Africapitalism, Ubuntu, and Sustainability
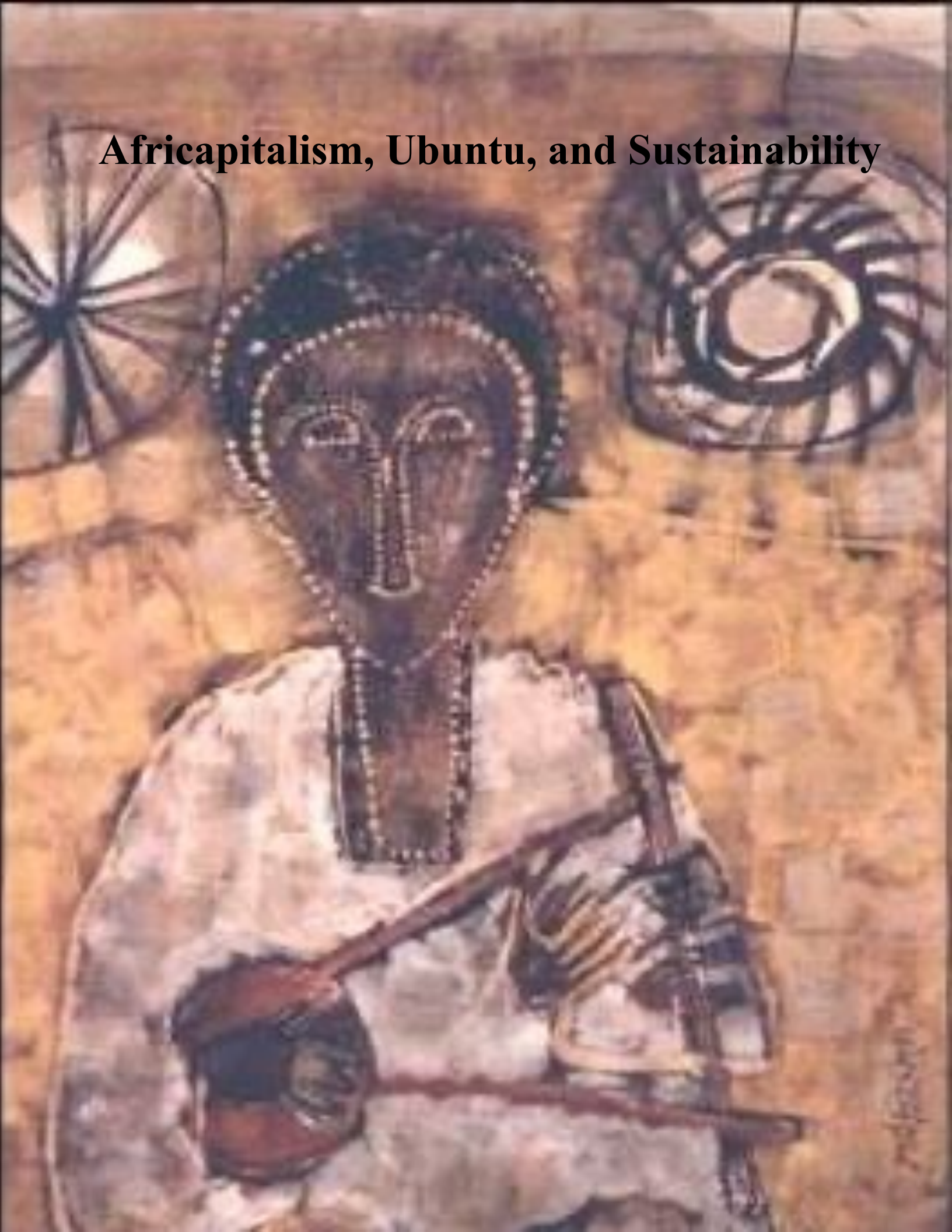
Africapitalism, Ubuntu, and Sustainability

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Ubuntu originated in small-scale societies in precolonial Africa. It stresses metaphysical and moral interconnectedness of humans, and newer Africapitalist approaches absorb ubuntu ideology, with the aims of promoting community wellbeing and restoring a love of local place that global free trade has eroded. Ecological degradation violates these goals, which ought to translate into care for the nonhuman world, in addition to which some sub-Saharan thought systems promote environmental concern as a value in its own right. The foregoing story is reinforced by field research on African hunting operations that appear—counterintuitively—to reconcile conservation with business imperatives and local community interests. Though acknowledging shortcomings, I maintain these hunting enterprises do, by and large, adopt Africapitalist and ubuntu attitudes to enhance community wellbeing, environmental sustainability, and long-term economic viability. I also examine how well-intentioned Western conservation agendas are neocolonial impositions that impede local control while exacerbating environmental destruction and socioeconomic hardship. Ubuntu offers a conciliatory epistemology, which Africapitalism incorporates, and I conclude by considering how standard moral theories and political divisions become less antagonistic within these sub-Saharan frameworks, so even opponents can find common cause.

Introduction

This article examines manifestations of the Africapitalist ethos observed in the course of field research on sustainable sub-Saharan practices. Africapitalism is an economic and ethical approach first championed by the Nigerian entrepreneur and philanthropist Tony Elumelu. The outlook posits businesses ought to cultivate long-term social wealth and claims it is paradoxical to seek private economic gains at the expense of the broader community because the fortunes of the two entwine (Elumelu 2012, 2014). As its name suggests, the framework responds specifically to African contexts. It advances a local and sometimes continental patriotism that aims at countering policies from abroad that strip Africans of wealth and otherwise disadvantage them (Edozie 2017, Chs. 3-6; Adegbite et al. 2018; Amaeshi and Idemudia 2018; Otubanjo 2018). This patriotic attitude entails *topophilia* (Amaeshi, and Idemudia 2018), a love of place that is protective and sensitive to exigencies of specific areas in Africa. An additional way the movement grounds itself in local concerns is by wedding business approaches with indigenous sub-Saharan values and manners of thinking (Amaeshi, and Idemudia 2018; Idemudia, Amaeshi, and Adun Okupe 2018).

