Title:

European Integration and Russian Orthodoxy: two Multiple Modernities Perspectives

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Abstract:

This article introduces a distinction in the paradigm of multiple modernities between a comparative-civilizational and a post-secular perspective. It argues that the first, comparative-civilizational perspective, helps to understand modernization-processes in large cultural-civilizational units; whereas the second, post-secular viewpoint, focuses on actors and cultural domains within civilizational units and on inter-civilizational crossovers. The two perspectives are complementary. What we gain from this distinction is greater precision in the use of multiple modernities for explaining the place of religion in modern societies. The example of Russian Orthodoxy is used for clarifying the difference between these two perspectives: whereas from a comparative-civilizational viewpoint, Russian Orthodoxy may appear as Europe's 'other'; from a post-secular viewpoint, Orthodox religion is part of Europe's religious pluralist landscape and partakes in an ongoing process of defining the meaning of European political and cultural integration.

Keywords:

multiple modernities – post-secularism – Habermas – European integration – Russian Orthodoxy

Main text:

Introduction

With the return of religion as a vibrant research-topic in the social and political sciences over the last couple of decades, there has come along a diffusion of the theoretical paradigm of multiple modernities. Multiple modernities offer a historical and sociological analysis of cultural differences that avoids the strong implications of *clash-of-civilization* type of approaches, highlighting instead the persistence of religious, cultural and traditional patterns

in modernizing societies. In particular with regard to Europe, the view that variations in patterns of secularization and socio-political development may be explained through the study of religious-cultural trajectories seems to have gained acceptance. European integration – defined as cultural and political process which, in its most general sense, implies the overcoming of ideological divisions since the breakdown of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, and in its more concrete forms refers to the creation of common institutions such as the European Court of Human Rights and the European Union (see also the definition in: Katzenstein 2006) – becomes, from this angle, a matter of defining or achieving common ground between Europe's multiple modernities.

Two recent applications of the multiple modernities approach to the religious situation in Europe – Wilfried Spohn's article 'Europeanization, Religion and Collective Identities in an Enlarging Europe: A Multiple Modernities Perspective' (Spohn 2009) and Timothy Byrnes' and Peter Katzenstein's edited volume *Religion in an Expanding Europe* (Byrnes et al. 2006) – demonstrate, however, that the paradigm can be used in two different ways, leading to different conclusions and results. In a comparative-civilizational key, European integration becomes a matter of encounter between a thoroughly secularized Western Christian civilization and the Eastern and South-Eastern Orthodox Christian and Muslim civilizations. For Wilfried Spohn, these different civilizational spheres and their varying religious-secular trajectories constitute the main obstacle to European integration (Spohn 2009). From a perspective focused more narrowly on actors and institutions, it is instead religious actors and transnational religious alliances that appear as a hindrance to further integration (Katzenstein 2006). In this article, I would like to clarify the different starting points and implications of these two variants of the multiple modernities paradigm, which I call 'comparative-civilizational' and 'post-secular' respectively. Looking more closely at present religious-secular debates and using Russian Orthodoxy as an example, I want to show that fault-lines of religious-secular conflict oscillate between civilizational borders and ideological secularist-religious conflict-lines. The paradigm of multiple modernities can help to explain both of these phenomena, and for this reason it is in need of further specification.

Russian Orthodoxy confronting secularism and religious pluralism

Orthodox Christianity in Europe today could be seen as a religion on the rise, re-emerging after decades of suppression under communist regimes and intrinsically bound up with the nationalist revival in many Eastern European countries. In all Orthodox countries in former communist Europe, Churches have benefited from an increase in religious attachment of the population. Olaf Müller, who has compared survey-data on religiousness in former Communist Europe in the 1990s, registers only a moderate increase in church-attendance in

the Orthodox countries, but finds evidence for the rise of a general attachment to and trust in the Orthodox Church. He even speaks about 'a huge religious revival' in Russia (Müller 2008: 70, see also: Inglehart et al. 2004: 111-32, Greeley 1994). Furthermore, in all Orthodox countries have the Churches been able to re-establish themselves as religious actors in the public sphere and have gained a certain degree of political influence. This is particularly the case in Russia, where the Orthodox Church's status as one 'traditional church' on Russian territory is emphasized in the preamble to the law on religions from 1997, which restricts religious pluralism in Russia (Davis 1997).

