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VSEBINA / INDICE GENERALE / CONTENTS

- Mojca Cerkvenik:** *Intorno la Difficoltà di ben tradurre* (1743): Gian Rinaldo Carli e la traduzione 321
Intorno la Difficoltà di ben tradurre (1743): *Gian Rinaldo Carli and Translation*
Intorno la Difficoltà di ben tradurre (1743): *Gian Rinaldo Carli in prevajanje*
- Mojca Kumin Horvat & Januška Gostenčnik:**
 Slovenian Dialectal Diversity as Presented in the Slovenian Linguistic Atlas 333
La diversità dialettale slovena presentata nell'Atlante linguistico sloveno
Slovenska narečna raznolikost v Slovenskem lingvističnem atlasu
- Marija Jurić Pahor:** »Najprej mi, potem vi« koroški Slovenci spričo terorja in nasilja nad Judi v času nacionalsocializma 347
»Prima noi, poi voi«: gli sloveni carinziani alla luce del terrore e della violenza contro gli Ebrei ai tempi del nazionalsocialismo
»First Us, Then You«: Carinthian Slovenes in the Face of Terror and Violence against the Jews in the Time of National Socialism
- Reza Dehghani, Rahmat Hajimineh & Hossein Rassouli:** The Effect of Cultural Policies in Reza Shah's Period on the Status of Religious Minorities' Schools in Sanandaj (Jews and Christians) 367
Gli effetti delle politiche culturali del periodo di Reza Shah sullo status delle scuole delle minoranze religiose (degli ebrei e cristiani) a Sanandaj
Učinki kulturnih politik v obdobju Reze Šaha na položaj šol judovske in krščanske manjšine v Sanandadžu
- Željko Boneta:** Relationship between Religious Socialization in Childhood and Actual Religiosity in Student Age: The Case of Croatian Students from the University of Rijeka 387
Connessione tra socializzazione religiosa nell'infanzia e religiosità attuale in età studentesca: il caso degli studenti Croati dell'Università di Fiume
Povezave med religiozno socializacijo v otroštvu in aktualno religioznostjo v študentskih letih: primer hrvaških študentov Univerze na Reki
- Marjan Hočevár, Sanja Bojanić & Tomaž Bartol:**
 Istria as a Site and as a Subject Matter in the Production and Organization of Regional Knowledge: Bibliometric and Sociological Analysis 405
L'Istria come sito e come soggetto nella produzione e organizzazione del sapere regionale: analisi bibliometrica e sociologica
Istra kot kraj in kot predmet obravnave v produkciji in organizaciji regionalnega znanja: bibliometrična in sociološka analiza
- Milica Vuković-Stamatović:** »Accessing the EU is Like Running on a Treadmill in the Gym«: How the EU Accession Process is Metaphorically Presented in the Online Media of Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina 427
«Accedere all'UE è come correre sul tapis roulant»: la presentazione metaforica del processo dell'adesione all'UE nei media digitali in Serbia, Montenegro e Bosnia-Erzegovina
»Pristop k EU je kot tek na tekalni stezi v telovadnici«: metaforično predstavljanje procesa vključevanja v EU v digitalnih medijih v Srbiji, Črni gori ter Bosni in Hercegovini

Teodora Stanković: Competing Interests of the European Union and Russia in the Western Balkan Countries with a Comprehensive Analysis of Economic Leverage 449	Igor Ivanović: Advertising Discourse and the Pertaining Ethnography: An Ethnographic Case Study Conducted in Montenegro 465
<i>Interessi contrastanti dell'Unione Europea e della Russia nei paesi dei Balcani occidentali con un'analisi complessiva della leva economica</i>	<i>Ricerca etnografica del discorso pubblicitario: un caso di studio etnografico condotto in Montenegro</i>
<i>Konkurenčni interesi Evropske Unije in Rusije v državah Zahodnega Balkana s celovito analizo gospodarskega vzvoda</i>	<i>Etnografska raziskava oglaševalskega diskurza: etnografska študija primera v Črni gori</i>
	Jana Arbeiter & Maja Bučar: Global Partnership in Response to Covid-19 481
	<i>Partenariato globale nella risposta al covid-19</i>
	<i>Globalno partnerstvo kot odgovor na covid-19</i>
	Kazalo k slikam na ovitku 497
	<i>Indice delle foto di copertina</i> 497
	<i>Index to images on the cover</i> 497

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOUS SOCIALIZATION IN CHILDHOOD AND ACTUAL RELIGIOSITY IN STUDENT AGE: THE CASE OF CROATIAN STUDENTS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA

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ABSTRACT

After the collapse of socialism, Croatia experienced a religious revival and became one of the most religious ex-socialist countries. Religion and religiosity went from a privately tolerated but socially undesirable fact to becoming part of social normalcy, and formal religious socialization became a dominant pattern of raising children. The paper analyzes the relationship between religious socialization in childhood and actual religiosity in student age based on an online survey conducted in 2021 on a sample of students at the University of Rijeka (N=624). The results reveal a departure from the experience of primary socialization, which is dominantly manifested as secularization.

Keywords: (non)religious socialization, actual religiosity, socialization agents, students, secularization, Croatia

CONNESSIONE TRA SOCIALIZZAZIONE RELIGIOSA NELL'INFANZIA E RELIGIOSITÀ ATTUALE IN ETÀ STUDENTESCA: IL CASO DEGLI STUDENTI CROATI DELL'UNIVERSITÀ DI FIUME

SINTESI

Dopo il crollo del socialismo, la Croazia ha vissuto una rinascita religiosa ed è diventata uno dei paesi ex socialisti più religiosi. La religione e la religiosità, da un fatto privatamente tollerato ma socialmente indesiderabile, sono diventate parte della normalità sociale e la socializzazione religiosa formale è diventato il modello dominante di educazione dei figli. Il testo analizza la connessione tra socializzazione religiosa nell'infanzia e religiosità attuale in età studentesca, sulla base di un sondaggio online condotto nel 2021 su un campione di studenti dell'Università di Rijeka (N=624). I risultati rivelano un allontanamento dall'esperienza della socializzazione primaria, che si manifesta prevalentemente come secolarizzazione.