Among these sub-Saharan ways of thinking and valuing is ubuntu—simultaneously a word, a concept, and a philosophical outlook—that holds "the solitary human being is a contradiction in terms" (Tutu 2011, 21). This means people depend on one another for the full realization of their humanity. The word "ubuntu" originates in the Bantu languages and traces to precolonial life that was characterized by the following: people lived in small oral societies in which they could know everyone else in their group; shared rituals had elevated significance; livelihood revolved around the land, held in common and allocated according to need or clan membership; helping family had especial priority, but there was moral obligation to aid the community and indeed strangers; solitariness was perplexing, and wedding and procreating were duties; sources of wisdom, the elderly were believed to persist after death, so that continued interaction was possible; people also identified with non-human animals and the land, spiritually imbuing them (Bell and Metz 2011; Chuwa 2014; Chibvongodze 2016). Conjointly, these orientations cultivated oceanic bonds, with togetherness deemed essential to developing one's humanness. As one widely circulated formulation puts it: "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am" (e.g., Mbiti 1970, 152; Nussbaum 2003, 3; More 2004, 157; Tutu 2011, 21; Ewuoso and Hall 2019, 96). This metaphysical statement about human existence entails the moral assertion that individual wellbeing reciprocally ties to that of the community, making responsibility to self and others mutually implying (Chuwa 2014, Ch. 1).

It is not just my goal to review connections between Africapitalism and ubuntu, but to detail how both, if followed consistently, engender environmentally sustainable practices. My case is reinforced by onsite observations of *topophilically* oriented sport hunting enterprises in Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe that appear—counterintuitively—to reconcile conservation with business imperatives and local community interests. Hunting has been defended on the grounds that it motivates a caring attitude towards the land that supplies livelihood and enjoyment, additionally furnishing employment and funds for community

development (Lindsey 2008; Scruton 2012, Chs. 5, 8, 10). Yet hunting is also amply attacked (e.g., Batavia et al. 2018; Ghasemi 2020), and the ideas of Africapitalism and ubuntu help show why, in certain sub-Saharan contexts, objections are often misplaced. Though acknowledging revenues can flow disproportionately to the wealthy, sometimes with hints of apartheid master-servant arrangements; and while taking animal welfare objections seriously, I argue the businesses examined do, by and large, adopt Africapitalist and ubuntu stances to promote community wellbeing, environmental sustainability, and long-term economic viability. I also consider how well-intentioned Western conservation agendas—in addition to being neocolonial impositions that impede local control—can exacerbate wildlife and habitat destruction, not to mention socioeconomic hardship. These same agendas reinforce dubious metaphysical schemes that psychologically sever humans from nature and contravene traditions that place value on living off the land (see Kesby 2003).

Importantly, the observations offered in this article cut across racial lines to include aboriginal tribal groups and also white ranchers and safari operators. This means, as the Nigerian philosopher Emmanuel Ani (2014, 346) counsels, that my project reaches "into African tradition for conceptual schemes" without being "tainted with a presupposition of ... human or biological dichotomies between races." Furthermore, while the solutions proposed are specific to parts of Africa and would be ill-advised in other places, the conclusions offered are conciliatory because, as I will argue, they simultaneously uphold left- and right-wing ideas, not to mention African and Western traditions. Conciliation and harmony are themselves in the spirit of Africapitalism and ubuntu (see Mangaliso 2001; Nussbaum 2003) and I conclude by briefly considering how approaches discussed open avenues for bridging worldviews.

Africapitalism and Place

Many presume economic and political solutions are universal, erroneously thinking what works in one time and place is suited to all others. The mass imposition of global capitalism involves such an oversight, introducing related problems that Kenneth Amaeshi and Uwafiokun Idemudia (2018, 31-32) detail in their account of Africapitalism:

> The sense of place and belonging is at the heart of the Africapitalism agenda. It is a direct response to globalised capitalism, which often takes place for granted and prioritises cost instead. Consequently, it is easy to outsource and for capital to follow the least cost-tolerant path. Arguably, therefore, globalisation trivialises place and promotes 'placelessness'. It reduces place to a mere resource, to the extent that the economic value of a place determines its situation in the scheme of things. Place is consumed, and place is fluid.

The above characterization of globalization gets close to Martin Heidegger's (1954) concept of "standing reserve," which is unsurprising as Amaeshi and Idemudia cite scholars influenced by him. Heidegger's concept signifies economic and technological arrangements that strip the unique being of things, converting them to undifferentiated commodities to be stockpiled. Thus trees become a woodlot and a rugged mountain a coal source, measured in BTUs or even more blandly as units of trade. People are treated similarly, as indicated by the linguistic shift from "personnel" to "human resources" or "human capital." Part and parcel to this standpoint is the widespread belief that essentially similar management systems are optimal in all parts of the globe. Against this, Amaeshi and Idemudia (2018, 32) seek "to restore in managerial decision making the link between place and economics on the one hand, and between place and self-identity on the other hand." Love of place—or *topophilia*—is accordingly core to Africapitalist thinking.

While Africapitalism therefore seeks place-specific solutions, it does not completely diverge from generally accepted Western economic principles—a point highlighted by the very inclusion of the word "capitalism" in the compound "Africapitalism." John Cobb (1995), for instance, is a United States theorist, who attends to the harmful impact of global free trade in

postcolonial—which means neocolonial—contexts. He, too, asserts global economic and political policy erodes local control and connection to place, approaching what Africapitalists call "placelessness." As with Africapitalists (e.g., Chizema and Nyathi 2018), Cobb argues traditional economic metrics such as GNP do not adequately measure material wellbeing. He offers the Indian state of Kerala as a case in point: its infant and maternal mortality, education levels, and access to healthcare are better than the rest of India, even though its income per capita is roughly the same. Cobb—like many others—stresses environmental overexploitation damages economic prospects. Here, he deploys the concept of "externality," defined as costs businesses impose but do not pay. For example, petroleum extraction and refining can degrade soil and air, diminishing crop yield and human health, inflicting economic and social harms. Much of the time, oil companies do not pay for the damages they inflict, but instead externalize them to the broader community, which bears the costs. In the global system, moreover, production and associated environmental costs often are exported to developing nations, exposing people there to dangerous conditions and compensating them poorly (e.g., Abrams 2016). Insofar as profits depend on community exploitation, these practices violate core principles of Africapitalism, not to mention ubuntu. This is more so because Africapitalism aims at long-term economic and social wealth, which requires environmental viability.

