Academic productivism based on a Habermasian perspective

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Abstract

This article argues that the issue of ethics in academic practice must receive the same attention dedicated to it in other professional practices. In fact, a difficulty faced in the debate concerning ethics in academic practice is disregarding that the latter also consists in a social practice, conditioned by the same problems faced by contemporary society, especially in its economic dimension. Thus, this paper discusses utilitarianism in academic practice, having Jürgen Habermas's discourse ethics framework as a basis, and exploring some concerns about Brazilian academic productivism. Methodologically, the theoretical essay format is used as an argumentative procedure in order to build a less formal and more provocative text, instigating reflection and debate on the proposed issues. Specifically, we notice the problem of quantitative appreciation of production without regard to the quality of academic work as an attempt to measure academic activity, as well as a lack of adequate reflection about the ethical and moral values encompassing the scientific and educational activity in Brazil. At last, to illustrate the presented perspective, we resort to hypothetical situations of academic practice, and make conjectures about four correlations between its pragmatic orientation and ethical issues, taking into account the Habermasian construct of strategic action.

Keywords: Academic productivism. Habermas. Discourse ethics.

Produtivismo acadêmico baseado em uma perspectiva habermasiana

Resumo

Este trabalho objetiva compreender os desafios que se impõem à cidadania com o advento do fenômeno do hiperconsumo na sociedade brasileira pela perspectiva das teorias que procuram entender as implicações da centralidade do consumo na sociedade contemporânea. Esse objetivo surge da reflexão sobre o aumento gradativo das muitas políticas governamentais de incentivo à bancarização, ao acesso facilitado ao crédito, bem como à criação de planos sociais de distribuição de renda e aumento dos salários ocorridos nos últimos anos e seus possíveis impactos sobre a cidadania. Em termos metodológicos este trabalho é um ensaio teórico. Como resultados, aponta-se que produzir uma cultura de consumo hedonista em nossa sociedade poderia enfatizar o individualismo em detrimento das demandas coletivas. Ou seja, as políticas públicas implementadas no período poderiam ter como uma de suas consequências, ainda que indiretas, o estímulo à cidadania pela inclusão do consumo, considerada um processo de construção desigual, despolitizador e alienador da cidadania. Portanto, dizer que pelo consumo as pessoas se tornarão socialmente incluídas minimizaria os efeitos sociais decorrentes da desigualdade social presente em nosso país e ainda contribuiria para que o exercício da cidadania fosse confundido apenas com a inclusão monetária no mercado de consumo. Em outras palavras, contribuiria para que as distâncias existentes entre as classes sociais diminuíssem pelo consumo, ou pela ilusão de que o consumo as colocasse em uma classe superior, podendo comungar dos benefícios propiciados pelo capital econômico.

Palavras-chave: Administração pública. Consumo. Cidadania. Classes sociais.

Productivismo académico con base en una perspectiva habermasiana

Resumen

Este trabajo pretende comprender los desafíos se imponen a la ciudadanía con el advenimiento del fenómeno de hiperconsumo en la sociedad brasileña por medio de la perspectiva de las teorías que tratan de comprender las implicaciones de la centralidad del hiperconsumo en la sociedad contemporánea. Este objetivo surge de la reflexión sobre el incremento gradual de muchas de las políticas gubernamentales para estimular la atracción, facilita el acceso al crédito, así como la creación de planes sociales de la distribución de los ingresos y un aumento en los salarios que se han producido en los últimos años y sus posibles impactos sobre la ciudadanía. En términos metodológicos el presente trabajo es un ensayo teórico. Como resultado, se señala que producir una cultura de consumo hedonista en nuestra sociedad podría enfatizar el individualismo en detrimento de las demandas colectivas. Es decir, las políticas públicas implementadas en el período podrían tener como una de sus consecuencias, aunque indirectamente, el estímulo a la ciudadanía mediante la inclusión del consumo, que se considera un proceso de construcción, desigual, alienante y de despolitización de la ciudadanía. Por lo tanto, afirmar que las personas serían socialmente inclusas por medio del consumo minimizaría los efectos sociales derivados de la desigualdad social presente en nuestro país y además contribuiría para equiparar el ejercicio de la ciudadanía con sólo la inclusión en el mercado de consumo monetario. Es decir, podría contribuir para que las distancias existentes entre las clases sociales fuesen disminuidas por medio del consumo o por medio de ilusión de que el consumo fuese capaz de elevarlas a una clase superior para compartir de los beneficios del capital económico.
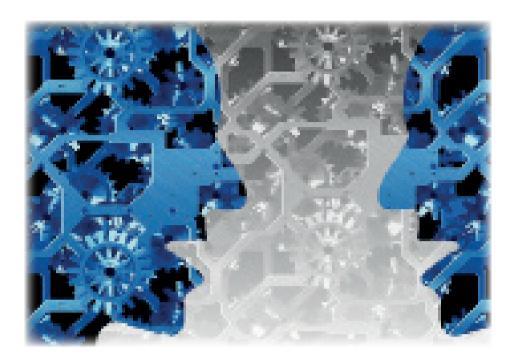
Palabras clave: la administración pública. El consumo. La ciudadanía. Las clases sociales

[Translated version] Note: All quotes in English translated by this article's translator.

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INTRODUCTION

The striking presence of the theme "ethics" in both discussion and reflection around academic practice, in both its internal channels (congresses and academic publications) and independent channels (media in general and governmental agencies), clearly demonstrates how relevant this discussion is. However, it is not possible to say that the debate around this issue points to a consensual understanding of how scholars can ethically guide their professional practices, particularly because ethical problems and dilemmas have been amplified and modified over the years.

However, considering the importance of thinking on ethical consequences of Natural Sciences (SANTOS, 2000), it is on the field of Social Sciences that an ethical debate reaches a particularly problematic level (ALCADIPANI and HODGOSON, 2009). Social Sciences produce a type of knowledge whose implications are more serious to social life in the long term. Taking this into account, the knowledge produced by Social Sciences might play a significant role on political life, on work relations, on culture and even on the constitution of mental models and references that legitimize patterns of human behavior or make them natural (THOMPSON, 2000; SANTOS, 2000).

Thus, ethics in academic practice must be considered with the same care that it is considered in other professional practices. In fact, a difficulty in the debate around ethics in academic practice is the usual disregard of academic work as a productive activity. It is an activity that is strongly connected to the economical dimension of social life. Therefore, the academic activity is conditioned by the same problems that challenge contemporary society, such as the complex relationships between cultural, political and economic aspects of human actions. In other words, the researcher-scientist is an individual pressed by the market society's logic of productivism as much as it is a worker or a businessperson. Moreover, despite all the ethical implications (RAMOS, 1989), this issue seems not to be on the agenda of debates on academic ethics.

