

Faith in Flux: Exploring Religion's Role in a Globalized World

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Abstract: This article examines the dynamics of religion in the era of globalization based on perspectives outlined in the book *Living Religions* by Mary Pat Fisher and Robin Rinehart. Globalization has significantly influenced the practice and role of religion in modern society. On one hand, globalization creates opportunities for religious pluralism, cross-cultural dialogue, and the dissemination of universal values. On the other hand, it also presents challenges such as radicalization, interfaith conflicts, and the process of secularization. Using a descriptive-analytical approach, this article explores how religion functions as both an element of cultural and spiritual identity and a force for social transformation within an ever-changing global landscape. It also discusses the interaction between religion and politics, the role of religion in conflict resolution, and the importance of interfaith dialogue amidst technological advancements. The analysis reveals that religion remains relevant as a means of providing meaning and stability in the globalization era. Moreover, religion holds great potential to serve as a bridge for fostering harmony amidst diversity. *Living Religions* offers comprehensive insights into how religions adapt to global changes while maintaining the core values of each tradition.

Keywords: globalization; horizontal conflict; living religions; religion; religious pluralism.

1. Introduction

Globalization has had a significant impact on various aspects of human life, including religion. In this era, the world is becoming increasingly connected through advances in technology, communication and human mobility which enable intensive cross-cultural and religious interactions (Rahmawati et al., 2022). This creates new space for interreligious dialogue, the spread of universal values, and the enrichment of spiritual traditions. However, globalization also poses major challenges, such as the emergence of religious conflicts, radicalization, and secularization processes that threaten religious traditions in various communities. This phenomenon makes religion a global issue that continues to be in the spotlight in international social, political and cultural dynamics (P. Beyer, 1994).

In an international context, religion not only functions as a spiritual aspect but also as an element of identity that influences relations between nations (Fakhrurrazi et al., 2021). Several international conflicts, such as tensions in the Middle East, religious discrimination in Myanmar, and religion-based violence in India, show how religion can be both a trigger and a solution in efforts to create world peace (Damayanti et al., 2022). On the other hand, the phenomenon of global migration and religious diaspora has expanded the spread of religious values, creating a more complex pluralism in multicultural societies. This challenge requires a more inclusive and dialogical approach to understanding the role of religion in the changing global landscape (Juergensmeyer, 2011).

The 21st century presents new challenges for unique and complex religions, many of which are related to globalization (Achruh & Sukirman, 2024). Globalization has brought the world

community into a network that is increasingly connected through technology, economics and human mobility across geographical and cultural boundaries (Sanmee, 2024). However, this process does not only involve the exchange of information and products; it also includes the spread of values, ideologies, and beliefs previously limited to local contexts. In an increasingly pluralistic and dynamic world, religions face fundamental questions about their role and relevance amidst a global culture that is increasingly homogeneous, secular and influenced by modernity.

Mary Pat Fisher, in her book *Living Religions*, explores how the world's major religions are responding to this challenge. In Chapter 13, "Religion in the Twenty-First Century," Fisher provides an in-depth analysis of the changes religion is experiencing in the era of globalization (M. P. Fisher, 1999). He outlines how religions that were once bound by regional boundaries are now spread globally, experiencing significant adaptation in modern cultural, political and technological contexts. On the one hand, globalization provides great opportunities for religions to reach new audiences through digital media, international travel, and diaspora communities. On the other hand, globalization also introduces new challenges that often question the authority, authenticity and relevance of traditional values promoted by these religions (M. P. Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

Fisher highlights the phenomenon of religious pluralism, which is increasing along with the globalization process. Societies that were once dominated by one faith now have easy access to a variety of religions and spiritualities from around the world (Kurien, 2022). This situation paves the way for inter-religious interaction, inter-faith dialogue, and in some cases, also conflict and friction between followers of different religions. Fisher also notes that globalization has not only influenced traditional religions but also facilitated the emergence of new spiritual movements that offer alternative answers to existential questions in the context of a rapidly changing world (M. P. Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

Several previous studies also discussed this, such as research conducted by Beyer (1994) in *Religion and Globalization* explores how globalization influences the transformation of religion, both in the form of institutions and religious practices. Beyer explained that globalization has changed religion to be more personal and individual, with a focus on spirituality rather than dogma (P. Beyer, 2003). This concept is relevant to the inner view *Living Religion*, which highlights the diversity of religious experience in a global context (P. Beyer, 1994). Other research also conducted by Berger (1999) in *The Desecularization of the World* shows that globalization does not always cause secularization but also increases religious pluralism (Berger, 1999). This research highlights how various religious traditions remain relevant in the modern era, despite the challenges of cultural homogenization. This finding is in line with *Living Religion*, which celebrates the diversity of religious traditions and practices (Berger, 1999).