The emphasis on labor and community wellbeing is superficially evocative of certain Marxist implementations.[1] However, though critical of global free trade and capitalist arrangements that allow some to prosper and others to flounder; and while not antagonistic to social safety nets and public services, Cobb (1995) and Africapitalists (e.g., Amaeshi and Idemudia 2018; Edozie 2017, Ch. 5) do not propose tightly and centrally controlled economies. Instead, they suggest a third option: place-oriented capitalist arrangements in which people living

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[1] "Certain Marxist implementations" is distinguished from Karl Marx's ideas and some of his major interpreters. Thus, for example, while Africapitalists and Cobb reject centralized communistic control, both converge with thinkers such as Max Horkheimer and Herbert Marcuse, who identify as Marxist.

in an area have relatively more economic and political autonomy than in the global system. For Cobb, this means small scale, but he is intentionally vague about what this encompasses. He recognizes certain forms of commerce are infeasible at anything less than a national level, while insisting most production and associated environmental costs ought to be handled on very local scales. The key is internalizing production and associated costs, which should lead to more sustainable socioeconomic and environmental arrangements. This outlook supposes local fortunes interrelate with those of the global community, human and non-human, and promotes the wellbeing of all, so it is *partly* consistent with utilitarianism. Simultaneously, the account resonates with negative rights theory. Only in this case, the emphasis is on group rights and corresponding duties to produce goods locally and not inflict harm on other groups by externalizing costs to them. The framework therefore departs from the customary stress that negative rights theory places on isolated individuals, albeit without abandoning concern for them. After all, climate change, lead poisoning, and much else that hurts groups concurrently infringes on individual negative rights to life (Howarth 2011), while impeding human flourishing.

Place and community often are almost synonymous, and Africapitalism aims to build both by promoting parity, harmony, and respect for local existence (White and Kitimbo 2018). Good Africa Coffee, started by Ugandan businessman Andrew Rugasira, is one example. The company purchases and markets coffee at fair prices; it returns half its profits to farming communities, additionally supplying training to enhance sustainability and yield (White and Kitimbo 2018). A second example—and one predating the term Africapitalism—is the restructuring of the South African company Cashbuild. According to the then managing director Albert Koopman (1991), one strategy during a profit slump was to distribute power more equally and to "tie together the rights of people, their spiritual humanity and the processes of economy" (295). To this end, an annual "indaba" or communal gathering was held, during which

employees offered input. Koopman stresses the value of workers because financial success can depend on a smiling cashier, a custodian tidying floors, or stock controllers keeping the shelves full. Questioning why workers should get warning letters for tardiness "when a manager can steal the company's time to his heart's content over lunch with no reprimand" (299), employees were granted the right to censure even Cashbuild's director. They could veto the appointment of new managers after three months, and concerns about the penalization of white managers were not realized. Koopman adds that people want to grow, which is why Cashbuild allowed interested employees to learn new skills by rotating jobs, with Black Africans eventually managing half the outlets. Employees voted for profit sharing, which secured the equivalent of five months extra salary. Koopman concludes: "This was the hardest pill to swallow as capitalists. We had to decide when enough was enough as a reward for the shareholders" (299). Purely individual pursuit of "increased profits must be replaced by communal objectives of creating more wealth for all" (298).

Thus, in addition to deploying place-based economic patriotism against a global order that marginalizes sub-Saharan regions, Africapitalists more conventionally propose private sector commitment to generating economic and social wealth. For the founder of the movement—and Elumelu (2018, xv) cites Good Africa Coffee to vindicate the point—the basic lesson is African entrepreneurs can enjoy "significant profits, all the while placing community development at the centre of [their] strategy—proof that economic and social wealth need not compete but can coexist." Insofar as long-term economic and social viability depends on ecological sustainability, Africapitalist agendas logically imply taking care of local places by means of environmentally responsible business practices.

Ubuntu Metaphysics and Morality

Although Africapitalism subsumes ubuntu perspectives, the two have different scopes. Africapitalism is a program for managing economic relations and specifically deploying capital to bring about better life for sub-Saharan populations. Ubuntu encompasses ideas about the metaphysical nature of being human and the place of people in the cosmos, also addressing the social nature of morality within families, communities, and broader environments.

In a book on Desmond Tutu's ubuntu theology, Michael Battle (1997, 65) remarks "we are made for togetherness" and "need other human beings in order to be human" as "we don't come fully formed into the world," making a commonsensical assertion that has received ample empirical vindication (see Crippen 2017; Crippen and Schulkin 2020, Ch. 3). Another scholar accordingly says that "the phrase 'being with others' in Ubuntu is of central importance" (Chuwa 2014, 16).[2] With these starting points, ubuntu tends to see rights—or something approaching them—as belonging to communities. For instance, ubuntu perspectives often appear to regard privacy boundaries as existing more between groups than between individuals (Burk 2007). This makes sense insofar as ubuntu outlooks conceive individuals and groups as ontologically interdependent, advancing a matching normative framework that holds the wellbeing of each cultivates that of the other.

The communal character of ubuntu, however, does not abrogate conceptions of the individual. Rather, the worldview suggests individuals pursue their own good by building common wellbeing, and invites each to contribute his or her unique skills toward this shared goal (Chuwa 2014, Ch. 2; Ewuoso and Hall 2019). Ubuntu outlooks, moreover, include "an impartial element, part of which is a matter of individual rights," so that "traditional African societies have often thought of human life as having a dignity that implies recognition of certain universal human rights" (Metz and Gaie 2010, 283). This entails more than negative rights and duties, for

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[2] The resonance with Heidegger is not accidental as Chuwa elsewhere cites the Heidegger scholar John Macquarrie's use of "being with" and Heidegger reaches into pre-Modern traditions that emphasize community existence.

it is often seen as an obligation to shelter, feed and otherwise help strangers merely because they are human (Metz and Gaie 2010). Summarizing the ethical parameters of ubuntu, Thaddeus Metz (2007) says moral actions respect a person's dignity and do not degrade humanity; they promote the welfare of others without violating their rights or diminishing wellbeing; they foster positive relations with others, helping to perfect one's nature as a social being; moral actions also promote solidarity with vulnerable groups, in addition to cultivating harmony, reducing discord, and building community.

Metaphysically, a case can be made that ubuntu does not conceptually limit "community" to humans. Instead, the term arguably encompasses the entire cosmos, which is imbued with vitality (Chuwa 2014, Ch. 1; Chibvongodze 2016; Etieyibo 2017; Ewuoso and Hall 2019), notwithstanding dissenters who maintain ubuntu regards the non-human sphere instrumentally (Enslin and Horsthemke 2004; Horsthemke 2015, Ch. 6). The basic idea is that "a human person can neither be defined nor survive if separated from the society and the cosmos that enables that person's existence," making ubuntu simultaneously anthropocentric and cosmocentric (Chuwa 2014, 13; also see Ramose 2009; Le Grange 2012). On these grounds, it becomes "a matter of justice to care for other humans, other lives and the non-living part of the cosmos" (Chuwa 2014, 13-14). By extension, care becomes a core relational virtue in the holistic worldview of ubuntu (Metz and Gaie 2010; Chuwa 2014, Ch. 1), which is concentrically structured such that more obligation may be owed to family than to non-relatives and the cosmos. Strata in this layered whole, however, cannot be removed without destroying people, who are not self-sufficient but defined in relation to communities, human and cosmic.