Therefore, this essay aims at discussing ethics in academic work from the perspective of the relationship between ethics and pragmatism, which is particularly presented in the logic of productivism of the economic rationality, which is hegemonic of contemporary society. The main argument put forward in this essay is that the increasing pressure for productivity in the academic field of Administration – as well as the opportunistic behavior resulting from this pressure – reflects the way in which

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instrumental rationality has overlapped other ways of thinking in contemporary capitalist societies. In this sense, this essay is based on the premise that the lack of ethics in modern society is related to the hegemony of utilitarianism in contemporaneity (RAMOS, 1989; ENRIQUEZ, 1997), and this utilitarianism is grounded on the logic of productivism engendered by capitalism and by the technical rationalism of science (HABERMAS, 1984). Consequently, it is necessary to further discuss ethical criteria for the academic community, dissociated from the consequentialism of a utilitarian orientation.

In fact, the problem of rational-instrumental orientation in face of the predominance of utilitarianism in the academic practice is extended to other forms of consequentialism in modernity. This is the case either on the philosophical thinking about technological development and its consequences to humanity and the planet (SANTOS, 2009; 2012) or as a result of contemporary theories of morality and judgement, such as the ones which ground the legal consequentialism (PETTIT, 1991). According to Habermas' thinking, the problem in all these consequentialist positions is to consider only the teleological stance as criterion of human judgment (HABERMAS, 1984; 1989a; 1989b; 1990). Nevertheless, this essay is not intended to discuss the broad debate about the different consequentialist ethics[2]; we have briefly discussed the impact of a utilitarian orientation on academic practice and its implications for a possible academic ethics. In order to do so, we have chosen to work with Habermas' perspective of discourse ethics, which was grounded on his Theory of Communicative Action (HABERMAS, 1984; 1987), a theoretical framework oriented by the philosophy of language.

As Habermas (1990) suggests, the limits of consequentialism as an ethical stance, come from the hegemony of the cognoscent conception of human rationality, which can be found in analytical philosophy. By adopting this author's proposal of discourse ethics as reference, we follow the Wittgensteinian tradition of ontological integration between language and social relations, understanding both human rationality and ethics from a relational point of view, inter-subjectively constituted and representing a psychological and social construction.

It is particularly for this reason that we understand Habermas' perspective defending an ethics of communicative action (discourse ethics, as Habermas names it) to be beneficial for the critique of the utilitarianism in the academic practice of Administration. Beside this, we think it is important to highlight that Habermas' thinking has been broadly used as reference for an approach called Critical Management Studies (VASCONCELOS, PESQUEUX and CYRINO, 2014; VIZEU, 2005; BURRELL, 1994). Finally, some authors on this work consider Communicative Action Theory as an important theoretical and methodological reference for a broad research program on Organizational Studies, as well as public and business administration, in Brazil[3].

As for the method, this work was built as a theoretical essay. It is important to highlight that most academics in the field of Administration seem to consider theoretical essays merely as a review of academic literature or theoretical discussion, committed to the objectivity of the positivist conception of science. For this work, we look at the theoretical essay as a general procedure for presenting ideas that go beyond the hypothetical-deductive construction of knowledge, which is bounded to a formal protocol that legitimizes an idea as being a "scientific truth".

The perspective adopted about the theoretical essay is the one presented by Meneghetti (2011a; 2011b). The author highlights the rhetorical and argumentative freedom of an essay, which contributes to more free-thinking, promoting further open dialogue resulting in more questions than certainties. About the essay, Meneghetti (2011a, p. 322) argues that "despite not

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[2] As one of the reviewers of Cadernos EBAPE.BR reminded us, Virtue Ethics in Aristotle tradition is a position which is eminently contrary to the perspectives of consequentialism, which could also be adopted when discussing ethics in academia. However, it is not the intention of this essay to discuss deeply the contraposition between virtue ethics and the ways of consequentialism adopted here as theoretical framework. We consider that the reflection on pragmatic orientation in academic practice, and how it can be observed based on the ethics of the discourse from Habermas (which is the conception we have adopted since the beginning of this essay), is fully justified in the paragraphs that follow this Introduction.

[3] Once again, we would like to thank one of the reviewers for recalling the work of Karl-Otto Apel as another Frankfurtian author, who decisively contributed to the construction of the perspective of discourse ethics and its connection with the critique of utilitarianism in capitalist societies. Indeed, as it was asserted by several commentators on the work of Jürgen Habermas, such as Freitag (1986), he was strongly influenced by Apel, and the communicative action is considered by many to be a concept of authorship of both Frankfurtians. Without discussing the authorship of Communicative Action and his discourse ethics, we emphasize that we have chosen Habermas to ground our work because of his reputation in the area of Administration and Social Sciences, in general. Moreover, Habermas wishes to contribute more to the incorporation of assumptions of Wittgenstein' linguistics in Social Sciences, which produced a more integrated theoretical framework, with important sociological and social psychology theories (HABERMAS, 1987; 1989).

being linked to methodological rigor like the scientific production, what makes an essay a strong method is its reflexive characteristic of understanding reality".

This essay is divided in topics that discuss ethics and pragmatism, ethical issues in academic practice and productivism in Brazilian academia. Below, we present some of our concerns, pointing to a new agenda of studies about academic ethics, especially (but not exclusively) in the field of Administration. Finally, we present some considerations including questions that aim to encourage reflection and debate among scholars of the field.

ETHICS, MORALS AND PRAGMATICS

In order to discuss how ethics is related to pragmatic action based on Habermas's theoretical model, it is necessary to understand how the concept of ethics has been debated in Philosophy, as well as the relationship between ethics and other philosophical matters. It is important to recognize that there is an intense debate and no consensual understanding about ethics among philosophers from all times. Therefore, the efforts made to clarify ethics in this essay have been limited to premises that allow us to understand Habermas' essence of *discourse ethics.* The choice for Habermas was made because of his effort to approximate philosophical aspects to the theoretical thinking developed in Social Sciences[4]. Habermas offers an argument that allows us to understand the similarities between pragmatic and ethical behavior, starting from a discursive conception of moral orientation. As Habermas (1989a) himself states, his model of discourse ethics is based on Kantian's conception of ethics and morals, which was expressed in Kant's work *Critique of Practical Reason* (KANT, 2002). In his book, the German philosopher presents the bases of a conception of ethics centered on the categorical imperatives that regulate practical life.

However, by presenting Habermas' perspective on ethics, the argument will not focus on its main ontological attribute: the discursive conception of practical life, a concept studied by the German philosopher in hermeneutics and philosophy of language (ARAGÃO, 1997). In spite this omission preventing a broad comprehension of Habermas' theoretical framework, it is necessary to make this a brief text. Nevertheless, we do not believe this choice poses a problem to the intention of confronting ethical and pragmatic behavior, which is one of the consequences of thinking the ontology of the discursive action proposed by Habermas.