Parole chiave: socializzazione (non)religiosa, religiosità attuale, agenti di socializzazione, studenti, secolarizzazione, Croazia

INTRODUCTION¹

Religiosity has undergone dramatic changes in ex-socialist countries over the past half-century, which cannot be reduced to a common denominator. Some of these countries today, according to most indicators, are among the most religious countries in Europe (e.g., Poland and Romania), while others (e.g., the Czech Republic and Estonia) are at the forefront of secularism (Inglehart, 2021). The strength of the religious revival in ex-socialist countries depends on the role of religion and confessional organizations in the history and culture of a particular society, as well as the modernization processes within them. The World Values Survey (WVS) (Inglehart, 2021) and the European Values Survey (EVS) (Nikodem & Zrinščak, 2019) still place Croatia among ex-socialist countries with a high level of religiosity despite secularization trends. Understanding current and future trends of people's attachment to religion and the Church is not possible without an analysis of the intergenerational transmission of religiosity in a specific social context.

The following text² will attempt to determine the prevalence of different patterns of religious socialization (RS) and connect them to the students' actual religiosity (AR). The paper is structured as follows: a brief review of sociological analyses of RS is followed by a review of traditional and AR in Croatian society in the socialist and post-socialist periods, with an emphasis on the religiosity of the youth. The central part of the paper deals with the analysis of the results of empirical research, problematizing the connections between patterns of (non)religious socialization and AR, and the students' assessment of the influence of agents on their attitudes toward religion.

RELIGIOUS SOCIALIZATION

In fundamental texts (Prout & James, 1997), the new sociology of childhood justifiably criticizes classical socialization theories because children are treated as mere objects of the socialization process. The new paradigm considers that socialization is not a one-way process, and children are not passive objects that adults, primarily parents, shape "in their image and likeness". It should be noted that this critique least affects the process of early family RS because the only option for a child is to accept their parents' religion (Bruce, 1999). In other words, "religiosity without personal decision" is at play in early childhood (Vrcan, 1980). Sociologists mostly agree that the family is a key factor in RS (Petts, 2009; Petts & Desmond, 2016;

Regnerus & Uecker, 2006; Roberts & Yamane, 2012; Sherkat, 2003; Thiessen, 2016; Vermeer, 2014; Voas, 2015). Parents decide whether to raise children of that age: (non)religiously; (not) to include them in the religious community; (not) to practice faith together; (not) to enroll them in religious education, etc. "The family is the place where the intergenerational transmission of religious beliefs and practices takes place and thus is of crucial importance for the persistence and continuation of religious traditions and communities" (Vermeer, 2014, 402). Therefore, the theory of social learning is the most common theoretical starting point for an RS analysis. "Primary socialization mechanisms (i.e., family) are critical for how and why children approach religious or secular worldviews" (Thiessen, 2016, 9). Research has found that parental instruction, everyday family religious atmosphere, and the quality of child-parent relationships increase the chance of successful transmission (Petts, 2009). By maintaining social ties with families with a similar worldview, parents place their children in the earliest childhood in a broader (non)religious atmosphere of primary socialization and thus (pre)select potential friends (Kelley, 2015). Parents have the opportunity to prevent children's potential alienation from the family worldview by increasing socialization pressure, e.g., by enrolling children in religious schools or in religious education classes and thus ensure the continuity of the family RS. The transmission of religiosity is more successful when there is religious homogamy, i.e., when parents' attitudes about religion are harmonized and when parents' messages are supported by their consistent religious behavior (Bader & Desmond, 2006; Petts, 2009; Roberts & Yamane, 2012; Sherkat, 2003). Parents are role models for their children ("significant others"), and research has found great intergenerational similarities in religious identification, belief, and behavior (Gvozdanović et al., 2019; Petts, 2009). Proponents of this approach, which we might call the persistence perspective (Wasburn & Adkins Covert, 2017), argue that childhood patterns and preferences resist life distractions and persist into adulthood and play a key role in shaping one's (non) religiosity (Petts & Desmond, 2016; Thiessen, 2016; Vermeer, 2014).

As children grow older, parental control weakens, and the influence of peer groups, the school, and the media (Lövheim, 2012), whose worldview may be at odds with that of the family, strengthens (Vermeer, 2014). Children/young people are becoming increasingly active actors "in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around

1 This work has been fully supported by the University of Rijeka under the project number uniri-drustv-18-226.

2 The following abbreviations appear in the text: RS= religious socialization; ARES= attending religious education at school; AR= actual religiosity; RSR=religiously socialized respondents; PRSR= partially religiously socialized respondents; NRSR= non-religiously socialized respondents.

them and of the societies in which they live" (Prout & James, 1997, 8). Critical periods "adolescence and emerging adulthood are life stages often characterized by religious instability, but also ones that play a key role in the development of a religious identity" (Petts & Desmond, 2016, 241). In the analysis of the political socialization process, the thesis that includes the possibility of deviating from the parental worldview is called the lifetime openness perspective (Wasburn & Adkins Covert, 2017). People during their lives may change their religion or become more or less religious in relation to socialization in their childhood. However, confessional conversions in Western societies are relatively rare (Vermeer et al., 2011), and people mostly choose a partner and environment that shares their denomination (Sherkat, 2003).

