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MANAGERIALISM AS ANTI-SOCIAL: SOME OF *UBUNTU*'S IMPLICATIONS FOR KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

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ABSTRACT

Given the myriad ways in which managerialism in South African higher education, and especially knowledge production undertaken there, is intuitively undesirable, what would the southern African ethic of *ubuntu* entail about them? In particular, would it plausibly explain why they are objectionable and prescribe some realistic alternatives? In this contribution, a work of applied ethical philosophy, I answer 'yes' to these overarching questions. Specifically, I argue that the various respects in which managerialism is unjustified, particularly with regard to research, are powerfully captured by an ethical philosophy grounded on salient ideas about communal relationship associated with *ubuntu*. Furthermore, I bring out how the moral-theoretic interpretation of *ubuntu* that I invoke provides concrete guidance about how university research, amongst other things, ought instead to be conducted in South Africa and elsewhere. Although there have been a variety of Western critiques of managerialism, this is the first comprehensive one to be grounded on salient sub-Saharan values.

INTRODUCTION

Criticizing managerialism (or performativity, audit culture, neo-liberalism, corporatization) is a favourite pastime of contemporary academics, not only in the hallways but also in the literature. Many of us have an intuitive sense of what is objectionable about managerialism, but is there a plausible theoretical account of it? In the ultimate name of what would it make sense to object to all the various managerialist practices? Is there one thing at bottom that makes all the various forms of managerialism problematic?

Of course, there might not be just a single thing that makes the myriad forms of managerialism undesirable.[1] However, it would be fascinating, at least

[1] In the final analysis, there might be an irreducible plurality of many different kinds of problems with managerialism, of the sort one finds in Lynch (2006). However, one can know that no unity amidst the diversity is forthcoming unless one first seeks it out.

from a philosophical standpoint, if there were, and I aim to make headway on the search for what it might be. In this chapter, which is a work of applied ethical philosophy, I present a unified account of what makes managerialism with respect to knowledge production in at least South African higher education problematic, and I suggest respects in which the account can plausibly be extended to managerialism more generally. In particular, I advance a novel, sub-Saharan theory of why managerialism is wrong, drawing on a certain ideal of relating communally that is commonly associated with *ubuntu*, the Nguni word in southern Africa for human excellence. In a nutshell, I argue that a plausible account of what is fundamentally wrong with managerialism is that it flouts communal relationship, and I also provide concrete guidance about how university research ought instead to be conducted in South Africa and elsewhere so as to honour it.[2]

Although communalism is particularly salient in the sub-Saharan tradition of thought about ethics, I do not mean to suggest that the critique of managerialism is only 'for Africans'. Those from a wide array of cultural and theoretical backgrounds can find something plausible in the suggestion that managerialism is objectionable, very roughly, for keeping people apart. Note that I do not intend to provide evidence that this is the *best* explanation of why managerialism is unwelcome. Instead, my goal is the more limited one of providing a new, powerful explanation with an African pedigree that could in the future be weighed up against theoretical competitors, particularly those grounded on characteristically Western ideals.[3]

I begin by spelling out what managerialism is, providing several examples of it, particularly when it comes to research in contemporary South African higher education. Note that I do not address the causes of managerialism, such as changes to government policy or what occasioned them, leaving that to my colleagues in the social sciences. Next, I provide a philosophical interpretation of *ubuntu*, one that is meant not to reproduce it in its entirety as a religious worldview or way of life, but instead to cull out a morally attractive dimension of it, one that could be understood and appreciated by those from a wide array of backgrounds. According to my favoured reading, *ubuntu* as an ethic prescribes becoming a real person, which one can do insofar as one prizes communal relationships with others, ones of sharing a way of life and caring for their quality of life. After having clarified this principle, including by differentiating it from an ideal of collegiality, I apply it to managerialism. The basic problem with managerialism in light of this understanding of *ubuntu* is that it tends to impair the ability to relate communally. Undertaking research could be a way of communing between academics and managers, other academics, students and the broader society, but managerialism makes such relationships much more difficult to achieve. Next, I suggest ways in which university procedures could be imbued with more *ubuntu* while retaining enough efficiency, accountability and other values that have tended to motivate administrators to adopt managerialism. I conclude the chapter by noting the need in

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[2] As I write, other applications of *ubuntu* to an educational context are forthcoming at the global level, e.g., it was the theme of the 2015 Annual Conference of the Comparative and International Education Society and will be the focus of a special issue of the *International Review of Education*.

