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## Killing a bull with bare hands: *Ukweshwama* and Zulu cultural accommodation

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# Killing a bull with bare hands: *Ukweshwama* and Zulu cultural accommodation

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## ABSTRACT

A new trend in political theory is to question whether cultural practices clash with moral concerns about animal welfare. On the one hand, there is widespread concern to protect cultural distinctiveness; on the other, cultural distinctiveness may mean treating animals in cruel ways. In this article, I articulate this debate using the case of the killing of a bull in the *Ukweshwama* practice from South Africa. By engaging with the literature on multiculturalism, I question whether Zulus in South Africa are entitled or not to practice the killing of a bull during *Ukweshwama*. I respond to this question affirmatively, by defending that for reasons of autonomy, moral loss and legal consistency, Zulus are entitled to continue their practice.

**KEY WORDS**  
Zulu culture,  
*Ukweshwama*,  
multiculturalism,  
cultural accommodation,  
South Africa.

## RÉSUMÉ

*Tuer un taureau à mains nues : Ukweshwama et intégration culturelle zouloue.*

Une nouvelle tendance en sciences politiques consiste à savoir si les pratiques culturelles se heurtent aux préoccupations morales concernant le bien-être animal. Il existe une volonté générale de protection de la spécificité culturelle, cependant, cette dernière peut amener à traiter cruellement les animaux. Dans cet article, je pose ce débat *via* le cas de la mise à mort d'un taureau dans la pratique d'*Ukweshwama* en Afrique du Sud. En étudiant la littérature sur le multiculturalisme, je m'interroge quant au droit des Zoulous d'Afrique du Sud de tuer ou non un taureau durant *Ukweshwama*. Je réponds par l'affirmative, en démontrant que pour des raisons d'autonomie, de perte morale et de cohérence juridique, les Zoulous sont en droit de poursuivre leur pratique.

**MOTS CLÉS**  
Culture zouloue,  
*Ukweshwama*,  
multiculturalisme,  
intégration culturelle,  
Afrique du Sud.

## INTRODUCTION

South Africa is a culturally diverse country which, since the end of apartheid in 1994, has been trying to construct a rainbow nation, a country where individuals' cultural and racial differences are respected and even praised (Dubow 2014). Nevertheless, although apartheid has now ended, the country remains full of tension between different groups (Durrheim 2011). A recent controversy in South Africa was whether the Zulu practice of killing a bull during *Ukweshwama* ought to be accommodated or not. By cultural accommodation, I mean providing the legal space and means whereby a certain cultural group may practice their culture. During *Ukweshwama*, young men kill a bull with their bare hands to praise the king and their ancestors. The controversy was raised because some animal activists in Africa and around the world argued that the practice was excessively cruel to the animal; however, very little of the debate focused on arguments for cultural accommodation.

In this article, I wish to refocus the debate on the right to kill a bull during *Ukweshwama* quite precisely, looking at whether cultural accommodation arguments justify or not the tolerance of this practice. Put differently, the objective of this article is to answer the question of whether the ritual of killing a bull during *Ukweshwama* ought to be accepted or not by looking at the philosophical arguments made in the multiculturalism literature in order to justify cultural accommodation. By doing this, I am placing the South African case at the core of contemporary debates in the political and moral philosophy of multiculturalism, which have recently addressed the question of animal cruelty as practiced by various cultural groups (Deckha 2013; Kymlicka & Donaldson 2014; Cordeiro-Rodrigues 2015; Kim 2015).

Taking this on board, this paper is divided into six sections. In the first, "The practice and controversy of *Ukweshwama*", I outline the debate occurring in South Africa regarding *Ukweshwama*. The following five sections discuss possible arguments to justify the accommodation of killing a bull during *Ukweshwama*; such arguments are routinely used in the philosophical literature of multiculturalism. The second section, "The promotion of friendship", discusses the argument that suggests the practice ought to be accommodated on grounds of it promoting friendship ties. The third section, "Redistributive justice", considers the argument whereby the practice should be maintained because banning it may economically burden the Zulu people. I reject these two arguments as sound justifications for accommodating the practice.