Changes in the level of individual religiosity occur more frequently. This may be due to changes in the social context, such as the pronounced growth of AR in Croatian society after the collapse of socialism (Marinović-Jerolimov & Jokić, 2010). The instability of religiosity is related to the period of late adolescence or emerging adulthood, when there may be a weakening but also a strengthening (Hill, 2009; Petts & Desmond, 2016) of religiosity among youth. Most research has found that a more common pattern is a decrease in religiosity associated with enrollment in higher education and separation from parents. For example, Uecker et al. (2007) found that participation and identification among young adult Americans have declined by 30–40%. Studying is considered the most critical period for maintaining the religiosity adopted and practiced in childhood (Petts & Desmond, 2016). Regnerus & Uecker (2006) detected the reasons for erosion in a weak family RS, the strengthening of individual freedom, peer influence, and opportunities to independently choose activities in a new environment that are contrary to previous religious upbringing (e.g., debauched hedonistic life, drug use, premarital sexuality). Sherkat found the cause of turning away from religion in the negative impact of atheism-prone professors of humanities and social sciences, as opposed to "college professors, hard scientists – physicists, mathematicians, biologists, engineers, and so on – [who] tend to express orthodox religious beliefs, and they attend church and maintain religious affiliations" (Sherkat, 2003, 161). Uecker et al. (2007) hold the view that the expansion of the cognitive horizon leads to the questioning of traditional religious values but that higher education per se is not secularized. The authors believe that American universities are becoming places of vital religiosity and that postmodern discourse favors religion and spiritualism. Although acknowledging that "religious involvement is simply not a priority among this generation of young adults" (Uecker et al. 2007, 1686), the authors argue that "faith simply remains in the background of students'

lives as a part of who they are, but not a part they talk about much with their peers or professors" (Uecker et al., 2007, 1683). American research argues that this is a temporary decrease in religious participation while spirituality continues to rank high in student life (Hill, 2009; Mayrl & Oeur, 2009; Uecker et al., 2007). By getting married, some of them will become religiously active again (McNamara & Abo-Zena, 2014; Petts, 2009; Petts & Desmond, 2016), yet they admit that the share of young people with this life path is on the decline.

Collet Sabe (2007), starting from Davie's thesis on "believing without belonging," holds that the consequence of the process of individualization is the removal of young people from traditional religiosity, but not from spirituality. The author believes that traditional socialization institutions (school, family, and church) are in deep crisis because they are blindly adhering to the classic socialization pattern that treats children and youth as passive objects, which young people resist and create new religious identities. Mere teaching of religious content at school, far from everyday experience, was appropriate for the parents' RS but not for their children. The author believes that the transmission of religion can be successful only if the religious content coincides with the everyday experience of young people.

Voas (2009), on the other hand, argues that the youth's distancing from religion cannot be explained either by current life circumstances (studying) or by individualization that leads to the discovery of new religions. New generations of young people are becoming increasingly indifferent to religion, and, with age, they will not become more religious. Based on the results of the European Social Survey, the author claims that "each generation in every country surveyed is less religious than the last" (Voas, 2009, 167). He calls the dominant European trend *fuzzy religiosity*, whereby this term refers to "maintaining a certain loyalty to tradition, albeit in a rather unrelated way" (Voas, 2009, 161). It is a generational phenomenon of deviation from religion; "it is a staging post on the road from religious to secular hegemony" (Voas, 2009, 167). Vermeer (2014) found the cause of the weakening of youth religiosity in the mismatch of religious ideas and institutional church practice, while Bagg and Voas (2010) reported a weakening of parents' participation and a change in social desirability, i.e., increasing acceptance of secular culture.

American research (Hill, 2009; Petts, 2009; Mayrl & Oeur, 2009) found that despite the current suspension of religious behavior, most young people claim that religion is an important and very important aspect of their lives (McNamara & Abo-Zena, 2014; Petts & Desmond, 2016). British research reveals a different picture. Voas and Crockett (2005) determined that the majority (63% of boys and 58% of girls) of young

people believe that religion does not affect their lives. In British society, unlike in American society, religion has become irrelevant in everyday life, and non-religiosity is socially acceptable.

Religion is simply not very often on the British mind – whether God exists or not, He plays very little role in the lives of most people. And yet, despite the lack of daily interference, Christianity has not disappeared from the backdrop of society, with a majority of Britons holding to a belief in some sort of God and identification as some sort of Christian. (Bagg & Voas, 2010, 108)

RELIGIOSITY IN SOCIALIST CROATIA (YUGOSLAVIA)

In order to comprehend the current context of Croatian society, which is vital for understanding the specifics of its RS (Kelley, 2015; Vermeer et al., 2011), it is necessary to briefly indicate the changes in religiosity in the socialist period, during its collapse and the disintegration of socialist Yugoslavia in the 1990s and after the establishment of the Republic of Croatia.

Religiosity, until the end of World War II, in the predominantly agrarian Croatian society, had the attribute of a normal social fact, and the largest religious organization – the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), was an important public cultural and political factor (Vrcan, 2001). With the establishment of the socialist order, the position of religion and the RCC began radically changing. The time had come “for the systematic ghettoization of religion and more or less constant institutional supervision and pressure on religion, as well as the systematic favoritism of atheism and non-religiousness in general” (Vrcan, 2001, 59). The systematic atheization of society is a consequence of (1) the ideological agenda of the Communist Party; (2) “unresolved relations” between the RCC and the communist movement, characterized by a long tradition of intolerance and mutual stigmatization; and (3) tacit legitimacy given by the RCC in Croatia to the pro-fascist Independent State of Croatia during World War II. (Perica, 2002). From the very beginning, the RCC marked the communist movement as one of the greatest evils of the time,³ while religion was marked by the communist authorities as opium for the people.⁴ In the war’s aftermath, the relationship between the government and the top of the local RCC hierarchy varied from open conflict to cooperation (Zrinščak, 1993; Mithans, 2020). In the first wave, the socialist regime drastically limited the

rights of the RCC, nationalizing part of its property and acting repressively against priests, especially those compromised in the war. Sociologist of religion and priest Ivan Grubišić stated that the second-class social position of religion was visible in the prohibition of public religious rites, media ignorance of religion, atheistic ideologization of education, discrimination of practical believers in employment, prohibition of wearing religious symbols in the army, etc. (Grubišić, 1993). The strained relations between the two elites eased in the late 1960s and soon turned into politically mutually beneficial cooperation, culminating in a socialist leader’s first official visit to the Vatican in 1971 – the meeting between the SFRY President Josip Broz Tito and Pope Paul VI. Grubišić (1996) noted that ordinary citizens – practical believers – benefited the least from the improvement of relations between the elites. The incompatibility of communist political engagement and religiosity led to the social marginalization of practical believers and the rejection or concealment of practicing religiosity among those who aspired to social promotion. On the contrary, by witnessing one’s own faith, an individual consciously chooses a marginal social position (Grubišić, 1996). The consequence of the systematic atheization of society, which weakened considerably in the 1980s, is exogenously induced secularization.