Apart from that, research by Campbell and Tsuria (2016) in *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media* discusses how the digital era creates new space for religion to develop (Campbell & Tsuria, 2016). Technology allows religions to reach global audiences through media platforms, creating new dynamics in religious practice. This perspective supports the inner view of *Living Religion* about how religion can adapt in the era of globalization through media innovation (Campbell & Evolvi, 2020).

The similarities between this research and previous research can be seen in that they both discuss how globalization influences religious transformation. Beyer's article and this article agree that globalization has brought significant changes to religious institutions and practices, both in the form of more individualized spirituality and a shift in focus from dogma to religious experience (Beyer, 2024).

Apart from that, Barger's article with this research also shows that globalization increases religious pluralism and maintains the relevance of various religious traditions. Same as in *Living Religion*, Berger's research highlights how diverse religious traditions persist and even

thrive amidst the challenges of cultural homogenization brought about by globalization (Berger, 1999).

Both this article and previous research highlight the role of religion as an important social force in the era of globalization. Beyer and Berger both discuss how religion not only functions as a spiritual means, but also as a tool for creating social identity, solidarity and harmony in an ever-changing world. This article expands this discussion by connecting it to the contemporary global landscape examined in *Living Religion*.

Meanwhile, the difference between this research and other research is that Beyer's research places more emphasis on the transformation of religion to become more personal and spiritual as a response to globalization. Meanwhile, the article *Dynamics of Religion in the Era of Globalization* also discusses how religion is not only a personal aspect but also continues to function as a collective element in creating social harmony and cross-tradition dialogue in a plural society.

Berger's research focuses on desecularization, namely a phenomenon where globalization does not always lead to a reduction in the role of religion but instead strengthens the relevance of religion in the modern era. This article, although recognizing desecularization, also raises the challenges of globalization, such as the process of secularization that occurs simultaneously with religious pluralism, which is an important aspect of religious dynamics in the era of globalization (Berger, 1999).

This article uses a perspective taken from the book *Living Religion*, which highlights the experiences of individuals and communities in a variety of religious traditions. This approach provides a practical and contextual dimension that is not explicitly discussed in Beyer or Berger's research, which focuses more on globalization theory and religion in general.

In this article, we will examine Mary Pat Fisher's thoughts on how religions around the world respond to the challenges and opportunities that arise as a result of globalization. This article will also discuss how globalization is changing religious practices, creating opportunities for interfaith dialogue, and triggering shifts in religious power and authority structures. This article aims to understand the relevance of religion in an increasingly secular world, as well as traditional beliefs in maintaining their essence amidst the currents of modernity and pluralism. It is hoped that this article can provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics of religion in the era of globalization, as explained by Mary Pat Fisher in *Living Religions*.

2. Method

This research uses a qualitative-descriptive approach, which aims to explore an in-depth understanding of religious concepts in the context of globalization (Creswell, 2014). This approach is suitable for analyzing the meaning and interpretation of religion as described by Fisher and Rinehart in the book *Living Religion* (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b). This method was chosen because it allows the author to explore in-depth texts related to religious phenomena in diverse global contexts, as explained in the book.

The first step in this research was to conduct an in-depth literature study of the work *Living Religion*, especially the section discussing the impact of globalization on religion and religious practice. After reviewing the literature, this research uses thematic analysis to identify and categorize main themes related to the dynamics of religion in the era of globalization, such as religious pluralism, secularization, changes in religious rituals, and interreligious interactions. The next step is contextual interpretation of the categorized findings. As an additional step, this research might conduct a comparative study of Fisher and Rinehart's views with other theories from experts who discuss religion and globalization. It is hoped that this comparison can provide a more comprehensive and critical understanding of the dynamics of religion in the modern era (Moleong, 2018).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Adapting Religion in the Face of Globalization and Technological Change

Globalization is a process of integration and interaction among nations, driven by advancements in technology, economics, and culture. This phenomenon has created opportunities for religions to adapt to new global conditions, but it also poses significant challenges, including cultural homogenization and a decline in the authority of traditional religious institutions (Robertson, 1992). Rather than being marginalized, religion in the era of globalization finds renewed significance as it interacts with pluralism and cross-cultural religious traditions. Berger (1999) highlights that globalization not only fosters secularization but also revitalizes religion by enabling pluralism and the exchange of spiritual values across cultures (Berger, 1999). This dual impact underscores religion's vital role in responding to modernity's challenges and providing meaning amidst social transformations.

Religious pluralism, a hallmark of globalization, underscores the growing dialogue and interaction among diverse faiths. As Fisher and Rinehart argue in *Living Religion*, pluralism is not merely a reflection of diversity but a call for deeper interfaith engagement (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017a). Similarly, Cox (2000) emphasizes that religious communities must embrace pluralism through dialogue and an openness to diversity, fostering mutual understanding and the enrichment of universal values (Cox & Rowlands, 2000). Such interactions not only promote learning across traditions but also contribute to a shared vision of global harmony.

