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The apparatus theory: 'Religion in the city'

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The apparatus theory is used to challenge the interpretation of religion and also to determine whether religion is a factor to contend with in modern society. Religion could be the element that keeps the city intact or could be the one element that is busy ruining our understanding of reality and the way this interacts with society in the urban environment. Paradigms determine our relationships. In this case, the apparatus theory would be a more precise way of describing not only our relationship towards the city but also the way in which we try to perceive our relationship with religion and the urban conditions we live in. This article gives theoretical background to the interpretation and understanding of the relationship between various entities within the city. The apparatus of the city creates space for religion to function as a binding form. Religion could bind different cultures, diverse backgrounds and create space for growth.

Introduction

The existence of cities and expressions of religion are here to stay. Religion and the urban context have interacted either positively and/or negatively since the inception of both realities. Religion was in some cases the reason for the origin of cities. The development of cities over time stifled the existence and growth of religion in an urban environment. It is however undeniable that the fates of cities and religion are intertwined. People with a spiritual need will always inhabit urban areas and will need space to express their religious existence. This research aims to indicate how the relationship between religion and the city contributes to the formation of both realities.

The nature and definitions of what constitutes urban existence and what is considered to be religion have varied over time. Defining these two concepts cannot but be contextual. The urban context is one that is thriving and different questions have been asked on how it influences the civil society and other systems within this structure. Religion has always been part of this discussion, but when it comes to the relationship between the urban environment and religion, we cannot but look at the history of these concepts. This relationship, between city and religion, takes on new forms depending on the circumstances, conditions and surroundings in which it is practised. It is without doubt that religion has changed drastically since the development of cities. Religion has become a parameter for society. It has become a parameter of boundaries, civil rights, rite of passage and even a system that tries to correlate a society. This article will attempt to shed more light on the relationship between city and religion from a particular perspective. The aim is to showcase the need for religion in a society that is being torn apart by the process of urbanisation. The apparatus theory of Foucault is used as an instrument to guide our discussion.

In the argumentation to follow, a phenomenological approach as to what is a city and what is religion will be used. Phenomenology intends the issues under scrutiny to speak for themselves instead of having presuppositions determine the outcome. This is what Husserl referred to as *epoche* (compare Krüger 1982:17–18). Phenomenology is a process of inquiring after what lies beneath that which the senses permit the researcher to engage with. This is referred to as 'intentionality' (compare Krüger 1982:17). This investigation will further consist of a discourse analysis investigating the relations, especially the power relations operating within an urban environment.

The discussion starts off by defining key concepts. This is followed by a discussion of interrelatedness between the main concepts of religion and city as guided by the apparatus theory. Lastly, a discussion will follow as to the implications and conclusion.

Religion

The first concept to analyse is religion. After centuries of attempts it still remains difficult to define religion (Smith 1991:17). For Smith the inadequate existing multitude of definitions for 'religion' is an indication that the term should be discarded, as it has become obsolete. It is not the purpose

of this discussion to address the problem of defining religion. Cox's (2010:3–7) meaningful suggestion is to study the groups of definitions instead of studying the definitions themselves.

W.C. Smith (1991) explains how religion ought to be viewed. Understanding religion is never an unbiased endeavour. The culture of the researcher always plays a role. Culture contributes to the spectacles through which religion is viewed (Smith 1991:18). For too long, Smith argues (1991:52), has Western understanding determined the way in which religion is perceived and what can be deemed religious, as well as the relations between religion and other disciplines. Western thought has produced names for the world religions. The way of studying religions is the result of Western scholarly processes. It can be argued that the occurrence of cities might also be a Western invention, but there are numerous examples of cities in non-Western societies. Compare ancient cities in Africa as well as in South America.

Smith (1991:53, footnote 2) suggests rather referring to 'cumulative traditions' instead of using the biased term 'religion'. Traditions have contexts and history. The concept of religion tends to call to mind a structured system of beliefs. There are more words to refer to the phenomena Western minds over time have provided with names (Smith 1991:52). Smith suggests alternative terminologies such as 'piety', 'reverence', 'faith', 'devotion' and 'God-fearing'. These terms do not necessarily call to mind a structured system as would the term 'religion'.

After carefully indicating that the concept of religion is in fact a concept originating from a Western (modern) stance of naming and analysing the human environment and behaviour, Smith comes up with a solution as to the problem of transposing the (Western) concept of religion onto world religions. Smith's (1991:50) suggestion is to discard the term 'religion' altogether. His argument remains that the term 'religion' is misleading, confusing and unnecessary. The term 'religion' hampers the understanding of people's faith and traditions. This hampering is caused by our attempt to conceptualise faith and traditions into what we refer to as religion.