[3] See, for instance, appeals to the ethics of deliberative democracy in the work of Jürgen Habermas (Enslin et al. 2003; Coughlan et al. 2007), of encounter in Emmanuel Levinas (Standish 2005) and of 'techniques of the self' in Michel Foucault (Shore 2008; Clarke and Knights 2015).

other work to weigh up this *ubuntu*-based critique of managerialism with other, particularly Western theoretical perspectives.

MANAGERIALISM, PARTICULARLY AS IT BEARS ON KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

In this section I provide what is supposed to be a comprehensive analysis of the nature of managerialism in higher education, with key illustrations from a South African research context. I aim to go beyond merely: providing apparent synonyms of the phenomenon such as 'performativity'; noting one-sided facets of it such as 'commodification' or 'top-down' approaches; or pointing out a variety of examples of it. Instead, here I proffer an account of managerialism that is meant to get at its essence.

Follow the suggestions of Penny Enslin et al. (2003) and Felicity Coughlan et al. (2007), I submit that managerialism is well understood as a condition in which central university activities are largely determined by rationalized, viz., quantified, standardized and hierarchical, procedures that are typical of modern economies and states. Higher education is more managerialist, the more that teaching, research and governance are steered by the instrumental logic typified by markets (money) and bureaucracies (power).

This proposed definition borrows much from the sociological tradition of Max Weber (1904, 1922) and Georg Lukács (1923), particularly as they have been interpreted by Jürgen Habermas (1981a, 1981b). All three social theorists view a large part of modernity to consist of the development of institutions focused on efficient goal attainment or means-ends rationality. In the private economy, maximizing outputs and minimizing inputs has often meant a business owner or manager breaking down the labour process into discrete processes that can be easily measured and repeated. The assembly line is the quintessential example, but the suggestion from these thinkers is that much of everyday life in contemporary capitalism, and not merely most of the work, has a similar structure. When it comes to modern public institutions, for example, a bureaucratic chain of command similarly involves high-ranking officials issuing directives to subordinates to engage with clients on the basis of fairly inflexible form-filling and box-ticking.

There is real debate to be had about whether these rationalized processes are undesirable all things considered, or even avoidable, in a mass society. Habermas' (1981b) view that the development of these systems is in fact a kind of social progress, but that they must be prevented from becoming too extensive, merits serious consideration. The present point is that one compelling way to understand managerialism in higher education is in terms of the extension of an instrumental logic characteristic of modern economies and states into a realm where it has not been in the past.

I now show how this analysis of managerialism makes sense of a wide array of practices that are intuitively managerialist in the sphere of 21st century South African higher education.

Think about the practice of monitoring and evaluating lecturers primarily with respect to their pass rates, with anything under 82% being considered a course or lecturer 'at risk'.

Consider the approach of judging a unit's equity or transformation profile merely according to the percentage of black South African staff it has, with deans tasked to seek out something on the order of 36% in a given year.

Imagine a university the senior management of which mobilized substantial resources so that instead of ending up in the top 4% of global rankings, it would move into the top 3%.

Suppose that, in order to reduce the degree of fraud reported, line managers had to examine every receipt, write the word 'cancelled' on it, sign it and then date it, on pain of his academics not getting reimbursed for their expenses.

And then reflect on the practice whereby those largely affected by a financial decision are not allowed to have a meaningful say in it, e.g., where there is no academic oversight, let alone consultation, with regard to a university's budget.

In these real-life examples, some are more bureaucratic, and others are more market-oriented, but all are plausibly called 'managerialist'. My suggestion is that the label is apt because they all, to a varying extent, involve steering subordinates in ways that call for the production of uniform outputs according to measurable criteria.

There is no explicit mention of knowledge production in these cases, though one might pause to consider how it might be indirectly affected by them. For now, I indicate some forms of managerialism that have a more direct bearing on the way research is undertaken.

Think about senior management designing a development programme for associate professors without first consulting them about what they would find useful for their research and career more generally.

Consider that when this programme is implemented, prospective participants are not able to engage with senior management about their concerns, but rather must channel them through a coordinator, who relays them to a director, who relays them to a still more senior manager who must then approve any changes.