The modern era has also seen the evolution of spirituality beyond institutional religion. Individuals increasingly adopt personal spiritual practices, often leveraging digital technologies. Fisher and Rinehart note that globalization enables personalized spiritual journeys, where technology serves as a facilitator (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b). Lynch (2016) echoes this sentiment, highlighting how digital platforms provide new avenues for spiritual expression, transcending geographical boundaries (Lynch & Mannion, 2016). These platforms foster global communities centered around universal values like peace, justice, and harmony, reflecting the shifting contours of spirituality in the digital age.

The digital era has further revolutionized religious practices. Social media, religious apps, and live-streamed worship services exemplify how technology is reshaping the way people engage with their faith (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017a). Campbell (2016), in *Digital Religion*, identifies technology as not merely a communication tool but a new sacred space where religion adapts and thrives. This transformation demonstrates the resilience and flexibility of religious practices in responding to globalization's rapid advancements (Campbell & Tsuria, 2016).

Despite these opportunities, globalization also challenges religious traditions. Cultural homogenization and identity crises are pressing concerns, as Fisher and Rinehart caution that religions must balance integrating universal values with preserving local cultural uniqueness (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017a). Asad (2003), in *Formations of the Secular*, critiques the pressures of modernity, which often push religions to conform to secular frameworks, risking a dilution of their authority and authenticity (Asad, 2003).

Globalization and technological advancements have brought profound changes to the dynamics of religion (Abbas & Shamim, 2023). While these forces challenge traditional structures, they also offer opportunities for adaptation and growth. The interplay between pluralism, technology, and spirituality illustrates how religion can remain relevant in a rapidly changing world (Mohiuddin, 2023). As explored in *Living Religion* by Fisher and Rinehart, cross-cultural dialogue, technological integration, and a commitment to diversity are crucial for religious traditions to sustain their influence and meaning in the globalized era.

3.2. Globalization and Religion in the 21st Century

Chapter 13 of the book *Living Religions* by Mary Pat Fisher's work entitled "Religion in the Twenty-First Century" presents a comprehensive review of the role of religion in the context of the continuously developing modern world. In this chapter, Fisher critically examines how

religion adapts and interacts with the social, cultural, and political changes occurring in the 21st century. Religion, which for centuries has been one of the main forces in shaping human identity and life, is now facing new challenges from globalization, secularism, pluralism, and various technological and cultural changes (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

Fisher begins the chapter by recognizing that religion remains an important element in the lives of many people around the world, even though the modern world seems to be leaning more toward secularization (Fisher-Høyrem, 2022). Major religions such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism continue to play a significant role in guiding the moral and spiritual lives of millions of people (Fisher, 2024). However, Fisher also highlights that the way people experience religion and participate in religious practices has changed drastically in the 21st century. These changes are largely driven by the phenomena of globalization, mass migration, technological advances, and increasing intercultural interactions that bring together various religious traditions.

One of the very important topics in this chapter is how globalization has brought religions into closer and more complex contact (Bosio & Olssen, 2023). Fisher argues that globalization has not only accelerated the spread of major religions throughout the world but has also created deeper cross-cultural interactions that often challenge traditional understandings of religious belief. For example, spiritual concepts from the East, such as Buddhist meditation and Hindu yoga, have been widely adopted in the Western world. On the other hand, Western religions such as Christianity and Islam are also increasingly penetrating Asian and African regions. In this process, religions not only adapt to new contexts but also engage in dynamic dialogue with existing local cultures (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

In the context of globalization, Fisher explains that religion is experiencing two sides of impact: on the one hand, major religions such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism have spread more widely and become global; On the other hand, globalization also creates space for the emergence of new spiritual movements and more fluid interfaith approaches (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b). Globalization not only facilitates the spread of religion to wider geographic areas, but also creates intensive interactions between various cultures and religious traditions, which often bring new challenges and opportunities for religious practice (Turner, 2001).

Globalization allows religious communities from all over the world to more easily connect with each other. Communication technologies, such as the internet and social media, enable the rapid dissemination of religious information and allow individuals from different parts of the world to learn about religions that were previously beyond their reach (Hasan & Putri, 2021). This means that religious influence is no longer limited by geographical boundaries. For example, spiritual practices such as Buddhist meditation or Hindu yoga, which were previously concentrated in Asia, have now been widely adopted by people in the West. Likewise, Western religions such as Christianity have also found new audiences in Asia, Africa and Latin America (Sheikh Khairudin & Mohammad, 2021).

Fisher highlights that through globalization, religions often engage in what he calls "cross-cultural dialogue." This creates opportunities for people of different religions to exchange views and learn from each other, but it can also give rise to friction and tension when different religious teachings meet in the same social context (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b). In this case, globalization can be a bridge connecting various religious traditions, but it can also become a battleground for ideological supremacy or a stronger religious identity (Özpinar, 2024).