Religion is concerned with beliefs and practices that might find expression in material elements. Studying religion will thus include seeking physical evidence of the presence of religion in an environment such as a city. This might include symbols with religious connotation (i.e. crosses at a cemetery), the architecture of religious buildings (i.e. minarets), images and statues of religious leaders of the community (i.e. priests or saints), the clothing people in a community wear (i.e. *hijab* or a nun's habit) and even rituals performed publicly (i.e. reciting prayers). Religion is therefore fluid, contextual and might even be considered superfluous. The forms religion takes on can vary from one context to another. There might be an abundance of elements filled with religious meaning within the confines of an urban environment.

Apparatus

In order to assist in understanding the relation between the city and religion we turn to the apparatus theory. Foucault (1970:196) describes apparatus as 'strategies of relations of forces supporting, and supported by, types of knowledge'. These forces consist of a 'heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions – in short, the said as much as the unsaid' (Foucault 1970:194). The apparatus itself could then be seen as the arrangement, structure and link that exist or are established between all these elements. Secondly, Foucault (1970:195) says that the function of the entire system is that of subjection and power, the need to repress (and perhaps also conceptualise) madness.

Important to consider is that the individual and society are part of the same process.

Foucault, as cited in Kishik and Pedatella (2009:1), uses the word *dispositif* or 'apparatus' quite often when he starts to take interest in the governmentality or the government of men. The apparatus theory could help us to govern this balance. The definition of 'apparatus' focuses our attention on the ensemble of different heterogeneous aspects. The city will be the focus of this research and religion will form the basis for the city to continue to exist or to keep developing into a space of plurality and understanding.

Understanding the subjectification of the city is important. We are formed by and form the environment around us (compare Berger 1990:4). The once-institutionalised form religion once took on is no longer functional. The city, as would be argued later, became a space that needs to be re-designed and envisioned as an integral part of the apparatus of the city. Religion, in its broadest sense, needs to become part of the whole. The city is the apparatus that religion forms part of.

In order to set the parameters of our understanding of this theory, it is necessary to take note of the following passage by Agamben, as translated by Kishik and Pedatella (2009):

> If we now try to examine the definition of 'apparatus' that can be found in common French dictionaries, we see that they distinguish between three meanings of the term:
>
> 1. A strictly juridical sense: Apparatus is the part of a judgement that contains the decision separate from the opinion.
> 2. A technological meaning: The way in which the parts of the machine or of a mechanism and, by extension, the mechanism itself are arranged.
> 3. A military use: The set of means arranged in conformity with a plan. (pp. 7–8)

It is evident that these definitions have supposed a strict structure that should be descriptive of the construct. It can be argued that balance is only possible where structure is not seen as the main goal. Religion in its essence is part of social conditions and cannot be understood as a barrier or structure

that forces moulding. Therefore the apparatus theory provides reasons for an urban environment that combines these heterogeneous forces and relations in a balance and ensemble that construct harmoniously.

Apparatus and religion

Foucault never uses the term 'apparatus' in order to state the object of his research. Foucault rather uses the term *positivité* [positivity], which is argued to be a neighbour of the word *dispositif*. This study will not aim to give an etymological overview of the terms 'apparatus' and *dispositif* and 'positivity'. It is important to take a brief look at what is implied by Foucault. Agamben (in Kishik & Padetella 2009:3) states that there was no definition provided by Foucault, for using this term ('apparatus'), until he re-read a book by Jean Hyppolite. According to Hyppolite (1996:21), destiny and positivity are two key concepts in Hegel's thought. Positivity finds its proper place, according to Hegel as cited in Kishik and Padetella (2009:4), in opposition between 'natural religion' and 'positive religion'. There is a difference between the concepts of natural religion and positive religion.