The second factor that acts as an endogenous cause of secularization is the modernization of Croatian society. The territory of Croatia was on the margins of the first wave of European modernization processes, which affected it only lightly and with great delay. The main actor in the second (socialist) wave of modernization was the Communist Party, which sought to shape society in accordance with its ideological postulates. In the beginnings of “socialist construction,” the epicenter of modernization initiatives was narrowed to the voluntary decisions of a group of ideologically enlightened revolutionaries, who based their legitimacy on the merits of war, which, of course, is not a guarantee of modernization success. Biological laws inevitably impose the need for the “routinization of charisma” (Weber) so that a key role in the system is taken over, as time has shown, by an inefficient bureaucratic apparatus. Despite many weaknesses, socialist modernization has radically changed the structure of Croatian society (Županov, 1995). It should be emphasized that some Croatian regions are more strongly affected by modernization processes than others, which has left visible differences in religiosity (Boneta, 2000; Boneta & Banovac, 2007; Marinović-Jerolimov & Zrinščak, 2006; Vrcan, 2001).

³ For example, in the appendix (Syllabus) of the encyclical of Pope Pius IX *Quanta Cura* from 1864.

⁴ The phrase *opium for the people* follows from the Enlightenment critique of religion as a means by which the cunning elite manipulated the ignorant populace. It is a distorted interpretation of Marx, who uses the phrase *opium of the people*, criticizing social conditions (“inverted world”), in which religion is an illusory way of overcoming inhuman conditions, “the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering” (Marx, 1992, 244).

Neither the systematic atheization of society nor the socialist (semi)modernization has significantly disrupted the traditional religiosity, which is mostly present and deeply rooted in the population. The share of the confessionally unidentified during the period of socialism never exceeded one-fifth of the population. "4% of the population claimed no confessional affiliation in the Zagreb region in 1968, 6% in 1972, 15% in 1982, and 20% in 1989. At a national level, 12.5% of respondents declared that they did not adhere to any confession in 1953 and 18% in 1989" (Hazdovac Bajić et al., 2020, 45).⁵ The religious atmosphere is present in the vast majority of families during the holidays, participation in three key religious rituals (baptism, wedding, funeral) is almost ubiquitous, and two-thirds of respondents were religiously raised (Vrcan, 1980).⁶ Informal and formal RS, with the aim of maintaining traditional religiosity, are part of the experience of the majority of the Croatian population, which leads Vrcan to conclude that, during the period of stable socialism, the population was "connected with thousands of threads to religion and church" (Vrcan, 1980, 283).

Unlike traditional religiosity, AR was a characteristic of a distinct minority part of society. Practicing believers are largely recruited from politically deprived social groups – the working class⁷ and the peasantry. Secularization processes at the individual level are visible in the gap between traditional religiosity and AR, the dissolution of dogmatic belief, and reduced religious participation mainly of women, the elderly, villagers, and those with lower education (Vrcan, 1980). The most common strategy in the conditions of systematic atheization of society was the hibernation of the actual, publicly expressed religiosity while maintaining the traditional connection with religion and the church.

Research conducted at the end of the socialist period found that young people are "more affected than their parents by the process of separation from religion and church" (Marinović, 1988, 197). In addition to confessional identification, in all indicators, AR is a characteristic of the minority of young people⁸ (Marinović-Jerolimov & Jokić, 2010). Students are less religious than the average young person, noting that neither the religiosity nor the

non-religiosity of young people" are "homogeneous and consistent" (Marinović, 1988, 197).

RELIGIOSITY IN A NEW CONTEXT

Although expelled from the public sphere, religiosity – or rather confessionalism – in socialist Yugoslavia was the most important distinguishing marker between three ethnic groups: Croat = Catholic; Serb = Orthodox; Bosniak = Muslim (Sekulić et al., 2004; Vrcan, 2001). Identification of national and confessional identity is a characteristic of the eastern Croatian regions, which border Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. In the bloody disintegration of multiethnic and multi-confessional Yugoslav society in the early 1990s,

religions and major confessional communities, in particular Serb Orthodoxy, Catholicism among Croats and Bosnian Islam, were neither major nor independent social and political actors, and although these conflicts were basically of a political nature, they were directly involved, included, and intertwined in different ways and to different degrees, but also consciously engaged on opposite sides. (Vrcan, 2001, 20)

After the war and the change in the confessional structure of Croatian society from biconfessional to monoconfessional, the RCC in Croatia "collects dividends" (Ferrari) for its engagement in dismantling socialism, opposing Greater Serbia politics, and supporting the new ruling party (Croatian Democratic Union – HDZ). With the collapse of socialism, "religion penetrated the emptied public square mainly in the form of an overbearing and universally binding cultural and symbolic system, which practically at least determined the boundaries of political, cultural, moral, and even symbolic normality and abnormality" (Vrcan, 2001, 21). Government policy became pro-religious (Kelley, 2015) with desecularization intent. The state and the RCC signed four cooperation agreements (in 1996 and 1998) by which the RCC, as the largest religious community with the largest number of followers, received numerous concessions and privileges.⁹

5 "According to the 1953 census, 'only' 10% of the Slovenian population and 12% of the entire Yugoslavian population declared themselves atheists, which so disappointed the authorities that Yugoslav censuses no longer included questions about religious affiliation" (Mithans, 2020, 426).

6 The data are taken from research conducted in the Zagreb region in 1972 (Vrcan, 1980). Interestingly, Vrcan found that the vast majority of Communist Party members (or those who wanted to) were baptized (91.3%) and attended church religious education (67.8%).

7 It is paradoxical, given the proclaimed goals of socialism, that a group whose interest the system should advocate accepts the only socially permissible "cultural and symbolic system of an extrasystemic nature" (Vrcan, 1986, 70).

