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Hybrid Social Spaces and the Individualisation of Religious Experience in the Global North: Spatial Aspects of Religiosity in Postmodern Society

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Abstract: This paper interprets the changing traits of religiosity in modern and postmodern societies from the perspective of spatial turn. The analysis examines the impact of social experience and action on spatial structure and how changes in spatial structure have influenced individual actions and experiences over the past decade, with a specific emphasis on the relationship to transcendence. The analysis explores the impact of the interaction of social spaces and actions on religiosity, in order to provide new insights into the interpretation of religious phenomena through a novel approach to the study of religion. It focuses on the consequences of individualisation, hybridisation, and globalisation, and analyses how these transformations are shaping contemporary religiosity in the global north. The paper argues that spatial structural changes are reinforcing more individualised forms of religiosity, often separated from traditional institutionalised religiosity. This gives greater scope to subject-organised 'patchwork religiosity', which inevitably reinforces a new kind of religious syncretism. The reflection unravels the spatial aspects of this transformation in a novel way.

Keywords: spatial turn; religiosity; religious experience; sacred and secular spaces; hybrid social spaces; individualisation; globalisation; transcendental meaning-making

1. Research Traditions and Theoretical Perspectives

The study of religiosity is a complex phenomenon that requires the perspectives of various disciplines. However, while researchers from diverse perspectives share a common focus on changes over time when interpreting religious phenomena, there is a lack of analysis on the role of spatiality in religious experience and how spatial structures shape religious experience. This paper applies the perspective of spatial analysis to examine changes in religiosity and religious experience over recent decades in order to gain a more nuanced picture of the characteristics of contemporary religiosity and to highlight the impact of spatiality on religion. This paper interprets the evolving characteristics of religiosity in modern and postmodern societies from the perspective of the spatial turn. On the other hand, this study analyses how changes in social experience and action affect the structure of space. In this way, the analysis explores the impact of the interaction of social spaces and actions on religiosity, in order to provide new insights into the interpretation of religious phenomena through a novel approach to the study of religion.

The paper begins by discussing the impact of the spatial turn on social scientific analysis, highlighting the potential of spatial analysis. It then examines the changes in the spatial structure of society, which have led to a more fluid structure of spaces in postmodern society, dissolving the sharply segregated spatial structure of modern society. However, the study also examines the changes in the social hierarchy that provide more room for individual interpretations of reality, rather than those defined from above. The primary focus of the analysis of this set of changes is on religiosity and religious experience. Three concepts (individualisation, hybridisation, and globalisation) are used to analyse this transformation. In doing so, the paper argues that all this is shaping more individualised

forms of religiosity, and in many cases forms of religiosity that are separated from traditional institutionalised religiosity. On the other hand, it gives greater scope for "patchwork religiosity" through the subject, which inevitably reinforces religious syncretism. The train of thought unravels the spatial aspects of this transformation in a novel way.

This social analysis emphasises the role of spaces and the impact of spaces on society. Scholars in the field have noted that social practices are inherently linked to space and that spaces play a crucial role in shaping social relations (Lefebvre 1991; Bourdieu 1985, 1991, 1992; Foucault 1980, 2006; Giddens 1985; Soja 1989, 1996, 2008; Shields 2013). Thus, the understanding of social phenomena cannot ignore the mapping of spatial relations as a factor that in many ways shapes the practice of social action itself. In this way, social spaces are the consequences of human activity, i.e., they are not merely passive imprints of social processes, but also contribute to the constitution of society. On the other hand, the novelty of the spatial turn is that it draws attention not only to the constitutive role of spaces, but also to the fact that social spaces are not absolute entities; that is, they are not absolute spaces independent of social agents, but that spatiality is socially constructed (Lefebvre 1991; Bourdieu 1985, 1991, 1992; Foucault 1980, 2006; Giddens 1985; Soja 1989, 1996, 2008; Shields 2013). Therefore, social science aims to understand and capture this interaction.

Of course, the study of the relationship between spatiality and society has implications for a wide range of disciplines and has enriched our knowledge of the constitutive role of social spaces in many ways. It is important to note, therefore, that spatial research has not only focused on the general influential role of spatiality, as has been the focus of the work of authors famous for the spatial turn. While the focus of our present review is on this perspective and its implications, we cannot refrain from referring to and addressing other aspects of spatiality research as part of our analysis. In this respect, it is important to note that research into social geography, human geography, and spatial anthropology, partly as a result of the influence of the authors of the spatial turn and partly as a result of the development of their own discipline, has developed important perspectives that are also relevant to the study of religious spaces and religious identities. In particular, these disciplines have produced new results in the analysis of territories, mobility, flows and networks. While a detailed presentation of these perspectives would require a separate analysis, the study also touches on approaches to the study of the impact of spatiality on religiosity that do not strictly belong to the mainstream of research on spatiality, such as the spatial turn. As part of this analysis, reference will be made to ethnoscape (Appadurai 1996) and cultural hybridity (Burke 2013). On the other hand, in addition to the classical authors of the spatial turn, we will also refer to the perspectives that present more recent interpretations of spatial theory, from border cultures (García Canclini 2004) to multi-sited territory (Giraut 2013) and hyper-place (Lussault 2017).

As noted above, a successful description of social relations requires keeping in mind that social processes are spatial forms, just as spaces are social processes. This perspective, which has been less prominent in the sociology of religion, but was already present in the work of Maurice Halbwachs (Halbwachs 1980, 1992), can offer a fresh approach to describing religious phenomena in contemporary times. The relationship between spaces and sociality has a significant impact on religious experiences and the creation and transformation of religious spaces. According to the spatial turn perspective, social spaces are also important for religiosity and religious experience. This is because the constitution of spaces can determine the content of religiosity, and religious practice itself contributes to the creation and alteration of spaces. In the following section, we examine the interaction between religious actions and the processes that define social (including religious) spaces. To accurately capture the main features of this interaction, we provide a brief description of the transformative process that has repositioned the place of religiosity and religious experience in society.

