

## **A Critique of Metz's Relational Economics in Africa through Marxist Political Economy**

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### **Abstract**

Underdevelopment and poverty are some of the ongoing problems afflicting Africa. Metz diagnoses excessive individualism as one of the main problems that undermines development globally. He does not regard capitalism as the main problem. Metz's reformist relational economics provides remedies that seek to eliminate excessive individualism by incorporating communal values into the global capitalistic system. On the other hand, Marxist scholars regard underdevelopment and poverty as effects of the intrinsic structural faults of the global capitalist system. These faults include imperialism, primitive accumulation, the creation of a permanent surplus population, and the transfer of value from the Global South to the Global North. In this paper, I use the views of Samir Amin, Michelle Yates, and Rosa Luxemburg to show the limitations of Metz's reformist relational economics. This paper seeks to use Marxist political economy to contribute knowledge about the plausibility of integrating the global capitalist system with Afro-communal values.

**Keywords:** Metz, Relational Economics, Global Capitalist System, Marxist Political Economy, Sovereign National Accumulation, Permanent Surplus Population, Primitive Accumulation.

### **Introduction**

The African condition involves underdevelopment and poverty that can be traced to capitalist exploitation of Africa from the colonial era to the present. Also, global capitalism is associated with dumping many Africans into the rapidly growing population of disposable and superfluous beings who are excluded from capitalist production, wages, exchange, and markets.<sup>1</sup> This is a population that cannot be exploited by capitalism and such a population is produced as waste (YATES 2011). This population is predicted to reach 1.5 billion in 2025 and 2.5 billion in 2030 (YATES 2011). Underdevelopment and poverty in Africa have led to destitution, malnutrition, hunger, low life expectancy, vulnerability to disease, failing public health systems, and poor public education systems. The global capitalist system is complicit in causing underdevelopment and poverty in Africa. According to Samir Amin, the global capitalist system is associated with

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<sup>1</sup> See (YATES 2011, 1689) on the exclusion of surplus population from capitalist production, exchange and markets.

relationships of unequal exchange, which privileges the transfer of value from the periphery to the center (1990). Such a transfer results from the super-exploitation of labour and natural resources in the periphery (Amin 1990). Samir Amin (1990), Patrick Bond (2019), David Harvey (2003), Sam Moyo, Praveen Jha, and Paris Yeros (2013), and Rosa Luxemburg concur that primitive accumulation is not a temporal feature that is found at the origin of capitalism but is a permanent feature. Primitive accumulation involved slavery and the looting of wealth from the extraction of natural resources in the Global South from the colonial era to the present. Such primitive accumulation led to the formation of global capital stock controlled by the few in the West and emerging countries (MOYO, JHA & YEROS 2013). Given these problems associated with capitalism, radical Marxist scholars such as Amin (1990), Luxemburg (2003), and Bond (2019) concur that there should be the liquidation of the global capitalist system and its replacement with a global socialist economic system. Yates (2011) advocates a revolutionary solution that seeks the termination of the capitalist mode of production.

However, Thaddeus Metz recently argued against the revolutionary overthrow of the global capitalist system (2020). For Metz, relational economics, which seeks to reconfigure the global capitalist system by African communal ethics constructs a global economic system that promotes harmonious relations (2020). Such relational economics seeks to terminate poverty and underdevelopment, which emerge in a world afflicted by a cultural crisis and a deficit of communal values. Metz holds that poverty and economic underdevelopment in modern African states are expressions of a deep cultural malaise of excessive individualism (2017, 2020). The solution is to limit individualistic values by reformist relational economics that integrates capitalism with Afro-relational values. The project involves the bifurcation of the economy into the capitalistic economy and the communal economy and the infusion of Afro-communal values into the capitalistic system (METZ 2020). The communal economic system does not replace the capitalistic economic system. Metz rejects a revolutionary approach that overhauls the capitalist system and prefers a pragmatist approach (METZ 2020).<sup>2</sup>

In this work, I evaluate whether Metz's relational economics is a plausible remedy to the underdevelopment and poverty problems plaguing Africa. I evaluate the desirability of Metz's relational economics by considering whether it has suitable remedies for global capitalism's problems, which are identified by Samir Amin, Michelle Yates, and Rosa Luxemburg. The use of Marxist political economy to evaluate Metz's relational economics will yield new knowledge on the plausibility of reforms that integrate the global capitalist system with African communal ethics. Another issue that will be explored pertains to whether it is possible to integrate a global capitalist system that has a logic that conflicts with the logic of African communal ethics. African communal ethics has a logic that prioritizes the promotion of life and the welfare of human beings (METZ 2022).