Therefore, the starting point is Haberrmas' (1989) understanding that ethics in philosophy comes from only two great traditions: Aristotelian (that expresses ethics from virtues) and Kantian (deontic ethics). According to the Frankfurtian philosopher, all philosophical perspectives about ethics come from one of those two traditions. Both are originated from the reflection of the practical rationality, that is, the mental mechanisms adopted by human beings to reflect upon their actions in the world, in order to psychologically justify them, which guarantees, a conformity between the psychic state and these actions. Nonetheless, differently from Kant, who grounds his arguments of ethics on the analyses of procedural conditions of human practice (ANDERY, MICHELETTO, SÉRIO et al., 2007); Aristotle grounds his ethics in universalist assumptions that are expressed as dogmas. In that sense, despite following Kant's ideas, Habermas does not abstain from searching for elements from Aristotelian ethics, in order to base his own discourse ethics (HABERMAS, 1989a).

Being considered the founder of ethics – the philosophical discipline about the reflection of righteous behavior and living well – Aristotle, builds the notion of *ethos* (Greek word related to the "way of being") from the essentialist conception that dominated classical thinking (ANDERY, MICHELETTO, SÉRIO et al., 2007). Aristotle's conception acknowledges the origin of good in the virtue, and consequently sees the virtue as a reference for moral behavior. However, this conception also sees a universal principle in the virtue that is not dependent on the will, a divine element that exists in the universal order to organize the political life of human beings. The desire for "good" is one main question for accessing this universal reference of "how to behave". For Aristotle, this is the human being's immanent desire for happiness (FARIA, 1994; ANDERY, MICHELETTO, SÉRIO et al., 2007).

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[4] The reasons that led us to use Habermas' perspective in this essay were presented in the previous note.

Habermas considers this propensity towards "good" as part of the process of individual's self-determination, i.e., recognizing oneself and the desire of becoming something. This desire is expressed in strong values or, in other words, existential values, because they express the existential desire to be someone with certain behavior and living in a certain way. For Habermas, strong preferences are "those valuations which are not only concerned with 'eventual' dispositions and inclinations, but also with the understanding of the self (*Selbstverständnis*) of a person, the kind of life one has, and his/her character" (HABERMAS, 1989a, p. 6).

Therefore, for Habermas (1989a; 1989b), behavior can only be considered ethical when the action is justified on values that support the very notion of an individual's "to become", that existential awareness that one can be someone better, his/her search for happiness, and the pursuit for "good". The ethical behavior would be the behavior for "good", because it is based on values which guide the individual to his/her particular discovery of "who he/she is" and "who he/she wants to be".

The moral behavior concerns the desire to do something in accordance to a desire of a collective. After reviewing different psychological and psychosocial perspectives, Habermas based his argument on moral behavior, in order to promote an interesting complementation between Philosophy and Social Sciences (ARAGÃO, 1997). Therefore, according to Habermas' perspective (1989a; 1989b), moral is the acknowledgement of the other, because it is understood in the categorical imperative of social *praxis*, in which one coordinates his/her own existence to other existences. That is, moral is about the regulation of life to conform it to the collectivity that an individual lives in. That is why moral refers to the regularizing norms of social life. Thus, moral behavior is steered by the notion of fairness, i.e., moral behavior has to be in conformity to actions which are in everybody's interest. It is important to notice that the conception of moral is relative, because it puts conditions on the action based on shared values that are not necessarily acknowledged as "good", but rather as "fair". That is why it is possible to talk about "the moral code of criminals" (HABERMAS, 1989b). According to this way of thinking, a regular objection to a definition of a reference of universal moral is that each culture builds its own, and there is no way to judge a moral rule of a culture based on a moral rule of another culture.

That is why philosophy connects moral to ethics (especially Kantian's philosophical thinking). In fact, to have a good life – an effort that would not need to consider the other, because it is a personal search – It is necessary to search for justice, because it is necessary to respond to the interest of all, in order to live well in society (FARIA, 1994). Thus, when one relates the individual framework of ethics to the collective moral framework, the existential values that are highlighted are those that refer to the expectations of regulation of collective life (KANT, 2002). Habermas points to this approximation between the ethical framework and the moral framework in his ideas of maxim.

> Maxims are the intersection point between ethics and moral, because they can both be simultaneously judged from a moral and ethical point of view. The maxim of misleading someone once might not be good for me – i.e., when we are not the person we would like to be, and we would like to be known as. The same maxim can also be unfair – i.e., if everybody does the same, the results are not equally good for all (HABERMAS, 1989a, p. 9).

In contrast to the ethical and moral behavior, Habermas (1989a) considers the pragmatic behavior as being the one whose references are the exclusive concerns about the conditions and particular difficulties for the performance of the action.

In that sense, every effort of performing the action involves problems of pragmatic order. For instance, how to use the available resources for doing something? How to obtain the results you expect? Both questions are of a teleological essence, which brings the practical dimension to a level of instrumentality (something that corresponds to Weber's formal rationality). The performance of the action also relates to immediate will: I am going to hunt because I am hungry, I am going to lay down because I am tired, I am going to defend myself because I do not want to die. These pragmatic justifications, based on the will of the individual who acts, are not of the same nature as the will based on ethics – which is based on the self-consciousness of existential order – or moral – which is based on the consciousness of the collectivity and on the imperative of adjusting the individual's behavior, in order to maintain the collective order. The pragmatic interests are of a self-centered nature and they involve a type of strategic action. According to Habermas (1989a, p. 8):

> Pragmatic tasks are proposed from a perspective of an agent focused on his/her goals and preferences. From this point of view, moral problems cannot arise, because other people are important only as means

Cad. EBAPE.BR, v. 14, nº 4, Article 8, Rio de Janeiro, Oct./Dec. 2016.

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or restrictive conditions for each individual to accomplish his/her own action plan. In strategic action, participants assume that each one decides in an egocentric way, according to his/her own interests.

Therefore, for Habermas (1984), the strategic action is that which is based on instrumental rationality, i.e., it is governed by the utilitarian calculation resulting from the confrontation of means and endings, considering exclusively the pragmatic point of view (that Habermas calls success). In this type of acting, legitimacy of certain action in accordance to existential values, or the judgement around fairness, those are not the things to be judged. What is being assessed is the way of acting regarding the circumstances of the action, the needs that emerge from the conditions in which the action takes place, and that respond to the agent's particular interests.