8 A survey conducted in 1986 found that there were significantly more non-religiously (47.2%) than religiously (28.3%) declared. Only one-fifth (19.6%) of young people believed in the existence of God, and more than half (56%) did not believe. One-fifth (21.4%) also attended Mass at least once a month, and almost half (45.3%) of young people never attended Mass (Marinović-Jerolimov & Jokić, 2010).

9 The RCC was given back most of the property confiscated during socialism; it was provided with funds from the state budget for the support of the clergy, the work of religious teachers in schools, the work of religious schools and colleges, the state (co)finances the construction and maintenance of churches, etc. The signed contracts are often subject of public criticism because there is no clear record of the funds given by the state to the RCC due to the wastefulness in the construction of church buildings, etc.

From a politically insignificant, the Church becomes a respectable political factor with its public activities: above all, the speeches of high church dignitaries and careful assessment of reality. ... The Church [...], even when it may not intend to do so, sets cultural criteria. It is present in the family, at school, even in the parliament. Politicians not only respect it but also 'court' it. (Cifrić, 1995, 820)

At the individual level, there is a strengthening of AR, so the share of the non-religiously identified almost doubled (41%–73%) in ten years (1986–1996), and the share of the nonreligious decreased three times (37%–13%).¹⁰ We find almost the same direction and scope of change in belief and participation (Marinović-Jerolimov, 2000). Research results are further supported by censuses, in which nine out of ten Croatian citizens declare themselves Catholics, while only every twentieth declares themselves to be agnostics or atheists.

Researches reveals that there was a large increase in all indicators of religiosity among young people between 1986 and 1999 (Marinović-Jerolimov & Jokić, 2010). An additional impetus for the religiousization of the socialization atmosphere is the reintroduction of confessional religious education in primary and secondary schools (school year 1991/92).¹¹ The intention of this introduction was “to secure the cultural transmission of religious values to young generations” (Hazdovac Bajić et al., 2020, 40). Given the students’ response, it can be concluded that the goal has been achieved because nine out of ten students (Marinović, 2018) attend Catholic religious education at school (ARES), which is an obvious indicator that religiosity is becoming the dominant pattern of primary sociali-

zation.¹² The share of ARES in the transition to high school decreases after children have received the holy sacraments (confirmation and holy communion).

Fifteen years ago, two opposing trends emerged at the global level – people exposed to changes in the social context in some ex-socialist countries became more religious, while at the same time, in developed countries, they became less religious (Inglehart, 2021). However, current research has found changes in ex-socialist countries as well. “Formerly communist countries continue to be the main locus of growing religiosity ... (but) ... the resurgence of religion in ex-communist countries was losing momentum” (Inglehart, 2021, 15). A secularization trend in Croatia is visible in the weakening of indicators of church religiosity, while identification¹³ is continuously highly expanded (79%). Between the first and third EVS, the share of regular practitioners decreased from half (52.5%) to one-third of respondents (34.9%), with a growing gap between identification and participation, so there are more than twice as many regular practitioners as those who identified themselves as a religious person (Nikodem & Zrinščak, 2019). The biggest decline was related to trust in the Church as an institution, in which almost two-thirds of respondents (62.8%) had high and very high trust in 1999, while in the last survey, their share was slightly higher than one-third (38.4%). Weakening occurs according to the secularization pattern, with greater religiosity of women, those with lower levels of education, and those from smaller settlements (Nikodem & Zrinščak, 2019). Although these changes may be indications of changes in the social climate in the direction of reducing social desirability,¹⁴ they are not reflected in the scope of ARES.¹⁵

10 Data on drastic changes in religiosity in Croatian society between 1986 and 1999 can only be partly explained by the democratization of society, as the pressure of systematic atheism of the regime in the 1980s weakened considerably. Certainly, when explaining the changes, one should take into account the literal (war) and existential economic insecurity, but also the informal pressure of systematic theization of society that promotes new norms of social desirability.

11 Confessional religious education is conducted in public schools but is under the jurisdiction of religious communities. The aim of the subject is teaching in the faith and evangelization, i.e., introducing students to belief and participation and strengthening of their connection with religion and religious community (Marinović, 2018). An illustration of the ambitions of the RCC to present itself as a universally binding cultural and symbolic system is also visible in religious education textbooks, where “Catholic (Christian) religion is not presented as one of the existing worldviews in the world (Croatia), but as the only true religion” (Marinović, 2018, 140). Although textbooks start from the idea of tolerance, Marinović finds that they convey “not the acceptance of difference but the correction of atheists and prevention of atheism, by evangelization” (Marinović, 2018, 146).

12 Therefore, not enrolling a child in religious education classes in elementary school can have, as a consequence, the non-conformist separation from the group. In high school, the situation changes because students have the option of choosing an alternative elective subject (Ethics).

13 The scale of religious self-identification used by EVS is questionable in terms of content because on the nonreligious side of the instrument, it offers two (convinced atheist and nonreligious person), and on the religious side, only one modality (religious person). The scale does not include the possibility of positioning indecisive and indifferent respondents.

14 The change in the zeitgeist is also visible in the statistical data on the decline in the share of the religious in relation to civil marriages. The share of religious marriage dropped from 64.7% (in 2000) to 42.3% twenty years later (Statistical report, 2021).

15 There are large regional differences in the number of students who attend religious education at school. School religious education is attended by more than ninety percent of primary school pupils in seventeen counties (out of twenty-one), but also in only four when it comes to secondary school. The lowest number of pupils attending religious education is in the Istria (66%) and Primorje-Gorski Kotar Counties (75.5%) (Index.hr, 2018).