In what follows only a brief description will be given of both. Agamben (in Kishik & Padetella 2009) argues that:

> … natural religion is concerned with the immediate and general relation of human reason with the divine; positive or historical religion encompasses the set of beliefs, rules and rites that in certain society and at a certain historical moment are externally imposed on individuals. (p. 4)

'A positive religion', as Hegel writes in a passage cited by Hyppolite (1996):

> implies feelings that are more or less impressed through constraint on souls; these actions that are the effect of command and the result of obedience and are accomplished without direct interest. (p. 21)

Hyppolite, according to Agamben (in Kishik & Padetella 2009:21), shows how this opposition between these two terms ('nature' and 'positivity') corresponds. The following passage, written by Hyppolite, must have interested Foucault, Agamben argues, because it forecasts the notion of the apparatus. What follows is a brief extract from the passage:

> We see here the knot of questions implicit in the concept of positivity, as well as Hegel's successive attempts to bring together dialectically – a dialectics that is not yet conscious of itself – pure reason (theoretical and above all practical) and positivity, that is, the historical element. In a certain sense, Hegel considers positivity as an obstacle to the freedom of man, and as such it is condemned. To investigate the positive elements of a religion, and we might add, of a social state, means to discover in them that which is imposed through a constraint on man, that which obfuscates the purity of reason. But, in another sense – and this is the aspect that ends up having the upper hand in the course of Hegel's development – positivity must be reconciled with reason, which then loses its abstract character and adapts to the concrete richness of life. We see then why the concept of positivity is at the center of Hegelian perspectives. (Hyppolite 1996:23)

If 'positivity', as Agamben argues, is the term that the young Hegel gives the 'historical element', this historical element is loaded with rules, rites and institutions that are forced on an individual by an external power. These elements are internalised by the individual and become a system of beliefs and feelings.

Foucault then, according to the preceding paragraph, takes a position on the respective problem. The relationship between individuals and their position towards the historical element can be described as follows (Agamben, as cited by Kishik & Padetella 2009):

> Foucault's ultimate aim is not, then, as in Hegel, the reconciliation of the two elements; it is not even to emphasize their conflict. For Foucault, what is at stake is rather the investigation of concrete modes in which the positivities (or the apparatuses) act within the relations, mechanisms and 'plays' of power. (p. 6)

Agamben carries on this line of thought by investigating the term *oikonomia*. Agamben (in Kishik & Padetella 2009:6) argues that *oikonomia* refers to the 'administration of the *oikos* [home] and, more generally, management'. *Oikonomia*, Agamben argues, begins to indicate the governance of the world and human history. The translation of the fundamental Greek term used by Latin Fathers is *dispositio*. 'The Latin term *dispositio*, from which the French term *dispositif*, or apparatus, derives, comes therefore to take on the complex semantic sphere of the theological laden term *oikonomia*' (Agamben, as cited in Kishik & Padetella 2009:11):

> The term 'apparatus' designates that in which, and through which, one realizes a pure activity of governance devoid of any foundation in being. This is the reason why apparatuses must always imply a process of subjectification, that is to say, they must produce their subject. (Agamben, cited in Kishik & Padetella 2009:11)

Agamben (cited in Kishik & Padetella 2009) argues that it all refers back to the term *oikonomia*:

> … that is, to a set of practices, bodies of knowledge, measures and institutions that aim to manage, govern, control, orient – in a way that purports to be useful – the behaviors, gestures, and thoughts of human beings. (p. 12)

Or to make it more clear: 'an apparatus is literally anything that can capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviours, opinions, or discourses of living beings' (Agamben, cited in Kishik & Padetella 2009:14).

As argued so far, the city or the environment of the city is the apparatus that determines the ways in which the city dwellers are being formed. The city is not far from what Foucault refers to being like the interior of a prison – the constricting environment determining one's complete existence. It is necessary then to understand the effects this apparatus, the city, has on its inhabitants and the environment.

Is it possible for religion to still function in a way that allows this apparatus, the city, to form a heterogeneous ensemble?

What are the implications necessary to look at? There are two great classes, as argued by Agamben (as cited in Kishik & Padetella 2009:14): living beings and apparatuses. A subject is added to these two classes and refers to the results from this relation, or ongoing fight, between the mentioned two classes. The same human can therefore be part of multiple processes of subjectification: 'the user of cellular phones, the web surfer, the writer of stories, … and so on and so forth' (Agamben, as cited in Kishik & Padetella 2009:14–15).

This growth of apparatuses in modern society today also forms part of the extreme reproduction in the processes of subjectification.

It has become necessary to take a look at all apparatuses and debate whether each is good or bad for society. This study argues that the apparatus of the city could be diffused by the strong presence of religion. The apparatus of religion needs to form part of the bigger picture.

Apparatuses cannot be destroyed. Apparatuses are not merely an accident but form part of the process of 'humanisation'. At the root of every apparatus lies an all-too-human desire for happiness (Agamben, as cited in Kishik & Padetella 2009:17). This means that the strategy to combat apparatuses is not an easy task. Agamben (in Kishik & Padetella 2009:17) argues that we are dealing with the liberation of that which remains captured and separated by these apparatuses.