One of the clearest impacts of globalization on religion is how it functions as a means of spreading religion beyond its home religion (Adegboyega et al., 2021). Fisher notes that world religions, which previously developed in different cultural and geographic contexts, now increasingly come into contact with one another. The process of global migration and the growth of diasporic communities has accelerated the spread of major religions to regions that previously had little exposure to these teachings (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

For example, Muslim communities in Western countries are growing as a result of global

migration, and Christian communities from South America and Africa now have a growing influence in Europe and North America (Stockemer & Moreau, 2021). Hindu, Buddhist and Sikh communities have also grown rapidly in Western countries as a result of population migration from India, Nepal, Tibet and other Asian countries (Hermawan et al., 2024). With globalization, these religions not only appear in new territories but also often bring with them traditions, practices, and rituals that influence local culture.

However, Fisher also highlights that globalization does not only spread religion physically. Globalization also allows religion to exist in more symbolic forms through mass media, films, literature and music (Sutrisno, 2023). For example, films that focus on religious or spiritual themes, such as *The Passion of the Christ* or *Life of Pi*, have been successful in introducing religious concepts to a wider audience, transcending geographic and cultural boundaries (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

Globalization not only encourages the spread of religion, but also challenges religions to adapt to new realities (Sutrisno, 2023). Fisher notes that in an increasingly global and plural world, religions often have to confront new issues that were not faced in the past. One of the biggest challenges facing religions in the era of globalization is how they can adapt to growing religious pluralism (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

This pluralism, which occurs as a result of the meeting of various religious traditions in one social space, often challenges the dominance of the majority religion in a region (Sarrazin & Redondo, 2022). In countries experiencing large migration flows, the majority religion often has to learn to coexist with previously foreign religious traditions. For example, Western countries dominated by Christianity now have to deal with increasing numbers of Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists as a result of immigration. This creates new challenges for state policy and interfaith relations (Reus-Smit, 2021).

In this context, Fisher notes that major religions often face a dilemma: whether to adapt their teachings and practices to be more inclusive of other traditions, or to assert their identity to maintain their influence and authority (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b). Some religious groups have responded by becoming more exclusive, reaffirming their identities and separating themselves from too intense interfaith interactions (Khan, 2024). On the other hand, there are also interfaith and ecumenical movements that are increasingly actively involved in interreligious dialogue and cooperation, with the aim of creating peace and harmony in an increasingly religiously diverse world.

In addition, Fisher also highlights that globalization often leads to the commodification of religion, where spiritual elements are sold and consumed like other cultural products. Religion is no longer only the domain of formal religious institutions, but has also become a commodity that is marketed globally. The most obvious example of this phenomenon is the worldwide spread of New Age practices of yoga, meditation, and spirituality, which are often divorced from their religious or philosophical roots and sold as health or wellness products (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

This commodification of religion, according to Fisher, often creates ethical challenges for religious communities who feel that their spiritual traditions have been exploited and turned into commercial products (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b). In some cases, this even creates tension within the religious community itself, especially when certain elements of the religion are separated from their original context and used for very different purposes. However, the commodification of religion also shows that religion has extraordinary appeal and can adapt to global market dynamics (He, 2024).

Globalization also impacts how people understand their religious identity. Fisher explains that in an increasingly connected world, a person's religious identity is no longer static or tied to local traditions. Instead, many people now find themselves involved in more pluralist or syncretic forms of religion, in which they combine elements from various religious traditions to form their own spiritual identity (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

This phenomenon can be seen in the various new spiritual movements that have emerged in the modern era, which often mix teachings from various religious traditions. New Age spirituality, for example, combines elements from Eastern religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism with the teachings of Western mysticism and esoteric philosophy (Hidayah, 2021). Fisher notes that for many people, New Age spirituality offers an alternative to more rigid formal religions, providing the freedom to seek more personal and individual spiritual meaning (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

However, the globalization of religious identity also has a dark side. In some regions, globalization has led to the rise of religious fundamentalism, in which religious groups strengthen their identities in response to rapid social and cultural change (Al Uyun, 2017). Fisher notes that fundamentalism often arises as a reaction to feelings of uncertainty and loss of control in an increasingly plural and complex world. In this context, religion is often used as a tool to assert cultural and political identity, and sometimes triggers conflict with other religious groups (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

Overall, Fisher concludes that globalization is a double-edged sword for religion. On the one hand, globalization has opened the door to interfaith dialogue and the spread of religion throughout the world (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b). However, on the other hand, globalization also challenges religion to adapt to an increasingly plural and secular world. Fisher emphasizes that in the 21st century, religions can no longer operate in isolation, but must engage in dynamic dialogue with other traditions, and respond to the social, political and environmental challenges facing the global world (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b). The following are several important points explained by Fisher regarding the dynamics of religion in the era of globalization, namely as follows.