This layered ecological connectivity is stressed by the sharing of clan names with non-human animals (Chibvongodze 2016); or African art highlighting humanity's place among the Moon, Sun, and stars (Semeniuk 2012); or immanent theologies that see divine presence in water pools and plants (Chibvongodze 2016); or rituals such as burying the placenta and umbilical cord

to mark a covenant between a newborn and the land (Chuwa 2014, Ch. 2), a practice carried out in other indigenous cultures such as those of the Americas (Whitt et al. 2001). Likewise, there are religious restraints against plundering nature (Kinoti 1999; Chibvongodze 2016). Much of this can be seen as anthropocentric insofar as an aim is to protect current and future generations of humans, who are thereby given moral priority. Yet granting priority and making one class of beings central does not automatically reduce others to mere instrumentalities. Thus, parents may feel greater obligation to their own offspring without ejecting other children from the ethical universe. Analogously, if people are inseparable from nature, which is itself a multi-layered animate community in ubuntu thinking, then the standpoint need not imply that nonhuman constituents are morally insignificant. On the contrary, ubuntu is part of a cultural outlook that supposes everything belongs together (Holdstock 2000, Ch. 10), metaphysically and ethically, so that "the natural world is an integral part of an indigenous community" (Somé 1998, 38). In broad terms, ubuntu thinking holds "whatever is against life is unethical; whatever favors life is ethical. Although human life is the center of all life on earth, all life is sacred since all life is considered interdependent" (Chuwa 2014, 13).

There is of course a danger of romanticizing and overgeneralizing cultural standpoints, with Africapitalists warning precisely against this (Amaeshi and Idemudia 2018; Nkomo 2018). It is obvious to anybody who has spent significant time in sub-Saharan regions that inhabitants do not universally live up to ubuntu ideals, just as many US citizens do not adhere to their founding principles. Africa's ruling elites have historically behaved poorly,[3] and the continent's population often has been divided from one another and the land, partly a legacy of colonialism (Chibvongodze 2016). Another reason to avoid painting Africa with the same brush and

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[3] As Kiros (2004, 221) summarizes the situation, many postcolonial leaders "profiteered from formal independence by taking their colonial masters' place. They became the new masters of the masses of the third world. These are the masses who live in tin shacks and shanty towns, walk on unpaved roads to fetch water from dried-up wells, who die before they turn 30, and whose children die of malnutrition. They suffer so that the new masters might live in gated communities, deposit their money in foreign banks, and send their children to the best universities in the West."

imposing one identity on a vast plurality is that single sub-Saharan countries have more linguistic and cultural diversity than entire regions such as Europe or North America (Metz and Gaie 2010; Sulamoyo 2010). Metz—a ranking expert who expressly issues this warning—nonetheless suggests most sub-Saharans will find ubuntu familiar and attractive (Metz and Gaie 2010; also see Dauda 2017).[4] This is more so because Pan-African responses to colonialism circulated ubuntu ideas (More 2004; Edozie 2017), which also were championed by post-apartheid heroes such as Desmond Tutu (2011, Ch. 2; also see More 2004). Ubuntu perspectives entered Truth and Reconciliation literature as well, thereby diffusing further (Metz 2007).

Critically, however, Africapitalists cite ubuntu notions as normative ideals to be pursued, and normative ideals are somewhat independent of their exercised prevalence within cultures. This is perhaps less so to the extent that Africapitalism specifically incorporates local values. At the same time, the movement does not pitch ubuntu as a panacea or fundamental truth about Africa, but rather as a way of approaching sub-Saharan challenges in a manner that respects some of the region's local wisdom.

Two Case Studies: Hunting in South Africa and Zimbabwe

It is not just my goal in this paper to review Africapitalism, ubuntu, and connections between the two, but to detail how both, if followed consistently, entail ecologically sustainable attitudes. My case is reinforced by onsite observations of an activity that, on the face of it, seems

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[4] Edozie (2017) traces ubuntu even into Egypt, albeit without documenting her claim very well, and Siame (2013) observes ancient Egyptian languages have Bantu elements. Without defending Edozie's assertion, one might adopt Metz's phraseology and say people from North Africa are likely to find ubuntu ideas familiar and attractive. My experience of living in Egypt and around people from other North African countries suggests many in this part of the world believe individual and group wellbeing are linked, with remarkable charity common in Egypt, even among the poor. Egypt has a debating culture in which people like to talk until they agree, in line with a conciliatory wish for social harmony. As in ubuntu, hospitality is valued. Today, North Africans connote many essential activities with words built from an Arabic root (جمع) that roughly means "to gather together." This ranges from praying at mosques to an Egyptian practice of pooling money so all individuals in a group can meet large expenses on a cyclic basis. Egyptians have a fluid sense of time, and do not cling to it greedily. Mangaliso (2001) similarly maintains time is "not a finite commodity" in ubuntu thinking.

at odds with environmentalism, namely, sport hunting.[5] One claim explored is that local control

of sport hunting yields economic value from habitats and wildlife, making environmental

destruction financially costly and motivating conservation to preserve revenue sources.[6] This is

especially in remote places where conventional photo safaris are less feasible. It also may be that

the direct stewardship entailed in such enterprises restores a sense of belonging to the land and it

to people, and thus a protective *topophilia* or what Roger Scruton has called *oikophilia*,

meaning "love of home" (see Tuan 1974; Scruton 2012; Amaeshi and Idemudia 2018). A

second tenet is that sport hunting often benefits local human populations by providing funds for

community projects and also more jobs or higher skilled ones, along with ancillary goods such as

donated meat. If these postulates are true, then hunting operations may sometimes instantiate

Africapitalists' placed-based strategies for mobilizing private resources to generate long-term

economic and social wealth, which implies environmentally sustainable arrangements. Hunting

also may be in line with ubuntu, which favors community development and tends to identify life-

promoting and life-thwarting activities as ethical and unethical, respectively (Chuwa 2014, Ch.

1). This last proviso has the advantage of introducing a moral imperative to abandon sport

hunting if the activity ceases to favor human and non-human life.