What then could be done, seeing that there needs to be some kind of strategy?

Proposed strategy

The strategy that Agamben (in Kishik & Padetella 2009) proposes is called 'profanation':

> According to Roman Law, objects that belonged in some way to the gods were considered sacred or religious. As such, these things were removed from free use and trade among humans: they could neither be sold nor given as security, neither relinquished for the enjoyment of others nor subjected to servitude. Sacrilegious were the acts that violated or transgressed the special unavailability of these objects, which were reserved either for celestial beings (and so they were properly called 'sacred') or for the beings of the netherworld (in this case, they were simply called 'religious'). While 'to consecrate' (*sacrare*) was the term that designated the exit of things from the sphere of human law, 'to profane' signified, on the contrary, to restore the thing to the free use of men. 'Profane', the great jurist Trebatius was therefore able to write, is, in the truest sense of the word, that which was sacred or religious, but was then restored to the use and property of human beings. (p. 18)

Therefore, it is to be emphasised:

> … that one can define religion as that which removes things, places, animals, or people from common use and transports them to a separate sphere. Not only is there no religion without separation, but every separation contains or conserves in itself a genuinely religious nucleus. The apparatus that activates and regulates separation is sacrifice. Through a series of minute rituals that vary from culture to culture … sacrifice always sanctions the passage of something from the profane to the sacred, from the human sphere to the divine. But what has been ritually separated can also be restored to the profane sphere. Profanation is the counter-apparatus that restores to common use what sacrifice had separated and divided. (Agamben in Kishik & Padetella 2009:18–19)

The public space of the city has been transformed into the interior of a prison:

> Analogous considerations can be made concerning the apparatus of the prison: here is an apparatus that produces, as a more or less unforeseen consequence, the constitution of a subject and of a milieu of delinquents, who then become the subject of new – and, this time, perfectly calculated – techniques of governance. (Agamben, in Kishik & Padetella 2009:20)

The city has undergone major transformations over the past few years. Even the condition of the environment is no longer favourable. These issues have caused the subjects (urban dwellers) to become part of the process of de-subjectification. This means that the subjects need to start breaking down that which is already starting to build up. We now turn our attention to the process known as 'de-subjectification':

> To Agamben, being human is conditioned by an indefinite potentiality for being inhuman, and the distinction between being human and inhuman is itself an unstable constitution. 'Man' is neither a biologically defined species nor a given substance, but rather a field of dialectical tensions. (Minnesota University 2007: n.p.)

Subjectivity and the discussions of this term have been a central concern in certain organisational studies and critical management studies over the past few years. Although differences occur, existing approaches to subjectivity have one thing in common: a theoretical interest in the construction and reproduction of subjectivity, that is, subjectification (Minnesota University 2007). However, no study has actually only focused on the concept of de-subjectification – processes of breaking free from subject positions:

> Subjectivity here is seen as the result of both subjectification and desubjectification. The former refers to the subject positions that organizational actors move towards while the latter is understood as the subject positions they break free from. (Minnesota University 2007: n.p.)

Foucault focuses on subjectivity when he refers to subjectification. But Foucault also implicitly focuses on the term de-subjectification. Although Foucault never truly gave a definition of this latter concept, the works of Agamben have elaborated on this part of Foucault's thoughts. Here we will focus on the framework of subjectivity, understood as a dialogue between processes of subjectification and de-subjectification.

Religion will continue to exist as long as society exists. Religion and society have an interrelationship. The subject constantly forms and gets formed by the environment it lives

and functions in. Religion, as part of urban society, gives guidance to this formation, not only of the profane world, but also how the subject perceives the sacred world:

> Through the introduction of desubjectification and the relationship between subjectification and desubjectification we can get a better understanding of how the city subjectivity is formed. When people appropriate a new subject position this is not only driven by processes of subjectification and the 'adding' of new settings of power/knowledge etc. but also through getting rid of a number of values, behaviours, imaginations, etc. The processes of subjectification and desubjectification should always be seen in a dialectical tension. The processes of subjectification and desubjectification need to be explored to fully understand the formations of subjectivity. (Minnesota University 2007: n.p.)

Contemporary societies, like the city, find themselves always as part of a process of subjectification and de-subjectification. The city, as apparatus, cannot determine one's health, gestures, occupations or diet:

> The problem of the profanation of apparatuses – that is to say, the restitution to common use of what has been captured and separated in them – is, for this reason, all the more urgent. (Agamben, in Kishik & Padetella 2009:24)

Compare in this regard Peter Berger's (1990:4) analysis of the formation of society by way of the three processes.