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<sup>2</sup> Also, he mentions that African communal values are more aligned with democratic socialism. However, he does not give any consideration to democratic socialism (METZ 2020).

This logic is irreconcilable with the logic of capitalism that puts profit maximization above the welfare and life of human beings. I start by showing the two features of Metz's relational economics, which are the construction of an Afro-communal economic system and the infusion of Afro-communal values into the capitalist world economic system. Next, I show global capitalism's problems from the perspective of the abovementioned Marxist scholars. Also, I use the Marxist political economy that is associated with the views of Amin, Yates, and Luxemburg to evaluate the plausibility of Metz's relational economics.

### **Metz's Ideas in Relational Economics**

#### ***Communal economy and communal ownership***

Metz's relational economics involves communal ownership of natural resources such as farmland and minerals. Individuals cannot own large portions of natural resources (METZ, 2020). According to Metz's conception of African ethics, individuals who exercise legal control over natural resources should comply with certain moral guidelines and conditions (METZ, 2020). Some of the moral guidelines require avoidance of the exploitation and the subordination of others (METZ, 2020). Metz seems to limit communal ownership primarily to natural resources. This leaves capital, technology, plant, and equipment in private hands. Also, the retail, construction, and manufacturing sectors are governed by capitalist production relations involving private ownership.

#### ***Communal Economy and the Banking Sector***

Also, the bifurcation of the economy into a capitalist economy and communal economy comes to the fore in the way Metz conceives the banking sector. For Metz, the world's banking sector is problematic as it is associated with giving loans to those who can pay back the loan and interest (2020). Such banking practice excludes low-income earners and those without income. Metz's remedies to such flaws in the banking sector involve the creation of a fund from the contributions of generous wealthy individuals (2017, 2020). Also, Metz suggests stockvels and state banks. The common feature of these remedies is the creation of loan facilities that abolish the requirement of interest and diminish the expectation of profits by lenders (METZ 2020). Metz seeks to ensure that all can access loans for income-generating projects and for solving liquidity problems. The communal banking system that is regulated by Afro-communal values exists alongside a capitalist banking system. Metz does not abolish the capitalist banking sector.

#### ***Communal Economy and Communal Labour***

Metz's relational economics promotes a communal labour system that is regulated by Afro-communal values. The communal labour system is associated with the matsema practice of sharing labour (2020). Metz gives an example of how the matsema practice can be used by a society that needs libraries (METZ, 2020). We can have construction companies build library buildings for free or at a low cost. Art students decorate the buildings at reasonable prices. Also, other companies donating computer equipment. Rich individuals with extra books can donate their books (METZ, 2020). Next, I show how Metz uses African communal values to regulate the global capitalist labour system.

The labour system that is controlled by Afro-communal values restricts laying off workers. For Metz, laying off workers is permitted when a company is facing threats of collapse (2020). Such retrenchment cuts costs associated with wages and salaries to forestall the collapse of a business firm. Metz holds that a company is not allowed to lay off workers to increase profits for shareholders and to reduce the prices of products for consumers (2020). Also, Metz's relational economics imposes restrictions on policies such as those that pertain to the adoption of labour-saving technology. Labour-saving technology is efficient, and it increases the productivity and profitability of the workplace. However, labour-saving technology is problematic as it replaces human beings and fuels unemployment (2020). Metz's relational economics maintains that a business should adopt labour-saving technology when there are huge losses that threaten the business with collapse and to improve the quality of products for consumers (2020). The company cannot adopt labour-saving technology to expand productive capacity and profitability (Metz 2020).

### ***Economic Inequalities and Afro-Communal Distributive System***

Also, Metz's relational economics seeks to eliminate economic inequalities by infusing Afro-communal values into the global capitalist system. For Metz, economic inequalities are unacceptable as they can lead to property crimes, envy of the rich by the poor, and exploitation and domination of the impoverished masses by the rich individuals (2020). Economic inequalities are associated with a lopsided capitalist market system that distributes goods to wealthy individuals who can pay the highest price (METZ 2020). The skewed capitalist market distributive system denies the marginalized and impoverished masses access to essential goods such as housing and adequate nutritious food. Relational economics' remedies involve allocating more goods to those with a low quality of life and those with special gifts. The implication is that the impoverished countries in the Global South should receive more resources to improve their quality of life.