Imagine that academic staff generally are incentivized with a monetary bonus at the year's end that is determined by a numerical rating of their performance, which, with regard to research, is based nearly exclusively on quantified outputs, such as number of publications in forums that are expected to accrue government subsidy to the university.

Suppose that when it comes to promotion, a staff member's research contribution is expected to meet a certain quantified threshold, where a journal article counts as one full unit and a chapter in an edited book counts as half a unit.

Finally, reflect on the practice of awarding research-related funds to academics according to whether they publish in a journal on a certain list that is expected to help the university climb the global rankings.

There are a number of reasons why academics might reasonably find the above practices unwelcome. In the following I seek out a principle that would make sense of all of them, as various manifestations of one basic problem: they inhibit academics from communing with managers, each other, their students, and the society in which they live.

UBUNTU AS A MORAL THEORY[4]

The maxim that indigenous southern Africans often invoke to sum up salient ethical perspectives is well known to be 'A person is a person through other persons' (e.g., Khoza 1994: 3; Dandala 2009: 160; Mandela 2013: 227).[5] Although those familiar with traditional African cultures tend to associate certain ideas with this phrase, in plain English it means virtually nothing to someone outside the fold (after all, whoever thought that a person is not a person?). Since this chapter is directed towards an English-speaking audience that transcends those who know Africa, and since transparency and clarity are essential for the purposes of public morality, in this section I articulate an ethic based on this maxim the meaning of which can be readily grasped, and even appreciated, by those from a variety of backgrounds.

Note that I am not seeking to accurately *reflect* the way that a particular people indigenous to the sub-Saharan region has understood morality or even the above maxim about it. Instead, I draw on some of the ways that a variety of (southern) African societies and thinkers informed by them have often understood it, in order to *construct* a plausible moral theory with an African pedigree that can be used to judge contemporary social controversies, including managerialism in higher education.

What, then, does it mean to say that a person is a person through other persons? Or, more carefully, which interpretation of this phrase is both continuous with sub-Saharan ethical traditions, particularly those in southern Africa, and prima facie attractive as a basic moral principle?

Take the first clause. When sub-Saharans say that 'a person is a person' they are not expressing a tautology. Instead, what they mean usually includes the idea that someone who is a person, in the biological sense of a deliberative agent such as a human being, ought to strive to become a *real* or *genuine* person, that is, someone who exhibits moral virtue (e.g., Ramose 1999: 52-53). Someone with the latter has *ubuntu*, literally humanness or human excellence in the Nguni languages of southern Africa. A true or complete person is someone who lives a genuinely human way of life, who displays ethical traits that human beings are in a position to exhibit in a way nothing else in the animal, vegetable or mineral kingdoms can.

Just as one might say that a jalopy is not a 'not a *real* car' (Gaie 2007: 33), so (southern) Africans often say of those who lack *ubuntu* that they 'are not a person' (Gaie 2007: 32; Dandala 2009: 260-261) or that they are even 'animals' (Pearce 1990: 147; Bhengu 1996: 27; Letseka 2000: 186). That does not mean that the wicked are literally not human beings, viz., no longer subjects of human rights, but instead connotes the metaphorical point that these individuals utterly fail to exhibit human (moral) excellence and have instead actualized their lower, base nature (Ramose 1999: 53).[6]

Turning now to the second clause, it tells people how to become real persons and to exhibit *ubuntu*, namely, 'through other persons'. Typically this

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[4] Much of this section borrows from Metz (2011a, 2014, 2015a, 2015b).

[5] For discussion in the context of several other sub-Saharan peoples, see Menkiti (2004); Nkulu-N'Sengha (2009).

[6] For discussion beyond southern Africa, see Gyekye (2010).

means by entering into *communal relationship* with others, or seeking to live *harmoniously* with them. It is well known that indigenous African ethics is characteristically communitarian, but this element is often left vague or is construed in a crude manner, as the group taking precedence over the individual. As should become clear below, a sub-Saharan moral principle can really be put to work, and be attractive for giving due weight to individual interests, once one is clear about what it means to enter into community or to live harmoniously. To spell out what this plausibly involves, I start from representative comments from southern African intellectuals about it.

