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Aliyu Abdullahi Jibia

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Fulfulde, Globalization and the Future of Mankind

Aliyu Abdullahi Jibia, PhD

Department of Political Science, Bayero University, Kano, P.M.B. 3011, BUK, Kano, Nigeria.

E-mail: mizbauhameed2010@gmail.com

Abstract

Pulaako, to put it mildly is the philosophy or innate values that lie at the bottom of the Fulani way of life. If the Fulani racial group has a cardinal principle governing their existence in life, then pulaako is indeed that principle. It is an in-born, almost internalized value system which is part and parcel of the Fulani social existence. A Fulbe bereft of Pulaako, is no different from KADO (a total non-fulani, almost antithetical to anything Fulbe). It is in the light of this that the paper seeks to explain the seven principles, underlying the philosophy of Pulaako, especially as entrenched in the living culture of the average Fulani community. The belief, indeed adherence to the ethics of Pulaako by the average Fulani is largely what determines the “fulbeness,” the true personality of the average Fulani individual, be that male or female, rich or poor; of high or low birth.

Keywords: Fulfulde, Pulaako, Globalisation, Mankind

Introduction

Humanity has witnessed tremendous changes within a spell of less than 150 years. The twentieth and of course the twenty first centuries have recorded great achievements thanks to giant strides and of course great advances in science and technology. Of no mean advantage, are successes so far recorded in information technology and in the field of medicine, such as, the eradication of killer diseases, cure for serious, often contagious sicknesses and vast advances in the invention and production of state-of-the-art medical facilities.

In the field of transportation just as in communication, mankind has recorded remarkable successes on land, sea and air. Despite these successes, however, man, is yet to achieve his optimum. No less than a billion people are hungry. About double the number does not have portable drinking water? Less than 100 individuals own more than 2/3 of the wealth of the world. Far more serious, peace, an essential element in human development has continued to elude man.

This paper attempts to assess the myriad meanings often accorded to the term, “globalization” and finally settles on what I prefer to call as a layman’s interpretation of this, nebulous phenomena that belies a single, consistently acceptable definition. I arrive at this understanding in view of the visible footprints of globalization’s unmistakable features in the living condition of societies in the developing world.

The paper argues that, globalization is nothing short of direct expansion of capitalism for continuous maximization of profit at the expense of poor, hungry nations that are being exploited, left, right and centre. In reality, therefore, globalization, as a process, is part of a continuum of exploitation, began as it were, several centuries ago: exploration-slavery-colonialism-imperialism-neo-colonialism-globalization. The inhuman nature of this continuum makes it imperative to search for a way out. It is in this vein that Pulaaku, the living ideology and lifestyle of the Fulani race, has an important role to play, especially in our morally-bereft world that is gradually losing its humanity.

Understanding Globalization

Globalization is currently taking the centre stage of the international system. It is now a ready-made terminology to explain away the complexities of the current world order. The emerging reality as posited by globalization, has tended to knock down such age-old concepts as the nation-state system, East-West bipolarity, Left/Right, progressive/conservative clichés.

The collapse of the Berlin Wall, the fall of the Soviet Union, the demise of bi-polarity, these and all, have melted down all ill- feelings and antagonisms between hitherto “mortal enemies”, (Capitalism/Communism); bringing forth in its stead a strong, united and galvanized force marching furiously to envelope the world as a super culture towards a common destiny, devoid of territoriality, as a global village.

Yesterday, the enemy was the Communist Eastern bloc, the Russian bear, which needed to be contained via an Iron Curtain. But with the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the tensed relationship suddenly changed. The resources of the world located in remote corners of the developing world are enormous; and the developed world, having exhausted its own, and hungry to feed its industrial machines, saw the fervent need to unite, marshal in full force in order to reap the booty.

These resources are translatable into goods and services. These enormous resources are very much available only to be harnessed. Then, why the rivalry, the petty squabbles over trivial issues that often lead to war of words or direct physical combat? Trade in goods and services; often made possible through mass production, under a common market, governed by codified rules and regulations, that and all would prove the caveat to suit the insatiable, powerful nations of the world. This element and, perhaps many more, made the Cold War and the attendant bipolarity, rather, out of place, unnecessary and moribund. Since then, unity and unification began to feature prominently in international relations.