Then, in sections four to six, I focus on arguments which I contend as soundly in support of the practice. In section four "The promotion of autonomy", I argue that the practice has the potential to promote autonomy and that this is a sound justification for maintaining it as a practice. Then, in section five "Conscience, cultural disposition and moral loss", I contend that the substantial moral loss incurred by Zulus for not killing a bull during *Ukweshwama* is also a sufficient reason to allow it to continue. Finally, in section six "Legal consistency", I argue that for the sake of legal consistency, the practice is one that ought to be allowed.

This article's starting point takes an animal welfarist point of view. Animal welfarism incorporates the perspective that while animals matter morally, their vital interests matter less than the vital interests of humans (Garner 2013). However, trivial human interests matter less than animals' vital interests. In practice, what this means is that if there is a decision to be made between the vital interest of a human and a vital interest of an animal, the vital interest of the former ought to be prioritized (Garner 2013). For example, if one needs to kill an animal to save a human life, then this ought to be done. However, if the human interest is trivial, then the animal's vital interest ought to be protected. For example, a sadistic person may have an interest in kicking a dog for fun, but this interest is less important than the dog's interest in not suffering pain (Garner 2013). This view is the one most widely shared among people and is also the one that is present in the law of most states in the world (Schaffner 2011; Garner 2013). Thus, by starting from this point of view, my assumption is one that is widely shared, rather than one that presupposes too many rights to animals that few people worldwide actually endorse (Casal 2003).

This idea leads me to my second point, what I consider to qualify as vital human interests. In this article, these include the interest in economic resources, job opportunities, living according to one's conscience and being an autonomous agent (Barry 2001). There may be more interests, but for the current purpose it is only necessary to stipulate these.

Finally, it is important to mention that I do not address philosophical arguments about the intrinsic value of culture; that is, arguments about culture being protected because it is valuable in itself, will not be addressed in this paper. Rather, the arguments that I address here are those focusing on the *instrumental value of culture* – culture valuable only as a mean to something else, such as friendship, equality, autonomy and so forth.

## THE PRACTICE AND CONTROVERSY OF UKWESHWAMA

Zulu culture is full of symbolic rituals (Berglund 1976). One of these is the First Fruits Festival, also known as *Ukweshwama*. This ritual is a celebration of the ripening of the season's crops, where Zulus bless the land to produce an abundant harvest, thanking their ancestors for their protection and the Zulu king for his leadership. It is believed that if this blessing does not occur, the mystical powers of the ancestors may negatively interfere in the harvest and that some bad fortune may fall upon the Zulu king and Zululand. That is, this long-standing traditional Zulu thanksgiving ceremony is mainly a gesture of appreciation that serves as an appeal to the ancestral spirits for help and protection in the coming year. For, it is believed by many that if the ritual is not practiced, then the king may die and the ancestors will not help with the harvest in the coming year (Berglund 1976; Rautenbach 2011; Horsthemke 2015).

The ceremony has various stages, and the final one is of most interest to this paper; in the final stage of *Ukweshwama*, a group of young Zulu men (*amabutho*) kill a bull with their



bare hands. The ritual starts with a call by an *induna* (warrior chief) for the young men to enter the *kraal* (the sacred place where the practice happens) in order to face the bull (Rautenbach 2011). Upon entering, the young Zulu men, who are wearing animal skins, wave their spears and shields, while bare-breasted girls dressed with beaded waistbands strut past. Then, the young men take off their shirts and start fighting the bull until they kill it, which is to be done without spilling blood. During the fight an *inyanga* (herbal healer) runs among them, splashing them with *muti* (a Zulu medicine) as a means of protecting them (Behrens 2009; Bilchitz 2010, 2012; Horsthemke 2015). This ritual is preceded and proceeded by a variety of other practices; some of those preceding the killing include electing a particularly strong bull and choosing a number of young boys who are approaching puberty to fight the creature. The practices that proceed it are the removal of the bull's gall bladder and the mingling of this with natural herbs so that the king is able to drink it; the meat of the bull is distributed among the young Zulu men, and finally, the carcass of the bull is burned (Bilchitz 2012; Horsthemke 2015).