2. The Spaces of Modern Society and the Position of Religiosity

Religion has played a significant role in the emergence of modernity. It has been the counterpoint against which modern society has defined itself, as a sacral order and understanding of the world. Modernity has put secular values at the centre, and over time this perspective has been reflected in the structure of society (Taylor 2007). The earlier sacral perspective has been replaced by the structure of social subsystems and fields (economy, law, politics, science, education, etc.) (Luhmann 1998; Bourdieu 2013). This restructuring has fundamentally redrawn social spaces. Indeed, the autonomous spheres that emerged have represented secular values that shaped the communication of social spheres by similarly negating the transcendental-immanent distinction of the religious perspective (Luhmann 2017a, 2022). One of the main features of modernity is that it has sought to neutralise public spaces in line with the liberal model of the democratic rule of law. The rise of secular values has challenged the dominance of religious worldviews and forced them to adapt or be excluded from public discourse (Willaime 2004; Preyer 2010; Berg 2019). On the one hand, modernity has promoted an equal appreciation of religious and non-religious beliefs, but on the other hand, this seemingly neutral perspective has also meant the marginalisation of religious reasoning. Indeed, religious beliefs could only be legitimate for the public if their viewpoint had a secular basis and arguments appropriate to the discourse. Despite its ideological neutrality, a social practice has emerged that displaces the religious perspective.

This change in perspective also defines the social spaces of modernity. In a social structure defined by secular values (cf. Taylor 2007), a dichotomy of public spaces and private spaces is emerging. Of course, religious people are not excluded from public spaces, but their largely secular content determines the fundamental nature of the discourse there. In essence, individuals with religious beliefs must set aside their fundamental convictions to participate in public discourse on equal footing. The redrawing of social spaces consequently offers less space for the religious perspective to emerge, insofar as it substantially reduces its public articulation. However, the reordering of social spaces not only brings about a secular orientation of public spaces but also inevitably impacts the experience of religiosity itself.

In modernity, individuals who were previously able to assert a religious perspective in all aspects of sociality (cf. Gurevich 1985) are now confronted with the fact that their religious perspective can only be expressed in certain social contexts and may receive little or no public attention. The alteration in the spatial structure of society has also led to the privatisation of religion (Luckmann 2003). As a result of this transformation, religiosity can primarily be manifested in the private sphere of individuals. The religious perspective, deprived of its social weight or limited in this respect, is consequently characterised by new features. It no longer focuses on the social perspective but rather on the personal nature of the faith lived and the impact of religiosity on the individual's lifestyle. (It is worth noting that the nineteenth century was a period of significant change in the religious life of individuals. However, discussing this phenomenon in detail is beyond the scope of our present analysis. It is important to note that 19th-century religious literature, including works by Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard, shifted towards a focus on the individual's religious perspective in line with the aforementioned structural change. Their analysis emphasised the religious content of the lived experience rather than the social aspects of religiosity).

In any case, modernity implies a perspective that prioritises secular values and, as modernity progresses, considers them to be the primary guiding principle. This change is also reflected in the spatial structure of society, resulting in a dichotomous structure where public discourse and the private sphere are becoming more sharply separated. Habermas' dichotomous social theory (Habermas 1995) and Bryan Wilson's pioneering work on the sociology of religion (Wilson 1966, 1982) both reflect the dual structure of modernity's spaces. The novelty of Habermas' complex social theory, his theory of communicative action, was that it distinguished between the social spaces organised by modern rationality,

the systemic organisations, and the largely independent personal space of social actors, the lifeworld. While the former encompassed the social spaces of work and administration based on goal-oriented action, Habermas' concept of the lifeworld focused on intersubjectivity, describing the structure of personal relationships and their specific value systems (Habermas 2018). However, these new insights focused primarily on changes in social structure over time and did not extend the aspects of spatial analysis. This explains the criticism of Davis Harvey, who, while praising Habermas' achievement, also notes that "Habermas has [.] no conception of how spatio-temporalities and "places" are produced and how this process is integral to the process of communicative action and evaluation" (Harvey 1996, p. 354).

The constitutive role of spatiality is more pronounced in Bryan Wilson's conceptualisation, which, in addition to the temporal aspect of social structural change, also emphasises the role of spatial structural change in new forms of social experience. Wilson's theory also focuses on the changing position of religion in the discussion of the spatial structure of modernity. He distinguishes between the 'rational society' and the 'moral community' in his description of modernity. (Wilson draws partly on the work of Ferdinand Tönnies (2021) and partly on the work of Talcott Parsons (Parsons 1971)). The concept of a 'rational society' refers to the secular sphere of modernity, where production, administration, and public discourse are organised based on secular values. On the other hand, the 'moral community' refers to the lifeworld, personal relationships, and strong ties, where moral reflection is more important.

While religion is losing its influence in the public sphere, it is still predominantly found in the latter social space. Religious world views hold greater weight in what Wilson refers to as the 'moral community'. The rationality of the secular public sphere is less able to dominate in this social space, since its main focus, in accordance with the ideology of the liberal constitutional state, is on the spheres of public life, administration, and the state institutions. The personal world, which refers to the small community, offers different orientations from the public social space. Therefore, the once-primary religious worldview has a place in which its own perspective can develop more fully. In this period, privatised religiosity is not necessarily individualised, since the institutional framework of religiosity provides ample space for the experience of communal religiosity (Lenski 1963). The institutions of denominational religiosity thus perpetuate communal forms of religiosity and religious experience, since the loss of space of the church itself has not eroded this institutional structure at this time. In this context, denominational religiosity retains its role of identification in the modern era, i.e., it continues to play an important role in the self-definition of individuals and groups (Davie 2000, 2001, 2005).