Despite this evidence, however, Eastern Orthodoxy today appears not only as a religion on the rise, but also as a religion on the defensive. This point has been made by Sabrina Ramet, who shows that in many cases the Orthodox Churches find themselves in a defensive and apprehensive position with respect to phenomena of societal modernization and Europeanization (Ramet 2006). Orthodox religion in Europe today is on the defensive at its borders – vis-à-vis the Western world with its secular and pluralist values and vis-à-vis other religions – but it appears equally defensive to the inside – vis-à-vis processes of modernization and secularization in the societies where it is rooted. The confrontation between Orthodox religion and secularism and religious pluralism is a double-confrontation: it affects the Orthodox Churches' external relations as well as their internal constitution and place in society.

This double-confrontation of Orthodoxy with secularism and religious pluralism is exemplified in a particularly clear manner by recent developments inside the Russian Orthodox Church. For the last decade, the Russian Orthodox Church has confronted itself actively with the effects of modernization and globalization. In a move unprecedented in Orthodox history, the Patriarchy of Moscow issued, in 2000, a document entitled *The Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church* (Russian Orthodox Church 2000) (henceforth: *Social Doctrine*), followed, in 2008, by a document dedicated to the question of human rights, *The Russian Orthodox Church's Basic Teaching on Human Dignity, Freedom and Rights* (henceforth: *Human Rights Doctrine*) (Russian Orthodox Church 2008). These documents lay out the Russian Orthodox Church's position on a variety of socio-cultural phenomena of modernity, encompassing a whole range of issues from state-church-relations and law to secularism, from culture to bioethics and human rights. The current Patriarch of Moscow Kirill, elected into office in 2009 and former head of the Department for External Church Relations, was the chief responsible for both documents. It is apparent that he has made the confrontation of Orthodox religion with modernity a central theme of his patriarchy.

When the *Social Doctrine* was published in 2000, many commentators interpreted the mere fact of its formulation as an important step of Russian Orthodoxy on its way towards a modern secular political order. Rudolf Uertz, for example, wrote 'the document contains

important impulses for a constructive confrontation with the modern order' (Uertz 2004: 95); and Konstantin Kostjuk interpreted the *Social Doctrine* as important step by the Russian Orthodox Church on its way towards becoming more modern. He pointed out that the formulation of the document constituted a leap into a modern regime of communication and self-positioning, but also observed that this modern impulse stood in tension with the predominantly conservative content of the text (Kostjuk 2004, 2001). Also Alexander Agadjanian emphasized the ambivalence of the document between a pragmatic social and a conservative political agenda (Agadjanian 2003).

The *Social Doctrine* addressed members of the Russian Orthodox Church and Russian society as a whole. Even though it found resonance also outside Russia and especially in the Catholic world (Uertz et al. 2004), its main intended audience appeared domestic. With this document, the Church quite clearly reacted to the social upheaval of Russian society since the breakdown of the Soviet Union, which had brought many freedoms, but also many social and economic problems and, in the eyes of the Church, moral decline. In the document, the Church offered guidelines for the Orthodox believer on questions such as abortion, contraception, euthanasia, genetic engineering and even environmental protection. Especially the political agenda of the *Social Doctrine* constituted a novelty: the Russian Orthodox Church defined itself as independent from the Russian state and government. Drawing a lesson from the history of subordination under the Tsarist state and of suppression by the Soviet state, the Church positioned itself as a potential counterplayer of the government and independent force in civil society (Alfeev 2003). This commitment to a separation of church and state is, as I have shown elsewhere, not necessarily of liberal nature (Stoeckl 2010), but it constituted a break with the long tradition of the symphonic model of church-state relations characteristic of Orthodox Christianity.

Rather than interpreting the document as evidence for a rise of Orthodox religion in Russia, I am inclined to interpret it as a gesture of self-defence. Orthodoxy in Russia today competes as much with other religions as with secularist worldviews; with the *Social Doctrine* it stakes its claims inside a heterogeneous and pluralist Russian society. The document represents as much a confrontation with modernity as an attempt of partial reconciliation. Notwithstanding its conservatism in content, the mere fact that the Orthodox Church acknowledged and responded to questions of life in modern societies suggests that it is defending a position of relevance under conditions of secular and religious pluralist modernity.