Former South African Constitutional Court Justice Yvonne Mokgoro remarks of an *ubuntu* ethic, 'Harmony is achieved through close and sympathetic social relations within the group' (1998: 17).

Gessler Muxe Nkondo, who has had positions of leadership on South Africa's National Heritage Council, says, 'If you asked *ubuntu* advocates and philosophers: What principles inform and organise your life? What do you live for?....the answers would express commitment to the good of the community in which their identities were formed, and a need to experience their lives as bound up in that of their community' (2007: 91).

Nhlanhla Mkhize, an academic psychologist at the University of KwaZulu-Natal who has applied *ubuntu* to conceptions of the self, remarks that 'personhood is defined in relation to the community….A sense of community exists if people are mutually responsive to one another's needs….(O)ne attains the complements associated with full or mature selfhood through participation in a community of similarly constituted selves….To be is to belong and to participate' (2008: 39, 40).

For a final example, Mluleki Mnyaka and Mokgethi Motlhabi, two theologians based in South Africa, say this of *ubuntu*: 'Individuals consider themselves integral parts of the whole community. A person is socialised to think of himself, or herself, as inextricably bound to others....*Ubuntu* ethics can be termed anti-egoistic as it discourages people from seeking their own good without regard for, or to the detriment of, others and the community' (2009: 69, 71-72).

These (and additional construals from many other parts of Africa[7]) about what it is to commune or to live harmoniously with others suggest two recurrent themes. On the one hand, there is what I call 'identity', a matter of being close, experiencing life as bound up with others, belonging and participating, and considering oneself a part of the whole. On the other hand, one finds reference to being sympathetic, being committed to others, responding to others' needs, and acting for others' good, which I label 'solidarity'.

More carefully, it is revealing to understand identifying with another (or being close, belonging, etc.) to be the combination of exhibiting certain psychological attitudes of 'we-ness' and cooperative behaviour. The psychological attitudes include a tendency to think of oneself as a member of a group with the other and to refer to oneself as a 'we' (rather than an 'I'), a disposition to feel pride

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[7] For example, the Ghanaian Kwame Gyekye notes, 'The fundamental meaning of community is the sharing of an overall way of life, inspired by the notion of the common good' (2004: 16), while the Nigerian Segun Gbadegesin says of a representative African moral perspective, 'Every member is expected to consider him/herself an integral part of the whole and to play an appropriate role towards achieving the good of all' (1991: 65).

or shame in what the other or one's group does, and, at a higher level of intensity, an emotional appreciation of the other's nature and value. The cooperative behaviours include being transparent about the terms of interaction, allowing others to make voluntary choices, acting on the basis of trust, adopting common goals, and, at the extreme end, choosing for the reason that 'this is who we are'.

Exhibiting solidarity with another (or acting for others' good, etc.) is similarly aptly construed as the combination of exhibiting certain psychological attitudes and engaging in helpful behaviour. Here, the attitudes are ones positively oriented toward the other's good and include an empathetic awareness of the other's condition and a sympathetic emotional reaction to this awareness. And the actions are not merely those likely to be beneficial, that is, to improve the other's state, but also are ones done consequent to certain motives, say, for the sake of making the other better off or even a better person.

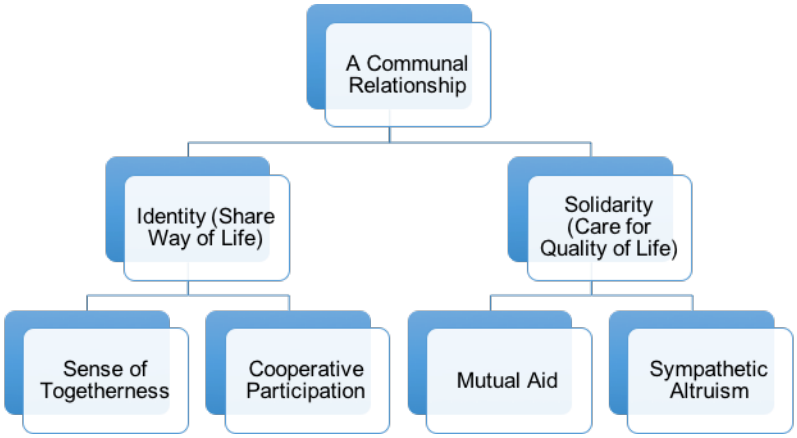

Figure 1

These specifications of what it is to commune or harmonize with others, outlined in Figure 1, can ground a fairly rich, attractive and useable ethic with an African pedigree. Bringing things together, here are some concrete, principled interpretations of 'a person is a person through other persons':

•one should become a real person, which is matter of prizing identity and solidarity with others;

•an agent ought to live a genuinely human way of life, which she can do if and only if she honours relationships of sharing a way of life with others and caring for their quality of life;

•morally right practices and policies are those that treat people as special in virtue of their capacity to enjoy a sense of togetherness, to participate in cooperative projects, to engage in mutual aid and to do so consequent to sympathy and for others' sake.