This particular stage of the *Ukweshwama* ceremony is of important significance to young Zulu men as the ritual is a coming of age passage, allowing the males to pass from childhood to adulthood. For many Zulus, young men are only seen as autonomous, free and responsible agents when they pass this test. The practice, therefore, is an essential aspect of gaining respect in the community, which, in turn, aids the young men's self-respect. The reason why the practice is aligned with heroism and altruism by the community is because the killing of the bull guarantees the help of Zulu ancestors with the harvest, whilst also serving to protect the Zulu king, as the strength of the dying bull is passed to him (Horsthemke 2015).

The killing of a bull during the *Ukweshwama* practice has raised condemnation from various animal welfare organisations in Africa and around the world. The most active critic being the animal rights activist group 'Animal Rights Africa', who contended that the bull was subjected to terrible cruelty. They contended that, based on anonymous accounts, "the bull's eyes, genitals and tongue are ripped out whilst it is still alive, and sand or mud is thereafter forced down its throat in an apparent attempt to suffocate it while it is trampled, kicked and beaten to death. The bull dies after being subjected to such treatment for approximately forty minutes" (Bilchitz 2016: 138). The activist group took the matter to court, and the ensuing discussion was mainly on whether the activists' description was truthful or not and, therefore, if the bull did suffer excessively, meaning that the practice violated the Animal Protection Act of 1962 (South African Government 1962). The judge analysed the case in light of the evidence provided and concluded that there was not sufficient evidence to support the activists' version. Due to the lack of evidence, the judge did not need to extensively engage with rights-based arguments, even though he recognised that there were questions related to freedom of speech, belief and conscience involved in the case.

## THE PROMOTION OF FRIENDSHIP

Having outlined this South African controversy, I would like to consider a possible argument for maintaining the practice. A possible argument that could be used is that the practice is valuable because it is instrumental in promoting the virtue of friendship. To be more precise, friendship is, from this point of view, understood as the combination of identification and solidarity (Metz 2007, 2011). Identification arises when individuals share common ends, engage in joint projects together, consider themselves a members of a group, and are seen as members by others as well. Solidarity refers to individuals who feel good with the other person, the other person needs support, there is an intention to support the other with one's actions, individuals act for others' sake and individuals are dissatisfied with others' harm (Metz 2010b).

Taking account of this, the argument suggests that, by allowing individuals to experience solidarity and identification, the killing of the bull promotes the experience of friendship for these individuals. In particular, a shared goal taken together as a team fulfills the identification criterion, while the solidarity criterion is reinforced by the mutual support and sacrifice of the bull for the good of the community and king, as does entering into a fight with the bull. Thus, the argument goes, by experiencing solidarity and identification during the practice of killing the bull, these individuals are practicing the virtue of friendship.

However, the idea that such a violent activity as killing a bull can promote friendship goes against sociological and psychological studies carried out on animal cruelty. Various studies instead, suggest that animal cruelty is often correlated with aggressive and anti-social rather than friendship or bonding behaviour. The reason offered is that animal cruelty tends to stimulate the anti-social and aggressive aspects of an individual's personality (Osofsky *et al.* 2005; Gullone & Arkow 2012). Additionally, there is a positive correlation between domestic violence, sexism and animal cruelty (Gullone & Arkow 2012; Adams 2015). Studies on bullfighting practices in particular, have demonstrated that they stimulate various negative anti-social emotions, leading the United Nations to suggest that children ought not to be present or participate in practices and shows which include animal cruelty, as this may have a strong negative impact on their moral development. Taking this on board, what this entails is that participating in the killing of the bull during the *Ukweshwama* practice does not promote the value of friendship because, as scientific studies on the matter have demonstrated, there are a corresponding number of anti-social, enemy-like behaviours and emotions that are stimulated by the practice.