The *Human Rights Doctrine* was published in 2008. It has the character of a final word to the ongoing debate about human rights inside the Russian Orthodox Church, manifest in speeches and interventions by high Church officials during the preceding years (Agadjanian 2008: 14). Human rights enshrine freedom of conscience and equality of worldviews. From

the Church's perspective, they are therefore an instrument that both protects religion – one must not forget that the Orthodox Churches behind the Iron Curtain suffered persecution and abuses that are not yet forgotten – and an instrument that challenges religion, because it proclaims the equality of faiths. It is precisely this double-impact of human rights on religion that emerges clearly from an analysis of the Orthodox document.

The Russian sociologist of religion Agadjanian speaks of an 'inward' and 'outward' orientation of the document. The 'inward-orientation' consists in providing a clear guideline to Church members on how to deal with human rights issues and how to use this legal instrument for the purpose of protecting the rights of the Church and its members (Agadjanian 2008: 15). Orthodoxy here appears in a minority position, as 'an institutional, social and moral *enclave*, which uses the human rights rhetoric to create and protect its own niche, its own modest space within the global multicultural universe.' (Agadjanian 2008: 18) In its 'outward-orientation', on the contrary, the document addresses the human rights discourse more generally and makes a distinctively Orthodox contribution to a national and international debate about human rights. Here Russian Orthodoxy appears as majority-voice that wants 'to remind the Russian society, the Russian state (and the international community, for that matter) that the Russian Orthodox Church has been a "formative factor" for the Russian cultural ethos, and therefore Christian anthropology, Christian vision of dignity and freedom, Christian version of rights, *must define* – at least in a certain degree – the public discourse of values and morality.' (Agadjanian 2008: 18)

The two documents are examples of how the Russian Orthodox Church deals with the double-confrontation with secularism and religious pluralism. This confrontation concerns the church itself, her relation with believers, politics and society as a whole, and it also concerns the church's external relations and her place in the world. What I want to do now is to interpret these documents from two different theoretical angles: a comparative-civilizational, and a post-secular multiple modernities perspective.

European integration and Russian Orthodoxy: a comparative-civilizational multiple modernities approach

In a speech from 2006, the Patriarch of Moscow, at that time still Metropolitan of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, gave a motivation for the Church's engagement in the human rights debate. In his paper, read at the Tenth World Russian People's Council, a meeting that carried the title *Faith. The Person. The World. Russia's Mission in the 21st Century*, Kirill stated:

> 'There is an opinion that human rights are a universal norm. According to this view, there can be no Orthodox, Islamic, Buddhist, Russian or American concept of human rights since this would introduce relativity into the understanding of human rights, thus

considerably restricting their functioning in international life. This is the thinking of many politicians and public leaders. Indeed, one can understand the desire to preserve the universal character of the concept of rights and liberties that does not depend on any variables. In fact, Orthodox people are among those who do not object to the existence of certain universal rules of behavior in the modern world. But these rules must be truly universal. The question arises here: Can human rights as set forth today really claim to be universal? [...]' (Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad 2006)

This statement by Kirill, it seems to me, is predestined for interpretation from a multiple-modernities perspective. It presents the Russian Orthodox *Human Rights Doctrine* as one among competing codifications of human rights norms, comparable, perhaps, to the *Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights* (1981) or the *Bangkok Declaration of Human Rights* (1993). The basic idea is that the concept of human rights was generated and developed in Western countries and might not be applicable in the same fashion elsewhere. 'It should be admitted,' Kirill adds, 'that it succeeded in these countries, but also revealed its shortcomings.' Are Western standards of human happiness applicable to all countries and all cultures? he asks. Do other civilizations not also have their positive experience of social life? (Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad 2006) Kirill is not rejecting the idea of human rights; he is not denying the value of the concept as such. His statement does not have an anti-modern, pre-modern or 'fundamentalist' intent. Kirill is simply claiming that there can be multiple understandings of human rights and human happiness, and that the predominantly individualistic interpretation, which human rights have found in the West, might not be the most adequate elsewhere.

From a historical sociological perspective, the quote by Kirill confirms what the theory of multiple modernities, in the formulation of its chief representative S. N. Eisenstadt, has always argued: The Western trajectory of modernization must not be seen as the only possible pathway to modernity; instead, we find in the world a multiplicity of continually evolving modernities, each of which realizes a particular institutional and ideological interpretation of the modern programme according to specific cultural prerequisites (Eisenstadt 2000b, a, 2003, Eisenstadt et al. 1998). Religion represents one, if not the most important element among the cultural fundaments that shape the modernization-patterns of different societies. For Eisenstadt, religion does indeed constitute *the* main factor in the emergence of multiple modernities, since he sees multiple modernities rooted in earlier patterns of axial age civilizations, which, in turn, crystallize around religions (Eisenstadt 1986: 1).