One way to begin to appreciate the explanatory power of these principles when it comes to ethics is their implication for the nature of wrongdoing. Since the relationship of identifying, or sharing a way of life, with other people in combination with that of exhibiting solidarity with, or caring for, others is basically what English-speakers mean by 'friendliness' or a broad sense of 'love', this philosophical interpretation of typical sub-Saharan values implies that wrong

actions are, roughly, those that are not friendly (or, more carefully, fail to prize people in virtue of their capacity for friendliness). What makes acts such as killing, raping, deceiving, exploiting, breaking promises and the like typically impermissible is that they are (extremely) unfriendly, ways of prizing division and ill-will, the discordant opposites of identity and solidarity.

Such analysis fleshes out the following suggestive comments of Desmond Tutu, renowned former chair of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, when he says of indigenous Africans,

> We say, 'a person is a person through other people'. It is not 'I think therefore I am'. It says rather: 'I am human because I belong.' I participate, I share….Harmony, friendliness, community are great goods. Social harmony is for us the *summum bonum*—the greatest good. Anything that subverts or undermines this sought-after good is to be avoided like the plague (1999: 35).

What is prima facie compelling about *ubuntu* interpreted as an ethical-philosophical principle is that implies that immorality is behaviour that fails to prize friendliness (and is often itself unfriendly), which differs from the dominant views in English-speaking philosophy that immorality is what causes harm in the long run, degrades people's autonomy, or violates rules that everyone would reasonably accept.

Before applying this ethic of communal relationship to managerialism, I pause to indicate how it differs from an ideal of collegiality, which has at times been invoked to criticize managerialism and precisely in a South African context (e.g., Johnson 2006; Stewart 2007; Weinberg and Graham-Smith 2012). Collegiality, once typified by the University of Oxford (Tapper and Palfreyman 2000, 2010), is more or less a relationship amongst academic peers in which decisions about core university activities are largely determined by academic judgment made consequent to respectful deliberation.

There are of course communal elements in this relationship, and it probably captures what the present interpretation of *ubuntu* prescribes when it comes to the ways academics ought to treat each other. However, collegiality is not a comprehensive ethic, and so cannot explain respects in which managerialism is problematic with regard to relationships between academics and non-academics, such as laypeople in the broader society. *Ubuntu* is the genus, collegiality a species, where the former has the power to explain philosophically what is so appealing about the latter.

MANAGERIALISM AS UNDERMINING OF COMMUNITY

The basic problem with managerialism, from the perspective of *ubuntu* as a moral theory, is that it tends to *degrade communal relationships*. When a core university function such as knowledge production is steered by money and power, it fails to honour friendliness in the sense of *making it harder both to share a way of life* and *to care for one another's quality of life.* To make this case, I return to each of the examples mentioned above, working to show that *ubuntu* theoretically captures what is intuitively objectionable about these practices.

Return to the case of senior managers deciding to implement a programme meant to improve the research of associate professors without consulting them about their needs. Probably the most glaring problem with this approach is the flouting of identity, that is, the extent to which it impedes not only a sense of togetherness, but also cooperation, between managers and academics. Even if academics were not required to participate in the programme, and so would not be outright subordinated, the lack of even-handed dialogue about how such a programme would be designed means that management is not prizing the communal value of sharing a way of life. When those with substantial education and experience, such as associate professors, are not allowed to participate publicly and collectively in decisions that will affect them in significant ways, then 'we-ness' is hardly forthcoming; instead, a feeling of disrespect and consequent demoralization (or, to use the jargon, a lack of 'buy in' and sense of 'ownership') are to be expected.