East and West Germany finally got united after long years of soured relations. The two Koreas aspire to unite but for the intransigence of the Northern cousin. China still covets for Taiwan. WARSAW has given way to NATO. In fact, many examples abound on the issue of unity and unification in the international system. During operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, a war fought against Saddam Hussein of Iraq (in defense of Kuwait), no less than 30 nations, in alliance with the US forces, participated in the war from 1990 to 1991. Moreover, when the Taliban became more and more intransigent after 9/11, and the US was facing serious reversals, NATO had to be drafted to continue

the fight. Now, let us explore the workings of this hydra-headed phenomenon, especially in the light of the living condition of people in the developing world, but let us start with some definitions.

What is Globalization?

Simply put, globalization is a gradual, though rapid and oftentimes, spontaneous process of narrowing the world into a global village through the power of capital, information technology, militarism, trade and democratization. It is “a rapid transformation of economic and the emergence of a single global market alongside strategies of global production”. According to Asobie, globalization is the increasing integration of the activities of human societies around the world. (Halilu 2013:26).

Tomlinson however, views it as the rapidly developing process of complex interconnections between societies, institutions and individual world-wide. (Halilu: 27). Speaking about this phenomenon, Connolly has this to say: the end of the cold war had accelerated economic globalization, population migration, tourism, and cross national cultural communication. (Halilu: 35). In a more comprehensive sense, Thomas Friedman sees globalization as “The inexorable integration of markets; nation states and technologies to a degree never witnessed before, enabling individuals, corporations and nation states to reach around the world faster, farther, deeper and cheaper.

Rosow sums it up by saying, “globalization denotes simply a resurgence of capitalism, capital ascendancy; the second coming of the wave of capitalism or the capitalist reconfiguration of the world at the end of the cold war”.

Globalization is a dynamic, all-encompassing process which is irreversible. No wonder, today, no nation-state has control over the gradual, though massive, yet imperceptible proliferation of the Jeans and T-Shirts, mushroom of satellite stations, Junk food houses, and designer fashion outfits as well as assorted models of mobile phones. No nation state, no matter how powerful its ideological stance, can stand as an island unto itself over the amorphous and galvanizing power of globalization.

Despite its absolute power and control over the destiny of its human and material resources, China has unavoidably become a casualty of globalization considering the after effects of rapid proliferation of giant industries all over the country. The consequences of these include, industrial pollution, callous degradation of nature and massive, though frightening, bastardiization of its rural settings. Day before yesterday, the Coca-Cola was foreign to China. Today, it is fully domesticated. The Coca Cola Company re entered China in 1979 and in the first 6 months it sold 1 billion bottles. In 2013, the Company expanded its investment to 4 billion dollars. Thanks to globalization, China couldn't have developed such rapidly and fast considering what it was only years before. In 1972, there were only half a dozen cars in Beijing, today China imports no less than forty thousand cars monthly.

Half a century ago, China could afford to close its doors to outsiders. Today, not only has China opened its gates to all and sundry but, it has assumed the status of a global factory for all nations. Patriotism does not only mean ones' love and commitment to one's country but also one's endeavor to enhance the economy and welfare of one's' country and citizenry. But today, cheap labour and affordable cost of production have forced patriotism to wear a new garb, thanks to the potentialities that abound in China.

Today, captains of industries from the US, France, UK, Germany without any being less patriotic, prefer to produce goods in China and ship them wholesale to countries of their domain or any place of choice. This, to say the least, is acceptable by the fundamental and unchallengeable principles of globalization.

Manifest able Features of Globalization

As we have stated above, thanks to globalization, the world today, has become a global village. The information super highway, as Ali Mazrui might have said, has created definite patterns of social relationships in which nations and individuals relate with one another.

An event may happen in one country now; seconds, it could be known in another part of the world. Minutes later, and the same event would be known the world over via air waves, cable satellites and the social media. At no time in human history, has mankind enjoyed such a myriad of privileges and infinite possibilities. Thanks to the power of the internet, money, no, capital, roams the world. Today one can buy and sell, transact in millions of dollars with people in remote corners of the world from one's bedroom.

The Internet, together with the services it provides, has made life much easier for the many that court it. No wonder, when a cargo ship at one time in the Mediterranean waters hit and cut some of the cables, a lot of reasons were advanced to explain away the mishap. At first Osama bn Laden was the first culprit to be charged. It was believed to be a calculated act of terrorism, as it placed a section of humanity in many parts of the Middle East, away from internet, mobile, ATM as well as cable satellite services for nearly three days. Later, on uncovering what actually happened, the poor Osama was exonerated.