The analysis of religion in Europe from this theoretical perspective pays special attention to the ways in which religions have shaped societies in the different parts of Europe. Whereas secularized Latin Christendom becomes the basis for the Western pattern

of modernity (Casanova 2006), Orthodox Christianity and Islam in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe assist to markedly different societal and political developments. This deeper level of civilizational analysis of Europe is made clear by Wilfried Spohn in his reply to Timothy Byrnes' and Peter Katzenstein' analysis of religion in Europe, which also takes a multiple modernities-perspective but does not extent it to a comparative-civilizational analysis (Byrnes et al. 2006). '[…] following more strictly Shmuel Eisenstadt's comparative-civilizational framework,' Spohn writes, 'European multiple modernity should not be restricted, as the Byrnes and Katzenstein volume does, to the continuing salience of the religious realm in its manifold religious organizations and actors alone but also considered in its constitutive institutional and cultural role for the secular realm of politics, states, nations and collective identities […].' (Spohn 2009: 360)

The Orthodox criticism of the Western model of human rights could be interpreted as a form of resistance and consequently as an obstacle to a deeper cultural and political integration between the Orthodox East and Western Europe. The argument about the inadequacy of the Western human rights discourse outside of the Western cultural sphere, which the Russian Orthodox Church is putting forward, is by no means a singular case in the global religious-secular debate: as pointed out by S. N. Eisenstadt '[…] most contemporary religious movements take a markedly confrontational attitude to the West, indeed to anything conceived as Western, seeking to appropriate modernity and the global system on their own, often anti-Western, terms.' (Eisenstadt 2000a: 22) Spohn observes that contemporary Europe is characterized by tensions between a Western European secular-cultural integration mode and an Eastern European revival of religion:

'The post-war division of Europe in 1945 enabled the developing unification of Western Europe on the basis of Latin Christianity and strongly secularizing societies in confrontation with communist-atheistic Eastern Europe in the context of the global East-West conflict. This European constellation contributed to the pacification of the conflictive potential of religion on both sides of the Iron Curtain. In post-1989 Europe, however, the restoration of the structural and cultural pluralism of European civilization has been accompanied by the expansion of the Western European secular integration project to the East. This enlarging process of Europeanization has been confronted with growing opposition and tensions between the Western European secular-cultural integration mode and the Eastern European revival of nationalism and religion. In addition, the contemporary wave of globalization with growing immigration and intensifying inter-civilizational interactions has contributed to increasing tensions between secularized Latin Christian Europe, revived Christian Orthodox Europe and the Islamic civilization.' (Spohn 2009: 362)

Spohn's interpretation of Orthodoxy in Europe privileges the external aspects of the Orthodox confrontation with secularism and religious pluralism; it sees Orthodox religion on the rise and in counter-tendency to Western Europe. The above-quoted statement by Kirill, at first sight, confirms this interpretation of a mounting contrast between Orthodox religion and Western secularism.

The contrast between Orthodoxy and secularism, however, is, as I have tried to show above, in reality a double-confrontation. It takes place not only on the level of external relations of the Russian Orthodox Church, where the Church seeks to define its place in a global context, but also on the domestic level. The Orthodox Churches in Eastern Europe today operate in a social context that puts them on the defensive also in their domestic spheres. We can read the documents I presented in support of the viewpoint that the Orthodox Christian tradition does indeed spell out a specific kind of modernity, but we should bear in mind that these documents rather *construct* such a modernity than actually *document* it. In other words, some caution is necessary when inferring from programmatic statements by officials of the Orthodox Church the existence of an Orthodox Christian civilizational sphere, which delineates a borderline relevant for European cultural and political integration. The comparative-civilizational multiple modernities perspective risks to brush over this difference.

Here, it seems to me, we should take very serious some critical assessments of civilizational theory that also shed new light on the paradigm of multiple modernities. Wolfgang Knöbl points out that the strong claims of civilizational theory to cultural and religious path-dependency are problematic. 'It doesn't seem to be very plausible,' he writes, 'to argue that individual and collective actors in different regions of a civilization and in very different periods of time were again and again reproducing the same civilizational arrangements by just drawing on the same intellectual and cultural resources […].' (Knöbl 2010: 93) In his view, the explanation of the durability and persistence of civilizational patterns requires an analysis of those mechanisms of power, authority, and control that guarantee the transmission of these very patterns. In this respect, Johann Arnason's work on 'imperial formations' offers a new key for interpretation (Arnason 2003), because it highlights that civilizational patterns have to be supported by political power in order to stabilize, and that, in turn, power-holders are interested in preserving and expanding institutional arrangements (Knöbl 2010: 93).