Studies on these activities suggest that individuals who engage in this kind of violence are more likely to have a general attitude of moral disengagement (Forsyth & Evans 1998; Cordeiro-Rodrigues 2015; Cordeiro-Rodrigues & Achino 2017); this means that such individuals are more likely to become or be insensitive to the suffering and pain of others and, in general, are less empathic (Bandura 1999; Mitchell 2011). There has not been any study about the psychologi-

cal effects experienced by individuals related to killing a bull during *Ukweshwama*; however, given that studies have been carried out on similar activities, such as *corrida* and Spanish and Portuguese bullfighting, the analogy can be made.

Additionally, such individuals tend to engage in the rationalisation of harm, which consists of justifying evil actions on the grounds of moral norms (Forsyth & Evans 1998). For example, rationalisation of harm occurred in Nazi Germany, with Nazis rationalising the killing of Jews based on the supposed superiority of the Aryan race (Osofsky *et al.* 2005).

## REDISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

From the previous section it can be concluded that the rationale of friendship does not actually work. In this section, I wish to address a different popular argument in the literature of multiculturalism. This argument is that a certain practice, even if immoral, ought to be allowed on grounds that banning it may add a significant economic burden to the group that practices it (Barry 2001). The rationale behind this is that, generally speaking, human beings' economic interest in job opportunities and economic resources morally overrides other interests, so when there is a clash between different interests, priority ought to be given to economic interests. Consequently, society should not unfairly magnify the constraints to accessing these interests through its laws and regulations (Van Parijs 1998; Phillips 2006). Put differently, human beings' economic interests have, broadly speaking, moral priority over other kinds of interests; thus, if a choice needs to be taken between economic interests and other interests, economic interests ought to be given priority.

Take an example given by Brian Barry in *Culture and Equality* (Barry 2001); if an employer has an interest in promoting a certain dress code, but the imposition of this dress code would substantially impact on the job opportunities of a certain group in society because these would refuse to abide by it, then the employer cannot impose such a dress code on his or her employees. To be more concrete, if there is a school that bans hijabs, but this ban would lead to a substantial diminishing of the economic opportunities available to Muslim women, then the employer ought not to impose such a code. Barry himself clearly disagrees that this would be the case with animal cultural practices, however; instead, he argues that the interest in animal welfare overrides the interest in treating the animal in a cruel way (Barry 2001). However, there are philosophers such as Sebastian Poulter (1986) who have defended the view that human interests override animal welfare interests.

The economic argument also does not offer a sound justification for the accommodation of killing a bull during *Ukweshwama*. Firstly, the practice is not an economic activity on which Zulus are highly dependent for job opportunities and economic resources. There is a superstition linked with economic resources that these will disappear if the practice is not carried out (Rautenbach 2011), but there is no effective relationship between banning the practice and a lack of such

opportunities. This contrasts with, for example, the practice of bullfighting in Portugal, upon which the Portuguese bullfighting community is highly dependent for the job opportunities it provides (Monteiro *et al.* 2007; Cordeiro-Rodrigues 2015). Likewise, there are communities that are strongly economically dependent on game hunting for survival (Horsthemke 2015). In short, however, the killing of a bull in the *Ukweshwama* practice is not an economic activity that fulfils the Zulus' economic interests; rather, its value is linked to the cultural/religious meaning that is attached to it, which will be addressed in another section. Hence, the value of it may be cultural, but not economic.

A second point is that if it were, indeed, an economic activity on which Zulus were highly dependent, this would be insufficient grounds for justifying the practice. If the South African state could offer alternative economic opportunities which would ban the practice without economically burdening Zulus, then the state ought to pursue that possibility and ban the practice. That is, if there was a way to simultaneously uphold animal welfare and the Zulus' economic interests, this possibility should be given priority. Taking the case of Portuguese bullfighting again, anti-bullfighting activists in Portugal have contended that the resources used by the state to support bullfighting ought to be used, instead, to help the bullfighting community pursue activities that do not involve animal cruelty (Basta 2013; Cordeiro-Rodrigues 2015). Thus, it would only be the case that the practice ought to be allowed to protect the economic interests of Zulus if there was no alternative economic support available.