Despite the decline in religious meaning-making in the public sphere, religious institutions have not experienced a sharp decline. This is related to the persistence in modernity of institutional structures that link religiosity and religious experience not only to spheres of the lifeworld but also, with the limitations discussed above, to public social spaces. In secularised public space, the spaces of institutional religiosity in the form of cathedrals, churches, and ecclesiastical institutions in central locations are still present. Although less prominent than in the past, religious institutions are still capable of facilitating communal religious experiences. The decline in religious communities' role in the secular public sphere has not abolished their successful self-constitution. They rather continue to provide, through their institutional systems, an identification that leads to a specific group membership and community consciousness for religious groups. It is therefore no coincidence that religiosity and religious experience in modernity express a community of values that is expressed through a particular relationship to values (Lenski 1963; Rokeach 1969a, 1969b). Religiousness then takes the form primarily of moral communities, with a group relationship that expresses a shared worldview and value system among group members (Schwartz and Huismans 1995).

Religiousness finds its specificity in the commitment to or orientation along religious values. Of course, religious communities constituted in this way in the social space of the

'moral community' have not renounced their representation of this value orientation in the public space of modern society. This intention is expressed not only in the sacred spaces of institutional religiosity in the secular space, but also in the modern ideology of Christian democracy. However, the liberal rule of law's secular values and the ongoing neutralisation of public spaces offer limited opportunities to achieve this. Thus, the political action of the religious community can no longer be aimed at restoring the sacred order of society, but at expressing the values of a moral community in an essentially secularised political space, which can at most restrict the content of public discourse (Davie 2000).

3. The Social Spaces of Postmodernity

The structure of modern society, with its public and private spheres, is slowly changing. The public/private structure of modernity, which essentially expressed the ethos of bourgeois society (cf. Habermas 1990; Schulze 2005), has been affected in recent decades by influences that have led to a slow dissolution of this sharp separation.

The transformation of mass media has distanced itself from bourgeois culture and increased the role of popular culture. Popular culture defines itself in opposition to the delimitation of the private–public boundary. This has played an important role in a series of multifactorial changes (Fiske 2010). In any case, the 'semiotic power of the people' has eroded or at least relativised the previous dual structure of modernity by foregrounding the public experience of private life and the various public forms of self-representation. This has offered a wider space for new forms of self-definition. However, this change has also transformed the indicators of the public sphere. The public sphere is no longer dominated by middle-class orientation and semantics that favour high culture, but by popular content that appeals to a wider range of social groups (Jameson 2012).

These changes have affected various parts of modern society. The 'semiotic power of the people' has transformed the relationship between different social spheres (economy, law, politics, science, education, mass media, etc.). The importance of the mass media in providing information to broader social groups has increased and now plays a crucial role as a sphere of social self-description (Boltanski 2009; Luhmann 2017b; Sutter 2010, 2016). The role of the social spheres favoured by the previously well-positioned bourgeoisie (cf. Bourdieu 2010), which shaped the ideology of bourgeois society, has steadily declined. The economy's profit-seeking rationality has increasingly focused on meeting mass, popular needs. This change is also evident in politics, where the main task is seen as securing the economic conditions for this mass demand by constantly increasing GDP and implementing economic policies that prioritise material goods for mass consumption over the civic values of the middle class in exchange for political support (Galston 2018). In parallel, the development and global diffusion of digital technology has transformed mass communication institutions, resulting in the loss of local and national frameworks and the strengthening of global tendencies (McQuail and Deuze 2020).

This has had an impact both on the spatial structure of society and, more broadly, on the position of individuals. Modernity's once stable structures have become more fluid (Bauman 2000), and previously more sharply delineated social units have begun to merge (Burke 2013). In postmodern society, the public and private spheres are no longer clearly separated into canonicalised spaces of action, where individual actions are linked to particular spaces and where actions fixed as to space also set the rules of normative behaviour. In the postmodern era, there is a diffusion of these social spaces (Schroer 2019; Knoblauch and Löw 2017, 2020; Knoblauch 2021). This eliminates the previous distinct divisions and permits actions that were previously prohibited or disapproved of in both spaces (e.g., the public sharing of private messages, pictures, and videos on social media). In other words, instead of the previous definite contrasts (such as private–public, work–leisure, here–there, near–far, private–foreign, etc.), a structure of less controllable spaces has been created.

The transformation of society's structure is reflected in the growing cultural diversity, which is becoming more intense and frequent. This diversity is causing actors to move

beyond their own cultural traditions and be influenced by other cultures. As described by Peter Burke (2013), this cultural hybridity not only challenges the identity-giving role of local roots but also deconstructs nation and class. According to Appadurai (1996), the expansion of global culture is accompanied by a change in the spatial structure and experience of space, resulting in the global cultural flow. This is evident in the fluid and irregular shapes of landscapes, the mobility of actors such as tourists, migrants, refugees, and guest workers, the disposition of global capital, and the global configuration of technology. This involves breaking down fixed spatial concepts such as state and nation, and developing new ways of producing locality.

The aforementioned alterations in social structure are shaping a new spatial structure. This is primarily due to the impact of globalisation and digitalisation, which is resulting in a fusion of global and local spaces. Conversely, in an increasingly interconnected world, places are becoming more accessible, leading to numerous encounters, the blending of different conceptions of space, and ambiguous interpretations of place. Lussault's (2017) conception of hyper-spaces presents a dynamic understanding of spatial structure. Spaces are viewed as constantly changing and experienced differently by actors. This is demonstrated through the co-presence of multiple lived realities and the interweaving of several spatial-social mechanisms. In hyper-places, spatial practices and representations are interconnected, allowing visitors to be both actors and spectators. Lussault refers to the dialectical relationship between a new kind of space appropriation, rather than the local versus global opposition, in the context of hyper-spaces. This leads to a new type of individual space for movement and, consequently, a new type of spatial experience.