Such pragmatic condition in the acting of the individual generates a conflict with the references of the ethical and moral behavior. The author recognizes this conflict as an ethical dilemma that, from the perspective of psychological structure of the human being, is solved in favor of ethics and moral (HABERMAS, 1989b). However, there is an inversion of order in modern times: a pragmatic orientation prevails over the ethical and moral orientations. This inversion is explained by the predominance of the rational-instrumental trends, nowadays, especially because of the configuration of the institutional system based on economic and scientific natures that characterize the modern State and capitalism (HABERMAS, 1984; RAMOS, 1989). There is much evidence of these social and psychological disorders arising from the predominance of a pragmatic logic over ethical and moral references, as suggested by Habermas (1984, p. 369).

> The socio-psychological costs of a rationalization restricted to the cognitive-instrumental dimension – costs that are externalized throughout society and expressed by individuals – appear in different ways. They range from clinically treated mental illnesses, neuroses, addictions, psychosomatic disorders, educational and motivational problems to the actions of protest of the aesthetically inspired countercultures, religious sects and criminal groups (which also include anarchist terrorism).

This state of things that the members of the Frankfurt School connected to the problem of reification of instrumental rationality in modernity (ADORNO and HORKHEIMER, 1985) is particularly felt in the context of economic organizations and under the auspices of modern management (RAMOS, 1989; VIZEU, 2010). That is why it is possible to see the trivialization of social injustice in productive organizations, where labor relations lack an ethical model in the name of a pragmatic interest of a utilitarian rationality (DEJOURS, 2001). In order to perform their tasks efficiently they must disregard ethical and moral judgement. They disregard the criteria of "good" and fairness.

In this condition of behavior that the economic and scientific order imposed to society (RAMOS, 1989) it is possible to observe, even more clearly, a rupture with the ethical and moral references. This can be seen especially in the concern about ethics in companies, which occurs in response to the lack of legitimacy of corporate actions in society. As Enriquez (1997, p. 6) suggested:

> The reappearance of ethical concerns reflects the malaise of our societies because of the triumph of instrumental rationality that tends to transform human beings into manipulative objects. This perversion of rationality is particularly manifested in companies, which currently look forward to integrating ethical concerns in their operation. By acting this way, in most cases, companies aim to develop a strong consensus around their own ideals, both from their members and from the whole society.

The logic of economy, as an end in itself, as a superior value second to nothing else, causes other dimensions of social life to depend on market relations, which make all other contexts of social life ruled by an economic and utilitarian order (RAMOS, 1989). According to this perspective, people are compelled to adopt a utilitarian behavior. They engage themselves in productivism which is engendered by economic organizations (and also present in non-economic organizations). One is happy in this world only if he/she is successful in this utilitarian order, even if that means the corruption of ethical and moral references. Denying this order is to accept marginalization (ENRIQUEZ, 1997, p.8):

> Each individual is asked to become a fighter, a hero, a "radar" capable of adapting to all circumstances. Entire populations are led to value nothing else than economic and personal success. The conclusion is obvious: those who can adapt to a society that is guided by these values are sure to be acknowledged and able to participate as citizens in the functioning of society. The others should be satisfied (In Western societies) with ways of menial labor, or they will belong to a disqualified social category (the so-called assisted or marginal individuals).

Unfortunately, the academic world is not exempt from this perverse tendency of relegating ethics and moral to a secondary plan. In fact, scholars – in spite of the emancipatory value of scientific knowledge that is sought by the nineteenth-century positivism (SANTOS, 2000) – are also part of the labor world, whose regulatory order is the economic logic of a utilitarian rationality. This justifies the intense preoccupation with the issue of ethics in this field, although some specific elements need to be taken into consideration, which will be discussed further in this essay.

ETHICAL ISSUES IN ACADEMIC PRACTICE

The question of ethics in academic activity has been discussed for some time, especially after the Nazi experiments on humans during World War II, which led to the concern of creating discussion forums in the scientific community for the development of codes of ethics (ALCADIPANI and HODGSON, 2009). In addition to this effort, there is also an ethical concern that questions the consequences of the search for knowledge at any price. This is a behavior which is legitimized by positivism. This concern was also redesigned after the advent of the atomic bomb and the insecurity that resulted from the Cold War (SANTOS, 2000). In Social Sciences, the discussion of ethics in academic practice has focused on ethical and moral dilemmas that certain research practices might produce (TAYLOR, 1987; MARSHALL and ROSSMAN, 1999; ALCADIPANI and HODGSON, 2009). Despite this debate, authors do not seem interested in discussing ethical issues that arise from this pragmatic orientation in academic practice.

In order to mention some issues that usually result in ethical problems in Social Sciences, we highlight those problems of accessing places of research, the respect for the physical and moral integrity of participants and obtaining the documented consent of participants, as well as their complete knowledge on the terms and nature of the research. In spite of these discussions still being timid, they have been promoting debates on social researchers' behavior (MARSHAL and ROSSMAN, 1999; ALCADIPANI and HODGSON, 2009). The problem of such debate is that it usually does not question or consider that these issues involve the pragmatic orientation assumed by the researchers when undertaking their research practice.

Patrus, Dantas and Shigaki (2015) have recently added academic solidarity to this discussion, which they consider to be strongly linked to academic productivism. Ethical issues emerge from that dimension and the authors point out that many researchers choose not to perform activities that are not aligned with the goals they are assessed for (publication). These researchers do not give importance to volunteer work (for example, providing peer review to journals/conferences, participating in evaluation committees for master and doctoral degrees). For the authors, this kind of thinking threatens the system as a whole, since "scientific production only exists because there is a number of reviewers that devote their time, energy and expertise to review the manuscript" (PATRUS, DANTAS and SHIGAKI 2015, p. 14).

In other words, in order to better understand the ethical problems in Social Science's academic practice, we must take into account that, from a professional point of view, scientific research is a job like any other. For that reason, it is under the same pragmatic pressures that guide other activities of economic modern life.

A case reported in an article on ethical issues in research practice is emblematic to illustrate this omission. Taylor (1997) presents his own experience to point out how ethics is manifested in the fieldwork of Social Science researchers. By studying the behavior of attendants of a US psychiatric hospital, Taylor observed abuse and violence that those attendants committed against patients. The author describes how horrified he was by witnessing those practices, as well as the frustration he felt when he realized some of those practices happened because of his presence. The dilemma he faced involved four possible choices: intervene and try to stop those abusive practices; leave his fieldwork; report the abuse to authorities or to newspapers;

or continue with his research. The author uses pragmatic arguments to discuss each of these options. For example, the fact that his intervention would not be able to stop the abuse, or even if he stopped that specific group, it would not stop other groups in other hospitals (or even those who came to replace the accused) from practicing acts of violence. Thus, the author chose to continue his research without opposing the abuse.