Creating reality

In what follows, Berger's discussion on society and the transformation thereof will be discussed. It is important to mention that Berger's interpretation of religion is done on the grounds of sociology. This part will focus the reader's attention on the effects transformation has on the urban dwellers.

We are constantly forced to choose how to interact with the world and how we are shaped by the environment. In Berger's (1990:4) terminology, we must choose how to 'externalise' ourselves, which means how to relate to and shape the environment around us:

> It is through externalization that society is a human product. It is through objectivation that society becomes a reality *sui generis*. It is through internalization that man is a product of society. (p. 4)

It is necessary to understand that the environment surrounding us also has an impact on its in-dwellers. Humans shape the environment (Berger 1990:4), create rules and conventions through the process of externalisation, whereupon this created reality gets a life of its own (objectivation) and starts acting autonomously, impacting human existence (internalisation). What we create eventually determines our existence. As cities are human creations it is to be expected that these urban realities can, according to Berger's theory, start functioning autonomously and eventually start prescribing ways of existence. This would imply that the city as created reality starts setting conditions for what religious existence within the confines of the city must look like.

Berger begins his interpretation of religion by observing that very little in human life is determined by instinct. Because we humans have a relatively short gestation period in the womb (compared to other species) (1990:5), we don't have time to develop very elaborate instinctual equipment. We have very few instincts, and the ones we have are quite weak. So we have few specific responses to specific stimuli 'patterned' into us. This means that in every situation, we have a very large range of options for responding. Every time we externalise ourselves we change the environment, which creates a new set of choices to be faced. Humans have to create a world to exist in (Berger 1990:5). For Berger (1990:25), religion is the result of human construction of a 'sacred' cosmos.

Because the relationship between self and world is always changing, we are always 'off balance' (Berger 1990:5). What we want more than anything else, according to this sociological view, is to be in balance – to have a permanent stable order in our lives, so that we can predict both the environment and the responses to it that we and others around us will choose.

Referring back to Mumford's (1940) definition and incorporating that of Foucault regarding the apparatus theory, this may seem true:

> The future is bound up with the creation of a new pattern of cultural activity, which shall be neither national nor parochial; but more intimate than the first and more open to worldwide forces and impulses and ideas than the second. We must construct an intimate regional framework for a balanced social and personal life, in harmony with the underlying possibilities of landscapes and regional resources and people; and we must achieve this local balance within the larger framework of the world as a whole. The world of barbarous men is bent on predatory exploit and military conquest. We are already involved in it and threatened by it. (p. 540)

Society's main project is to create this sense of stable predictable order and to make all of us believe in it, although in fact it is always a false illusion. Society does this by 'objectivating', which means teaching us to make the same choices over and over again as we externalise ourselves and thereby assigning meaning to reality (Berger 1990:27).

More importantly, society wants us to believe that those choices aren't really choices. Society wants us to act as if they are necessary and inevitable; as if they are an objective reality beyond our ability to change. For example, in our society we teach little children that people don't eat with their hands, they use silverware, even though in many societies people do eat with their hands. However, we want our children to believe that they must use silverware, as if that were an objective fact. This is part of the imparting of culture through the process of externalisation (Berger 1990:10).

Society also wants us to believe that the particular roles we play in life (e.g. child, student, worker, spouse, etc.) are not arbitrary, that they could not be done any differently than we

do them now. The process of learning these roles is called 'socialisation' (Berger 1990:30). In order for socialisation to work effectively, we must also feel that our inner identity depends on playing those roles.

In Berger's terms, we must 'internalise' the supposedly objective realities that society imposes upon us. We must feel that our inner worth, our inner sense of 'rightness', depends on conforming to society's way of doing things. For example, we must feel not only mistaken but guilty, sinful or 'bad' if we eat with our hands. To conform to the religious demands of society, however, becomes problematic. Learning social and ethical skills from society can be helpful, but how to react to society's expectation to adapt to some form or other of religion can be problematic.

To denote the sum total of all the patterns that a particular society objectivates and wants individuals to internalise, Berger (1990:19–20) uses the term *nomos*. The nomos is made up of the society's worldview (all its knowledge about how things are) and its ethos (all its values and ways of living), contributing to the formation of human behaviour in the world.