The decrease in the possibility of control results in more flexibility and, of course, greater opportunities for bottom-up intentions and interpretations of reality. Indeed, social changes have led to individuals breaking free from traditional relationships and having more self-determination. This obviously leads to a new process of identification where there is more room for individual interpretations of situations and realities, to the reassessment of the role of the personal world (the home), or to the re-structuring of memory and its new role in identification (Ratnam 2018; Teixeira 2023b). It also leads to new relations and norms in the field of religiosity and religious experience. The following section will examine the concepts of individualisation, hybridisation, and globalisation to better understand the relationship between the changing social spatial structure and the new type of religiosity.

4. Use of Space and Individualisation in Religious Experience

In the discussion so far, postmodern society has been characterised by the dissolution of stable spatial relations. This transformation also implies a change in the clear power relations of public spaces. While in modernity the public sphere is characterised by the dominance of secular content, diffuse social spaces also bring about a shift in this respect, allowing greater space for the public expression of religious content. One possible explanation for this phenomenon is that individualisation allows for greater freedom of movement from the positions fixed in modernisation (Inglehart 1997). As a result, religious experiences can be more fully expressed in public spaces that are dominated by secularisation (Turner 2011). It is no coincidence, therefore, that recent decades have been fraught with the diversity of public expressions of religiosity and often with the conflicts that have arisen from this. This is related to the changes in social spaces, particularly the process that promotes the development of individual religiosity by challenging hierarchical structures (Wigley 2018; Martínez-Ariño and Griera 2020).

The process that sociology of religion has dubbed the 'spiritual revolution' (Heelas and Woodhead 2005; Flanagan and Jupp 2007; Houtman and Aupers 2007; Voas 2009; Lynch 2007, 2012; Cortois et al. 2018) reflects the individualisation of religious experience. This revolution has led to the public emergence of alternative and holistic spiritualism. According to Charles Taylor, modern culture has undergone a transformation known as the 'subjective turn' (Taylor 1991, p. 26). This shift involves individuals prioritising their own subjective experiences over external or objective roles such as duties and obligations.

In religious experience, this individual focus is becoming more prevalent; indeed, in many places it is becoming mainstream, as the role of subjective well-being in religious experience is emphasised. Of course, the role of the spiritual revolution is not without controversy. In the context of the rise of pluralism and spiritualism, which goes hand in hand with the growth of individualism, the question remains whether new forms of religiosity are replacing earlier forms of meaningful identification (Bruce 2011). However, it is not disputed that changes in the structure of social space mean that religious and spiritual experiences are now linked in public discourse, making it possible to successfully articulate individual religious experiences. This can be observed not only in the media's attention to spirituality, but also in the growing market for products that express or refer to a holistic approach (Redden 2016; Knoblauch 2009, 2021).

The individualisation of religious experience is related to the spatial relations of society in two ways. Firstly, this individual religiosity defines itself in relation to secular public space. Secondly, this individualised religiosity also defines itself in relation to institutionalised religiosity, and these spatial relations also influence the characteristics of this new type of religiosity. To better understand both processes, it is worth introducing, for further analysis, the concepts of strategic and tactical action of de Certeau, a classic of spatial theory (De Certeau 2011). De Certeau distinguishes between strategic and tactical action. Strategic action refers to the actions of those who control and dominate a social space, while tactical action refers to the actions of those who are not in a position of power within that space. Tactical actions are often in opposition to the strategic goals of the space, and can be seen as a form of resistance.

This individualisation is linked to the fact that religion, which was previously only conditionally present in the public sphere, is now given more space. As a result, religious individuals can better express their personal worldview, as they are less subject to external social constraints than in the earlier modern era. As a result, the religious perspective may also become more manifest in opposition to the established strategic meanings and actions of the public sphere (Beyer 1990; Casanova 1994; Achterberg et al. 2009; Glendinning and Bruce 2011). Additionally, religious meaning-making is increasingly manifest in technocratically regulated spaces. This is reflected in the increasingly frequent phenomenon of the religious person giving a different meaning to secular spaces and expressing his or her religious affiliation in public spaces. The result is that religion, now visible in the public space, also becomes a factor in this social space and plays a role in the recomposition of the public sphere (Teixeira 2023a). (This trend, which has been present since the modern era, is now more prevalent in the postmodern era.) This is also the case with the public events of a religious community, when its sacred content (e.g., religious symbols, liturgical elements) displays a religious perspective in secular space. In these tactical actions, individuals and communities transform profane spaces, with increasing frequency and self-evidence, into places that offer opportunities for religious and spiritual reflection and manifestation. On the other hand, the increasing prominence of institutional forms of religiosity in public spaces implies that they must be integrated into public urban spaces, often requiring them to be more flexible than before (Teixeira 2010).

As a result of these structural changes, the political and cultural role of religion has become more visible, and the liberal state must respond to this transformation (Turner 2011; Griera 2016). Religious content can lead to the public emergence of religious individuals and institutions, as well as their competition. This 'deprivatisation' of the sacred not only transforms the secular space but also poses new challenges for the state. It may even lead the state to intervene in the life of religious institutions for some radical groups, but in any case it leads secular power to develop inclusive and exclusive policies towards religious communities (Turner 2011) or rules of 'bad' and 'good' religiosity (Martínez-Ariño and Griera 2020).

The transformation of secular space, and its increasing diversity, also suggests that it is worth considering social spaces as complex, multi-sited territories (Giraut 2013) where the state itself, the political power, has to choose from a wide range of instruments in order

to react to the changed spatial situation and to select the instruments of emancipation or repression, and all the more so as the diversity of social spaces implies a competition of different cultural claims, in which the possession of power or a peripheral position also offers different opportunities for self-representation (García Canclini 2004) and thus for the representation of sacral content. In other words, following Canclini's approach to border culture, we can also interpret sacred content in secular space along the lines of notions of difference and inequality. The public emancipation of sacred content in the global North is now also taking place in the dominant medium of the secular perspective.