An opening example is that of the Makuleke tribe, a group forcibly evicted from their

ancestral land in Kruger National Park in 1969. This was just one instance in an extended history

that earned Kruger National Park's first game warden the moniker *Skukuza* or The Sweeper for

his ability to "clean" the land of its indigenous inhabitants (Steyn 2012, 72). In the late 1990s,

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[5] I conducted the above mentioned field research in Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe between 2015 and 2016. Methods consisted of interviews with several tribes in South Africa, travelling through the bush with an anti-poaching patrol in Shona territory in Zimbabwe's Zambezi Valley, and observing business operations in Zimbabwe and Namibia. Research in South Africa and Zimbabwe was carried out with a collaborator. Work in Namibia was conducted alone, but with my collaborator helping with organization. Committees at the American University in Cairo funded and approved the project. Results from these research trips are published in a preliminary précis (Crippen and Salevurakis 2019) that does not discuss Africapitalism or ubuntu.
[6] For supporting arguments, see Lindsey (2008). For an account acknowledging moral ambiguities of trophy hunting while asserting it can promote conservation, see Gressier (2012). For arguments largely against trophy hunting, see Batavia et al. (2018) and Ghasemi (2020).

however, after much negotiating, land totaling about 250 km^2 was restored to the tribe, which agreed to forgo ecologically destructive activity such as mining and farming (Reid 2001; Magome and Murombedzi 2003; Wells and McShane 2004; Steyn 2012). The Makuleke subsequently leased land back to Kruger National Park for conservation purposes, generating revenue for community development (Magome and Murombedzi 2003). In 2000, the Joint Management Board, which oversees the area with representatives from the Makuleke Community Property Association (CPA) and South African National Parks (SANParks), completed a plan for conservation with the help of outside ecologists and donors (Reid 2001; Reid et al. 2004). Notably, this plan permitted commercial trophy hunting.

By 2003, the community was generating US$231,000 annually from the hunting of cape buffalo, various antelope species, and a handful of elephants (Magome and Murombedzi 2003; Steyn 2012). Funds, in turn, supported scholarships, schools, women's groups, and water supply, while providing food to poorer families (Makuleke 2004; Steyn 2012). The latter was augmented further because trophy hunters only keep mementos such as hides and tusks, while the animal meat is retained by locals, this being customary throughout southern regions in Africa. Hunting also supplied seed money for ecotourism enterprises that were pursued in conjunction with private partners. In 2005, a partnership was forged with Wilderness Safaris to operate the Pafuri Lodge, this time without trophy hunting and with 10% of revenues directed to the Makuleke CPA (Makuleke 2004). Later, other tourism ventures agreed to share 10–15% of earnings; an eco-training camp educated community members; and SANParks, for its part, committed to promoting biodiversity on Makuleke lands (Matiku, Zuwarimwe, and Tshipala 2020). All this was in addition to jobs supplied. Lala Steyn (2012, 82) crucially adds that in such partnerships, "the Makuleke CPA has proven to be cohesive, … avoiding the failure of many other CPAs that have been captured by a small elite group that skews the distribution of benefits." My own onsite observations accord with this claim.

The Makuleke also appear to have successfully upheld conservation goals. This was enough so that in 2005, Kruger National Park allowed a private company to relocate rhinos, wildebeests, zebras, and impala to the Makuleke concession to create new breeding nuclei (Uddhammar 2006; UNDP 2012). At this point hunting was restricted to a three-week period in the adjacent Mabalingwe area (Steyn 2012), although not because of poor management; it was rather because a private partner worried hunting would make animals skittish, interfering with photo safaris and ecotourism (Uddhammar 2006).

It appears, then, that sport hunting is not necessarily at odds with sub-Saharan conservation agendas. This was SANParks' position with the Makuleke, but reasons for the stance can be laid out more clearly with an example from the Shona lands in Zimbabwe. The area is in the Zambezi Valley, specifically the Mbire District in the Dande region, which borders Zambia and Mozambique. The region has endured poaching, which employs unselective methods such as snares and poison. The situation is worsened by porous and unpatrolled borders. While many poachers in Zimbabwe are poor and simply after food (see Tchakatumba et al. 2019), their indiscriminate methods strip the land to a point that locals will eventually have little left.

In the last decade, however, the Shona have leased hunting rights on one 1825-km^2 parcel to a trophy hunting business, and the owners recognize poaching hurts profits. They accordingly fund anti-poaching patrols and have established reward systems for captured snares, poachers, and hunting equipment. The patrol removed approximately 6500 snares between 2014 and 2016. A multiweek research stay, moreover, saw a leopard poacher arrested and another convicted for snaring a juvenile elephant (Crippen and Salevurakis).

It is important to note quotas restrict totals killed and cost does, too, with certain packages exceeding US$100,000, meaning trophy hunting in the Mbire District is not the mass slaughter detailed in colonial-era epics like Theodore Roosevelt's (1910) *African Game Trails*.

Far from it, the hunting business has in fact reduced—not increased—the number of animals

killed. This partly follows from more eyes on the land, with poaching decreasing during hunting

season. Active measures also have proven impactful. Thus, in 2010—the first year the Dande

Anti-Poaching Unit or DAPU was established—40 poached elephant carcasses were uncovered

from the previous season. In 2013, the number was four with totals fluctuating in subsequent

years, but remaining below 10. The number hunted on legal safaris, by contrast, averaged about

11 per year from 2013 onward. This means that in even the worst years, the number of known

animals killed was roughly half of that occurring in the year prior to the introduction of DAPU

(Crippen and Salevurakis 2019). Thus, while many find the situation unpalatable, it is in line

with life-promoting philosophies discussed previously.

Ubuntu cosmologies and care hierarchies of course prioritize people over nonhumans, as

do Africapitalist worldviews, and the Shona's partnership with the safari operators benefits

locals. The two owner-operators of the business report upwards of $US740,000 is injected into

the local economy annually,[7] with $US67,500 per year allocated to social funds (McCallum

2016). From the standpoint of the Shona, hunting is critical because it realizes 90% of revenues

in the Mbire District (Crippen and Salevurakis 2019). Lease payments fund community projects,

and people's lives improve from jobs that would otherwise be absent. The local government

accordingly sees fit to pay half the salaries of DAPU scouts, with the safari operators covering

the remainder, plus equipment and food (Crippen and Salevurakis 2019).

Some consumptive arrangements are less successful, as on lands belonging to another

tribe on the border of Kruger National Park. Here, there seems to be a flippant attitude towards

conservation, so that during a research visit, a senior tribesman who takes clients on trophy hunts

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[7] The owner-operators report local governments determining how funds are distributed. Though data indicate revenues benefit local households, Tchakatumba et al. (2019) observe proceeds cannot be directed to levels lower than district councils with people on these disproportionately prospering. Murombedz (2003) adds that governmental structure inherited from the colonial period impedes distribution of funds to households.

boasted the buffalo shared at a community dinner had been poached. It is not damning in itself if tribespeople shoot an occasional buffalo on their own land for food. However, the observed animal variety and density was unexpectedly low given the proximity to the protected Kruger area. This suggests the area is overstressed, perhaps because local hunters have a sense they can externalize costs to Kruger insofar as animals killed will be replenished from there. Another issue is that revenues appear to flow disproportionately to tribal elites and less to community development.