In addition, with this non-consultative approach management would be undermining the value of caring for others' quality of life. To exhibit solidarity with others, it is not enough to have good intentions. If one tries to save someone drowning merely by waiving what one thinks is a magic wand, one means well but is not acting rightly; genuinely helpful behaviour would be diving in to pull the person out, throwing a life preserver or calling a life guard. Similarly, for managers to genuinely aid their staff would require asking them about the latter's perceptions of their own research-related needs, for quite often (one need not claim *always*) those perceptions will be revealing.

Similar remarks with regard to identity and solidarity apply to implementing the programme in ways that fail to devolve responsibility. If alterations to the programme in light of participants' feedback had to gain approval from three managerial layers, all the way to a deputy vice-chancellor lacking direct contact with participants, it would be bureaucratic control, and not communal relationship, that would be prioritized. Practices would be determined by a chain of command, and not so much by collegial dialogue, and without the nimbleness likely needed to implement the programme in way that would most assist academics.[8]

Turn now to the programme by which staff are rewarded with a year-end bonus according to the extent to which they have met numerical publication targets, particularly those expected to bring money into the university. Supposing these targets were unilaterally set down from above, there is a lack of sharing a way of life. Carrots are naturally more welcome than sticks, but, even so, it would not be a matter of interaction between management and staff being determined by the attempt to reach mutual understanding and agreement.

In addition, the focus on number of outputs and prospect of income threatens to reduce the influence of academic judgment on what and where to publish. Ideally, of course, an academic would try to publish material that she thinks is of genuine importance in a forum that is suitable and influential *as well as* in one that would satisfy management's interests in income, rankings, etc.

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[8] Also worth mentioning is the fact that the more bogged down that senior managers are with the nitty-gritty, the less occasion they have to reflect strategically on how to advance the institution.

However, in cases where the former pulls in a direction different from the latter, there is of course risk that the second will win out.

One might point out that academics would seem to be assisting their universities by bringing in funds. However, they would be doing their utmost to assist neither their colleagues' search for knowledge, nor their students and the broader society insofar as they have an interest in what is published. In addition, since a university presumably ought to be using funds precisely so as to promote the academic search for, and public appreciation of, knowledge, it is not so clear that bringing in funds at the expense of those things even counts as a relevant form of 'help' to the university! Insofar as academics ought to exhibit solidarity by aiding one another, their students and the public through their research, and insofar as managers ought to exhibit solidarity by aiding them to do precisely that, the kind of reward scheme under discussion is on the face of it counterproductive.

The same kinds of comments apply to the other two forms of managerialism with respect to research adumbrated above. Basing a researcher's promotion on number of peer-reviewed units produced, with more weight given to journal articles than book chapters, substantially reduces the influence of academic judgment not only on which research is produced and where it appears, but also on which researchers obtain greater influence and resources in the academy. The role of dialogue amongst experts about the merits of a researcher's contributions is reduced in favour of a counting exercise. And then a researcher seeking promotion is not encouraged to think about what would most benefit her field or her society, but rather what would satisfy a quantified benchmark. The latter point also applies to the practice of awarding money to researchers according to whether they publish in a journal on a certain list that is expected to help the university climb the global rankings.

Recall that I initially listed additional forms of managerialism not directly bearing on research. I submit that similar kinds of objections apply to them; they, too, flout the communal values of sharing a way of life and caring for others' quality of life. That is, they also create a sense of 'us versus them' (or at least a failure to foster 'we-ness'), involve a failure to base interaction on cooperative input (if not involve outright subordination), prevent academics from doing their most to help one another, their students and the broader public, and are not based on a motive of wanting to help others for their sake (but rather more self-regarding interests such as funding, prestige).

For example, judging a unit's transformation profile merely according to the percentage of black staff it has neglects, and fails to encourage focusing on, additional respects in which public institutions that had previously flouted communal values should be seeking reconciliation or otherwise seeking to aid a disadvantaged society, e.g., via engaging in community service, providing role models, improving the number of black postgraduates, offering bursaries, funding students to attend conferences overseas, and teaching them how to publish and how to construct a c.v. And for teachers to be monitored and evaluated primarily with respect to their pass rates neglects, and discourages focusing on, other facets of lecturing that would be good for students and society, such as: being an inspiration, fostering empathy, imparting cognitive skills such as critical thought and imagination, showing how to debate respectfully and constructively, broadening horizons, making students aware of excellence, conveying life lessons, making the curriculum relevant and up to date, etc.

