Religion and Globalization

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Abstract: *Muslims in the recent years have to take various approaches regarding globalization and fundamentalism. The present article tries to declare true familiarity with religion can help to face these issues logically.*

Keywords*: religion, globalization, fundamentalism*

While in the last 2-3 decades globalization was not very common in the public talks, and its use was restricted to specialized debates in certain courses of social sciences, the term has reached the status of a worldwide frequently used term, by which a wide variety of people in most regions of the globe, mean a great many different, and sometimes, contradictory things. We are accustomed to hear about the age of globalization as a way to describe our time. Globalization, is about everything, and everything has something to do with globalization. It is perhaps surprising that religion has been *comparatively* neglected in the many debates and vast literature on the topic; at least in the sense that religion does not seem to be about globalization, nor globalization about religion!

The people who speak from religious perspectives and with religious motivations are interested and represented in globalization discussions, but for the most part their voices address the effects of globalization and how religion should respond to globalization. Religion, seems, is

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looking at globalization as problem or potential problem!

There are exceptions to this pattern. Many authors contributing to this volume; who have written about religion , as an integral aspect of globalization. The literature in this regard is now increasing significantly. Indeed, this volume may be one symptom of the changing situation. Nonetheless, during the two, three decades that globalization has risen to current status, religion as irrelevant or as outsider to whatever globalization might has been, the prevailing orientation, with one exception: **fundamentalism**.

Although here is not a place to provide a detailed justification, it is entirely arguable that the rise of globalization discussions—which in their early social scientific and business forms began roughly, and with various antecedents, in the early 1980s- coincided with the rise of religious movements marked as fundamentalists. The New Christian groups in the United States are top ones in the 1980s. Thus fundamentalisms have indeed been part of many contributions to globalization debates that had ignored religion.

Of significance in that inclusion, is that the word fundamentalism carries a kind of exclusionary and pejorative denotation of something that is problematic, negative, and currently misleading, one needs to account. Religion, even when it is included as a symptom or a dimension of globalization, seems to be something that does not belong or it is against, and thus is basically outside the circle.

In this issue, none of the articles is directly, about globalization or fundamentalism. The topic came up as I thought about the current issues of religion, globalization, and the events in our region. The reasons for this absence are that analyses of movements and developments often labeled as fundamentalist can easily be found elsewhere; there is no need to repeat them here. A weightier reason is that religion is implicated in the processes of globalization, in far more complex and multi-dimensional ways, than a relatively simple concept like fundamentalism can possibly convey. Indeed, a focus on fundamentalism would probably only serve to continue to obscure that complexity, even though the facet which it emphasizes, the implication of the religious in the political, is without question one of the important questions in the globalization/religion relation. The contested meaning of globalization constitutes another aspect of its complexity. This takes the shape of a continuous denial of its existence, or an analytical possibility in terms of globalization. This forms contested concepts in the social scientific study of religion, such as secularization, lived religion, and deinstitutionalization, to render ‘religion and globalization’, a complex field of study.

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The articulation of religion with globalization, requires a variety of approaches that cannot be reduced to only one or two indicative developments, dominant trends or organizing factors such as, fundamentalism, secularization resistance, de-institutionalization, or westernization.

Thus in the future issues we will focus on the religious character of globalization processes, ideas of religion in the contemporary context, the delimitation of religion in globalization involves, various issues concerning institutional or conventional religion in the context of globalization, historical changes that have brought us to our contemporary globalized situation , the question of religion and globalization in terms of various specific themes, including environmental concerns, religion-government relations, trans – continental migrations, social marginalization , and oppositions and opponents to globalization .

There are, however, some selective more topics, such as war/violence, women, environment, religion-economy relations; and many other regional issues, among others. We will also pay attention to the places where Muslims reside as minorities such as Canada, the United States, Australia, and China as empirical reference, or the views of other peoples to the Islamic thoughts, or the Islamic communities.

Our strategy for addressing the questions of the ways that religion is an integral aspect of globalization has thus been multi-dimensional. I have done this in particular on Islam and Christianity.

The reason is that contemporary globalization is the outcome of a long historical process that includes the history of European and the Western projection of its power around the entire globe; so it should not be surprising that the dominant religion of these Westerners,

Christianity, has been an integral part of this study. The Christian religion reformed and expanded geographically not only along with Western expansions, but more critically as a part of that expansions! That fact alone makes it almost inevitable that it will play a salient role in the majority of analyses centering on the relation between religion and globalization.

We have put emphasis on the role of religion in globalization, but not to the point of ignoring other factors. Still, there are other stories that need to be told, from the perspective of different issues, regions and religions. What we will present here is a concerted attempt at address a

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number of the possibilities, and doing so with a variety of strategies.

We hope to allow the reader to appreciate how to understand religion or globalization in today's world. Like capitalism and the nation-state, religion and religious attitudes are integral aspects of what we mean by globalization from its inception, wherever and whenever this is located.

About the author:

Abduldjavad Falaturi (1926–1996) (Persian : □□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□) was a German scholar of Iranian origin.

He studied Islam (theology, sharia,) in Iran , up to the highest possible level, before going to Germany where he studied philosophy (up to Ph.d.) He has also written several other official publications (together with Udo Tworuschka) for education in Germany on Islamic theology (initially "Der Islam im Unterricht. Beiträge zur interkulturellen Erziehung in Europa", in: *Beilage zu den Studien zur Internationalen Schulbuchforschung, Braunschweig* : Georg-Eckert-Institute, 1992.)

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