The Makuleke and Zambezi cases, by contrast, exhibit principles outlined by Africapitalists. Here, private enterprise appears to augment communal wealth and environmental sustainability. *Topophilia* is another core Africapitalist character that is observed among Makuleke tribespeople, who are motivated by a love of place and community. There is an ancestral component to these feelings as the Makuleke are on historical lands. The concerns of the Zambezi operators are likewise more than just financial insofar as they have affection for the remote stretch of land they have leased. This is evidenced by the fact they and their families vacation at their rustic, off-grid camp facilities and consider an evening relaxing in the bush next to a tributary of the Zambezi River to be time well spent. For both parties and especially the Makuleke, this love of place arguably reinforces protective attitudes.

A related way that the Makuleke and Zambezi cases accord with Africapitalism is that the solutions deployed in both territories are geared to those locations, which can pose unique challenges. One is the presence of animals such as rhinos and elephants that poachers seek for the black-market value of their horns and tusks. A second obstacle is widespread poverty, leading people to do what any of us would: to place immediate needs above long-term environmental and economic sustainability. A third and related difficulty is that sub-Saharan nations have limited revenues for anti-poaching enforcement in vast areas, which is a reason that private business solutions can be helpful. A fourth factor is that rural areas can be relatively

inaccessible, and incidentally not ideal for ecotourism and photo safaris, meaning that there are, in effect, large unguarded swaths. The remoteness also entails relatively fewer employment opportunities, and sport hunting is more common in such areas, with poorer communities depending on it (Van der Merwe, Saayman, and Rossouw 2014; Naidoo et al. 2016; Saayman, van der Merwe, and Saayman 2018). Thus, using sport hunting to promote environmental and socioeconomic vitality is a solution that is specific to certain—but obviously not all—sub-Saharan African regions, and has little productive role in most other places.

A Third Case Study: Hunting in Namibia

A specific way that sport hunting sometimes promotes conservation is by internalizing costs of environmental exploitation, thereby fostering sustainability, which benefits local communities. An example is the roughly 2500 km^2 Loxodonta Africana Conservancy, comprised of 52 privately owned ranches in northwest Namibia. Legally, a hunting conservancy must have clear boundaries that neighboring communities do not dispute; it must have a defined membership and a committee of representatives from that group; it also must have mechanisms for equitable revenue distribution and an environmentally sustainable plan, which invariably involves government-set quotas (Nakamhela 2012). As with the Makuleke case, and in line with ubuntu perspectives, conservancies are accordingly directed toward the total wellbeing of the group and environment. Insofar as the arrangement is a place-specific one that aims at communal wealth without precluding individual entrepreneurs from profiting, it is also in line with Africapitalism. The particular 140 km^2 ranch that I studied—and which runs a hunting business—has been passed from parent to child, and the current owners wish to bequeath to their daughter what they have cherished, so *topophilia* is a motivating factor, too.

The hunting business itself can cultivate a more caring attitude towards the environment by adjusting ranchers' immediate interests, which have historically conflicted with wildlife. One

common problem is elephants breaking through fences, which damages property and allows breeding stock to mix. Elephants also can destroy human-made waterholes. For these reasons, elephants historically have been considered "problem" animals and shot. The same is so with predators such as leopards, this time to prevent them from eating livestock. The introduction of sport hunting, however, generates profits exceeding losses, even for ranchers not directly involved in safaris, who nonetheless receive revenues, which depend on local wildlife populations (Crippen and Salevurakis 2019). Again, affairs may be less than ideal, but as compared to a situation in which ranching is the only business, the arrangement favors both human and non-human life.

Though one would not want everybody to get out of agriculture as this would jeopardize food security, most are not interested in running hunting operations. At the same time, the ecosystem viability improves markedly when at least some abandon ranching in favor of using lands for sport hunting. One reason is that cattle decimate vegetation, stressing wildlife and impeding other processes such as seed distribution that occurs when indigenous animals roam and defecate (Hempson, Archibald, and Bond 2017; Otte, Pica-Ciamarra, and Morzaria 2019). The owners of the 140-km^2 plot, who have hunting rights on six neighboring properties comprising an additional 850 km^2, have in fact done more than remove most of their cattle. They actively promote wildlife—including elephants, giraffes, leopards, oryxes, springboks, warthogs, zebras, and other species hunted—by maintaining waterholes, which are critical during increasing droughts. Saltlicks and alfalfa pellets also are put out for animals (Crippen and Salevurakis 2019). One of the co-owners notes sport hunting is more profitable than cattle, especially during droughts. Further keep in mind more animals are lost when the only business is ranching because habitat destruction kills wildlife and cattle additionally go to slaughter.

Privately owned ranches in this part of the world are different than the sort that one finds in other places. At 140 km^2, the one I looked at is larger than most in North America and Europe.

It also is off-grid. Ranches in Namibia are overwhelmingly owned by Africans of European descent, and largely staffed by Black Africans (see Melber 2019). The Loxodonta conservancy is therefore partly a product of colonial and postcolonial socioeconomic fabrics that have supplied unequal opportunities in regards to wealth, education, and much else. When it comes to achieving Africapitalist values, one might compare the sport hunting operation to Plato's (*Rep.*, 514a–521d) famous cave allegory in which shadows are cast by puppets, which in turn imitate the true realities outside the cave. The safari business does not completely distort Africapitalist ideals, yet neither does it totally fulfill them. One might say the enterprise is to Africapitalism what the puppets in Plato's cave are to the entities they imitate. But the puppets in the cave still approach and hence resemble the genuine objects, and as compared to standard Western capitalism, one finds a greater concern for communal wellbeing in the Loxodonta situation.