In this simple example, the world, nay, humanity, has come to have, thanks to globalization, a common, irreversible fate; or perhaps destiny. Today, mankind seems to have a common culture, a common destiny, a common future and, take it or leave it, a common deity – globalization.

In our courtship with globalization, we have no control over what we watch (TV Station), what we listen to (air waves and mobile phones) what we eat (Junk food) or what we wear (jeans, T-Shirt or designer items or collections) and indeed what we read in the papers.

Consequences

But the tragedy of the twenty first century man is that he is entangled in the courtship with globalization wholesale without clearly being conscious of the consequences of such an affair; nor is man any aware of the true position globalization has reduced him to. Under globalization, mankind has been reduced to a mere consumer.

A consumer indeed he is, either of taste, passion or fashion. When an eatable or a drinkable product is advertised in the media (Radio, Television and or Newspapers), the appetite of taste is whetted. When nudity or pornography is displayed on television, the appetite of lust and passion is called into play. If however a designer shirt, perfume or watch is displayed, fashion is at play. Simply put, man has been reduced to a mere consumer – either of taste, passion or fashion. It is in this bondage that he has been confined to, hardly conscious of its precariousness. Today, the vogue is to be fashionably western: Jeans & T-shirt from Levi, perfume from Givenci, watches from Swiss and news from Reuters or International Press.

The Vehicles of Globalisation

Globalization is the user-manual of Western civilization. It is the means through which Western values are propagated. That's why women, alcohol and gambling have remained to this day, the vehicle of Western civilization. But the vehicles of globalization are numerous; I would only mention a few.

a) WOMEN: the principal aim of globalization is maximization of profit. In this regard, the easiest source of making money is the woman. Is it a product to be sold directly or through advertisement, then a woman is necessary; seductive, partially dressed, oftentimes, nude and therefore, captivating and enticing. No human being is veraciously exploited by globalization as women are. Woman seems to be on call at every moment of her life; in sales promotions, in discothèques, Casinos and gambling houses, prostitutions of various sorts, car fares, aircraft fares, in fact even in arms trade.

Today, even in organized crimes, little success is recorded if women are absent. This feeble being that is made so important by many revealed scriptures, has been reduced to a chattel, a mere plaything, by globalization. Worse still, she is paid pittance in return. In the end, when old age accosted her, globalization dumps her in the dustbin of history, being an item of no commercial value, a casualty of irremediable proportion.

b) MILITARISM: This is the second manifestable feature of globalization without which, very little success is recorded. Globalization is fundamentally based on exploitation. To exploit with success, it requires force; where necessary, brutal force. With military strength and effective fire power, exploitation is limitless. To give it some measure of legitimacy, it could be done under a united platform or group, for example, The Allied powers during the two World Wars and even the two Gulf Wars, NATO, UN, Security Council etc. But exploitation is exploitation under whatever name it is done, Allied Powers or Axis of Evil. It does not matter whether it is a country or a regional organization that is involved.

c) CAPITAL: money is the catalyst of globalization. Under the guise of investment, transnational companies gain access into a country and decide its fate at any given moment; by installing puppet regimes and overthrowing legitimate ones, forceful investiture of poverty through unequal, manipulative trade deals, collusion with the ruling elites to saddle the state with unpayable, dubious loans in order to keep the citizens in perpetual bondage. Resources are exploited, treasuries burgled, nations saddled with fictitious debts and the palliatives for economic recovery given by the International Financial Institutions often tend to be ineffective and largely end up as booby traps.

In the end, economic recovery becomes, a wild geese chase; an impossibility. Conflicts, strikes of various sorts will begin to set in, giving birth to general insecurity and the state begins to engage security operatives to quell the crisis. When the populace becomes hardened and the state uses stiffer measures, International Civil liberty Organizations would begin to cry foul and criminalize the regime. As the economy grinds to a halt as chaos and massacre persist, The ICC would start coming up with charges against the leader or such prominent others of the state and the journey to FAILED STATE begins to set in.