The nomos is the product of a long series of human choices, all of which could have been made differently. However, the society, through its process of socialisation, hopes to persuade individuals that its nomos is objectively true and therefore unchangeable (Berger 1990:19). The society wants the nomos to be taken for granted as much as possible. Society is usually pretty successful at this. Because we come out of the womb with such weak instinctual patterns (Berger 1990:5), we simply don't know what to do. So for a long time we depend on our parents and other elders to teach us how to respond to the stimuli of the world. We usually have to trust them and do things the way they do things. However, every individual remains aware (however unconsciously) of some degree of freedom to act independently and go against the nomos. Because individuals as well as their environments are always changing, the nomos is inherently unstable (Berger 1990:20).

Moreover, individuals eventually encounter other people who have a somewhat different nomos – even more so in a multicultural urban environment – so the truth of any given nomos appears to be somewhat subjective. The objective reality and permanence of the nomos are especially called into question by unusual experiences – for example, dreams, moments of insanity or encounters with death. Anything that threatens to undermine the nomos raises the possibility that we might end up without a nomos or changing allegiance to a nomos. Berger (1990:6, 21) calls this condition of being without a nomos 'anomy'; because anomy is always a lurking possibility, the society wants to strengthen its nomos as much as possible.

This is where religion plays a role.

The role of religion

Religion is based on the claim that the particular nomos of a given society is not merely one among many possible choices. Rather, religion claims that the nomos is rooted in the cosmos (the universe) itself, because the nomos is a mirror image of the nature or pattern of the cosmos (Berger 1990:55). Because the cosmos is eternal, the nomos is also eternal, according to this claim. Religion supports its claim by supplying symbols that give a detailed image of how the nomos is rooted in the cosmos. These symbols seem charged with a special 'sacred' power (Berger 1990:25). This power is supposed to be the power that undergirds cosmic reality. It threatens those who violate the nature of reality with doom, while rewarding those who go along with reality. 'Reality' in this sense means the patterns of the nomos, which are mirror images of the cosmos. The ultimate threat, however, is to lose the nomos altogether and be plunged into the chaos of anomy (Berger 1990:53, 87). Religious symbols seem so powerful because they express the most important value in life: the feeling that reality is a meaningful order (compare Berger 1990:27: human activity of assigning meaning to reality) not a random chaos. So religion hopes to persuade its followers that the universe, and the individual's as well as the group's life in the universe, are all based on the same unified and orderly pattern.

Religion, and the choice for or against religion, is what simplifies this debate. Although religion is not automatically part of a society, it could still be debated that religion could guide the society it forms part of. Not being part of any religious group is still a choice that could be made. However, here it is argued that religion and the choice for religion could guide a system. In a society that has objectified religion, it needs to be understood that religion could be seen and portrayed otherwise.

The importance between objectification and subjectification also needs to be touched on. Subjectification means becoming yourself, the social process of becoming ourselves, the offers that we draw on, taking up one of the discourses. This is self-management, self-realisation, comparing the self to other. There is variety, but limitation. Limitations arise through objectification.

Objectification – It expresses the ways that knowledge about people is produced. It also limits what kind of subject we can be, and invest in, in order to become ourselves (Berger 1990:4).

It could be stated then, that the apparatus of the city has objectified its inhabitants to become subjectified to its environment. This has caused religion to become quiet in a society that needs its religious voice to be heard. Religion has been objectified to become religion, understood as a city's type of religion (becoming an individual entity), but it needs to be re-envisioned as an integral part of the apparatus of the city, contributing to the created reality filled with meaning wherein humans can exist.

When this study focuses on the difference between these two concepts, it must be reiterated that this will only be done broadly. It is argued here that the apparatus of the city forces the subjects (urban dwellers) to perceive life in a certain way. Religion can therefore pave the way for a new understanding (compare Mumford 1940).

Berger argued that religion provides the nomos for the urban dwellers to respond and react to, whereas Agamben argued that the apparatus, that of the city, could never be eliminated or used correctly.

In order for a system, religion and the city, to maintain a certain balance, it is necessary to look at the imbalances. According to Ford (1992) three processes of change can take place in an unbalanced system. As argued earlier in this study, religion could give guidance in an urban environment that is in desperate need of coercion and togetherness.

As to the struggle against subjectification in the urban environment, religion needs to provide the corrective. Foucault (1982) reminds us of the struggle that does exist:

> Generally, it can be said that there are three types of struggles: either against forms of domination (ethnic, social, and religious); against forms of exploitation which separate individuals from what they produce; or against that which ties the individual to himself and submits him to others in this way (struggles against subjection, against forms of subjectivity and submission). (p. 781)

The urban environment needs change, and religion can work in this apparatus of the city – in other words, to subjectify (or de-subjectify) that which has become objectified by the apparatus of the city.