Taylor (1987) argued that the power the research would have to change the social world justified his choice of omitting from intervening in the abusive and criminal practices. He suggests that by publishing his research, he would help more patients suffering from violence. He took into account the ability that the research has in revealing this type of abuse to society. However, according to the pragmatic logic he adopted to reflect on the situation, he does not mention that the difference between the three other options he had and the one he chose to solve his ethical dilemma was the fact that only the latter would ensure the successful completion of his research. Moreover, in his argumentation he did not consider his own interest in carrying out research that would generate publishable results (which is considered one of the most important products of academic work). That is, the author did not take into account his dilemma from the point of view of the pressure for productivity scholars are subject to, a pressure that is especially evident in dilemmas that put the research completion into question.

This was the same kind of problem observed in the case presented by Alcadipani and Hodgson (2009), about critical research. According to the authors, the ethical problems of critical studies in Administration (Critical Management Studies) arise from the situation in which the researcher needs to have access to an organizational reality that will be criticized and denounced. Thus, they point out that it is necessary to omit the real intentions of the research, in order to gain trust from the subjects, and therefore, access valid information for the study.

It is interesting to note the paradox involved in this situation, as, according to another article (DAVEL and ALCADIPANI, 2003) on Critical Management Studies, one of its principles is to contribute to emancipation of the individual who is oppressed in the context of organizations. The questions are how to target this emancipatory goal when it is necessary to manipulate the individuals who are researched in order to succeed in the research process? Is it necessary to manipulate people in order to emancipate them?

Both, Taylor's case (1987) and the report of Alcadipani and Hodgson (2009), show that the researcher can, in his/her relationship with others, show a strategic behavior. In other words, a behavior that disregards the perception of interests of those who are directly involved or affected by academic practice, on behalf of the pragmatic success of the activity. This relativization of the academic ethical-moral judgement because of pragmatic criteria can also be observed in other academic practices. Besides the fieldwork, it is possible to consider other academic activities as subject to strategic guidelines, among which the review of works for scientific journals, as it is mentioned by Resnik, Guitierrez-Ford and Peddada (2008), teaching activities, as mentioned by Tabachnick, Keith-Spiegel and Pope (1991) and the broadly taken investigation process, described by Mattos (2012). These activities are directly related to academic productivism that has been observed as a growing and worrying phenomenon, as we are going to see in the next section.

PRODUCTIVISM IN BRAZILIAN ACADEMIA IN THE FIELD OF ADMINISTRATION

According to Sguissardi, a well-known researcher for his studies on higher education in Brazil, "academic productivism" can be understood as

> [...] phenomenon usually derived from official or non-official processes of regulation and control, supposedly of evaluation, which is characterized by excessive valuing of the amount of scientific-academic production, tending to disregard the quality of this production. This phenomenon – culture or ideology – has its origins in the USA in the 1950s. It is known worldwide for the expression "publish or perish", meaning that professors and researchers who do not publish in accordance to parameters imposed by funding agencies, or by university bureaucracy or by the market would see their career decline (SGUISSARDI, 2016).

Authors in the area of Administration also adopt a critical attitude towards academic productivism, which is considered a dangerous phenomenon resulting from the bureaucratization of academic activity. In that sense, Tragtenberg (2009, p. 6) is not less acid in his criticism to the way scientific research is carried out in Brazil. According to him, the "publication of a text at any price is the measure of academic success". And he adds: "Knowledge creation and its reproduction give way to bureaucratic control of its production as supreme virtue" (TRAGTENBERG, 2009, p. 7).

In fact, the concern about bureaucratization in the processes of evaluation and control of academic activity is not new. In recent years, some researchers have intensified the debate in Brazil around quantitative evaluation, which supposedly would guarantee the quality of research. The debate is put forward by authors from the area of Administration (ALCADIPANI, 2011a, 2011b; FARIA, 2011; FREITAS, 2011; MENEGHETTI, 2011a, 2011b; MACHADO and BIANCHETTI, 2011; MATTOS, 2012; BERTERO, VASCONCELOS, BINDER et al., 2013), but also by other researchers in Human and Social Sciences, such as Education (SGUISSARDI and SILVA JÚNIOR, 2009; SGUISSARDI, 2010; NOSELLA, 2010; SANTOS, 2010; ANPED, 2011; TREVISAN, DEVECHI and DIAS, 2013), and Political and Social Sciences (LUZ, 2005; RAMÍREZ-GÁLVEZ, 2009; ANDES-SN, 2011). However, it is clear that the quantitative logic in the mechanisms of academic activity evaluation is inspired in the bureaucratic evaluation criteria adopted to assess the productivity of the capitalist worker[5].

As part of the effort to regulate academic practice, the 5th National Plan for Graduate Studies (PNPG 2011-2020) was launched in 2011 and it has gradually been incorporated by the academic community, who has engaged in several debates about the plan's content (TREVISAN, DEVECHI and DIAS, 2013). The National Plan presents guidelines that steer public policies for qualification at Masters and Doctorate level. It has been edited every 6 years, in order to develop scenarios regarding the growth of the system of graduate courses and programs in the country, as well as to establish goals and budget for the implementation of activities related to this system. Unlike the previous versions of PNPG, the most recent extends the period for the goals to ten years. In addition, the president of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) reported that due to new roles played by the agency, during the process of developing the current PNPG "activities aimed at basic education and at the needs for training for the business sector" were introduced. Against this backdrop, the discussion on academic productivism is particularly appropriate.

Previous plans were reviewed when PNPG 2005-2010 and the current plan were developed. One clearly notices that those plans were established to contribute to State planning, providing core guidelines for the construction and development of the graduate system in Brazil (BRASIL, 2004). In fact, the efforts to organize the advanced degree studies have been in the agenda since the foundation of CAPES in 1976-1977. Some authors believe that the debate within CAPES involves "discussions that aim to analyze the criteria for monitoring and evaluating graduate courses. Many professors and students consider this as a means to either 'measure' or 'control' the courses quality" (TREVISAN, DEVECHI and DIAS, 2013, p. 374). The problem arises when emphasis is on controlling and focuses merely on quantity overshadowing ethical aspects. This seems to be the current problem, which justifies the academic community concern with the growth of productivism. Twenty years after its foundation, CAPES intensified its system of "measurement and control" of researchers and graduate programs, using a *strictu sensu* assessment model which is based on quantitative criteria of academic production. The academic community has criticized this model, because it stresses how much a professor/researcher publishes more than the quality of the publications or even the scientific, public and social benefits of what is published. The emphasis is on productivity, not on the reception or public and social interest of the academic work (SGUISSARDI, 2010).