## THE PROMOTION OF AUTONOMY

One of the most famous arguments for group rights is advanced by the Canadian philosopher, Will Kymlicka (1995); he justifies accommodation on the grounds that group rights may be deemed vital for the freedom of members of a certain community. It is important to notice that here, Kymlicka is referring only to societal cultures. Nevertheless, my argument is broader in the sense that I am not necessarily focusing on societal cultures, but any culture. Even though this is the case, according to Kymlicka, the Zulus do match the criteria for a societal culture. Further, Kymlicka contends that individual freedom is strongly tied to membership of a community. This is because this community allows individuals the capacity to understand the meaning and value of the options around them; with community designated linguistic, religious, educational, artistic, economic and political institutions which provide a cultural context of choice, without which, the capacity to make a choice would be substantially impoverished. Put differently, cultural communities and their practices provide individuals with a groundwork of values and guidelines that make them capable of assessing the options around them. The conclusion then states that cultural practices are to be allowed and protected by the state if they are instrumental to the promotion of individuals' autonomy (Kymlicka 1995).

In contrast with the previous arguments, I contend that the autonomy argument also works for justifying killing a bull during *Ukweshwama*. As described in the first section, one of the functions of the practice is as a rite of passage to adulthood for young men. A young man who passes this ritual is then seen by the community as an agent who has the right to make, and can make, his own decisions. Equally, there is a process of self-recognition as an adult at play here; as the young men gain self-confidence in the process so that they are empowered to become autonomous agents. These two aspects, the recognition of the value of oneself and others, is essential in developing autonomy. This is because for an agent to be an autonomous agent, he usually needs only the recognition of significant others regarding his value, i.e., respect from the community, which will subsequently reinforce his own self-confidence in terms of decision making. Put differently, in general terms, individuals are only capable of making autonomous decisions when they are confident enough to do so. Given that, passing the bull killing test tends to be a key practice in allowing males to gain self-confidence in Zulu culture; then if one values autonomy, one should also value the means to achieve it.

Against this view, it can be contended that even if one agrees that this practice has this role, it does not mean it is irreplaceable. Hence, if it is replaceable by another practice that promotes autonomy and there is a concern regarding animal welfare, then the practice ought to be abandoned. Nevertheless, this aforementioned perspective undervalues the importance of *individuals' own culture* for the process of gaining self-confidence. For one to gain self-respect and, thereby, autonomy, one needs access to one's own culture.

Take the following example; if a Samurai was taken to an Amish community in Pennsylvania and passed all the Amish rituals of manhood, this would not likely make the Samurai feel that he had achieved something meaningful in his life or contribute to his levels of confidence due to this recognition by the Amish community. This is because the Amish culture would not be familiar or meaningful to him (Festenstein 2007). Rather, individuals need to be familiar with a culture for it to provide them with self-evaluation and evaluation of the world (Taylor 1992). In some cases, a change may happen, but usually the process of changing one's culture is costly, slow and ultimately impossible (Kymlicka 1995; Parekh 2005). Taking this into consideration, giving young Zulu men different options for proving their manhood, ones that are not familiar or meaningful, would not be beneficial for forming or maintaining their autonomy.

This idea is reinforced by the fact that in the case of black Africans, freedom is a key value. At least since European colonialism, African individuals have been subject to the privation of freedom, especially in terms of Chattel slavery (Chabal *et al.* 2002; Esmeir 2014; Kennedy 2016). Additionally, a predominant issue for African communities is the internalisation of racism, i.e., the internalisation of negative societal stereotypes (Oelofsen 2015; Kennedy 2016). This internalisation undermines self-respect, which, as explained, is a necessary condition for agency. So, as contended by the African

philosopher Severino Ngoenha, the privation of freedom and the search for it has characterised the African condition since colonialism (Ngoenha 1994, 2004).