The *First*, in general, secularization comes from the word "secular" which has Latin roots a century. According to Lorens Bagus, secular means: 1) temporal or worldly in nature, and 2) relating to objects that are not considered sacred or are far from religious and spiritual aspects (Bagus, 1996). Thus, secular describes a state in which worldly aspects stand apart from religious influences. For a long time, religion has had a dominant role in human life, so that various state affairs are often guided by and even follow the principles of religious teachings (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

Secularism, on the other hand, is an ideology that emphasizes the rejection of sacredness and aims to eliminate the sacred nature of certain values (Nashir, 2002). The aim is to place religion in its original role, namely as fulfilling the faith and moral needs of its adherents, without disturbing the state system of life which prioritizes nationalism, diversity and freedom. According to Turner, secularization is a theory that explains the reduced authority and power of church institutions in relation to secular institutions (such as nation states) and secular beliefs (for example, natural science) (Turner, 2011).

From the start, secularization was considered a threat to religion. For some people, secularization presents challenges that reduce the role of religion in society (Karim, 1997). The power of religion which previously had an influence in state life began to be questioned. For fundamentalists, this situation not only limits the role of religion, but also has the potential to eliminate the existence and influence of religion in the world. Secularity includes several issues, such as: 1) the alienation of religion from public life, 2) the decline in belief in and application of religious values, and 3) changes in ways of believing (Taylor, 2007).

George Holyoake first defined the concept of secularism in 1846, while the idea of a secular society began to develop in the consciousness of secular society in England in the 1880s. According to Holyoake, secularism refers to a social order that is separate from religion without confusing it with religious matters (Turner, 2011). In the extreme, secularization places humans at the center of determining their own lives in this world. As stated by Banchoff, the essence of secularization is the belief that humans, with their ability to master technology and knowledge, can determine the direction of their own lives (Volf, 2007). This condition is triggered by people's

disappointment with the dominance of religion that is too strong in their lives.

Based on these various definitions, it can be concluded that the secularization of religion is a new situation as a result of developments over time and the influence of ideology, where the role of religion is gradually being shifted by the role of the state and the influence of globalization (Dhima & Golder, 2021). The aim is to maintain the autonomy of each so that there is no mixing that could damage religious and state ideals.

Another important theme discussed is secularism. Fisher explains how secularism is becoming increasingly dominant in many countries, especially in the Western world, where religion is increasingly seen as one choice of faith among many. Modern secularism allows people to live a life without attachment to any particular religion, and this has had a significant impact on traditional religious practices (Rasekh, 2023). Fisher specifically outlines the impact of secularism on religious beliefs and practices, as well as how secularism affects the relationship between religion and the state, politics, and society at large in various countries (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

In Europe, for example, many countries that once had strong ties to religion, such as Italy and France, are now experiencing drastic declines in church attendance and religious involvement in daily life (Becker et al., 2021). Fisher notes that this phenomenon occurs not only in Western countries, but also in Muslim and Hindu majority countries, where the influence of modernity and urbanization has begun to separate religion from the public sphere (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

Fisher outlines how secularism in the Western world often arises as a response to the influence of religion that was considered too dominant in the past. Countries such as France and the United States emphasize the separation of religion and state as part of the legacy of the Enlightenment (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b). This separation aims to protect individual freedom in choosing religious beliefs or no religion at all. However, Fisher also notes that secularism does not necessarily mean the removal of religion from public life. In many countries, religion remains an important factor in politics and culture, albeit in a more implicit form (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b). For example, religious values often influence public debates on moral issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage, and human rights. This shows that secularism is not the end of religious influence, but rather a change in the form of religion's role in society.

In Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist majority countries, the influence of secularism is also increasingly felt. In many countries, such as India and Indonesia, secularism is manifested in the form of religious tolerance guaranteed by the constitution (Laborde, 2021). These countries allow the practices of different religions to coexist within the framework of a secular state. However, Fisher notes that in many places, secularism often faces challenges from fundamentalist groups who reject the separation of religion and state. These groups often perceive secularism as a threat to their religious identity and demand a greater role for religion in public life (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

Second, Religious pluralism is one of the important topics highlighted by Fisher. In the modern era, with increasing migration and globalization, society has become increasingly pluralistic in terms of religion. Fisher highlights that religious pluralism offers great opportunities for interreligious dialogue, but also brings great challenges, especially in dealing with differences in doctrine and practice (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

Globalization influences religion through the mobility of ideas, traditions and people across national borders (Deininger, 2014). This opens up opportunities for religious pluralism, but also brings challenges in the form of potential inter-religious conflict due to differences in doctrine or interpretation. Berger (1999) emphasized that religious pluralism in the era of globalization is a response to the need to address the complexity of multicultural society (Berger, 1999).