### ***Reformist Incorporation of African Countries into the Manufacturing Value Chain***

Also, Metz's relational economics reforms the global division of labour that restricts African countries and other countries in the global South from producing primary products for export and importing finished goods from the West and Newly industrializing countries. Such a racialized division of labour is one of the causes of the underdevelopment of Africa. The global division of labour is the structural architecture of the world economy that facilitates unequal economic exchange relationships that benefit the West and the newly industrializing countries. Metz's remedy is the integration of global capitalism with Afro-communal values. He uses the case study of Togo to discuss his reformist remedies (METZ 2020).

Metz expresses concern that Togo produces coffee beans primarily for export, but a lack of capital and technical infrastructure limits the domestic formation of the agro-processing industry that produces coffee products for local consumption. Metz holds that rich developed countries should help Togo acquire technology to manufacture coffee from locally produced coffee beans (2020). He

mobilizes Afro-communal values of sharing to promote voluntary assistance that can integrate Togo into the rudimentary manufacturing value chain (METZ 2020).

### ***Reforms of Global Trade***

Metz's relational economics promotes the adoption of protectionist policies by African countries. For Metz, "It is of course unjust for African and other economically poor countries to be told to open up their agricultural markets when European countries and the United States notoriously subsidize their farmers" (2020, 60). Metz's relational economics castigates the neoliberal free trade policies as unfair. Such free trade unfairly undermines the capacity of African farmers to compete in world markets. Metz offers reformist remedies associated with regulating the global trade regime by Afro-communal values. For Metz, there should be fair and not free trade (2020). Fair trade shaped by Afro-communal values would involve the adoption of protectionist policies by African countries (METZ 2020). Also, Western countries are required to rescind protectionist policies. Metz states that "Western governments and related bodies such as the European Commission should not protect" their farmers (2020, 60).

However, I argue that Metz's claim that we can reform the global capitalist system is problematic from a Marxist perspective. Marxist scholars such as Amin held that it is impossible to reform capitalism. One of the ineradicable intrinsic features of the global capitalist system is unequal development which undermines development in the periphery by transferring value from the periphery to the center (AMIN 1990). African countries and the Global South constitute the periphery, and Western countries belong to the core/center (AMIN 1990). For Amin, the global capitalist economic system has intrinsic and ineradicable structural faults that undermine the capacity of peripheral countries to develop (1990). In the following, I will show Amin's views on the irredeemable faults of the global capitalist system that cause underdevelopment and poverty in Africa.

### **Amin on the Unequal Exchange between the Center and Periphery**

Amin holds that the unequal exchange of the global capitalist system transfers value from the periphery in the Global South to the Global North (1990). Such transfer of value emanates from the extraction of surplus value from the super-exploitation of labour in Africa and the Global South (AMIN 1990). Underdevelopment and poverty in the peripheral areas of Africa are intrinsic features of the global capitalist system. For Amin, peripheral countries cannot achieve the level of economic development found in the center (1990). The current global capitalist system undermines the capacity of African countries to control their national accumulation processes. The African economies are constituted to serve Western capital (AMIN 1990). For Amin, five factors are essential for sovereign national control of accumulation processes within a global capitalist system (1990). The five factors include control of the social reproduction of labour. The "reproduction of labour" involves a viable agricultural sector that produces surplus food (AMIN 1990, 10-11). The second factor is control of national surplus and capital and the capacity of the nation-state to direct investment (AMIN 1990). The other factors include control of access to natural resources, control of technology, control of the market, and competitiveness in the global market in at least one product (AMIN 1990).

In this section, I use Amin's views on control of national accumulation and development in a global capitalist system to evaluate Metz's relational economics. For Amin, the control of the accumulation process within a nation that leads to development requires control of access to natural resources. One can say that Metz's sovereign community control of natural resources ensures national control of accumulation within a global capitalist system. However, Amin holds that control of accumulation requires capital, technology, and competitiveness in markets.