These kinds of energy-intense and commendable actions may indirectly lead to increased numbers of black staff or improved module pass rates, but they are likely to be insufficiently acknowledged, prized and rewarded in a numbers-based reporting system. The greater the reliance on quantified outcomes, the greater is the degree to which legitimate academic tasks, at least from the *ubuntu* perspective of genuinely aiding other people, become under-reported or fail to be undertaken.

NON-MANAGERIALIST APPROACHES TO KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

In the previous section, I argued that the salient respects in which managerialism in recent South African higher education is objectionable, particularly with respect to knowledge production, are well captured by the idea that it impairs the ability to relate communally, as often understood as an ideal in the southern African ethical tradition of *ubuntu*. Communal relationship, here, is the combination of identifying with others and exhibiting solidarity with them, and it is these values that managerialism arguably fails to honour appropriately. In this final section of the chapter, I turn from critique to construction, again drawing on the Afro-communitarian values of identity and solidarity, but now in order to propose some different and presumably more attractive ways of proceeding with regard to research.

Let us revisit a final time the idea of a development programme for associate professors, one that is meant to advance their research career. In order for managers to identify with academics, they would ideally call them together to let them know of the idea, to bounce management's ideas off them, and to solicit input. Of course not everything that academics want would be necessarily be on offer—not everyone would be able to travel to Bellagio or to stop lecturing for long periods. However, management would inform staff of what amounts and kinds of resources are available, and discussion would take place within those (let us presume reasonable) constraints. If it could not be done in person, it could be done by email. Doing these things before the programme were adopted would: cultivate a sense of togetherness between management and academics and probably amongst academics themselves; involve cooperative participation by the most affected parties; be most likely to produce a programme that would truly benefit academics; and express to academics that management cares about them.

Ideally, then, the group of associate professors would elect, or at least confirm, a coordinator who would liaise between themselves and senior management. Or, failing that, they would be given forums at which they could speak directly to senior management about their perceptions of the programme. However appointed, senior management would give a coordinator leeway to make decisions within certain boundaries, while expecting routine reports on progress and notification of any unexpectedly large changes. In this way, collegial dialogue between the coordinator and academics would be the primary determinant of the programme's unfolding, realizing a shared way of life, and it could readily adjust in response to new information that would invariably arise, enabling care of academics' interests.

Considering now academic staff more generally, the communal values of sharing and caring would prescribe an evaluation of their performance that is focused on discussion in light of academic judgment. A line manager and a staff

member would each make appraisals of the importance of the research produced by the latter in a given year and the impact (theoretical or practical) it has had or is likely to have, and in light of that determine what went well, what could have gone better and how to do better next year. A more radical suggestion would be to abjure individual performance management in favour of evaluating the way that a group has functioned. Such an approach would be particularly likely to encourage a sense of togetherness as well as to foster a cooperative division of labour that would be beneficial for all.[9]

Although such appraisals could still be awkward, a matter of a superior appraising a subordinate, surely communal relationship would be more likely to come from them than from the former giving the latter a numerical score for his performance tied to a certain monetary award based on number of subsidy-accruing units of output.[10] And where some quantitative steering is appropriate, say, with regard to number of research outputs, it would be ideal to have those subject to the steering make substantial input on the nature of the targets.

When it comes to promotion and allocation of research-related resources, a similar procedure would be apt. Ascertaining whether promotion is justified with regard to knowledge production should be undertaken in light of a holistic appraisal of what research is for.[11] Some of it is for other researchers, scholars striving to discover what is true or at least epistemically justified, and some of it is also for students and the public, who may have an interest in the former[12] but are often more urgently concerned with physical, social and economic well-being. Instead of primarily considering amounts of articles and chapters, with the former being weighted more heavily for whatever reason, academic research should be evaluated in terms of the sort of contribution it has made. What have we learned from this research? How have others benefited from its publication? From the perspective of *ubuntu*, knowledge production is aptly viewed as a kind of service, a way of exhibiting solidarity with others, sometimes practically in terms of society's health, happiness or the like, and other times theoretically in terms of people being able to understand themselves and their place in the world.