So the growing presence of sacrality (cf. Turner 2011) does not override the secular dominance of public spaces, which continue to determine the content of strategic action. However, it does allow for individual and communal religiosity to claim space from the constitution of public spaces. In public spaces, religious perspectives are increasingly able to appear as part of tactical actions, including in the field of work processes (economic activity). This is mainly due to the fact that religious individuals are no longer conducting work activities solely based on the rationality of the strategy-makers, but also based on their personal and subjective religious beliefs (Wigley 2018; Teixeira 2023b). The individual's representation is not limited to their clothing and accessories, which may express their religious or denominational affiliation or personal relationship with the transcendent. This also encompasses a spiritual attitude towards work, regarding it as a means of achieving wholeness. This transformation includes a change in the relationship with the body. The body, from an individualised perspective, represents a holistic view of social spaces and shapes the work activity of the religious individual (Holloway 2003; McGuire 2008, 2016).

As a result of individualisation, this tactical religious action is amplified in public spaces outside of work activity, where strategic action expressing secular values is less likely to prevail. Here, due to the reduced impact of external power forces that shape the religious individual, there is greater opportunity for strategic action aimed at expressing the individual's personal spirituality and religious experience. The public world outside of the workplace is more tolerant of individual value choices than in the earlier modern era. This provides ample scope for religious interest and leisure activities based on religious values and faith. In this sense, the search for religious and spiritual contact, as well as community formation, is based on personal preferences. This is substantially different from proximity-based traditional communities and is characterised by individual taste and subject-driven choice.

Additionally, the religious individualisation of the postmodern era also affects the relationship with sacred spaces. As individualisation prioritises personal evaluation and the pursuit of subjective well-being in religious experiences, it also alters the configuration of sacred spaces. The traditional spaces of institutionalised religiosity are diminishing in significance, while spaces of individual religious experience are becoming more prominent. However, our analysis emphasises interdependencies and mutual interdependence processes. Therefore, this series of changes can also be understood as a process where the marked decline of institutional faith (especially in Europe) and thus the marginalisation of institutionalised religious spaces is linked to the rise of individual forms of faith (Voas and Chaves 2016; Pollack and Rosta 2021; Koscielniak et al. 2022; Molteni and Biolcati 2023). It is worth interpreting the phenomenon in terms of strategic and tactical action, bearing in mind both sides of the change chain, and all the more so since Linda Woodhead, taking de Certeau's analysis further, has created the notion of strategic and tactical religiosity, which distinguishes between powerful and non-powerful actors and entities in the religious field, seeing institutionalised religion as strategic and individual religiosity, expressing a subjective perspective, as the action of tactical religiosity (Woodhead 2013).

Thus, the individualism of the postmodern era is characterised not only by the restructuring of public spaces but also by the transformation of the sacred space of society. During the modern era, strategic religious spaces such as churches, cathedrals, and ecclesiastical offices served as the centres of religious worldview. These spaces were organised around denominational religiosity and maintained religious worldviews in an increasingly

secularised society for centuries. The decline in the significance of denominational religiosity (Pollack and Rosta 2021, pp. 83–91) led to a gradual relativisation of its central role. However, this transformation did not necessarily result in the decline of religious belief (cf. Bognár and Kmetty 2023). Instead, it gave rise to new forms of religiosity.

As the spatial structure changed, individual religiosity and the subject-led search for transcendence became less and less aligned with strategic religiosity, as the questioning of traditional hierarchies in the postmodern era took place not only in relation to secular but also to sacred powers (Voas 2009; Lynch 2007, 2012; Cortois et al. 2018). Therefore, individuals who prioritise their religious beliefs seek opportunities for self-expression not only in the secular public sphere but also outside of religious institutions where they may feel constrained. Consequently, they began to rely more on tactical religiosity to develop their or his own religious beliefs in both public and private settings, individually or at least beyond the criteria of strategic religiosity. This is manifested in the process of individual recomposition of belief, as illustrated by recent empirical research on religious memory and identity (Ratnam 2018; Teixeira 2023b).

Tactical religiosity is inherently focused on the individual, who is the bracket of power structures, and on his or her personalised religiosity. The body itself becomes the main space of this personal religiosity, and it is organised around the rituals and gestures that can create the harmony of this personal space, and the wholeness of a holistic approach that is becoming increasingly mainstream (Giordan 2009; Tiggemann and Hage 2019). On the one hand, this use of space is characterised by individual rites that imitate the rites of strategic religiosity. These rites shape the individual's personal beliefs by taking prayer out of the order of denominational ritual and giving it personal content outside the institutional spaces of religion. On the other hand, rites are employed that go beyond strategic religious action, in so far as, for example, the European religious person who professes to be Christian may separate themself from the secular world through yoga practice and create their own personal sacred space (Philo et al. 2015). The purpose of prayer and meditation is to resolve uncertainties in one's relationship with the environment, creating a sense of comfort in the world for the individual who focuses on their personal faith (Giordan and Woodhead 2017). Individual rituals also contribute to creating a broader social space that provides a secure orientation for the individual. In all of these uses of space, actors develop autonomous strategies for managing space and time. This restructuring of religious experience is implied. This religiosity is increasingly divergent from the stable structures assigned by both secular and sacred powers. Together with the changes in the spatial structure of society, it presents a fluid structure characterised by constant transformation (Lussault 2017). Above all, it is characterised by the self-constitution of the individual, which is an individualised form of religiosity.

5. Uses of Space and Hybridisation in Religious Experience

The dissolution of stable social structures, and the emergence of fluid structures, is reflected in the process mentioned in part above, whereby the essentially secular medium of public space offers more and more opportunities for the expression of religious content. Previously highly normatively regulated spaces offer more opportunities for the emergence of value systems, different from the previously uniform normative regulation due to the process of fluidisation (Löw 2016). This alteration in spatial structure results in the blending of previously distinct spaces, meaning that spaces that were once clearly defined are now increasingly accommodating different preferences and interpretations of space (Beaumont 2008; Schroer 2019, pp. 199–216). One of the most striking features of this set of changes is that in both previously separate secular and sacred spaces, although not without precedent, the characteristics of the other space are becoming more marked; that is, secular space is becoming sacred and sacred space is showing features of increasing secularity.