Looking at the *Social Doctrine* and the *Human Rights Doctrine* from this perspective, what moves to the forefront is precisely the *political* nature of these documents. What political impact did the two documents actually have and how effective were they in shaping the discursive landscape on values and norms in Russia? Some evidence, especially the restrictive law on religions from 1997, which privileges the Russian Orthodox Church among the religious communities in the Russian Federation, supports a civilizational-imperial

interpretation of the theological and political strategy of the Moscow Patriarchy, as does the appeal to the 'homeland' in one of the more controversial passages from the *Human Rights Doctrine*: 'One's human rights cannot be set against the values and interests of one's homeland, community and family.' (Russian Orthodox Church 2008 summary of section III) Looked at from this perspective, the Moscow Patriarchy could be interpreted to be acting in support of an imperial political strategy, inasmuch as its codification of social and human rights norms makes an attempt to set limits to ideological pluralism (see: Arnason 2003: 5).

This analysis works for the field of Russian Orthodoxy; it is, however, not equally applicable to Romanian, Serbian, Bulgarian, or Greek Orthodoxy, let alone to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Orthodox Diaspora Churches that belong to it. With regard to these churches, it would be much more difficult to argue from an imperial-civilizational perspective, or to lump them together into one type of Eastern Christian civilization. In terms of a multiple-modernities perspective on the religious situation of Europe, I would therefore subscribe to a criticism voiced by Peter Wagner: '[…] there is a distinct risk that the analysis of multiple modernities, if based on the Axial Age debate, succumbs to the temptation of repeating the error of European social theory of much of the nineteenth and twentieth century, namely to inscribe the forms of modernity into compact and stable units similar to the national societies of former theorizing.' (Wagner 2005: 100)

Orthodox religion feeds into a Europe of multiple modernities, and Russian Orthodoxy can be considered one example; but it is also this one example which brings to the forefront the difficulty of speaking about Christian Orthodox Europe as one civilization. Overtly strong claims to civilizational path-dependency run the risk of misrepresenting the religious situation in Europe. Below, I will therefore show how the post-secular multiple modernities approach re-locates conflict-lines from civilizational borders to secularist-religious tensions inside European societies, and also envisions a way of bridging these tensions.

European integration and Russian Orthodoxy: a post-secular multiple modernities approach

In Timothy Byrnes' and Peter Katzenstein's edited volume *Religion in an Expanding Europe*, Orthodox Christianity is called 'a self-consciously European religious tradition not very interested in undergoing Europeanization, as that process is currently defined' (Byrnes 2006: 296). The authors take a polemical stance to current secular definitions of Europeanization (see especially the chapter by José Casanova in that volume: Casanova 2006) and argue, instead, that the return of religion 'is likely to demand new terms of coexistence with secularism.' (Katzenstein 2006: 2) While from a comparative-civilizational viewpoint, the religious situation in Europe appears as a confrontation between Western secular modernity and modernities informed by different religious origins and different secularization processes,

Katzenstein draws our attention to the unsettled core of Western secular modernity itself. The return of religion leads, from this perspective, not only to a confrontation with those modernities that are informed by different religious traditions, but also to a confrontation with the religious-secular identity of Western Europe itself: 'Religion continues to lurk underneath the veneer of European secularization. […] Legal and cultural Europeanization have left problematic and undefined the core of the European project. In the future religion may help fill that core by offering a focal point for political debate, engagement, and conflict.' (Katzenstein 2006). What I want to argue in the rest of this paper is that the moment we draw together in *one* theoretical framework the idea of a confrontation of multiple modernities *and* the observation that this confrontation leads to a re-definition of Western modernity, we are shifting from a comparative-civilizational understanding of multiple modernities to a *post-secular* understanding.

The concept of post-secularism is introduced into the sociological and political-philosophical debate at a point in time when the revival of religion on a global scale and inside secular Western societies raises questions about the relationship between religion and politics, which modern social and political thought had considered resolved through the process of secularization and its epiphenomena of separation of church and state, privatization of religion and gradual decline of religion (Casanova 2001). Within this broad debate, it was Jürgen Habermas who coined the term 'post-secular society' in order to describe a societal condition in which the continuity and presence of religion in the public sphere has become accepted normality (Habermas 2006). Even though post-secular positions have also been advanced by many other authors (for example: Rawls 1997, Walzer 2007, Audi 2000), the focus in this paper will be on Habermas as key-contributor to the philosophical debate on post-secularism over the last fifteen years (Habermas 1996, 2008, Habermas et al. 2010).