Diagnoses of the religiosity of young people in Croatian society have determined that: (1) it oscillates more in times of transition than the religiosity of other cohorts (Gvozdanović et al., 2019; Marinović-Jerolimov, 2000; 2002); (2) intergenerational differences are reduced due to a slight increase in the religiosity of the youth and a slight decline in the religiosity of the elderly (Črpić & Zrinščak, 2010; Marinović-Jerolimov & Jokić, 2010); (3) students are the least religious part of the youth (Boneta, 2016; Ilišin, 2014; Marinović-Jerolimov, 2002), which at the same time means that they are the least religious part of the population;¹⁶ (4) the stabilization of conventional religiosity is at play, but also that in the last ten years, there has been a noticeable downward trend in all indicators of AR (Boneta, 2016; Lavrič, 2021); (5) students' AR indicators are inconsistent with their ARES; (6) that there is structural and ideological religious polarization among the youth in Croatia, more strongly than in other countries of Southeast Europe (Lavrič, 2019). Structural religious polarization, i.e., the increase and proportional equalization of the categories of atheists and convinced believers, is taking place in Croatia due to the decrease in the share of religious people. "Secularizing tendencies can lead to a defensive reaction of the remaining believers... The mechanism of cultural defense works in such a way that a religious group, in a situation of internal threat, unites and strengthens its religious identity" (Lavrič, 2019, 134).

Since the empirical research was conducted at the University of Rijeka (UNIRI), and more than half of the respondents grew up in the regions of Istria and Primorje, it is necessary to briefly indicate the specifics of religiosity in these regions. Throughout history, denominationalism was not a *differentia specifica* of the three ethnicities in contact (Croatian, Slovenian, and Italian), so it could not be a supporting part of the politicized Croatian ethnic identity. In them, relations between the communist government and the RCC were, to a lesser extent, fraught with problems because a significant part of Croatian and Slovenian Catholic priests collaborated with the partisans during World War II (Petešić, 1982) and participated in the Paris negotiations on the demarcation between Italy and Yugoslavia. Under socialism, these regions modernized faster and thus secularized faster than the Croatian average (Boneta, 1989; 2000). After the collapse of socialism, these regions also experienced the revitalization of religiosity, but at a lower intensity than in other regions (Marinović-Jerolimov & Zrinščak, 2006) and with a lower level of politicized religiosity (Boneta & Banovac, 2007; Vrcan, 2001).

METHODOLOGY

The aims of this paper are: (1) analysis of the patterns of students' (non)religious socialization in their childhood; (2) analysis of the relationship between these patterns and their actual religiosity; (3) analysis of students' perceptions of the influence of individual socialization agents on their attitudes toward religion.

Based on previous research, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

H1: Most respondents have the experience of family religious socialization and/or religious education.

H2: The level of students' actual religiosity is lower than the population average and the youth average.

H3: The experience of (non)religious socialization affects the level of actual religiosity.

H4: Socio-demographic variables will influence (non)religious socialization in line with the secularization theory.

Kelley (2015) finds that in predominantly religious societies, which includes Croatian society, the religious environment has a greater effect on the intergenerational transmission of religiosity than all other factors, even family RS. Kelley claims that, in this environment, the effect of social desirability (conformism) will play an important role in RS. Because of that:

H5 Respondents who attended religious education at school and were not socialized religiously or non-religiously in the family will be more similar to religiously than non-religiously educated respondents in their actual religiosity due to the high level of religiosity in Croatian society.

Measuring instruments

Religious socialization is an independent variable operationalized by two indicators. The first is family upbringing in the faith with three modalities of response: 1. *No, I was raised non-religiously*; 2. *They raised me to be neither in favor nor against religion*; 3. *Yes, they raised me religiously*. The second is ARES with three modalities: 1. *No, never*; 2. *Yes, in primary school*; 3. *Yes, in primary and secondary school*. Based on these two variables, a composite variable, **patterns of (non)religious socialization in childhood**, was created, which has three modalities. The first modality includes **non-religiously socialized respondents (NRSR)** who have no experience of either family or school RS. The second modality includes

16 A comparison of data from national surveys of the population (Nikodem & Zrinščak, 2019), youth (Gvozdanović et al., 2019), and students (Ilišin, 2014) at the national level reveals that the share of religiously identified students (57.3%) is significantly lower than among young people (69%) and in the population (79%). There are fewer full-time practitioners (21.1%) among students than in the population (34.9%) and twice less than among young people (44%). The reason for such a more frequent religious participation of pupils is partly related to the obligations of school religious education.

respondents who were not raised by their parents to be either in favor or against religion but who, as part of their education, attended religious education – **partially religiously socialized respondents** (PRSR). The third modality is **religiously socialized respondents** (RSR), who have experience with both types of RS.

Four indicators of *actual religiosity* (AR) are dependent variables. Religious self-identification was measured on a five-point scale: 1. *Convinced atheist*; 2. *Much more inclined to disbelieve than to believe*; 3. *I do not know, I cannot assess*; 4. *Much more inclined to believe than to disbelieve*; 5. *Convinced believer* (Čulig, Kufrin & Landripet, 2007). Religious belief was analyzed through belief in four dogmas: 1. *There is a God*; 2. *God created the world*; 3. *There is Heaven and Hell*; 4. *God is the source of moral precepts and duties*, to which three-point scales were added: 1. *I do not believe*; 2. *I doubt it*; 3. *I believe*. Participation was measured with the frequency of attending Mass with possible answers: 1. *Never*; 2. *Only on major holidays*; 3. *Several times a month*; 4. *At least once a week*.¹⁷ The importance of faith in life is measured with the question: *To what extent does living in accordance with the teachings of faith represent your desirable life goal?* A five-point Likert-type scale was added to this ranging from 1. *Completely undesirable* to 5. *Extremely desirable*.

The influence of agents was measured with two instruments. In the first, the respondents were asked to assess the level of influence of their *mother, father, other relatives, and school religion teachers* on their attitudes toward religion. In a separate question, they needed to single out an agent that decisively influenced their views on religion.

The following socio-demographic variables were used: *sex, size of their childhood settlement, childhood region*,¹⁸ *the highest level of education of their mother and father, year of university study, and scientific field of study*.

Data collection and sample

The paper is based on the results of an online survey conducted in the second half of 2021 on a sample of UNIRI students¹⁹ (N = 624) whose characteristics are shown in Table 1. Data were processed in the statistical package SPSS 24 at the level of univariate and bivariate analysis.²⁰ The research procedures were approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Teacher Education, UNIRI.