Taking this on board, that there is a historical and contemporary injustice suffered by Africans, that is, the privation of freedom, means it justifies extra assistance to correct. More precisely, allowing the practice can further be justified on grounds of equality. Firstly, it can be equality in the sense of being a symbolic act that expresses equal respect for the cultural difference manifested in the practice. In this case, equality is achieved by showing regret and respect and, thereby, achieving equal societal recognition of value (Levy 2000; Shachar 2008). Secondly, it can be equality in the sense of providing an extra assistance to access the good of self-respect, which is important for autonomy (Kymlicka 1995).

### CONSCIENCE, CULTURAL DISPOSITION AND MORAL LOSS

Another possible argument that can be advanced is what can be called the conscience argument. This argument starts by observing that individuals do not chose their cultural dispositions and convictions (Tully 1991; Parekh 2005; Kukathas 2007). Further, it has been observed that these cultural dispositions and convictions are constitutive of individuals' sense of identity and "cannot be overcome without a deep sense of moral loss" (Parekh 2005: 241). This means that it is not without substantial suffering or effort that one steps out of one's cultural dispositions and convictions, for they are inextricably connected to conscience, and individuals tend to follow their conscience in their daily actions (Kukathas 2007). Just like for an individual in a wheelchair it can be extremely costly, and sometimes impossible, to function in, and access, places with physical barriers, a person may face similar difficulties in overcoming cultural difficulties (Parekh 2005). So, according to this argument, culture is represented as operating as an analogous force in individuals' lives, one that manifests as a physical barrier (Parekh 2005; Phillips 2006).

Taking this on board, the argument is that freedom of conscience is a vital interest for human individuals, and society should not create laws and regulations that substantially diminish the access to the fulfillment of this interest (Barry 2001; Festenstein 2007; Kukathas 2007). In other words, someone who has his or her conscience strongly directed one way, cannot comply to an opposite norm without a significant negative impact on his or her well-being, while the state, the argument goes, should, broadly speaking, protect individuals' fundamental interests (Van Parijs 1998; Barry 2001; Roemer 2013). In fact, legal codes tend to have exemptions to the law for religious groups precisely on the grounds that respecting religious individuals' conscience is crucial to the well-being of these individuals (Festenstein 2007).

The bull killing practice in *Ukweshwama* is strongly linked to conscience, with many of the individuals involved in the practice strongly believing that to kill a bull is the right way to



praise their Zulu king, ancestors and community (Horsthemke 2015). Bear in mind that Africans tend to value actions that are undertaken for the sake of their community (Metz 2007) and killing a bull during *Ukweshwama* does precisely that, being a practice where individuals follow their conscience by behaving in ways that uphold community values. Put differently, engaging in the ritual of killing the bull in the *Ukweshwama* context is a form of following one's conscience to the extent that it is inextricably connected to what Zulus think is the right thing to do (community sacrifice). Because acting against what one thinks is right is very difficult, not following this would entail substantial suffering in the sense that those who strongly believe that they should act this way would feel that they have not fulfilled their life purpose, something which could potentially cause extreme anxiety (Taylor 1992; Parekh 2005). Anxiety would be felt not just because there is a superstition linked to the practice, which would make individuals distressed for not following it, but also because dropping one of the most important activities in their communities, one that gives all their lives meaning, would lead to a sense of great moral loss.

## LEGAL CONSISTENCY

A final possible argument in favour of accommodating the killing of a bull in *Ukweshwama* is that it should be accommodated on the grounds of legal consistency. From the end of World War II, it was generally agreed that all individuals should, *ceteris paribus*, have the same status before the law and, therefore, be given an equal set of basic legal, political and civil rights (Balibar & Wallerstein 2011). That is, unless in exceptional circumstances, the state should endorse a unitary conception of citizenship furnishing its members with equal legal rights. Many possible rationales can be offered for this legal equality, but generally, the equal moral status of all human beings is one of the reasons that is most commonly advanced (Rawls 1971; Dworkin 2013). So, the legal consistency argument is that if analogous practices are legally allowed, then there is no good justification for legally banning a certain practice (Poulter 1986). More precisely, by allowing some practices in society and disallowing other analogous practices, the state is violating the value of equality and acting unjustly. In the particular case regarding South African law, the law would be unjust if there was no good justification for excluding the Zulu ritual of killing a bull while including analogous practices that are harmful to animals. If it were the case that this ritual was banned and other similar practices were allowed without good justification, then a violation of the value of equality could be said to have arisen.