Religious pluralism in the 21st century also involves increasingly active interfaith movements. This movement seeks to build dialogue and cooperation between religions to overcome complex social problems, such as poverty, climate change and political conflict

(Ebrahimi, 2023). Fisher describes how many religious organizations are now collaborating across faiths to strengthen global solidarity. An example is the Oasis of Peace community in Israel, where Jews and Palestinians live together in peace and work together to achieve common goals (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

Third, Interfaith dialogue is an approach that seeks to build understanding and harmony between followers of various religions. In the context of an increasingly diverse society, differences in beliefs often give rise to tension and conflict. Therefore, interfaith dialogue becomes very relevant as an effort to reduce prejudice, promote mutual understanding, and encourage cooperation between religious communities (Hermawan & Rahman, 2024).

Interfaith dialogue focuses on open communication and mutual listening. This not only includes discussions regarding the teachings of each religion but also highlights universal values such as peace, justice and humanity that are shared. With this approach, interfaith dialogue can become a space to defuse conflict and find solutions that benefit all parties, both on a local and global scale (Bardon et al., 2024).

In its application, interfaith dialogue has proven effective in many places in resolving various types of conflicts, ranging from social conflicts to political conflicts. By emphasizing the importance of empathy and respect for diversity, interfaith dialogue can create conditions conducive to the creation of a harmonious society. Apart from that, this dialogue can also strengthen social resilience by increasing understanding between communities of different religions (Pope & Nicolaides, 2021).

Fisher emphasized that interfaith dialogue could be a solution to reduce conflicts based on religion (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b). In many cases, interreligious conflict is caused by a lack of understanding and false stereotypes. Through open and honest dialogue, different communities can understand each other and find common ground, rather than just focusing on differences. In many countries, such as Kazakhstan, interfaith movements are encouraged by the government to promote national harmony (Elius, 2023).

However, Fisher also realizes that religious pluralism in the era of globalization does not always run smoothly. In some countries, increased interfaith interaction has actually strengthened religious boundaries and increased tensions (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b). For example, after the September 11 terrorist attacks, many religious groups hardened their identities in response to external threats. Fisher notes that in this context, religion is often used as a political tool to strengthen power and create fear of other religions (Rofiqi & Haq, 2022)

Several experts emphasize the importance of this approach. According to Hans Küng, interreligious dialogue is very important to achieve world peace because "there will be no peace among nations without peace among religions" (Kung, 1991). This opinion shows that interfaith dialogue is not only relevant for religious communities, but also for the stability of global society. John Paul Lederach, an expert in conflict resolution, also emphasizes that this approach must focus on building trust through an honest and open process so that sustainable solutions can be achieved (Lederach, 1997).

Forth, In the 21st century, the relationship between religion and politics has become increasingly complex due to globalization which accelerates interactions between nations, cultures and ideologies (Tahir & Nuri, 2024). The book *Living Religion* by Mary Pat Fisher and Robin Rinehart touches on this dynamic by underscoring how religion adapts and plays a role amidst dynamic global political change (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

In the era of globalization, religion is often used as a symbol of political identity that strengthens group solidarity. Huntington (1996) in *The Clash of Civilizations* stated that conflicts in the 21st century are more often based on cultural and religious differences than political ideology. For example, some religious-based political movements use religious values to mobilize the masses and demand policies that are in accordance with their beliefs (Huntington, 1996).

Mary Pat Fisher and Robin Rinehart in *Living Religion* highlight the role of religion in driving social and political change. Religion, through its teachings about social justice and

morality, is often a catalyst for political movements demanding structural change, such as the civil rights movement in the United States or the struggle against apartheid in South Africa (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

The 21st century is witnessing the challenge of secularization, where modern states seek to separate religion from politics. However, global trends show resistance from religious groups who view secularism as a threat to their religious identity. Casanova (1994) in *Public Religions in the Modern World* explains that religion is no longer just a private matter but has entered the public sphere to influence policies and social norms (Casanova, 1994).

One of the big challenges in the relationship between religion and politics in the 21st century is religious radicalization. Globalization facilitates the spread of extremist ideologies through digital media, which accelerates the recruitment and mobilization of radical groups. This poses challenges for global politics in dealing with issues of security, tolerance and religious freedom. Berger notes that the rise of radicalism is often a response to feelings of injustice and marginalization (Berger, 1999).

Although religion is often associated with conflict, it also has great potential as a tool for conflict resolution and peace. Fisher and Rinehart in *Living Religion* note that interfaith dialogue and cooperative efforts based on spiritual values can be a bridge for peace amidst political tensions. An example is the role of religious leaders in conflict mediation in the Middle East and Africa (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

Modern democracies often require religion to adapt to universal values such as human rights and gender equality. At the same time, religion often serves as a counterweight to political power, especially in countries where state institutions are not fully democratic. For example, in several Muslim-majority countries, Islam-based movements promote the values of justice in the political system (Hefner, 2011).

