of Quito did not like bullfighting, 86% did not visit a lot the bullfighting places, in addition, 61% of residents wanted to put an end to the activity.

## VI. CONCLUSION

It is rare that a bull activity with several centuries of history is still alive in modern society. Nowadays the bullfights, no matter culture or violence, have surpassed the original meaning as an old spectacle. There is no any exaggeration to consider it as a precious heritage for humanity, especially for Spain. This tradition has imposed an irreplaceable impact on both the image and the spirit of the nation. By referring to Spain, it reminds us of bullfights, and vice versa.

Currently, bullfighting has become a global controversy. There is no doubt that mistreating and killing animals also exists in other ways and in other parts of the world, but it never causes as much criticism as this Spanish show. In my opinion, the difference consists in the massacre in public view and the fame of the activity. Bullfighting was considered an activity of nobility and bravery. However, now people pay more attention to the torture of animals. Cruelty and suffering are clashes for modern values, especially in Europe, where people attach great importance to democracy, equality and freedom. What presents in bullfights is incompatible with the modern morality. Therefore, bullfights are shocking and even intolerable in the eyes of many people.

If this traditional entertainment is still cruel to animals, it probably does not have much future. But everything can be

resolved through the prohibition of authority? In my opinion, in the bullfighting polemic, the correct answer cannot be a simple "yes" or "no". The prohibition cannot be the only way out. In a survey published by the Spanish newspaper 'El País' in 2010, 60% of Spaniards do not like bullfighting. However, 57% opposed the ban in Catalonia, while 30% supported it<sup>27</sup>.

It's believed that it is imprudent to solve the problem with a single prohibition. The prohibition supposes a rejection to the cruelty, an end of the tradition, a negative impact to the industry, and perhaps, extinction of bulls, because without the bullfights, it does not serve anything to raise them in high costs. In sum, in the short term, what bullfighting needs are attempts to change, rather than a legal prohibition.

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<sup>27</sup> "Most Spaniards do not like bullfights, according to the 'El País'" [online] survey, Mundo de El Comercio.pe, first of August 2010. Available on the Web: <http://elcomercio.pe/world/616914/news-mayoria-espanoles-no-les-gusta-corridas-toros-according-survey-country> [query: February 28, 2012]