While affluent landowners disproportionately reap financial rewards, this still would be the case if they merely continued ranching, and the hunting conservancy at least preserves wildlife and habitats. It also provides higher skilled and hence better paying jobs for Black Africans, and employment opportunities increase during times of expansion. Additionally, uniforms and shelter are supplied to workers, and meat is distributed to them and local schools with roughly four tonnes donated annually by the owners of the 140-km^2 acre plot. The owners also allow local Black Africans to gather cut grass on their land to feed their own livestock. This differs from customary practices of the global North, which would likely sell unwanted meat and grass at discounted rates to generate good publicity, while simultaneously increasing profit. The situation instead gets closer to traditional African practices of leaving a portion of the land or produce for the needy (Chuwa 2014, 49, 86). One can accordingly speculate the white owners have absorbed at least some of the ethos of indigenous ways such as ubuntu and they are operating along quasi-Africapitalist lines. At the very least, the owners of this operation seem to agree with Koopman—another white Afrikaner—who was earlier cited to assert individual

profits need to be balanced with the aim of generating communal wealth, which in this case entails maintaining environmental viability.

Political Friction

Many—including myself—find sport hunting deeply problematic. However, hostility to African trophy hunting—much of it from abroad—can thwart economic solutions that mitigate habitat and wildlife destruction and help local human populations. Foreign antagonism also carries a degree of hypocrisy insofar as industrialized nations have long consumed excessive resources, inflicting planetary damage. Many Africans, to be sure, find hunting for sport objectionable, even while accepting the practice when done to secure food.[8] Yet they find it galling that the foreign media focuses intensely on events such as the killing of Cecil the Lion when human deaths, poverty, kidnappings, and other horrific occurrences get inadequate attention (Mkono 2019).[9] Africans generally feel critics do not understand their socioeconomic situation nor recognize non-human animals sometimes threaten people.[10] In short, Africans tend to see anti-hunting agendas from abroad as hegemonic, neocolonial impositions.

The already negative image of trophy hunting is complicated further by the fact that paying participants are almost invariably affluent white males, occasionally abrasive and promoting ideologies at odds with communal African outlooks, as with Donald Trump, Jr. Some hunters, however, try to offer measured explanations, Corey Knowlton being an example. Knowlton paid $US350,000 to hunt a black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*) in Etosha National Park in northern Namibia, but also articulated why this may actually help the critically

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[8] In my experience, it is not just everyday Africans that express incomprehension at hunting for sport, even while accepting it for food. The sentiment extends to professional hunters. The one running the Namibia operation stated he hates trophy hunting and a second I encountered in Namibia got out of the business because of his distaste for his last client's "bloodthirstiness." Mkono (2019) tracks similar attitudes in African social media.

[9] While Mkono (2019) frames her article as primarily showing Africans see sport hunters as neocolonial pillagers, her data clearly show the most common grievance is that foreigners value nonhuman animals over people. Mkono additionally reports that some object to naming a lion "Cecil" in light of the imperialistic activities of Cecil Rhodes.

[10] Such comments were repeatedly made to me during my research visits, but also see Mkono (2019).

endangered species. One reason is that hunts target geriatric males beyond optimal breeding ages; these bulls pose risks to their younger competitors, sometimes killing them, while also reducing genetic diversity because females in their territory are likely to be their daughters; revenues, moreover, are used for conservation efforts (Brown and Potgieter 2020). Additionally, if people, who are struggling, realize the animal's economic value to the community, they may become more protective. Knowlton suggested he had expected to pay a higher price, but public vitriol scared off bidders, diminishing funding for conservation and perhaps also local motivation to safeguard black rhinos (Howard 2014; Isaacs 2014; Lavandera 2018; also see Crippen and Salevurakis 2019). The Zambezi safari operators visited during field research made a similar point. Specifically, they complained that the United States regulations and airline policies against the import of ivory trophies from Zimbabwe were lowering the price of elephant hunts, making anti-poaching operations financially onerous.

The Makuleke trophy hunting operations, which were conducted according to SANParks' conservation agenda (Steyn 2012), supply a parallel example. Trophy hunting received criticism, exacerbated because it was taking place within Kruger—the crown jewel of African national parks—and the Makuleke had contracted with a private safari operator (see Magome and Murombedzi 2003; Turner 2004; Uddhammar 2006). The Makuleke came to see politically fueled conservation pressure as an encumbrance, with unease perhaps elevated by European legacies that have historically regarded Africa is an "Eden" that needs protecting (Reid 2001), which insinuates local incompetence. Though suitable for sport hunting, the Makuleke lands are remote and not ideal for photo safaris and suchlike (Magome and Murombedzi 2003), so that ecolodges and other non-consumptive tourism opportunities are rarely used at full capacity (Matiku et al. 2020). Without sufficient revenue, one wonders about the long-term prospects for wildlife (Kepe 2004), though matters are mitigated by the fact that Makuleke lands lie within

Kruger. It is worth adding hunting is a culturally and historically consistent practice for the Makuleke, although less so when conducted for trophies.

Though repellant to many, hunting proceeds did contribute to the economic viability of the community when the Makuleke were awaiting revenues from the as yet operational lodges (Reid et al. 2004). This means even if exclusively non-consumptive ecotourism ends up being more profitable than hunting, the latter was an interim step to the former, plus it is possible to carry out both. Moreover, hunting may have been more profitable without the public outcry, which arguably lowered demand and hence prices, in addition to which culls of certain species already occur in this area (Reid et al. 2004). Poaching remains a problem, too, and the impossibility of protecting all animals means "selling" some if only by protecting certain ones over others because of limited resources. Along similar lines, there are environmental costs to building ecolodges or cutting roads through prime African habitat for animals to be viewed by paying tourists.

Unequivocally, then, all economic activities are consumptive, as is human existence inasmuch as it stresses habitats because land is used one way or another. Cattle farming harms habitats and the entire planet by contributing to climate change. Growing crops also damages habitats. Sport hunting obviously extinguishes wildlife, too. In every case, accordingly, animals die. Anti-hunters cannot protect wildlife without sufficient revenues, and will inevitably sacrifice or sell some animals merely by using limited resources to protect specific areas over others (Crippen and Salevurakis 2019). In certain cases, sport hunting is less destructive to habitats and wildlife than activities such as ranching, as in the Loxodonta Africana Conservancy. Hunting also may be less destructive in comparison to not doing anything as unoccupied land is particularly vulnerable to poaching. Conversely, wildlife plummets have been documented following hunting bans, as in Kenya from the late 1970s onwards (Ogutu et al. 2016). Reasons are complicated, some independent of hunting or its absence, as with habitat-straining increases

in human population. However, bans can relate directly to wildlife destruction. Such happens when people, whose livelihood depends on doing something on available land, opt to raise livestock, thereby damaging habitats (Ogutu et al. 2016). Compared to livestock farming, moreover, sport hunting yields extra-value per animal. This is because safari operators—with the exception of a few species that are not widely eaten—keep the meat, either consuming or donating it, simultaneously collecting a trophy fee, plus hefty remunerations for curating the hunt. The economic value of animals raised for food, by contrast, is almost solely in money exchanged for the meat. In some cases, sport hunting adds jobs that would otherwise be absent, and typically supplies higher skilled and thus better paying employment.