The sacralisation of profane spaces is a process in which the religious perspective, which was previously excluded from secular public space, can increasingly appear in this social space. This process may be partly spontaneous and partly a conscious marketing

strategy. Rather empty secular spaces, or spaces that express only economic rationality (e.g., car dealerships, shopping malls), begin to use symbols of sacred space as a way of displaying the authenticity or wholeness inherent in religious experience. The sacralisation of profane spaces is also evident in leisure activities, as well as in the economy and work processes. This is particularly noticeable in mass forms of entertainment, such as rock concerts and sporting events, or the rituals of Americanised mass culture in large spaces, including Disneyland (Lyon 2000). In these contexts, sacred content is used to evoke a sense of awe, with the aim of enhancing the message's impact on the audience.

It is important to note that the hybridisation of social spaces involves not only spontaneous individual actions in secular spaces, or those motivated by economic rationality, but also the assertive presence of institutionalised religiosity in public spaces. Numerous examples of this can be seen when, for example, papal visits, Catholic youth meetings, or sermons by Protestant pastors that fill stadiums become public news and media events that engage the public for days or weeks (cf. Dayan and Katz 1994). All this shows that in modern society, the public, which essentially marginalises sacred content ideologically, is becoming increasingly tolerant of the mass, institutionalised display of explicit religious content. A new trend in postmodernity is also that public spaces expressing secularity also offer greater space for the public representation of non-strictly canonical religious content (Berg 2019), especially in areas where these communal rites express popular religiosity previously classified as superstition (Da Costa 2018; Knoblauch 2009).

This hybrid use of space can be linked to a variety of social factors. On the one hand, this demonstrates the resilience of religiosity, which has enabled religion to maintain its social relevance despite centuries of secularisation and partial exclusion from public spaces. On the other hand, the sacralisation of profane spaces also indicates that the ideology of modernity, as defined in relation to religion, if it has not perhaps failed, at least needs to be modified. It requires a transformation that brings the religious perspective more forcefully into the debate on society, science, the democratic rule of law, and universal morality. The dialogue raises the possibility of formulating a mutually understandable and acceptable principle by bridging the gap between religious and secular language (cf. Habermas and Ratzinger 2006; Habermas 2016). Thus, this hybrid social space now expresses a post-secular perspective in which religious experience appears as an ally of the secular world against those allied against the agenda of modernity. Religion becomes a semantic source of social integration (Willaime 2004; Schmidt 2012), even against premodern religious fanaticism that defines itself with the ideology of fundamentalism against plural democracies and the liberal rule of law.

The significance of religiosity has been re-evaluated in recent decades in terms of the contested interpretations of the previously overstretched opposition between secular and sacred content. Researchers, especially Hans Joas (Joas 2013, 2021), point out that human rights, which are the source of pluralist democracy, cannot be detached from sacred content. Rather, the ideology of the social changes that gave rise to modernity (the American and French revolutions) can be seen as a fruitful blend of Christian religious values and Enlightenment ideas, rather than as an anti-religious stance (Joas 2013). This idea of the intertwining of secular and sacred content also implicitly reassesses Max Weber's concept of disenchantment and formulates a rehabilitation of sacrality (Joas 2021). Overall, it highlights the coexistence of secular and sacred elements, which are often intertwined.

The hybridisation of social spaces dissolves the former opposition between the secular and the sacred. This process involves both the sacralisation of profane spaces and the profanation of sacred spaces. The hybridisation of social spaces implies not only a rehabilitation of religion, with a more pronounced individual and institutional presence in public spaces, but also a fundamental change in the relations between sacred spaces. The transformation of sacred spaces reflects the decline in institutionalised religiosity in Western societies. This is evidenced by the decrease in the number of believers (Voas 2009; Bruce 2011; Pollack and Rosta 2021, pp. 83–91). As a result, the primary spaces of strategic religiosity, such as churches, cathedrals, and ecclesiastical offices, have become partly non-functional. On

the one hand, this results in a multireligious use of the remaining sacred spaces, where denominations that were previously very distant from each other begin to share a central religious space. (This form of religious hybridisation is certainly related to the increasingly popular idea of ecumenism, which is both an ideological support for hybridisation and a practical response to the declining number of believers.) On the other hand, sacred spaces and buildings that have lost their function are now becoming community spaces. Visitors are no longer primarily seeking a religious experience but are willing to share in the cultural heritage. The profanation of sacred spaces is the sharpest form of the loss of space in religious spaces. This occurs when religious spaces are transformed and then put to the service of other functions such as a library or concert hall (Schroer 2019, pp. 199–216). In these spaces that were once considered sacred, visitors may either experience the spiritual significance of tthe former sacred space or be solely guided by the primary function of the new social space.

The hybridisation of social spaces, as illustrated above, demonstrates the significant influence of spatial relations on the character of postmodern society. This confirms the voices that have emphasised the growing importance of spatiality (Foucault 1980, 2006; Harvey 1992; Jameson 2012). At the same time, this spatial hybridisation also shows that spaces with previously stable meanings are increasingly being extended with layers of meaning that allow for substantially different interpretations. This change in social spaces is a result of differences in knowledge and intentions among individuals (cf. Husserl 2001), as well as the hybridity of spaces that present both sacral and secular perspectives, or both private and public, near and far, own and foreign, etc. The hybridisation of social spaces increases the juxtaposition and simultaneity of meanings, similar to the globalisation discussed after that. This plays an essential role in the transformation of religious experience in the present.