Many developing nations were forced to adopt the Strategic Adjustment Program (SAP) mostly prepared by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Quite a number of such nations did (including Nigeria), but the consequences were disastrous to both the society and the national economy. The World Bank officials often advise such nations to take the IMF loan as an

alternative towards quick economic recovery. But in the end, such nations become ever more indebted, with stock markets collapsing and banks crashing and the economy grinding to a halt. Such disastrous consequences have a telling effect on the nation's economy. An example or two will shed some light:

Bedeveled by massive, unpaid debts and continuous public unrest due to stiffer, economic measures imposed by creditor institutions, Argentina decided to stop all loan payments. Such a recalcitrant behavior appeared worrisome to the Creditor Institutions and the need to take action against Argentina became paramount. This is necessary because, if other nations were to follow the examples of Argentina and such nations decide to form a cartel of non-paying nations, such actions could spell doom for the International Financial Institutions. But, clever as the creditor agencies were, they invited Argentina for a "chat" and the rest is now history.

d) TRADE: what is easily noticeable in trade relations is often inequality. Poor nations toil hard to produce their resources at enormous cost but in the end, it is the World Trade Organization that determines the price for such products. GATT's primary concern was to regulate trade in merchandise goods. It was the WTO that expanded the GATT agreement to include trade in services, such as international telephone service, and protections for intellectual property—that is, creative works that can be protected legally, such as sound recordings and computer programs so as to douse the menace of piracy. As a formally structured organization whose rules are legally binding on its member- states, the WTO also provides a framework for international trade law. In matters of trade disputes, members can refer to the WTO where a dispute panel composed of WTO officials serves as arbitrators. Members can appeal this panel's rulings to a WTO appellate body whose decisions are final. Disputes must be resolved within the time limits set by WTO rules. Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2009.

e) THE WORKINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM: here, two laws operate: the laws for the weak nations and the laws for the strong and powerful nations. Erring, weaker leaders always fall prey to the International Criminal Court; Samuel Doe, Charles Taylor and now Sudan's Umar Al-Bashir. Recalcitrance is punished or rewarded depending on which country is at fault. This is a double standard, and that's what characterized relations in the International system today. This could be seen in the way and manner the Jewish state of Israel violates the laws of the Security Council with impunity by infringing on the rights of helpless and defenseless Palestinians in both Gaza and the West Bank.

The powerful nations – US, UK, Germany, France, and Russia may choose to descend on any weak nation at any time in pursuit of their basic interest. Gulf War 1 and 2 are cases in point, America's constant drone attack inside Pakistan, France's presence in Mali, Central African Republic, and now, her military encampment between Cameroon and Nigerian border, are cases in point. Russia's meddling in the current Ukrainian crisis is equally worrisome. North Korea may decide at any time to conduct a missile test; such a move could be quite scary to its neighbours, but nothing could stop the former from its plan notwithstanding her neighbour's (S. Korea) close relations with the US. Were Iraq, Sudan or Afghanistan to do the same, hell could have let loose. The Security Council could have met several times over the issue; and the NATO war machines could have been hovering over their skies. This is double standard in the workings of the International system.

In conclusion, globalization may not necessarily have one or two definitions. But its colour chemistry has fervently remained manifest and clear: that it is a capitalist onslaught to attain

maximum profit through the sale of goods and services via a single market in a global village where the essential lubricants in the workings of the system are capital, militarism and democratization; and the developing countries serve as the epicentre. If globalization were an experiment in a laboratory, its architects could have been prodded with the intimidating thought of taking a French leave, take to their heels and never to come back again because of the volatility of the chemical reaction.

This is because; the rising temperature in the engine room of globalization is so scary and worrisome that the anchormen are left with the debilitating thought of abandoning all and calling it a day in view of the tumultuous and turbulent reaction of the metres on the control panel. This is because there is not much to show in the developing world's long years of courtship with globalization except chaos and confusion, injustice, insecurity, apathy, hunger, poverty, spiritual emptiness, want and of course, bleak future; elements, bequeathed to the developing nations as a result of the exploitative tendencies inherent in globalization. I wish to end this paper with the graphic portrait of this phenomenon painted by, Abu Elwa Bin Saleh:

Globalization is a one thousand- coach train, travelling at neck- breaking speed, fully loaded with lethal explosives, descending down a sloppy cliff, towards an unknown destination, without breaks. Even the very architects of Globalization, have little or no control over it. This is humanity's greatest tragedy today.

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