Religion and the city

It is very important to raise the question: what form and function will religion take on in an urban environment?

The urban area (city) became a shared space for different ethnic groups. This space is divided between different cultures, religions and social institutions. Determining how this space can be best utilised, keeping diversity in mind, must be the core focus. In a briefing paper, 'Sharing Space in Divided Cities' (2012), a report compiled by researchers and investigators from several institutions, the authors found that:

> In contested cities people from different communities have motivations for sharing spaces that often are not related to a desire for integration. Instead, sharing may be dependent upon practical concerns such as transport or shopping, reflecting a range of attitudes that form a 'spectrum of shared spaces'. In times of strife, shared space may host clashes. But it is important to keep in mind that tensions can rise and fall, sometimes unexpectedly, and that areas of shared use are often affected more than others. Sharing space may simply mean that people from either side of ethno-national or religious divides get to see others, observe their customs, and hear their languages as they go about their lives. (Urban Conflicts 2012: n.p.)

This study understands that there are different factors that influence the extent of sharing when it comes to people living in this shared space. Could religion and the mutual understanding of one another's customs be the way forward?

Cities are definitely not new inventions. Throughout history the development in urban design can be seen. Shifts in paradigms have also had an effect on the way in which religions functioned in society. Political effects have significantly changed the face of religion, ever since the fall of the close ties between state and church in the South African context, just to name one example. Even ecological debates have forced city planners to take into consideration the changes needed when creating space for nature. All of these aspects play an integrative part in our understanding of religion within the city.

In a postmodern context religion tends to be a private and internalised matter, requiring no specific physical space, but this seems to no longer be the case. Religion in a postmodern context still seeks physical space and ways of material expression. This becomes evident when observing the growing number of buildings with religious connections in and around the city. These buildings seem to withstand the challenges of time. Institutional religion still tries to compete with secular buildings springing up all around and with the developing of new buildings or transforming of existing buildings, filling them with new function. Even existing buildings are co-utilised in some cases for religious and non-religious purposes. The physical presentation of religion is an act of claiming presence and establishing cultural and religious identity (Beyers 2013:1).

Rapid and extreme urbanisation determines the face of the city. The question addressed here is how does urbanisation influence the way the sacred is perceived and accommodated? The city becomes the shared space for many different religions. What form and function will religion take on in an urban environment? How will different religions perceive their relationship with others with whom they share the city space?

The research conducted on urban development over the past century resulted in a magnitude of manuscripts. The abundance of material testifies to the prominence of the discussion but also to the complexity of the issue under investigation.

Theories on the city have always been in abundance. Experts from many disciplines have given their unique perspective: sociologists, geographers, architects, philosophers, economists, missionaries and social workers. It seems to be a field that is completely exhausted. This is however not the case.

This study indicates how the apparatus theory of Foucault could be a way to see different religions working together and also indicates how religion can still be an integral part of

the urban space today. Religion contributes to the meaning-giving process continued in the changing environment of the city. Religion requests space for diversity and a *habitus* in a world unhindered by pluralism and diversity.

For as long as society remains, religion will be able to function as an integral part of it. 'Religion is a social phenomenon. Society and, therefore, religion will continue to exist as long as human beings exist' (Durkheim 2008:36).

Throughout history, the city was the main concept of all human science. It gave expression to humanity's ideas and creativity. It was a way to showcase their prowess. There seems to have been a link between different systems (religion, politics, ecology, sociology, geography, architecture and philosophy) within this structure of what we describe as 'the city'.

Urbanisation may be seen as a negative factor only, but the positive characteristics need to be kept in mind too. The primary benefits of urbanisation are centralised population and a sustained economy. Communities are brought together and demand urban planners to think creatively and in a way that benefits a diverse group of people. Increased populations also motivate governments to improve public transport and interconnectedness.

The pro-urbanisation side points to the benefits that a concentration of human capital can bring, as different people live together, share ideas and come up with innovative solutions for problems that they may not have discovered if they lived in rural isolation. There are also environmental benefits to urbanisation; it takes less energy to run the smaller homes in cities, thus saving resources and decreasing carbon emissions.

However, the challenges for religion, politics, economics, culture and morality in human society have become a source of great concern, not only for religious leaders but also for political and social leaders around the world. There seems to be a major transformation in the way human beings interact with one another in contemporary society.