Also, the global capital structure is associated with the control of a huge stock of capital by a few individuals from the Global North and emerging economies. This implies that Metz's relational economics cannot lead to development as African countries lack capital. For example, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) under Felix Tshisekedi adopted a national development plan centered on national sovereign ownership and control of natural resources (RADLEY 2023). But such a development plan failed due to a lack of capital (RADLEY 2023). Metz's relational economics development strategy based on community control of natural resources is futile as African countries lack capital.

It can also be argued that Metz's relational economics involves remedies to the global capital structure. Some of the remedies include the creation of a global capital fund and reforms to the global financial institutions (METZ 2017, 2020). However, these reforms require voluntary assistance from the West and emerging economies (METZ 2017, 2020). The emerging economies are unwilling to reform the global financial institutions in a way that benefits other developing countries. They perform sub-imperial roles that further undermine development in Africa. They sought to undermine the influence of African countries on the IMF by capitalizing the IMF in ways that led to the reduction of the voting rights of African countries in the IMF (BOND 2019). The quest by emerging economies associated with BRICS to construct alternative global financial institutions is not about reforms of global capitalism to promote development in developing countries. It has been argued that the development of developing countries is not on the agenda of the BRICS who are involved in sub-imperial relations with the developing countries (BOND 2019).

Further, the West and the emerging economies are unwilling to assist by contributing to a global capital fund that can benefit developing countries. In the 1970s developed countries adopted a UN resolution to distribute 0.7 percent of their national incomes to foreign aid. But the G8 countries failed to allocate 0.7 percent of their national incomes to foreign aid (WENGRAF 2018). Only Britain complied with the resolution four decades after adopting the resolution at the UN in the 1970s (WENGRAF 2018).

I have used Amin's factors of national accumulation and development within a global capitalist system to evaluate Metz's relational economics development strategy based on sovereign communal ownership of resources. Next, I use the factor of control of markets to evaluate whether Metz's relational economics can lead to development in Africa. According to Metz, African countries should adopt protectionist measures to prevent the domination of African markets by foreign multinational corporations. However, African countries lack the capital to control local accumulation. This accommodates the looting of wealth

from the extraction of natural resources by foreign multinational corporations. African countries cannot generate adequate revenue as they do not control the national accumulation process. They borrow to cover budget deficits. Western-controlled global financial institutions further undermine economic sovereignty by putting conditions on borrowing money. Some of the conditions require African companies to open their economies. This undermines the proposal of Metz's relational economics to promote the competitiveness of Africans in their domestic local markets. Metz's relational economics cannot promote development as imperialism which is intrinsic to the global capitalist system undermines economic sovereignty and protectionist measures that seek to promote the competitiveness of Africans in African markets.

Another factor associated with the control of national accumulation and development pertains to the control of technology. Metz's relational economics appeal to Western countries to assist African countries in acquiring technology. However, Western countries are not willing to assist African countries. The African economies before 2008 had been ruined by the austerity measures of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund that led to a high unemployment rate and severe poverty (WENGRAF 2018). However, after the global recession, the Western countries raised \$4 trillion to bail out the financial sector in their countries while the G8 countries promised a meagre \$25 billion in annual aid to Africa (WENGRAF 2018).

It has been shown that Metz's relational economics cannot promote control of national accumulation and development within a global capitalist system. Amin holds that some of the conditions for control of national accumulation and development within a global capitalist system are control of access to natural resources, control of technology, control of markets, and control of capital. I have shown above that Metz's relational economics fails to ensure control of national accumulation and development by African countries within a global capitalist system. The global capitalist system is configured in such a way that undermines the capacity of African countries to control the five factors that are essential for the development and emergence of a national economy that serves the interests of the people. If the global capitalist system undermines African countries' capacity to control the five factors essential for development, then African countries cannot develop within the global capitalist system.

### **The Creation of a Permanent Surplus Population**

I will demonstrate that Metz's attempt to configure the capitalist system by African communal ethics is problematic as there is a conflict between the capitalist system that has an intrinsic orientation to produce human beings as waste and African communal ethics with an orientation to promote the welfare of human beings. Another intrinsic structural fault of the global capitalist system is associated with the creation of a permanent surplus population of billions mostly in the Global South. For Mike Davis, the fastest growing population is the permanent surplus population, which is superfluous to the capitalist economic system (Yates 2011).