I am nonetheless sympathetic to objections from Peter Singer's (2002) anti-speciesist quarters and Tom Regan's (2004) inherent value argument, both of which reject killing animals for sport. Yet these ideas are ineffectual and likely counterproductive in sub-Saharan regions where people are struggling just to get by. It might be added that ecological welfare promotes animal welfare, not that Singer and Regan disagree; and if ecological and animal welfare are goals, then sport hunting is something of a side-issue next to industrialization, reckless farming, and other activities exerting inordinate environmental strain, with Africa already consuming the smallest fraction of the world's resources. Attending to these threats, of course, does not preclude criticizing sport hunting. Nonetheless, a conciliatory approach—and one incidentally in the spirit of ubuntu and Africapitalism—may bring about the greater balance of goods. Specifically, hunters enjoy nature and therefore dislike wildlife and habitat destruction. Environmentalists dislike it too. So the two should be able to work together to protect what they love, while promoting the wellbeing of human populations in sub-Saharan Africa.

Conclusion

I began this article by introducing Africapitalism and related ubuntu traditions. Africapitalism, to review, holds profit making and community wellbeing are interdependent, so that it is paradoxical to seek the former at the expense of the latter. To the extent it calls for private investment to promote long-term social wealth and economic viability, the philosophy entails environmental concern, for ecological destruction is inconsistent with sustainable prosperity. The notion that individuals and groups are interdependent is likewise a part of ubuntu culture, which is incorporated into Africapitalism and seeks conciliation and harmony.

Barbara Nussbaum (2003)—who suggests the rest of the world ought to learn from African approaches—supplies a nice illustration of the conciliatory impulsion of sub-Saharan culture:

> I recall being the only white person working in an NGO in Zimbabwe in the late 1980s. Matanga, a colleague, and I disagreed about an issue and after discussing it for an hour or two, I said, "Matanga, can't we agree to disagree?" He said, "No, sisi (sister) Barbs, we have to sit and talk until we agree." I have never forgotten this conversation since it illustrates a value base that stresses cooperation, the desire for reconciliation and communication in the interests not only of harmony but a shared understanding.

> I honestly believe that some of the cultural dynamics behind South Africa's political miracle must be attributed to the patience, maturity and reconciliatory skill that African leaders embodied over many years. Mandela and others found a way to talk issues through until a dignified consensus was found. Credit is also due to the humility and commitment of white leaders who chose to listen. But, in the final analysis, the reconciliatory wisdom in the service of discovering and building our connection with each other is an inherent gift of African cultural heritage, a gift that merits much greater attention in the world (5).

It is worth adding—and people who have experienced African debating culture know this—working for consensus does not abrogate individual thinking or require one person submit to another. At least if people are not idealogues, discourse may lead all parties to adjust their views, for example, by identifying weak points (see Taylor 1999). Interlocuters may alternatively discover already existing common ground. In a way, such already has occurred with the Africapitalist assimilation of ubuntu ideals, which stress largely consonant but still different practices (Edozie 2017, 151–153).

I do not want to reduce African perspectives to Western ones, but I think it is fruitful—and in the spirit of ubuntu—to hint at resonances between them. Utilitarianism is one moral framework Africapitalism appears to square with insofar as it seeks the overall good of the community. Yet this is only within limits because Africapitalism, while not opposed to world happiness, is directed specifically towards the betterment of Africa. As Amaeshi and Idemudia put it: "Economic patriotism, which is at the core of Africapitalism, is unashamedly good for Africa, and should be promoted within and for the continent" (Amaeshi and Idemudia 2018, 36). Africapitalism adds communitarian dimensions to the mix, but not just in the obvious sense of working for group cohesion and wellbeing. It is also in the more particular sense that community values and conceptual traditions are a basis for deriving a specifically African moral-economic framework. The orientation of Africapitalism in ubuntu additionally resonates with virtue ethics and natural law. This is insofar as ubuntu traditions hold that forming caring social bonds in communities makes us most human, and signifies excellence of character that fulfills our nature and makes us complete and thus happy (see Metz 2011).

Utilitarian and collectivist threads may appear to place African traditions at odds with individual rights, as conceived by classical liberals or libertarians. But ubuntu does have concepts of rights, as discussed earlier. Moreover, ubuntu-infused Africapitalist solutions have affinity with the libertarian proviso that people can use and take ownership of land on the supposition that there is enough good left in common for others (Locke 1690, Ch. 5, §27). Meeting this condition means not depriving future people of all resources and therewith basic negative rights to life, meaning the proviso promotes forward-thinking intergenerational justice (Howarth 2011). This necessitates making choices now to help future people who will be better off than today's Africans. In this regard, Africapitalism runs contrary to conventional utilitarianism, which holds that the better off should help the less fortunate (Howarth 2011), and instead falls more in line with duty-based rights theory.

These various alignments and blurrings of Western ethical distinctions suggest avenues for softening conventional political polarities, thereby developing more cooperative approaches outside of Africa. Africapitalist solutions are economic and largely bottom-up, which typically appeals to those on the right; yet they are directed towards promoting sustainable environments and aiding the poorest in society through community building, in line with left-leaning agendas. Companies externalizing costs to the community is an ongoing frustration for left-leaning liberals. Having the community pick up the tab for businesses amounts to a twisted socialism, so right-wing proponents—if consistent with their principles—should also favor the internalization of costs. Patriotism—economic and otherwise—pervades right-wing ideology, as does the principle of buying nationally. The right might accordingly be said to adopt the mantra: "buy local." The left sometimes advocates "buying really local," as in farm-to-table arrangements or purchasing locally produced crafts. It is simultaneously in the right-wing mythos to support local agriculture and to identify with the land (Scruton 2012), albeit occasionally in troubling ways (e.g., Lubarda 2019).

The Africapitalist and ubuntu impetus to bridge divergence and promote harmony between human beings logically extends to relations between people and their environments. Thus, while time has been spent detailing how African ideas yield individual benefits by bringing about community wellbeing and vice versa, all of this implies environmentally-friendly approaches. This is a central claim defended in this article. An additional point added in the conclusion is that while the solutions advanced are Africa-specific, the rest of the world can learn from sub-Saharan cultural practices, perhaps discovering many of today's dividing principals are only superficially divergent. In this way, we may find common cause where it seems lacking.

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