Not only promotion on the basis of research, but also grants, seed money and the like should be distributed in light of such considerations, and not so much on expected publication in a journal on a certain list that is expected to help the university improve its global ranking.

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[9] This approach was for a couple of years used by one of my own departments, until disallowed by senior management.

[10] One might suggest a combination of evaluation processes, the one I have suggested, focusing on the nature and influence of the academic's research, in addition to the managerial one of focusing on quantity and monetary incentive. Might that not be what would most encourage a typical academic to do his best work? The recent evidence, in fact, suggests not; 'external' or 'instrumental' incentives tend reduce creative work, even when there is the presence of more 'internal' or 'intrinsic' ones such as wanting to excel (see, e.g., Wrzesniewski and Schwartz 2014).

[11] Another, interesting suggestion that I do not explore here is that, by *ubuntu*, the means by which knowledge production is undertaken, and not merely its end, should also be informed by communal considerations. Perhaps research should not be conducted by an individual, even if that were possible for a given project, but rather in collaboration with members of the public. For this sort of interpretation of *ubuntu* applied to journalists, see Blankenberg (1999).

[12] It is not easy to find a place for knowledge for its own sake within a basically communitarian ethical framework, on which see Metz (2009). I here presume it can be done in terms of people having an objective interest in understanding themselves and how they relate to the world.

I submit that these measures would be consistent with management's reasonable interests in ensuring that academics are productive and that council, government and other stakeholders are informed about how tax money is being spent. It is of course much easier to count up the number of publications produced in a given year than to indicate what kinds of things researchers have discovered. The former calls for a scorecard, the latter a narrative, and a narrative takes time and creativity to construct.

But, then, what is it for a senior management to report properly on a university's activities? If a university ought to be identifying with and exhibiting solidarity towards the society in which it housed, then such considerations are, in fact, the only relevant sort of information to provide. Solidarity with regard to research would mean indicating what has been discovered and how it is to the good, either practical or theoretical, of others. Knowing that more numbers of publications have been produced compared to last year is simply not relevant, and a senior management that focused on such when reporting outwards would be failing to be accountable to stakeholders (cf. Metz 2011b: esp. 47-50).

CONCLUSION

I close this chapter by reminding the reader of its intended scope and of what has yet to be done. I have sought to develop an *ubuntu*-based critique of what is wrong with managerialism in general and as applied to research in particular. More specifically, I have pointed out that certain communal values are often associated with indigenous southern African worldviews, and have advanced a principled way of understanding their moral import. According to this ethic, to live a genuinely human way of life one ought to prize relationships of identifying with others and exhibiting solidarity with them. I argued that, by this principle, managerialism is basically anti-social; it tends to inhibit people's abilities to enjoy a sense of togetherness, to participate cooperatively, to do what is likely to aid one another, and to do so consequent to sympathy and for the sake of the other. I also suggested some non-managerialist ways of engaging in knowledge production that would not flout, but would rather accord with, these values.

I have not sought to argue that my *ubuntu*-inspired critique of managerialism is the only comprehensive one available, let alone the best one. For example, some would argue that the value of democracy is what managerialism at bottom forsakes by virtue of its procedures (Enslin et al. 2003; Coughlan et al. 2007), or that these procedures directly impede a certain kind of individual autonomy or self-formation (Shore 2008; Clarke and Knights 2015). Others working more closely with Habermas' (1981b) overarching framework might maintain that, while there is nothing in itself objectionable about managerialist procedures, they become problematic when they produce 'pathologies' such as 'legitimation crises', 'anomie' and lack of 'ego strength'.

A rigorous comparison of my account with an African pedigree with these, more Western theories would have to be undertaken elsewhere in order to determine, say, whether only one of these rationales is sufficient or whether a combination of them is needed. However, I conclude by noting that one prima facie advantage of my explanation is that, whereas the appeal to lack of democracy or autonomy focuses solely on managerialism as a process, and whereas the appeal to pathologies focuses solely on its consequences, *ubuntu* incorporates both

dimensions of criticism: managerialist procedures in themselves are incompatible with a shared way of life and they often undermine the ability to do what is likely to improve people's quality of life. [13]

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[13] This chapter has benefited from written comments by Bernadette Johnson and Peter Woelert as well as from oral comments by participants at a Colloquium on Knowledge and Change in the African University held at the University of Johannesburg on 1-2 October 2015.

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