According to Yates, labour is the source of value for the capitalist system (2011). The capitalist system extracts surplus value from labour. This surplus value is the source of profits. However, large-scale industries seek to increase the

productivity of labour by introducing machinery (Yates 2011). The introduction of machinery leads to a reduction in the number of employees. Such a reduction creates a permanent surplus population excluded from the capitalist production system, wages, markets, and exchange (Yates 2011). For Karl Marx, the capitalist law of accumulation links the increase in the accumulation of wealth by capitalists with the wasting of many human beings who are dumped into a rapidly growing population of permanent superfluous human beings (Yates 2011). Marx refers to the abovementioned process of wasting of human beings as the capitalist law of population. Marx further states that “the working population therefore produces both accumulation of capital and the means by which it is itself made relatively superfluous and it does this to the extent which is always increasing. This is the law of population peculiar to the capitalist mode of production” (MARX cited in (YATES 2011, 1689).

For Yates, the capitalist mode of production dumps human beings as waste into the rapidly growing surplus population (2011). These human beings survive by “trash pick” or by using the “black market” (YATES 2011, 1680). The surplus population endures a precarious existence in the slums. However, for Ali Kadri, the surplus human population is not only an effect of the capitalist mode of production (2023). It is a form of value within capitalism (KADRI 2023). The wasting of lives associated with the production of human beings as disposable waste is a “self-contained system” within capitalism (KADRI 2023, 8).

If the wasting of lives is a self-contained form of value within capitalism, then there are question marks on Metz’s use of African communal ethics to reform capitalism. There are conflicting logics of the capitalist system, which has an orientation of wasting human beings to generate value on the one hand and an orientation of African communal ethics which is associated with the promotion of welfare and human lives. The conflicting orientations of capitalism and African communal ethics cannot be brought together. They are irreconcilable.

Now, I establish that Metz’s attempt to reconcile the capitalist economic system that has an orientation towards dumping many human beings as waste and African communal ethics that promote the welfare and lives of human beings leads to accentuating the former. For Metz, some of the solutions to the falling rate of profit that threatens the survival of a company involve laying off workers and adopting labour-saving technology (2020). These remedies are not based on African communal ethics. These are essentially capitalist remedies that have a logic of wasting human lives. If there is a fall in the rate of profit, capitalism sheds a percentage of the labour. Also, if there is a fall in the rate of profit, capitalism can seek to increase profitability and productivity by adopting labor-saving technology. The adoption of labor-saving technology escalates the unemployment rate as jobs for human beings are taken by machines. The loss of these jobs of human beings leads to the dumping of humans into the permanent surplus population.

One can contend that Metz’s African communal ethics provides a fund that is associated with the dkgomo tsa mafias practice (METZ 2017, 2020). The dkgomo tsa mafisa practice involves people making financial contributions to a fund that can help people to start income-generating projects. However, there are



question marks on the possibility of such a fund as rich individuals, and many in the middle class are averse to sharing their wealth.

Furthermore, one can hold that Metz could have suggested solutions centered on African communal ethics that prevent the disposing of human beings as waste into the rapidly growing permanent surplus population. Some of the remedies centered on African communal ethics involve the creation of a fund that can assist companies incurring losses that are about to collapse. Such companies do not need to adopt labour-saving technology and to lay off workers to increase productivity and profitability. Such companies can access the money from the fund to cover losses and boost productivity. However, there are question marks on the source of such funds. Governments in Africa have debt burdens and are incapable of creating such a fund. The West and the emerging economies are not interested in helping but in *recompradorization* of African elites and looting wealth from the extraction of natural resources. Also, foreign multinational corporations are interested in profit and are likely to shut down operations when there are problems associated with making profits.<sup>3</sup> They opt to invest in other countries that have conditions that promote profit maximization.

It is implausible to reconcile African communal ethics and the capitalist economic system that produces human beings as waste. The two are irreconcilable and cannot be brought together. It is not possible to use African communal ethics to mitigate the intrinsic orientation of capitalism to produce human beings as waste. Capitalism concentrates wealth in a few hands, and this impedes the formation of a fund to mitigate the creation of human beings as waste by capitalism.