The relationship between religion and politics in the 21st century shows complex dynamics, reflecting the influence of globalization, pluralism and the challenges of secularization. The book *Living Religion* describes how religion continues to interact with politics, both as a tool of social transformation and as a force of identity, demonstrating the importance of religion in the modern global political landscape (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

Fifth, One of the dynamics of religion in the era of globalization was raised by Mary Pat Fisher in *Living Religions* is the role of religion as a political tool. Fisher warned that religion is often used as an instrument to strengthen political power and manipulate society. In many cases, religion is used as legitimacy to support certain policies, even to justify violence or oppression. This phenomenon can be seen in various conflicts in the Middle East, where religion is politicized to build a narrative of power which often leads to prolonged conflict, societal suffering, and human rights violations (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

However, Fisher also emphasized the positive side of religious involvement in politics. In modern history, many religious leaders have used their influence to fight for human values, such as peace, social justice, and the protection of human rights (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b). Figures such as Pope Francis and the Dalai Lama are examples of how religion can function as a force of positive transformation in politics (Aguilar, 2011). Pope Francis, for example, has encouraged the church to focus on global issues such as climate change, economic equality and poverty alleviation. Meanwhile, the Dalai Lama promotes the values of non-violence, tolerance and cross-cultural peace as a response to global conflict.

In the context of globalization, Fisher also shows that religion has the potential to build dialogue across traditions to create political and social harmony. Religion, when used wisely, can be a means of bridging differences and encouraging international cooperation. This is relevant to the challenges facing the world today, where inter-religious and ethnic conflicts are often a major obstacle to global stability. Fisher emphasized that dialogue and the constructive use of religion in politics can be powerful tools for creating a more just, peaceful, and inclusive world (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017b).

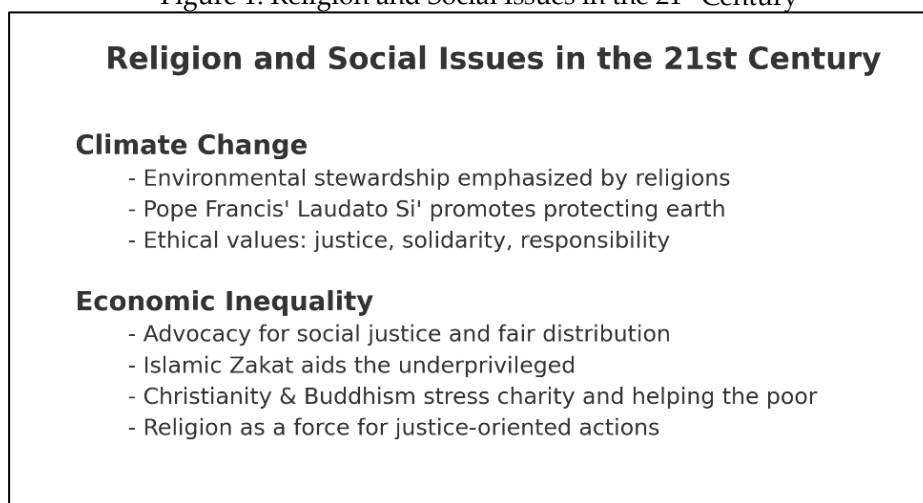
3.3. Religion and Social Issues in the 21st Century

In *Living Religion*, Fisher delves deeply into how religion continues to play a pivotal role in addressing complex social issues of the 21st century, such as climate change, materialism, economic inequality, and human rights, despite the growing tide of secularism in society. The discussion underscores religion's enduring relevance in tackling these pressing challenges and fostering moral guidance for global issues (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017a).

Regarding climate change, Fisher highlights the active stance many religious leaders have taken in advocating for environmental stewardship. Pope Francis, for instance, through his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, calls upon humanity to protect the earth as our shared home, emphasizing ethical values like justice, solidarity, and responsibility. Similarly, other religious traditions have echoed this call, underscoring the moral imperatives of environmental action and the importance of collective responsibility in preserving nature for future generations (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017a).

In addressing economic inequality, Fisher draws attention to the teachings of various religions that emphasize social justice and equitable resource distribution. For example, Islam's *zakat* serves as a tangible mechanism for wealth redistribution, aimed at supporting the less fortunate. Christian and Buddhist teachings also stress the virtues of charity and compassion, urging followers to aid the poor and marginalized. Fisher positions religion as a potential force for social transformation, encouraging adherents to act in the service of justice and equity (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017a).