Sguissardi and Silva Júnior (2009) show that universities have increasingly worked with focus on a managerial approach, based on productivist pragmatism coming from the Fordist logic. This is an issue addressed by other authors (ALCADIPANI, 2011a; BERTERO, VASCONCELOS, BINDER et al., 2013; MENEGHETTI, 2011a). Sguissardi and Silva Júnior (2009, p. 192-193) argue that three elements defined this productivism logic currently observed in graduate programs: 1) CAPES role in the re-organization of advanced degree studies in Brazil; 2) the inductive role performed by the National Council for Scientific and Technological

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[5] When criticizing the bureaucracy of academic productivism, we are not saying that bureaucracy is totally inadequate to the formal processes of academic evaluation. As it is suggested by Motta and Pereira (2004), quantitative regulations, besides serving as criterion of bureaucratic impersonality, also serve as formalistic precision, which guarantees greater efficiency in controlling an increasing the number of researchers-professors. The aspect of the bureaucratic control system which is considered to be harmful is precisely the personal use of bureaucratic regulation. This is what Merton (1971) called bureaucratic personality dysfunction.

Development (CNPq), that has provided financial support to applied research; and 3) the interaction between market and the university, allowing for a dialogue between researchers and the productive sector. The authors acknowledge that these elements have been intensified after the 1990s, with the State's institutional reform, especially in higher education.

Thus, the globalization of capital – intensified in the last decades of the 20th century – has strongly influenced public policies in general, as observed in the State's reform in Brazil, in 1995 (SANTOS, 2010). In education, evidence of this influence are the centrality of research and higher education and the strengthening of quantitative-based academic productivism. This evidence has been confirmed in the last PNPGs, affecting researchers who have been pressured by funding agencies.

By analyzing this scenario, Luz (2005, p. 45) considers PNPG references as a "tragic pedagogical misunderstanding for the nation", because it concentrates research activity in the educational system ("producers hierarchy"), which allows the creation of graduate policies as a legitimized and privileged institutional niche, still present nowadays. For Trevisian, Devechi and Dias (2013), even though PNPG 2011-2020 guidelines point to "new parameters and procedures in the processes" (BRASIL, 2010, p. 22), the main idea "is not to rethink assessment, but to offer support to emergent groups, in order to achieve excellence in the existing criteria" (TREVISIAN, DEVECHI and DIAS, 2013, p. 378).

In the pressure for intellectual productivism, "all types of texts are anxiously published" (NOSELLA, 2010, p. 179), which allows "superficial and frivolous practices, such as the reproduction of the same idea in several texts" (TREVISIAN, DEVECHI and DIAS, 2013, p. 375). "Using the same theoretical framework, making analyses within the same categories already defined [...] by the Master and Doctoral advisor" (MENEGHETTI, 2011b, p. 344). Therefore, what is observed is masters and doctorate students looking to 'boost' their curriculum so they increase their chances of being hired by universities, based on the number of publications

> [...] which are rarely read or are not scientifically relevant – the thing is that it (the curriculum) is a basic parameter for starting (or advancing) in academic careers, as well as obtaining scholarships and research funding. In some cases, it is also used as a parameter when applying for administrative positions (SGUISSARDI, 2010).

Particularly in the area of Administration, doctorate-advisors – following the rules established by the *modus operandi* of a mercantile academy – act in the so-called "production of knowledge", leaving behind the social aspects intrinsic to teaching and to the dissemination of knowledge. As stated by Alcadipani (2011a, p. 1174): "canning sardines in the form of papers". Bertero, Vasconcelos, Binder et al. (2013, p. 18) argue that "our doctorate students and young doctors [in the area of Administration] are more concerned with their publications and less concerned about the solid construction of knowledge and the development of consistent scientific contribution".

One suggestion presented by Meneghetti (2011b, p. 344-345) to qualify scientific production in Administration is the theoretical-essay. According to the author, a theoretical-essay is "a method where intellectuals reflect, as counterpoint to the logic of scientific productivism so present in our times". Thus, a theoretical-essay enables intellectuals to think of their own reality, "transposing the rigidity of knowledge production. [...] its strength is in the intellectual's autonomy.

However, Mattos (2012) warns researchers of some of the commonly used ways to "skip" the methodological and formal rigor of an academic article, and consequently, increase "productivity". The author says "an attempt is made here to pursue a demystifying aim and draw attention to certain practices that occur in the composition and institutional legitimacy of academic work – in short, everything converges on the nature of the texts of articles. A good deal is made to seem plausible in the 'academic production chain' " (MATTOS, 2012, p. 567).

Mattos (2012, p. 567) also reflects on the difficulties of quoting with "property and independence" such as the practice of excluding "*apud*" to increase the number of books and/or articles in the reference list, even though these books and articles were not read or searched. Mattos (2012, p. 569-570) also warns of what he calls "the power of data self-reproduction" by using statistical analysis software in which the "instrument guides the artist's hand, increasing the output". Furthermore,

what has to be criticized as well is the "willingness to transfer the object's ambiguity (human and social) to the method and by doing that, acting without criteria, clear procedures, adequate conceptual and theoretical frameworks" (MATTOS, 2012, p. 571). Finally, Mattos (2012) argues that, in order to avoid this distortion, the criteria of academic relevance should be external to the academic environment.

In addition to the "techniques" adopted to increase academic production through the compilation of ideas (following the Taylorism-Fordism logic of mass production), there are researchers who increase production, through semi-autonomous groups (as in Toyotism), gathering parts of articles from different researchers, as pointed out by Meneghetti (2011a) and Boava, Macedo and Sette (2012). Boava, Macedo and Sette (2012, p. 3) argue that there are three options for researchers who face productivism pressures in academia: a) to adapt to the system and become a component in the so-called 'article factory'; b) to continue to carry out research at their own pace and based on their conceptions and beliefs; and c) to give up on researching and focus on teaching.

Some authors in Administration have resisted the continuous pressure for quantification over qualification of knowledge. Some voices have, therefore, been heard in the field of Administration, not only by questioning the *status quo*, but by presenting propositions for change. In 2011, a panel called "Scientific Productivism" was developed during the National Meeting on Research and Teaching in Administration and Accounting (EnEPQ), which resulted in three essays published in the section "Opinião de Cadernos EBAPE.BR" (v. 9, n. 4, 2011). One of the published authors was Alcadipani (2011b), who presented 7 considerations regarding academic production: 1) do not ask masters or doctorate students to write articles about what they are not interested in; 2) do not sign your names on articles you have not contributed with; 3) show solidarity to senior researchers who have a solid academic history; 4) demystify the discourse that CAPES is the "bad guy"; 5) demand good reviews from journals and that these journals are managed by academics (not secretaries); 6) organize researchers associations to represent the interests of researchers; and 7) do not accept administrative positions only for the sake of having power.

By analyzing the context of Brazilian academic production in the last decade, Bertero, Vasconcelos, Binder et al. (2013) propose some points for reflection: 1) focus on Brazil by developing knowledge and theories about Brazilian subjects, objectives and phenomena; 2) bring theory and practice together through forums for dialogue and cooperation between academics and Administration practitioners; 3) develop research plans, building knowledge around certain themes, objects and phenomena; 4) promote rigor considering the gatekeepers leadership; 5) focus on the production impact, considering that the national assessment system should steer its focus from production to impact; 6) prioritize high-level international journals with greater impact and wide visibility by the international community; 7) reform the graduate programs; and 8) acknowledge outstanding research and researchers.