RESULTS

Religious socialization

The vast majority of respondents have experience of formal and/or informal RS, confirming thereby H1; however, there are almost twice as many of them attended religious education at school as those raised in the faith (Table 2). Only one in twenty respondents were raised as an atheist, while there is an equal share of those raised in the faith and those who grew up in a family environment that encouraged neither religiosity nor atheism. ARES is the expected continuation of RS in the family,²¹ but it is a characteristic of both one-half of the atheistically raised and more than four-fifths of neutrally raised respondents.

The most numerous category in the composite variable *patterns of (non)religious socialization* are RSR (47.1%), followed by PRSR (43.3%), and NRSR (9.1%). Since ARES is present to the same extent as baptism (90.9%) in all three parenting patterns, it can be concluded that most parents want their children to receive the sacrament of confirmation and first communion, which is not possible without ARES.

Statistical analyses found that four socio-demographic variables influence the socialization pattern in line with the secularization thesis (H4). Statistically significant differences were found with respect to sex ($r_s=.097^*$), childhood county ($r_s=.157^{**}$), size

17 For respondents who never go to Mass, we will use the term *abstainers*, for those who do so only on major holidays (Easter and Christmas) *occasional believers*, and the answers several times a month and weekly in chi-square analyzes are grouped into *regular practitioners*.

18 The respondents filled out the county where they grew up. Considering the established differences in the social context of certain Croatian regions, which are the consequences of different historical experiences, and the intensity of the modernization and secularization process, this variable was recoded into two variables in statistical processing. The first category included participants from counties afflicted by direct warfare in the 1990s, in which ethno-confessional identification is more pronounced, and the second category included students from counties in which there was no direct warfare. In the second, we distinguish respondents who grew up in the Istria and Primorje-Gorski Kotar Countries (Istria and Primorje), regions that were more affected by modernization and secularization processes, and respondents from other Croatian counties.

19 Students from the following University constituents participated in the research: Faculty of Civil Engineering, Faculty of Economics and Business, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Humanities and Social Studies, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Maritime Studies, Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Teacher Education and Department of Informatics.

20 Spearman's correlation test, Chi-square tests, t-tests, and analysis of the variance were performed. In ANOVA, a test of homogeneity of the variance was performed, the F-ratio was tested, and post-hoc multiple comparison tests were performed. The Scheffe test was used in the case of homogeneous variances, and the Tamhane T2 test in the case of inhomogeneous variances. Due to spatial restrictions, the statistical values of p in all analyses will be presented with the notation * for $p < 0.01$ and the notation ** for $p < .001$.

21 There is a significant statistical correlation between informal and formal RS ($rs=.423$)

Table 1: Respondents' socio-demographic characteristics²² (%).

<i>Area of primary socialization</i>			
Afflicted by direct warfare	21.3	Istria and Primorje	59.1
Not afflicted by direct warfare	78.7	Other parts of Croatia	40.9
Scientific field		Sex	
Technical sciences	26.4	Female	71.2
Social Sciences	73.2	Male	27.1
Father's education		Mother's education	
Elementary school	3.5	Elementary school	4.0
Three-year high school	17.6	Three-year high school	12.7
Four-year high school	46.0	Four-year high school	44.2
College	11.7	College	10.6
University	20.8	University	28.5
Settlement size		Year of study	
Up to 1.000	19.6	First	40.1
1.001 – 10.000	35.1	Second	17.3
10.001 – 100.000	24.8	Third	17.9
100.001 and above	20.4	Fourth	13.0
		Fifth	11.1

Table 2: Family upbringing in the faith and attending religious education at school.

		No, never	Yes, in primary school	Yes, in primary and secondary school	Total
No, I was raised non-religiously	% row	48.3	31.0	20.7	100.00
	% total	2.3	1.4	1.0	4.7
They raised me to be neither in favor nor against religion	% row	14.9	34.1	51.0	100.00
	% total	7.1	16.2	24.3	47.6
Yes, they raised me religiously	% row	1.0	14.5	84.5	100.00
	% total	0.5	6.9	40.4	47.7
Total	% total	9.8	24.6	65.6	100.00

of settlement ($r_s = -.174^{**}$), and the education level of the mother ($r_s = -.151^*$). The share of male students (13.7%) who were raised non-religiously is almost twice as high as that of female students (7.7%), which supports the thesis on differential gender socialization (Voas, 2015). RS is the predominant pattern (62.0%) in the smallest settlements, while nonreli-

gious upbringing in them is an anomaly (<2%). RSRs are the majority only in families where mothers have the lowest level of education, while PRSRs dominate in other families. Respondents who grew up in counties with direct war experience (60.9%) were mostly religiously educated, while PRSR is the most numerous category (43.6%) in "peaceful areas."

²² Percentages of students who did not answer the question are not shown, except in cases where the number of abstainers is indicative.

Table 3: Religious self-identification.

	UNIRI 2015	UNIRI 2021	EVS Croatia 2017 ^a	Youth Croatia 2018 ^b
Convinced atheists	14.2	12.9	5.4	8
Much more inclined to disbelieve than to believe	17.5	23.7	9.5	
I do not know, I cannot assess	15.1	18.1	6.8	22
Much more inclined to believe than to disbelieve	30.9	25.8	78.3	69
Convinced believers	21.4	19.6		

^aNikodem & Zrinščak, 2019; ^bGvozdanović et al., 2019**Table 4: Patterns of (non)religious socialization and religious self-identification.**

	Convinced atheists	Nonreligious	Undecided	Religious	Convinced believers
NRSR	31.0	44.8	6.9	8.6	8.6
PRSR	16.4	32.3	24.5	19.3	7.4
RSR	5.8	14.3	13.9	36.1	29.9
Total	12.7	25.0	17.9	26.2	18.2

Finally, there is a difference in RS between adult respondents in Istria and Primorje and those adults in other parts of Croatia ($r_s = .176^{**}$). In Istria and Primorje, there are more PRSR (46.3%) than RSR (40.9%), while among others, there are more RSR (56.5%) than PRSR (39.2%).