Habermas' paradigm of post-secularity has two critical edges: the first concerns the religious citizen; the second the secular citizen. He formulates certain requirements for equal dialogue between the two. With regard to the secular citizen, this requirement is a post-secular consciousness and a principled openness to the religious argument. With regard to the religious citizen, a different kind of change in consciousness is required: a '"modernization of religious consciousness" as a response to the challenges religious traditions have been facing in view of the fact of pluralism, the emergence of modern science, and the spread of positive law and profane morality.' (Habermas 2006: 13) This modernization consists in three steps for Habermas:

> 'Religious citizens must develop an epistemic attitude toward other religions and world views that they encounter within a universe of discourse hitherto occupied only by their own religion. They succeed to the degree that they self-reflectively relate their

religious beliefs to the statements of competing doctrines of salvation in such a way that they do not endanger their own exclusive claim to truth.

Moreover, religious citizens must develop an epistemic stance toward the independence of secular from sacred knowledge and the institutionalized monopoly of modern scientific experts. They can only succeed if from their religious viewpoint they conceive the relationship of dogmatic and secular beliefs in such a way that the autonomous progress in secular knowledge cannot come to contradict their faith.

Finally, religious citizens must develop an epistemic stance toward the priority that secular reasons enjoy in the political arena. This can succeed only to the extent that they convincingly connect the egalitarian individualism and universalism of modern law and morality with the premises of their comprehensive doctrines.' (Habermas 2006: 14)

This process of self-reflection of religious traditions under conditions of modernity is, in Habermas' view, the necessary pre-condition for including religions into the post-secular public sphere. He is also confident that such modernization is indeed taking place, pointing out the example of the Catholic Church, which theologically clarified its standpoint towards modern society with the Second Vatican Council. He adds that 'in the final instance it is the faith and practice of the religious community that decides whether a dogmatic processing of the cognitive challenges of modernity has been "successful" or not.' (Habermas 2006: 14)

Habermas' understanding of religious modernization offers a new interpretative key for the self-positioning of the Russian Orthodox Church. We can read the *Social Doctrine* and the *Human Rights Doctrine* in the light of the criteria for a 'modernization of religious consciousness' and study them with the aim to assess the nature of this modernization. The Russian Orthodox Church looks back to decades of suppression, political collaboration, and theological and institutional neglect. What is at stake for Orthodox religion today is not only the response to modernization and globalization, but also a basic theological, intellectual and institutional recovery. The two documents are evidence that the Patriarch of Moscow has chosen to conduct this recovery in part in the modern language of social teaching and human rights.

The assessments whether these documents represent a genuine modernization or not differ (for a more negative assessment, see: Agadjanian 2010, for a more positive one, see: Thesing et al. 2001) and this article is not the place to settle the question once and for all. My point here is slightly different; namely that already by adopting the interpretative key of religious modernization within post-secular society, we are led to an important theoretical and methodological insight: the shift in perspective from a comparative-civilizational to a post-secular perspective restricts our conclusions; it makes us 'zoom in' on the Russian Orthodox Church as religious actor in the public sphere of the Russian Federation. In this way, it not

only becomes more difficult to generalize from one Orthodox Church to Eastern Christian civilization; also the inner make-up of Russian Orthodoxy and its place in rapidly modernizing Russian society emerges much clearer. The 'internal confrontation' of Russian Orthodoxy with secular society in Russia moves to the forefront; a confrontation in which the *Social Doctrine* and the *Human Rights Doctrine* serve to stake the claims in a larger debate about values and norms. The 'multiple' of multiple modernities is, from this perspective, not situated along cultural-geographical borderlines, but corresponds to different actors and their respective standpoints on modernization and secularization.