On one hand, both reflections provided by the section "Opinião de Cadernos EBAPE.BR" (ALCADIPANI, 2011; FREITAS, 2011; FARIA, 2011) and the propositions put forward by Bertero, Vasconcelos, Binder et al. (2013) explain our role as researchers: regardless of how intense the activities we undertake in regulatory agencies (CAPES, CNPq etc.) and in other forums are, "we are co-authors of this situation and not mere victims, because we endorse those poor criteria when we review papers, articles, thesis and dissertations" (FREITAS, 2011, p. 1162). We might disagree with some propositions or they may cause discomfort. However, they lead us to reflect on the situation faced by researchers, professors, masters and doctorate students, reviewers and others. On the other hand, when we analyzed the regulatory role of CNPq, we found its president for the period 2011-2015, Glaucius Oliva, saying in an interview that his great challenge as president was to develop monitoring and assessment procedures that privilege quality, innovation and multidisciplinary, and especially, to intensify CNPq's cooperation with CAPES and the funding agency FINEP (BRASIL, 2011). The lack of integration among the aforementioned agencies had already been identified by Axt (2004, p. 75). The author emphasized the "duplication of attribution and resource allocation, which demands an increase of unnecessary control". This increase in control that comes from different sources may be another factor that influences the researcher's ethical behavior. It may also stimulate the development of mechanisms to avoid CAPES' assessment system (SILVA, 2010)

Finally, it is important to mention that the concern with productivism in Brazilian academia in Administration and in other areas of Social Sciences is not new, even though this debate has been intensified in the past few years. Back in 1979, Tragtenberg

Cad. EBAPE.BR, v. 14, nº 4, Article 8, Rio de Janeiro, Oct./Dec. 2016.

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questioned the commodification of knowledge and the growing productivism in academia: "Focused on 'national security', academic intellectuals free themselves from any social responsibility they have in their professional roles. [...] In this universe, this simple question can no longer be made: what is knowledge for and to whom is it produced? (TRAGTENBERG, 2009, p. 6).

In this scenario of intensification of academic productivism, it is necessary to consider the reflection about ethics and the pragmatic orientation in academic practice in Brazil. Considering Habermas's (1989a; 1989b) theory of discourse ethics, academic productivism is conditioned by instrumental rationality in capitalist societies. This type of rationality, which is mediated by systems of bureaucratic and economic power, lacks ethical and moral models, in the Habermasian sense of ethical behavior as one sustained by the ontological consciousness of "becoming". In the context of utilitarianism and instrumental rationality, the only reference for academic behavior is the pragmatic one. In other words, the behavior that is interested in successful actions in an objective world. Based on this pragmatic perspective, other players are reduced to means to achieve the success of the intended action.

If we consider that the rules of academia in Brazil and in other countries are guided by utilitarian logic and by bureaucratic and rational-instrumental criteria, the pragmatic criteria in academic behavior is intensified. That is why we see an increasing pragmatic orientation in the scholars' behavior in the field of Administration. This orientation is especially manifested in individual interests that surpass collective interests and the absence of criteria concerning society's common good. The discussion on academic productivism in Administration (as we have seen on the aforementioned EnEPQ forums and on Cadernos EBAPE.BR) does not consider that the lack of ethics is related to the growing influence of pragmatic objectives in the process of carrying out research.

In order to emphasize this lack of ethics, we will present, in the next section, some reflections on ethical behavior in academic practice and how it relates to productivist pragmatism in Brazilian academia. The reflections will be based on hypothetical situations we created from our own experiences as members of Brazilian academia in the field of Administration.

CONCERNS OF THREE MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY IN ADMINISTRATION IN BRAZIL

Based on the previous discussion, we present four questions that reflect upon ethical behavior in academia. We take into account productivity pressures and pragmatic criteria that are originated by those pressures. These questions, temporarily presented as "concerns", may be used as guides for future studies that take into account the discussion of the previous sections. They are presented as research guidelines, but also show controversial aspects of researchers' behavior when they have to deal with productivity pressures in academic practice in Brazil.

Before presenting the above-mentioned concerns, we discuss the illustrative situations through a fictitious story, in which the pragmatic behavior associated to the productivity pressures mentioned in this essay are dramatized.

We have all been working in graduate programs in Administration for a long time, in both private and public universities. Also, we have actively participated in academic associations in the area (such as the National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Administration, ANPAD) and as *ad hoc* reviewers of regulatory and development agencies (such as CAPES and CNPq). Thus, despite the story being fictitious, it involves activities that are routine in our daily academic lives. These activities would be familiar to any researcher, unless they are newcomers or one-timers in the field (GUARIDO-FILHO, MACHADO-DA-SILVA and GONÇALVES, 2009).

Having said that, we would like to argue that our propositions are not grounded on any positivist academic-scientific rigor or criterion. They simply show concerns that researchers and members of an academic community have about how productivity has been distorting ideals that influenced many of us to choose an academic career.

The hypothetical situation is as follows:

A young researcher, who has just finished his doctorate in Administration, is invited to become a professor in his own program. According to his advisor, he is a brilliant researcher with great potential. This young researcher is motivated by his idealism of contributing to society by producing quality research that could cause great impact on issues that are considered relevant by the academic community.

Nevertheless, in his very first staff meeting, this young researcher is shocked by the attitude of senior staff members, many of them his former professors. The meeting is about professors' production in academia. In the meeting, the participants do not discuss the research topics which are most aligned to the program or even the professors' future research proposals. Instead, their discussion is about how each one of them can achieve the necessary points that CAPES demands for the program to be considered a good program. After the meeting, the young researcher realizes some professors adopt certain practices in their work, in order to deal with the pressure that is imposed by CAPES' assessment system. Some of these are: 1) the submission of an article that was already submitted to another journal, in which the professor changes the title in order to mask the lack of originality of the article (especially when journals require originality); 2) ask students to write, as and end of course requirement, articles that can be submitted to congresses and journals, with the professor appearing as a co-author; And 3) the simultaneous submission of the same work to two different journals, so that waiting time can be minimized. Then, it is possible to withdraw the submission from the journal that longer to review and publish the article.

This fictitious story should be understood as a literary resource adopted to provoke reflection on ethics in academic life, especially based on the pragmatic behavior motivated by productivism, which has spread in academic practice in the area of Administration. We do not claim that this behavior is right or wrong; the story only addresses examples of behaviors that might have ethical implications. Such behaviors deserve to be openly debated, otherwise they can assume a contradictory orientation to the values that are supposed to guide academic practice.