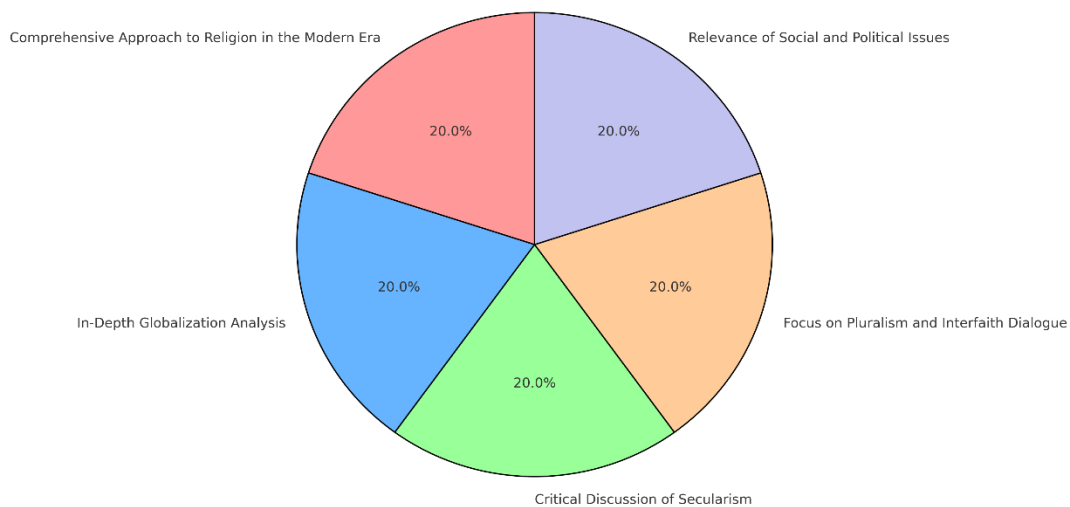
Figure 1. Religion and Social Issues in the 21st Century



Fisher's analysis in this chapter is both comprehensive and insightful, highlighting several key strengths. First, the chapter offers a thorough exploration of religion's interaction with globalization, secularism, and religious pluralism, providing readers with a nuanced understanding of religion's place in modern society. The emphasis on globalization's impact on interreligious dialogue is particularly noteworthy, illustrating how cross-cultural encounters foster mutual understanding while posing new challenges. Additionally, Fisher critically examines secularism's influence on traditional religions, exploring their responses to modernity through adaptation and identity reinforcement (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017a).

Figure 2. Key Insights in Living Religion

Advantages in Chapter 13: Summary of Key Insights



Another notable strength is the chapter's optimistic perspective on pluralism and interfaith dialogue. Fisher emphasizes the opportunities created by increased interaction among religious traditions, advocating for dialogue as a tool to promote peace and intercultural understanding. The discussion on religion's role in social and political issues—such as climate change and economic inequality—adds contemporary relevance, underscoring religion's potential to influence public policy and global justice (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017a).

However, the chapter is not without its limitations. Fisher's analysis leans heavily on examples from the Western world, offering limited perspectives from non-Western contexts. This focus risks alienating readers from regions where religion's interaction with globalization and secularism may differ significantly. Moreover, the chapter does not give adequate attention to minority or marginalized religions, nor does it sufficiently explore the conflicts or polarization that can arise from interreligious encounters (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017a).

Another shortcoming lies in the limited discussion of new spiritual movements and the role of digital technology. While traditional religions are thoroughly examined, emerging spiritualities and the transformative impact of social media and digital platforms on religious practices are largely overlooked. These elements are increasingly central to understanding religion in the digital age and warrant deeper exploration (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017a).

Fisher's exploration of religion's engagement with global challenges and modernity provides a compelling and optimistic view of how faith traditions can remain relevant and impactful in the 21st century. By addressing pressing issues like climate change, economic inequality, and interreligious dialogue, the chapter underscores the transformative potential of religion in a rapidly evolving world (Fisher & Rinehart, 2017a). However, broadening the analysis to include more diverse contexts and emerging spiritual phenomena could further enrich the narrative, offering a more holistic perspective on religion's place in contemporary society.

4. Conclusion

In *Living Religion*, Mary Pat Fisher and Robin Rinehart offer a profound exploration of the dynamic role of religion in the context of globalization. The book underscores that religion is not merely a component of cultural and spiritual identity but also plays a pivotal role in addressing the complex social, political, and economic challenges of the modern world. Globalization has opened new spaces for religious pluralism, cross-cultural exchanges, and the promotion of

universal values, while simultaneously presenting challenges such as inter-religious conflicts, radicalization, and secularization. Despite these challenges, religion remains a powerful force for helping individuals and communities find meaning and purpose in an ever-evolving global landscape. Through its engagement with pluralism, conflict resolution, and technological adaptation, religion serves as a bridge that unites diverse worldviews and traditions. Furthermore, religion plays an essential role in fostering inclusive and just social change, influencing political contexts to promote equality and fairness. Ultimately, *Living Religion* offers an insightful examination of how religion continues to adapt and stay relevant in the globalized world, proving that it remains a vital force in shaping the social, political, and cultural dynamics of the 21st century.

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