This debate is not restricted to Russia, it concerns all European societies. A good example for the way in which fault-lines of religious-secular debate in Europe shift from the border between East and West to the ideological front-line between religious conservatism and secularism, is the position of Metropolitan Hilarion, the present Head of the External Relations Department after Kirill's election as Patriarch. He considers the Catholic Church the chief ally of the Orthodox Church in the confrontation with 'militant secularism':

> '[...] militant secularism, in its efforts to diminish the influence of religion, has been inspired first and foremost by an anti-Catholic pathos. The Catholic Church, in turn, is the chief opponent of secularism and liberalism in Europe today. […] I am deeply convinced that the Roman Catholic Church is our main ally in Europe.' (Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev 2004)

Hilarion's statement makes clear that a Christian and a secular-humanist self-understanding of Europe are in serious conflict with each other; and that the opposing sides in this conflict cannot be located either East or West. Instead, on certain issues one is likely to find Moscow and the Vatican united on the same side of fence. Multiple modernities, again, do not exhaust themselves at civilizational borderlines; they cross over borders, intersect on topics of concern and can form trans-national alliances, irrespective even of deep-rooted historical divisions. A comparative-civilizational multiple modernities perspectives runs the risk of overlooking these alliances.

A post-secular multiple modernities approach not only brings out cross-civilizational affinities, the paradigm of post-secularity also envisions a way of bridging the gaps that result from religious-secularist debates. Post-secular political philosophy takes note of the rift between religious and secularist consciousness. It considers on equal footing religious doctrines and 'secularist secularism' and tries to scale down the disagreement between them in favor of a post-secular model of deliberation. This normative aspect of post-secular theory is relevant for a philosophical assessment of the confrontation between Russian Orthodoxy and secularism and of the arguments which Russian Orthodoxy brings forward in a global debate on human rights, values and norms.

Habermas' contribution to the debate about politics and religion is informed by his previous work on communicative action and deliberative democracy (Habermas 1993, 1996). What characterizes this work is the insistence on universalism as a valid category in modern political discourse. Universalism, this is Habermas' most basic position, does not lie out there in 'principles from nowhere', nor do we need to abandon the idea of universality in the light of a multiplicity of moralities and beliefs; agreement on 'principles valid for all' can, instead, emerge in the process of communication and deliberation, they can be the fruit of a mutual learning process and general consent.

Habermas' appeal to universalism is an appeal in degrees. It depends on how we understand the 'all' in the 'principles valid for all'. In the initial formulation and intention of Habermas' philosophical work, this 'all' consisted in the members of a constitutional democratic state. It therefore comprised, necessarily, secular as well as religious citizens. From the normative starting point that only equal and democratic deliberation leads to the kind of universally agreed upon political ethic that should be characteristic of constitutional democracies, it is only logical that also the dialogue between the religious and secular citizen must take place under conditions of equality. This equality is threatened, however, when the secular public discourse renders it difficult for religious citizens to voice their arguments. Post-secularism is a response to this very particular problem. The main point lies in the assertion that not only religious citizens should be asked to translate their claims into the language of secular public discourse, but also the non-religious citizen is asked to play her part, namely, to scale down her secularist aspirations. Only in that case can we expect equal conditions of communication and the possibility of mutual comprehension.

Reading Habermas carefully we note that the normative desirability of post-secular deliberation is based on two kinds of reasoning: one the one hand, it follows structurally from the general theory of deliberative democracy; on the other hand, it follows philosophically from the principled openness of the communicative situation. We can never know beforehand which reasons will respond best to the complex reality of decision-making processes. The following long quote by Habermas explains the normative-philosophical aspect of post-secularism very well:

> 'Religious traditions have a special power to articulate moral intuitions, especially with regard to vulnerable forms of communal life. In the event of the corresponding political debates, this potential makes religious speech a serious candidate to transporting possible truth contents, which can then be translated from the vocabulary of a particular religious community into a generally accessible language. […] This requirement of translation must be conceived as a cooperative task in which the non-religious citizens must likewise participate, if their religious fellow citizens are not to be encumbered with an asymmetrical burden. [...] the secular citizens must open their

minds to the possible truth content of those presentations and enter into dialogues from which religious reasons then might well emerge in the transformed guise of generally accessible arguments.' (Habermas 2006: 10-1)

In recent writings, Habermas has taken the argument for post-secular society beyond the limits of a constitutional democracy and nation-state (Habermas 2001a, see also: Kratochwil et al. 2009) and has made explicit the compatibility of post-secularism and the paradigm of multiple modernities: 'I consider the program of the group around Shmuel Eisenstadt and its comparative research on civilizations promising and informative. In the emerging world society […] there are, as it were, by now only modern societies, but these appear in the form of multiple modernities because the great world religions have had a great culture-forming power over the centuries, and they have not yet entirely lost this power.' (Habermas et al. 2010) Just as the Western self-understanding of modernity emerged from the confrontation with tradition, this dialectic between tradition and modernity repeats itself also in other parts of the world. 'There, too,' Habermas adds, 'one reaches back to one's own traditions to *confront* the challenges of societal modernization, rather than to succumb to them.' Against this background, intercultural discourses about the foundations of a more just international order should no longer be conducted one-sidedly, but these discourses ought to take place under the symmetrical conditions of mutual perspective-taking, with the West as one participant among others. (Habermas et al. 2010) The pluralistic and multicultural society of Habermas' earlier writings is here expanded to comprise a 'world society' made up of different nations and cultural traditions.

