

Pretender to universalism: western culture in the globalising age



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Professor Ali Mazrui in his lecture entitled “ Pretender to Universalism: Western Culture in the Globalising Age”, delivered in London, England, on June 15, 2000 underscores the inevitable duty of world powers, in particular, the United States, in view of the world-wide influence of its culture and the universal impact that its values and lifestyle have on the lives and cultures of people around the globe, to formulate and faithfully implement Universal policies that will integrate the various cultural traits of the people around the globe.

Mazrui (2000) further states that the current values and beliefs of America are lacking in consistency from one historical period to the next and has not made provisions for the varying aspects of the cultures over which it pretends to exercise leadership. Furthermore he concludes that America herself has not consistently shown shining examples of adherence to what their values hold to be right. These deficiencies he terms as historical, cross-cultural and empirical relativism (Mazrui, 2000).

Mazrui (2000) gives premier importance to cross-cultural value conflicts as the main setback in the Universalism of Western leadership. To explain this, the speaker traces the historical developments that made certain cultures attain global control today. Among these cultural elements which have attained considerable influence today, he says further, the majority are from the west, the principal power being America.

In particular, America, he claims has mobilized 3 out of what he calls the engines of globalization; technology, economy and empire. The fourth, or Pax Americana, which the lecturer equates with American social, political

and religious values, has also, he says exerted its influence on youth worldwide. The overall effect being that the people of the world are becoming more and more similar, more and more Western with every passing decade (Mazrui, 2000).

The speaker then goes on to speak about how this homogeneity has led to the hegemony or leadership of the globe by the Western leaders; that in the absence of consistent policies and impartial and encompassing guidelines, this hegemony or leadership is invalid. The speaker goes on to state that as the result of globalization, certain minority cultures have left their imprint on the predominant culture of the global powers.

One of these minority cultures is Islam which has demographically affected the countries where Muslims have been allowed to enter as skilled and non-skilled workers and businessmen. He says that the Muslim population in America and other leading countries has grown so fast within the last few years that special methods have had to be created in America education for Arabic children.

The speaker also speaks of the many mosques that have been built in America. The speaker ends his talk on globalization with the note that Islam may serve to counter the hegemony of the world powers, eventually to establish the much needed Universal leadership (Mazrui, 2000)?

The lecturer then proceeds to elaborate on the instances of empirical relativism shown by American culture; the inconsistency of actions with acknowledged values. He mentions examples of foreign states who lived up to the American standards better even than the Americans did. Specifically <https://assignbuster.com/pretender-to-universalism-western-culture-in-the-globalising-age/>

the lecturer mentions African Nobel Prize Winners for Peace and African Pacifist heroes who managed to garner great gains for their respective nations.

Then the speaker moves to talk about cultural and historical relativism, citing as examples of historical relativism the laws regarding homosexuality of the past and the present. He goes on to say that what may be culturally acceptable for Americans may not be appropriate for other cultures. In this respect he mentions the disintegration of traditional moralities in developing countries due to the liberal thinking absorbed from The West (Mazrui, 2000).

In conclusion, the lecturer recapitulates his stand that the challenge that the leadership of the West faces today is to make the culture that it seeks to disseminate one which transcends changes in time and makes allowances for the cultural differences of the countries it seeks to control...A Universal culture.

He ends with the optimistic encouraging note the West has indeed made some initiatives in that direction besides establishing and encouraging a political climate that allows pursuit of this Universal culture. What is implied is that more effort should be exerted to attain to this Universal culture (Mazrui, 2000).

References

Mazuri, Ali A. (2000). Pretender to Universalism: Western Culture in the Globalising Age. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 2001.