Having said that, we begin to discuss concerns that might be useful as part of the agenda for an ethical debate and about ethics in Brazilian academia in Administration.

Do pragmatic questions interfere in the definition of ethical criteria in the academic community?

This first question takes into account the concern of to what extent the academic community has been stretching its ethical and moral criteria because of pragmatic pressures in academic practice. To what extent do we see researchers changing their criteria of right and wrong related to their practices, as a result of the pressure from CAPES? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to longitudinally observe the possible changes in what academics consider to be ethical criteria, bearing in mind the institution's transformations related to productivism. Also, it is necessary to take into account the specialization of the academic community. In general terms, it is possible to investigate if there are differences in those criteria in different areas (for instance, are there different understandings of questions of practical order associated with researcher's activities in the area of Administration compared to the area of Philosophy?).

How frequently are ethical judgements, common to the academic community in Administration, disrespected by its members?

This concern comes from the expectation that human behavior reflects ethical and moral judgment as follows: 1) for issues considered unethical by the majority of members of an academic community, it is expected that there is little incident of deviant behavior; 2) for issues considered not to have ethical implications, it is not a problem if there is a great disparity of behavior or even how frequently disparity occurs. Incompatibilities between ethical judgement and behavior, i.e., frequent occurrence of situations that violate ethical values that are commonly accepted by the community, might be the result of the influence of adoption of utilitarian ethics by its members, as a result of pragmatic orientation (HABERMAS, 1989a). In this case, some authors have a hypothesis that the discrepancy between the judgement of what is 'good' and the action might be due to pressures for productivity (DEJOURS, 2001).

Is there any relationship between the researcher's profile – age, time in academia, institutional affiliation – and the different criteria of ethical judgment that is expressed in an academic community?

This is a concern based on the expectation that productivity pressures will be felt differently by members of a scientific community, depending on different contexts in which participants experience them. For example, a more experienced scholar, having gone through different conditions regarding the demands for academic productivity, might have a different attitude towards certain criteria of ethical judgment compared to someone beginning their academic career. Likewise, a researcher in a reputable institution, for instance, might have different pressures to deal with than somebody affiliated to a marginal institution. If we consider that productivity pressures of regulatory agencies have been increasing in each new cycle of assessment of masters and doctorate programs, it is possible to imagine a homogenization of this pressure is occurring, but on higher levels than experienced in the past.

Is the fact that a criterion of ethical judgment has direct implications on the researcher's scientific production relevant as a factor of ethics "bending" or deviant behavior?

It is necessary to reflect whether among different ethical problems presented to an academic community, the ones directly related to immediate productivist interests are more or less relevant than other dilemmas which have no direct implication on scientific production. For example, if we consider CAPES' current criteria for publication, the ethical dilemmas that involve, as a result of the action, increasing scientific productivity could be treated "less rigorously" than those actions that do not result in increasing productivity. This is an important concern because it helps to verify to what extent the criteria are distorted – even when becoming less rigorous – because of the pressures that scholars suffer based on productivism.

The aforementioned concerns presented as questions – free of any rigor or positivist criterion of scientific truth – are concerns of three researchers who are members of the academic community of Administration in Brazil. They reflect points and arguments to be explored by different forums for discussion within the community, seeking to stimulate the debate and critical reflection over the utilitarian imperative of modern societies in our own professional communities. As it was discussed in the introduction of this essay, we cannot forget that the pragmatic orientation in academic activity in the area of Administration is a result of the fact that this activity is also a way of living, inserted in a capital system as any other productive force serving the logic of capital reproduction. Notwithstanding, as members of this community, we do not believe that this historic condition of our professional activity is a fatality. On the contrary, we wish to recover the ideals of academic-scientific activity, those ideals that put the academic environment to the service of society. As members of the academic community, we are unhappy with the lack of character, with the omission of colleagues towards social problems and with respect to pernicious situations that we face, as well as with the lack of civil responsibility in the use of public money invested on research. These questions led us to write this essay and they aim to highlight problematic situations that invite us to reflect on academic practice and its role in Brazilian society.

FINAL REMARKS

Concluding our discussion that ethical concerns of our times involve the pragmatic orientation of modern societies, we envision that the debate on ethics in academic practice in the area of Administration will be richer if the community seriously discusses the productivist criteria of the regulatory agencies. First, productivism is present in the research funding agencies and in the assessment of research and graduate programs. However, considering that researchers themselves manage such agencies, the problem that there are not ethical-moral criteria in academic practice is engendered by the very same researchers. Far from being simple, the predominance of pragmatic behavior is embedded in our culture because it has its roots in the social and political order of capitalism and in the bureaucratic State.

Thus, this essay is an invitation to reflect on ethics in academia, especially on the intensification of productivism in this area. In order to trigger this discussion, we have adopted Habermas' (1984; 1989a; 1989b) perspective on discourse ethics and

the differentiation that emerges from this theoretical framework between an ethical-moral orientation and a pragmatic orientation.

Finally, it was not the objective of the authors either to victimize researchers or to demonize regulatory agencies. It is clear that productivism does not only come from the existence of metrics or other incentives for the search of practical results. It is in the DNA of contemporary societies. The same scholars, who criticize fast science and the ability of producing scientific work with the same agility that fast food chains have to prepare hamburgers, have often been successful in the productivism metrics imposed on them. As a reader of a preliminary version of this essay observed, the articles that are written in this way certainly represent more pride than embarrassment when they are listed to be included in CAPES' graduate assessment system.

We intend to dedicate more time and effort to the subject in the years to come. The ideas that were presented in this essay result from an enthusiastic debate we started, as members of the academic community who are intrigued with the possible clash between our ethical convictions and the pragmatic pressures we have to deal with in our regular research activities.

We are not more ethical, or less affected by pragmatism than any of our colleagues. Ironically, although we are standing against productivism and pragmatic behavior, we use the very same practice criticized by us here, the production of articles for journals that are considered to be the suitable venues to discuss our work, as proposed by CAPES. This, to a certain extent, corroborates the opinion of the above mentioned reader that the feeling related to the effort that is put into production is paradoxical: a number to be proud of when seen through the lens of the utilitarian evaluation, quickly becomes an embarrassment when one stops to reflect on where all of this is taking us.

Pragmatism and utilitarianism in our society push us towards an extreme quantitative logic and, in many cases, this happens without us having time to deeply reflect on the course it is taking. Does the way we are contributing to human knowledge make sense? Or should we stop and (re)construct ethics in our scientific community? Would this preserve substantive values in academia, which would enable universities to be places for reflection about paths to our society (perhaps, more equalitarian ones) and not only a place where the illnesses that afflict other sectors of society take a little longer to arrive, though being replicated to full extent? Far from having an answer to these questions, we intend to provoke our colleagues so that we can mobilize ourselves for a better, or should we say, more ethical future?

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