There is a good case for arguing for legal consistency with regards to *Ukweshwama*. Firstly, there is a constitutional case for accepting the practice. Recognition of customary practices comes from Section 211 of the South African Constitution (South African Government 2017). The new constitution of 1996 aimed at establishing customary law as a core element of the South African legal system (Himonga & Bosch 2000).

In particular, this means that if customary law should have legal value in South Africa, so should the particular customary laws of Zulus. In other words, to be legally consistent and respect equality, the customary practices of Zulus ought to be legally recognised as are other customary practices in South Africa.

It could be contended as a counter-argument that the South African constitution clarifies that only customary practices that do not go against the constitution are legally acceptable. Nevertheless, as Thaddeus Metz has shown, there is neither an explicit nor implicit mention of animal welfare in the South African Constitution (Metz 2010a). Put differently, there is nothing in the practice that goes against the Constitution; mainly because animals are not mentioned, and because the worries about conflict between customary law and the South African constitution are with regards to human rights, rather than animal rights (Himonga & Bosch 2000; South African Government 2017).

In addition to having a legal constitutional case, South African animal law reinforces the idea that legal consistency entails the acceptance of this practice. The Animal Protection Act (South African Government 1962) contends that animals should not suffer unnecessarily, but that 'necessary' suffering is allowed. The Act is slightly vague about the meaning of 'necessary'; however, in the literature of animal law, necessary usually means that the animal can be harmed or killed if, and only if, the harm or the killing are essential for human beings' well-being. That is, necessary suffering is such that the suffering contributes to an essential aspect of humans' well-being (Bilchitz 2010, 2012). As explained in the introduction, and as the arguments in the previous section demonstrate, culture is an essential aspect of individuals' lives. Therefore, as a matter of legal consistency, if other practices in South Africa are accepted on the grounds of the well-being of other individuals, the ritual of killing a bull in *Ukweshwama* should be also. Additionally, another important animal law in South Africa is the Meat Safety Act. This regulates where and how animals can be slaughtered; however, the Act's section 7.2, contends that all religious practices are exempt from the methods and locations demanded by the Meat Safety Act (Food and Agriculture Organization 2000). This is a required accommodation of the Act because South Africa offers a socially complex reality, with different ethnicities, religions, and so forth. Consequently, the way to equalise and respect groups' identity is to have laws that accommodate these different practices. Taking this on board, the exemption given to all cultures (hence, its universalism) provides a good case for upholding the ritual of killing the bull during *Ukweshwama*. For if all cultures benefit from this exemption, so should the Zulu practice of killing a bull.

## CONCLUSION

In this article, my objective was to address a question that continues to occupy public debate in South Africa; namely, should the Zulu practice of killing a bull during *Ukweshwama* be accommodated or not? I addressed this question by looking



at philosophical arguments about the *instrumental* value of culture in the literature. In particular, I studied five possible justifications for the accommodation of this Zulu practice. Namely, these were that it should be accommodated so that friendship, economic interests, autonomy, freedom of conscience and legal consistency are promoted. I argued that the practice cannot be justified on grounds of friendship and economic interests, but may be justified on the grounds of the other three arguments.

Further research on this should explore different practices; it would be particularly interesting to analyse bullfighting and *corrida* in the Portuguese and Spanish contexts to assess if the implications are the same. Analogous practices, such as dogfighting and cockfighting, also ought to be assessed in light of the arguments presented here. Further research should address the normative issue discussed here, but from the point of view of the intrinsic value of culture, which was not a topic addressed in this article.

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