Habermas' theory of a post-secular world society, which sees a world society of multiple modernities engaged in a deliberation about norms that can be considered overarching and universal, offers a valid interpretative key for the Russian Orthodox position on human rights. Coming back to the statement by the Patriarch of Moscow quoted earlier, it should be stressed that in his speech in front of the Tenth World Russian People's Council, Kirill actually did more than simply propose that multiple conceptions of human rights should be considered valid: he expressed himself in favour of a *universal* conception of human rights. Perfectly in line with post-secular reasoning, Kirill appealed to fair rules of deliberation about rules and norms when he said: 'Orthodox people are among those who do not object to the existence of certain universal rules of behavior in the modern world. But these rules must be truly universal. The question arises here: Can human rights as set forth today really claim to be universal?' (Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad 2006) Kirill's statement resonates with Habermas' considerations on equality and universality: 'Independently of their cultural backgrounds all the participants intuitively know quite well that a consensus based on conviction cannot come about as long as symmetrical relations do not exist among them – relations of mutual recognition, mutual role-taking, a shared willingness

to consider one's own tradition with the eyes of the stranger, and to learn from one another, and so forth.' (Habermas 2001b: 129)

From a post-secular multiple modernities perspective, normative assumptions and self-definitions of different modernity-regimes become exposed to critique and change. For Western modernity, this means that it is confronted with alternative understandings of modernity not only at its borderlines, but also 'inside', with regard to its own normative self-definition. What is at stake is the very definition of the relationship between secularity and religion in the West. The question of human rights is a crucial topic in this respect because of its centrality for the Western self-understanding. While the example of the Russian Orthodox intervention in the human rights debate shows that in a post-secular world of multiple modernities concrete definitions of human freedom, rights, and agency are again open to debate, the conceptualization of post-secular deliberation formulated by Habermas makes clear that such a debate does not take place between sealed-off civilizational spheres, but between different actors with their own understanding of modernity, which have the potential to change their position and thereby transform the conditions of confrontation and debate.

Conclusion

This article has introduced the distinction between a comparative-civilizational and a post-secular perspective within the paradigm of multiple modernities. I have argued that the first, comparative-civilizational perspective is useful for understanding modernization-processes in large cultural-civilizational units and should be underpinned by an analysis of the political processes that underlie the formation of modernity-regimes in order to avoid overtly strong claims to civilizational path-dependency. The second, post-secular multiple modernities perspective, focuses on actors and cultural domains within civilizational units and highlights inter-civilizational crossovers between and ambiguities within modernity-regimes. The two perspectives are complementary and sharpen the potential of the multiple modernities paradigm to explain the place of religion in modern societies. Given the popularity of multiple modernities in present sociological and political theory, greater precision seems desirable in order to prevent that the appeal to multiple modernities becomes not more than a general catch-phrase for signaling plurality.

With regard to Europe, it becomes clear that we should look at European cultural and political integration both from a comparative-civilizational (imperial-civilizational) and a post-secular perspective of multiple modernities, in order to explain differences as well as convergences, singular cultural constellations as well as inter-civilizational crossovers. The example of Russian Orthodoxy has been useful for clarifying the potential of the two perspectives with regard to explaining the role of religion in European integration. From a

comparative-civilizational viewpoint, Russian Orthodoxy may appear as the 'other' to secular Western Europe (Neumann 1999); whereas from a post-secular viewpoint, it partakes in an ongoing process of defining the meaning of European political and cultural integration. Orthodox religion is undergoing a process of modernization that implies both a re-definition of its place inside the societies where it is traditionally represented, as well as of its position in the larger European religious pluralist landscape. European integration, the overcoming of ideological divisions and the creation of shared institutions, is a process of defining common ground between Europe's multiple modernities, and it includes the re-negotiation of the place of religion.

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