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Section: WD-401

(1) What is the secularization movement? Do you think religion will decline because of globalization?

The secularization movement is a sociological theory that suggests that as societies become more modernized, religious power and the relevance of belief systems will subside before the scientific advancement and justification. Historically, it implied that what was considered to be the sacred would be overtaken by the non-religious, where faith was no longer shared as a common guiding principle, but an individualized and personal whim.

According to the statistics given by the Pew Research Center and the analysis of LSE, I do not think that religion will fade away due to globalization; it is only being redefined. Although some countries in Western Europe have experienced an increase in the non-affiliation of religion, the Pew Research Center indicates that the number of religions across the world is increasing, especially in the Global South. Globalization offers the technology and infrastructure with which religions can expand even beyond their traditional boundaries. Globalization has not caused death in faith, but it has resulted in the development of a global religious market, where the choice to believe or not is an active one.

According to researchers of LSE, when globalization takes its toll, it often provokes a so-called reactive religiosity, as people feel their locality being threatened by the unitary global culture, they tend to go back to religion as a major source of identity and opposition. Religion is not fading away, it is just turning more visible as a globalized political and social power.

(2) Explain how globalization affects religious practices and beliefs.

The two significant processes that transform religion are displacement and heightened diversity resulting from globalization. The MDPI Journal of Religions supports the notion that globalization has severed religion from certain geographic areas in terms of such entities as territories. This implies that a religion is no longer perceived as a product of its location, such that someone in London can be a Zen supporter by using a digital application, and an African Pentecostal can flourish in an urban centre in South America. This generates the existence of "transnational" religious identities in which the location of worship of a religion is no longer a nation-state, but an international web of followers.

Moreover, beliefs are influenced by globalization, which promotes cultural diversity and fusion. With the information flowing freely, people get exposed to what is referred to as a supermarket of ideas. This may bring syncretism, where believers mix up aspects of other religions and come up with their own individual spirituality. Yet, according to this exposure, religious fundamentalism can also be a consequence of this exposure, as reported by the LSE Religion and Global Society blog. In encountering the diverse world, which appears to challenge the so-called traditional values, there are groups of people who turn to a more strict and literal meaning of their texts in order to preserve moral limits. Finally, the traditions of religion as an inherited community have been turned into a highly mobile, digital, and typically politicized global identity by globalization.

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