6. Use of Space and Globalisation in Religious Experience

In the postmodern era, inter- or supranational frameworks play a growing role, rather than the nation-state framework of modernity. This process is leading to a new type of spatial structure, rather than the previously fixed spaces. The transformation of space, as seen in the European Union, indicates a shift towards larger economic units for profitability and the creation of larger political communities. Mass communication technologies play a decisive role in this change. The digital transformation enables simultaneous communication with the entire world and integrates global space into diverse interactions, creating a sense of unity in world society in a social theoretical sense (Luhmann 1998, pp. 145–171; Stichweh 2010). Therefore, digital technology plays an important role in interpreting reality, shaping the spatial structure of society and influencing forms of religious experience.

Globalisation has led to actors who previously operated at local and national levels now operating in a global space (Appadurai 1996; Burke 2013). Consequently, the spatial structure of religious experience is also transforming. Actors are attempting to incorporate this new type of social space into their previously primarily local experiences while increasingly seeking to represent themselves in the ever-expanding online space. The attempt by actors to converge offline and online religious experience (Campbell 2013) is fundamentally restructuring religious experience. This is because online presence is not merely an extension of offline practice. This restructuring is linked to the fact that the structure of the new type of online space already shapes the actors and thus influences their perception of reality (Couldry and Hepp 2018).

The structure of online space not only shapes the experience of physical presence but also allows individuals to experience the world remotely (Telepräsenz) (Waldenfels 2009). Therefore, the religious actor is oriented through both the medium of the world directly experienced and the experience mediated by online space, resulting in a new religious experience. In virtual space, individuals reflect on both their immediate physical reality and the world of distant places, images, and experiences. This results in a detachment from everyday spaces and a relativisation of religious or non-religious experiences. It also allows

for the exploration of new types of experiences that may be different from the place and personal culture of the actor.

Virtual space conveys a variety of heterogeneous messages to religious individuals. These messages often differ from personal experiences and express the content of parallel political systems, cultures, lifestyles, values, and fashions. At the same time, the messages communicated are not usually expressed within the framework of a nation-state, but in overlapping, interlocking spaces. In essence, virtual space is presented as a transnational identity space that is not primarily experienced as a geographical space, but as part of an expanded concept of space for the religious person. In this sense, virtual space is a distinct space where lived and represented space are interconnected, providing a spatial experience that differs from traditional forms of spatiality for the actor. (This is often the case in spaces constructed by actors online, where primary symbolic (existing only on the screen), non-material elements predominate (Berger 2020).) On the one hand, these changes free the religious actor from the constraints of space and temporality, but on the other hand, they generate a multiplicity of almost opaque, chaotic relations that make it difficult for the individual to orientate himself. This inevitably reinforces the individual's desire to use his or her religious perspective to somehow bring order to the multitude of messages offered by online space.

However, due to these processes, the ability to navigate both reality and virtual space cannot rely heavily on the forms provided by modern society, particularly on elements of national identity. This is because social transformation strongly relativises this entity, and virtual space is where this relativisation is most strongly expressed. However, these changes in postmodern society increase the possibility of religious identification. In the multiple identities of the postmodern era, religious content can serve as a means of establishing a distinct identity from others. The religious perspective can be a means of self-expression, an identity-forming force, or a distinction for individuals who think about the world independently, according to their own logic (Schmidt 2012; Bognár 2017). This is, of course, only applicable to those who consider it important to align with the transcendent from either an institutional or a personal religious perspective.

Online spaces offer religious self-determinations that are primarily conducive to personal, individual religiosity. The process of social transformation has surpassed the modern hierarchies that could define an individual's orientation and determine the constitutive process of religious experience along lines of authority. However, the subjective, individual religious orientation is also reinforced by the fact that the use of online space is already inherently individual, in contrast to the mostly collective experience of previous mass media eras (cf. McQuail and Deuze 2020). Therefore, personal preferences, desires, current life situations, and resulting choices determine the current direction of online space use. The experience of religion in virtual space is primarily characterised by a personal search for the transcendent, by individual religiosity rather than institutional faith. At the same time, interpersonal relationships, which form fluid and constantly reforming networks (Hérvieu-Léger 2002), will play an important role, giving new impulses to the content of individual religiosity.

On the other hand, virtual spaces constantly reinterpret the religious and spiritual experience of offline space for the religious person due to the disappearance of spatial and temporal boundaries. This search for greater autonomy in religious experience and its expression inevitably goes hand in hand. It can be observed that individualisation, hybridisation, and globalisation interact to shape the religious experience of the postmodern era. This can be seen in the way that the non-localised impact of online space reinforces hybrid rather than traditional forms of ritual. This includes the use of rituals from non-Western religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism, as well as healing techniques like feng-shui, ayurveda, or yoga, or their combination, as a form of cultural hybridity (Burke 2013; Toniol et al. 2023). This may introduce new religious interpretations to individuals that they may not have encountered in their local community. However, it is important to note that the offline space still holds significant value as it serves as the

foundation for the online experience. The individual's daily use of online space, which typically amounts to four hours a day (Alblwi et al. 2021), becomes integrated into their religious experience over time, making it difficult to distinguish the effects of the two types of space.

In this process of transformation, the online space reinforces personal choices and opportunities for self-representation. This is particularly true for those who have found few opportunities to do so in offline space (Campbell 2010, 2013; Campbell and Tsuria 2021). This provides more opportunities for more open approaches than the strategic action of institutional religiosity, for self-interpretations that go beyond traditional religious identities, and in itself reinforces the role of tactical religiosity. It also reinforces the role of tactical religiosity and individual forms of religious identity, which are further strengthened by a perceived transformation of spatial experiences. This is a new type of spatial socialisation process that involves the gradual disappearance of the Euclidean spatial experience (Löw 2016, pp. 65–67).

