

Globalization and Religion The Emergence of Fundamental Movements

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ABSTRACT Globalization broadly refers to the condition of complex connectivity evident in the world today, seen in terms of both the compression of the world and the intensification of global consciousness. Some theorists hold that Globalization has been occurring throughout history, only its form has changed over the different historical periods. Sociologists of the classical period had identified globalizing solvents in terms of capitalist commodification (Marx), differentiation (Durkheim) and rationalization (Weber). In contemporary sociological theory, Globalization is seen largely through the mediating category of Modernity (Robertson, Giddens, Wallerstein). Religion has played a significant role in the process of Globalization, initially through the expansion of the world religions of Islam and Christianity, and later through the secularization processes in Protestantism. Recent developments are however challenging the secularization thesis. What is instead being observed is the resurgence of religion in terms of what are being generally called Fundamentalist movements. These Fundamentalist Movements can be categorized into (a) the emergence of New Religious Movements and (b) the wave of Religious Nationalist movements. Niklas Luhmann holds that the globalization of society, while structurally favouring privatization of religion, provides fertile ground for the renewed public influence of religion. What is the future role of religion in society?