It has become necessary to look at these challenges:

> The debate on the role of religion and civil society takes place within the discourse of sociology. … the roots of the debate on civil society do lie partly in social philosophy. Religion is socially determined, that is, religion influences and is influenced by society. (Seligman 1992:2)

Important to notice here is the theory that religion is determined socially and vice versa. This could then mean that the urban society and context are beginning to change the face of religion. It must be noted that religion forms part of society and could be seen as the method through which all other structures could be brought together. In order to reach this goal, the apparatus theory as set out by Foucault gives direction.

Looking at the following account of ancient cities, it is clear that there was a definite structure in place for the sacred spaces to develop. It could be stated that cities were constructed, among other reasons, because of religion (Kotkin 2005:5). The relationship between nature and religion, as opposed to religion in an urban environment, is just as important an element to look at. Compare studies in this regard by Gomez and Van Herck (2012). It should be noted that the city was not the only place where religion could be practised. Nature played an important role, regarding the practice of religion and the space it allowed:

> For thousands of years, sacred space has shaped and provided deep meaning to cities and urban communities as well as to the health, well-being, and quality of life for the inhabitants. For the first time in history, a majority of the world's population is now living in urban areas. Government bonds, tax-increment financing and large-scale corporate returns now shape most growth. Despite the ascendance of economics as the touchstone for value and meaning in cities, sacred spaces are and will remain a vital part of healthy cities. (Foster 2012: n.p.)

Sacred spaces and gathering areas for worship have historically had a synergistic correlation with residential patterns of development. This historical trend has changed drastically. Urban areas are experiencing tremendous growth and change, especially with the diverse cultural values and faith traditions that shaped great cities of the past. It could be stated that a new dawn has been reached for religious institutions and sacred spaces. The importance of these sacred spaces has played an important role in the past and must be utilised to do so again. Religion as an apparatus could be the one feature in the urban environment that could guide the city in the appropriate direction.

Understanding religion as an organism will be key to understanding the features and functions of religions in the city. The very organic nature of the city enables theories on the city to constantly change as the form and function of cities change over time. It is necessary to state what is implied by 'organic nature' in this context:

> During the late nineteenth century, rapid social and economic changes negated the prevailing conception of the city as a uniform whole. Confronted with this disparity between the old urban definition and the new city of the late nineteenth century, social thinkers searched for a new concept that would correspond more closely to the divided urban community around them. Borrowing an analogy from natural history, these thinkers conceived of the city as an organism composed of interdependent neighborhoods/forms and sought to translate this concept into ways of dealing with the dislocations and problems in urban life. (Melvin 1987: n.p.)

Understanding and utilising urban space is very important. Multiple cultures, diverse groups of people and moral values being a dilemma are all factors that need to be kept in mind when trying to rethink the city. This is where a new understanding and function of religion is necessary. The aim of urbanisation is to create a global village. A truly urban world requires contribution, cooperation and commitment

from all people and institutions. Religion needs to be part of this process.

In order to conceptualise the present world urban situation and the current notion of urban, two key issues need to be understood. Firstly, the past, present and future trends of the city and urbanisation need to be reviewed. Secondly, a discussion needs to be undertaken to understand the notion of the city and also whether religion could give guidance in any way.

Conclusion

Religion is an undeniable part of the urban environment. This interaction between religion and city is most likely to be perpetuated because of the global rate of urbanisation. Urbanisation implies a growing multicultural environment. The city will become the only reality many children in the future will grow up to know. Humans from a social perspective are constantly in a process of creating reality, cosmosising reality in order to create an environment filled with meaning. The question addressed here is how religion will contribute to this world creation process in an urban context. Religion becomes part of the apparatus utilised to form (the process of externalising) reality. Once this reality has been constructed, through objectivation this created reality is filled with meaning, impacting on human existence and prescribing ways of existence. Upon this humans through the process of internalisation compromise to comply with the prescribed way of existence.

The apparatus theory of Foucault indicates how the city as system can infringe on the growth of religion in an urban environment. A re-calibration of the understanding of 'city' is needed to remove the power relation between the city and religion. These two concepts need not exist in a power-struggle relationship. In a postmodern environment there ought to exist an openness towards accommodating religion in the city. Religion does not usurp the power of the city over the lives of people. Instead, religion contributes to the empowerment of people living in the city to contribute to the well-being of all. Religion in the city therefore contributes to the process of building and constructing the face of the city.

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Authors' contribution

L.G. did the research. J.B. and L.G. drafted the manuscript and they equally contributed to this study.

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