In this transformation, children no longer experience social spaces gradually, starting from a central experience of space. Instead, they experience isolated spaces, where individual experiences are not integrated into a coherent whole. This experience of space described in urban space is even more so in virtual space, where a non-unified mapping is created where spaces are no longer materially experienced, and where multiple spaces are created, networked, and in motion. These multiple, scarcely cohesive spaces provide new impulses for religious experience, reinforcing the phenomenon of patchwork religiosity.

The individual constitution of different religious experiences has long been at the centre of sociological studies of religion, and the phenomenon is usually interpreted as a reinforcement of religious syncretism (Luckmann 2003; Leopold and Jeppe 2014). This refers primarily to the emergence and slow incorporation into religious experience of perspectives, features, and rituals of other denominations and religions that go beyond the religiosity of one's own cultural sphere. It is important to note that this new form of religiosity differs significantly from the religious syncretism of earlier periods. The current orientation, which combines different religious systems, no longer implies a religiosity with a collective perspective, where the coexistence of different religious trends has resulted in a new religious community, as in the Gnostic or Manichean Christian tradition. The religiosity of the postmodern era can be described as a process of individual constitution. A new religious worldview is created at the level of the individual as a religious experience from different cultural circles, mediated primarily through virtual space (Cheong 2017). This results in diversity and a constantly changing, fluid nature of personal religious identity.

This fluidity, and the instability that goes with it, inevitably brings with it, on the other hand, a lack of ontological security for individuals (Giddens 2013). As a result, individuals may seek external validation of their religious identity. Needless to say, virtual spaces offer a great opportunity for this, as a myriad of forms of group membership emerge for individuals in these spaces. The memberships of these groups tend to strengthen trans-local characteristics. This is because the process of forming a group brings together individuals who share a common trait, regardless of their location or personal preferences (Campbell and Tsuria 2021). At the same time, the online space also offers the possibility of grouping people in close proximity who are connected by the virtual space according to personal interests, values, and preferences. However, online religious communities formed through the grouping of people with shared personal interests, values, and preferences are typically loosely knit social relationships, as research has shown (Campbell 2010, 2013). The communities themselves and the personal preferences of the participants are in a state of constant flux.

This parallels the phenomenon that the cultural diversity of postmodernity and virtual space itself threatens the ability of some religious actors to find clear direction, and to overcome this they develop tightly closed group memberships that are sharply separated from the outside world. While this process of group constitution in online space can organise local religious communities, it often creates group memberships that transcend

local and national boundaries. These religious communities often have a closed mindset, being distrustful of the diversity of postmodernity or seeing it as a threat to authentic religiosity. This leads them to formulate their own religious principles, which are sharply separated from it. These prescriptions aim to establish boundaries between religious groups and the outside world. This helps to maintain homogeneity in religious experiences, as seen in the practices of Islamic fundamentalists and Pentecostals. But it also creates new religious authoritarians, who are reinforced by online spaces (Campbell 2013). However, in Western society, closed and communal forms of religiosity are peripheral compared to the majority pattern, where individual forms of religiosity are reinforced in hybrid social spaces (Campbell and Connelly 2020). Thus, globalisation transforms traditional narratives, social practices, and structures in religious virtual spaces. This illustrates that individualisation, hybridisation, and globalisation lead to a change in religious experience in postmodern society.

7. Conclusions

This paper explores the implications of social spaces and actions on the traits of religious experience. The aim is to provide a new perspective for the analysis of religiosity in the contemporary era through the perspective of the spatial turn. The paper has shown that the diffusion of social spaces, the relativisation of traditional hierarchies, and individualisation have had a profound impact on religiosity, and that the diffusion of new forms of religiosity has itself influenced the spatial structure of postmodern society. These social changes have freed religious experience from the secluded world of "moral communities" and given greater scope for the public experience of religion. This applies both to individual religiosity, which shares its personal, spiritual experience in public forums, and to the more traditional and more recent popular forms of institutional religiosity, which also find space in public forums to express their own identity.

We interpreted the rise in tactical action as a new phenomenon of religiosity in postmodern society. This may be related to a shift in the spatial structure, where the previously dominant position of secular spheres of power is being challenged. This presents an opportunity for religiosity to be expressed in this space of power. Furthermore, the analysis has shown a shift in the religious social landscape, with institutionalised religiosity playing a lesser role and grassroots religious aspirations growing as a form of tactical religiosity. This emphasises the self-constitutive ability of individual religiosity.

These interactions are also reflected in the hybridisation of social spaces, which implicitly entails the transformation of religious spaces. The dissolution of the distinct spatial structure of modernity creates transitions between social spaces defined by secular and sacred values. The sacralisation of secular spaces and the profanation of sacred spaces suggest that religiosity is expressing itself in a different spatial structure, which brings new forms of religious experience. At the same time, this change is fundamentally determined by the intertwining and juxtaposition of spatial experiences, and the hybridisation of social spaces.

The analysis indicates that these social trends are reinforced by the process of globalisation. The medium of networked and mobile spaces is creating a new type of religious syncretism. This primarily reflects the perspective of individuals and encompasses different cultural influences, both close and distant in time and space, along with personal preferences. Religious groups emerge in the changed social space to guide believers in the perceived chaos of postmodern society. These communities can thus be understood as a response to the challenges of contemporary society, in which religion plays an identifying role in the same way as in the case of personal religiosity, which emphasises individual religious and spiritual experience.

Capturing the above features, the reflection argues that the transformation of the structure of social space and individual action has given new content to religious experience. However, the religiosity of postmodern society differs from that of modernity not only in its content but also in its social role. In modern times, the integration function of religion has

been undermined by the strengthening of secular identities. This has led to the emergence of non-religious forms of integration. The study also shows that religiousness, now a feature of public space in postmodern society, is becoming a factor in the integration of society, albeit with reduced significance. Furthermore, the analysis has shown how religion can become a point of identification in the new type of spatial structure of society by emphasising difference. These changes have been interpreted as modifications to the spatial structure of society, highlighting the significant role that spatial relations play in the emergence of new forms of religiosity.

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