### **Critique of Metz's Relational Economics from the Lenses of Luxemburg**

Rosa Luxemburg shows the cannibalistic feature of the global capitalist system that is associated with the primitive accumulation and the capitalist cannibalism of the non-capitalist sphere (2003). These features of the global capitalist system that are identified by Luxemburg problematize Metz's relational economics that attempts to reconcile capitalism and Afro-communal ethics. Afro-communal ethics has an orientation towards the promotion of welfare. Such an orientation conflicts fundamentally with the orientation of capitalism. The global capitalist system and the Afro-communal economy are irreconcilable theoretically and practically. The two have competing logics. The African communal economy seeks to promote the welfare of all human beings above the accumulation of wealth. On the other hand, the capitalist economic system promotes accumulation above the welfare of all human beings. I will use Luxemburg's critique of the global capitalist system to show the irredeemable problematic features of the global capitalist system that conflict fundamentally with African communal ethics.

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<sup>3</sup> Recompradorisation involves the loss of sovereignty by African postcolonial states after nationalist revolts that gained political independence. Such loss of sovereignty is accompanied by ruling elites from the West and emerging economies dictating economic policy and industrialization that favour the interests of foreign capitalists. See (Amin 1990, 33-34)

For Luxemburg, the capitalist economic system cannibalizes the non-capitalist economic system (2003). It feeds on the non-capitalistic economic system (Luxemburg 2003). Luxemburg states that

Non-capitalist organisations provide fertile soil for capitalism; more strictly: capital feeds on the ruins of such organisations, and although this non-capitalist milieu is indispensable for accumulation, the latter proceeds at the cost of this medium nevertheless, by eating it up. Historically, the accumulation of capital is a kind of metabolism between the capitalist economy and those pre-capitalist methods of production without which it cannot go on and which, in this light, it corrodes and assimilates. Thus, capital cannot accumulate without the aid of non-capitalist organisations, nor, on the other hand, can it tolerate their continued existence side by side with itself. Only the continuous and progressive disintegration of non-capitalist organisations makes accumulation of capital possible. (2003, 397)

Capitalist super-exploitation of the non-capitalist sphere led to imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, and the second scramble for Africa (LUXEMBURG 2003). During the era of the second scramble, the ongoing privatization involves the capitalist theft of resources in the public sphere (BOND 2019). Capitalism feasts on public resources. Also, capitalist extraction of surplus value is subsidized by the non-capitalist production associated with subsistence agriculture and peasant agriculture (HOSKINS and MANDYOLI 2023). In other words, peasants subsidize capitalism by providing food for workers. Also, some workers subsidize capitalism by engaging in subsistence agriculture (HOSKINS and MANDYOLI 2023). The domestic work of women which contributes to the reproduction of the worker is also super-exploited by capitalism.

The capitalist logic and orientation are associated with the super-exploitation of non-capitalist economic structures. For Luxemburg capitalism does not accept impediments to accumulation from the non-capitalist economic system. According to Luxemburg, “Capitalism must therefore always and everywhere fight a battle of annihilation against every form of natural economy it encounters” (2003, 349). Luxemburg goes on to state that there is a violent destructive confrontation between the capitalist economic system and non-capitalistic social units. As she put it, “The method of violence, then, is the immediate consequence of the clash between capitalism and the organisations of a natural economy which would restrict accumulation” (2003, 351). A capitalist economic system is not only incompatible with a non-capitalistic economic system, but there is a violent and destructive confrontation between the two. If there is a violent and destructive confrontation that leads to the liquidation of the communal economy by capitalism, it seems problematic for Metz to seek to bring the two together. The two have irreconcilable logics. Luxemburg wrote that, “Since the primitive associations of the natives are the strongest protection for their social organisations and their material bases of existence, capital must begin by planning for the systematic destruction and annihilation of all the non-capitalist social units which obstruct its development” (2003, 350). It is problematic for Metz to hold that such a rapacious capitalist economic system organized by private ownership to benefit a

few individuals and that seeks to benefit from a non-capitalist economic system and that eventually destroys it can be reformed by Afro-communal ethics to benefit everyone.

The juxtaposition by Metz of the capitalist economic system and the communal economy is problematic as the communal economy can exist as the soil for benefiting capitalism. The African communal economy will be undermined by the ferocious capitalist appetite to accumulate value. If we look at the relationship between capitalism and the non-capitalist economic structure from Luxemburg's lenses, then it is implausible for Metz to conceive relational economics that seeks to reconcile capitalism with a communal economy. The two cannot have mutual coexistence. The communal economy can only be the soil for capitalist super-exploitation.

Also, primitive accumulation is another ineradicable feature of the global capitalist economic system that makes it incompatible with the African communal economy. Luxemburg (2003), David Harvey (2003), Patrick Bond (2019), and Samir Amin (1990) concur that primitive accumulation is a permanent and intrinsic feature of the global capitalist system. Primitive accumulation involved the formation of huge capital stock that is concentrated in a few individuals from the West from slavery, and the looting of wealth from the extraction of natural resources during the colonial era (MOYO, JHA, & YEROS 2013). Such primitive accumulation is a permanent feature of capitalism as there is ongoing green imperialism that is associated with the looting of wealth from the extraction of low-carbon natural resources in Africa. If capitalism exists, then primitive accumulation continues to concentrate wealth and capital in a few hands, mostly in the West and emerging economies. Also, if there is primitive accumulation then there is capitalist looting of wealth from the extraction of natural resources by foreign multinational corporations in Africa. Primitive accumulation undermines the domestic formation of capital in Africa, industrialization, and prospects for community sovereign development.

Also, one can contend that Metz is using African communal ethics to limit primitive accumulation that is associated with the looting of wealth from the extraction of natural resources in African countries. Metz conceives a communal economy that is associated with the community control of the accumulation of wealth from the extraction of natural resources. Such a communal economy transfers and reserves ownership of natural resources to the community. There is the view that resource-rich countries such as Norway, Russia, Australia, and Canada develop by controlling the accumulation of wealth from their natural resources (BOND 2019). The home-based industries controlled by the local bourgeoisie or state enterprises control accumulation from the extraction of natural resources. This enables reinvestments of profits (BOND 2019). However, in Africa, the accumulation of wealth from natural resources is controlled by foreign multinational corporations that repatriate profits. Metz's attempt to constitute communal ownership of natural resources counters primitive imperialism that is associated with the transfer of value by foreign multinational corporations to the Global North. However, Metz's attempt at constituting sovereign communal control of accumulation, in addition to control of natural resources, requires control of technology, control of surplus formation, control of markets, and the

control of the reproduction of labour. I have argued that African countries lack the capital and industrial technology to promote national sovereign accumulation of wealth from the exploitation of their natural resources.

From the foregoing discussion, the global capitalist system has an intrinsic irredeemable fault associated with cannibalism of the non-capitalist sphere and primitive accumulation. Such orientation of the global capitalist system fundamentally conflicts with the orientation of promotion of welfare and life that is associated with African communal ethics. Such fundamental tension shows that it is problematic for Metz's relational economics to reconcile African communal ethics and the global capitalist system. It is the global capitalist system that undermines the capacity of African countries to constitute communal sovereign control of accumulation. If it is the global capitalist system that undermines sovereign control of accumulation, then the solution should be the liquidation of the global capitalist system.

The global capitalist system has intrinsic and inseparable faults associated with primitive accumulation (LUXEMBURG 2003), exploitation of the periphery by the center (AMIN 1990), and the production of surplus population (YATES 2011), which cause underdevelopment and poverty. Marxist scholars propose a revolutionary remedy that liquidates the capitalist system and constructs a socialist world order. Questions have been raised about the possibility of the emergence of a global class alliance of peasants and poor workers that can overhaul the global capitalist system. However, the raising of questions about the practicability of revolutionary remedies should not divert attention from the intrinsic structural problems of the global capitalist system that pertain to imperialism, primitive accumulation, the transfer of value from the periphery to the center, and the creation of a permanent superfluous population. We should separate the problems of the practicability of revolutionary remedies from the issue of the limitations of Metz's reformist relational economics. The limitations include failure to provide remedies to the above-mentioned intrinsic structural flaws of the global capitalist system.

## **Conclusion**

This study has shown that Metz's reformist relational economics uses African communal ethics to promote fair incorporation of African countries in the global capitalist system. However, Metz's relational economics fails to provide remedies to the intrinsic structural faults of the global capitalist system. Such faults include imperialism, primitive accumulation, the creation of a permanent surplus population, and the relationship of unequal exchange that transfers value from the Global South to the Global North. Such a global capitalist system that is plagued by intrinsic structural flaws that cause underdevelopment and poverty in the Global South should be abolished. Future research should focus on how African communal ethics can be used to reconfigure a non-capitalist global economic system that promotes the welfare and prosperity of all human beings.

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