Religious self-identification

The distribution of responses shown in Table 3 reveals that more respondents were placed on the religious (44.4%) than on the nonreligious (37.7%) side of the scale, while one in six respondents was undecided. On both sides of the scale, there are more moderate than extreme modalities. Changes between research from 2015 (Boneta, 2016) and this research on the same student population reveal weaker processes of structural religious polarization compared to those that Lavrič (2019; 2021) found among Croatian and Slovenian youth.²³ In line with H2, students are significantly less religious (-33.9%) than the general population average (Nikodem & Zrinščak, 2019) and the youth average (-24.6%) (Gvozdanović et al., 2019).

We also find secularization tendencies in the expansion of self-identification. Respondents whose fathers have the lowest level of education ($r_s = -.105^*$) and who grew up in “war counties” ($r_s = .146^{**}$) are more religious. Interestingly, a mild but statistically significant association ($r_s = .097^*$) was found between the study type and identification. Contrary to Sherkat’s findings (Sherkat, 2003), UNIRI social science students are placed more in religious (47.8%) and less in nonreligious categories (33.7%) than technical science students (35.2% religious and 45.4% nonreligious), although there is no difference between them in the RS pattern.

Statistical analysis (Table 4) reveals that, in line with H3, the RS experience to a significant extent ($r_s = .431^{**}$) determines the current (non)religious identity of the two categories that were exposed to consistent agent information in childhood (NRSR and RSR). However, in both categories, we find a deviation from primary socialization; in this case, it is higher among RSRs, of which one-third do not fit into religious categories. At the same time, the move away from family socialization is a characteristic of just under a fifth of NRSRs. The

23 The religious part of the scale recorded a decline (-6.9%), while the nonreligious part increased (+4.9%), with both extreme modalities recording a slight decline. Changes in the direction of greater secularization are visible in all indicators of religiosity. Although the analysis of structural ideological and religious polarization is beyond the scope of this paper, it is clear that, in the context of politicized religiosity in Croatian society, the decline of religiosity strengthens ideological polarization.

Table 5: Testing differences in religious belief with respect to patterns of (non)religious socialization.

		N	M	SD	df	F	Post-hoc
<i>There is a God</i> (Tamhane)	1. NRSR	58	1.72	.790	2	54.919**	1<2<3
	2. PRSR	270	2.09	.807			
	3. RSR	294	2.61	.656			
<i>God created the world</i> (Tamhane)	1. NRSR	58	1.45	.654	2	53.851**	1<2<3
	2. PRSR	270	1.70	.805			
	3. RSR	294	2.30	.787			
<i>God is the source of moral precepts</i> (Tamhane)	1. NRSR	58	1.43	.678	2	50.892**	1.2<3
	2. PRSR	270	1.66	.801			
	3. RSR	294	2.26	.822			
<i>There is Heaven and Hell</i> (Tamhane)	1. NRSR	58	1.45	.626	2	48.123**	1<2<3
	2. PRSR	270	1.80	.782			
	3. RSR	294	2.31	.763			

Table 6: Patterns of (non)religious socialization and attending Mass.

	Never	Only on major holidays	Several times per month
1. NRSR	91.4	6.9	1.7
2. PRSR	58.9	35.9	5.2
3. RSR	20.4	48.6	31.0
Total	43.7	39.2	17.0

most dispersed group are PRSRs, of which, contrary to H5, almost half are nonreligious, and an additional quarter is undecided.

Religious beliefs

More than half of the students believe only in the existence of God (51.4%), with a quarter (27.2%) doubting and a fifth not believing (21.3%). Acceptance of other fundamental beliefs of RCC deviates even more from the experience of RS. Students mostly do not believe in the claim that God is the source of moral precepts and duties (41.5%), and they mostly doubt the claim of the existence of Heaven and Hell (33.7%). The distribution of answers about the belief in the existence of God also confirms H2 because the surveyed students believe in it much less (-30.4%) than the general population (Nikodem & Zrinščak, 2019).²⁴

ANOVA reveals that RSR differs from the other two categories because more respondents believe in all four dogmas (Table 5). However, it should be emphasized that, here too, more than half of them believe only in the existence of God, while half of them demonstrate uncertainty and disbelief when it comes to the remaining three beliefs. PRSRs mostly believe in the existence of God (37.0%), while slightly fewer doubt it (34.4%) and do not believe in it (28.5%), while most of them do not believe in the remaining three claims. Despite ARES, and contrary to H5, the majority of PRSRs are more similar to NSRRs than RSRs.

Religious participation

To what extent does RS manifest itself in church religious behavior during student years? Most students belong to the category of abstainers who never go to

²⁴ There is no comparison with beliefs among young people because there are no such variables in the research by Gvozdanović et al. (2019).

Table 7: Testing the differences in the desirability of living in accordance with the teachings of the faith with regard to the pattern of (non)religious socialization.

	N	M	SD	df	F	Post-hoc
1. NRSR	58	1.97	1.228	2	55.668**	1<3 2<3
2. PRSR	271	2.24	1.156			
3. RSR	293	3.21	1.274			

Table 8: To what extent have your attitudes toward religion been influenced by.

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	A lot	Significantly	M	SD
Your mother	25.5%	17.5%	25.8%	21.2%	10.1%	2.73	1.319
Your father	32.5%	19.9%	23.9%	17.3%	6.2%	2.45	1.274
Other relatives	35.9%	16.0%	24.4%	16.5%	7.1%	2.43	1.312
Teachers of religious education	36.5%	21.2%	22.0%	14.1%	6.3%	2.32	1.269

Mass, followed by the category of occasional practitioners who do so exclusively on major holidays, and less than a fifth are regular practitioners (Table 6).

In line with H3, the participation frequency was statistically significantly related to RS ($r_s=.506^{**}$). Not attending Mass is the characteristic of the majority of NRSRs and PRSRs, while most RSRs do so only on major holidays.

Students are generally the most religiously passive part of Croatian society (H2), as they regularly attend Mass twice less than the population average (Nikodem & Zrinščak, 2019) and two and a half times less than the youth average (Gvozdanović et al., 2019). Statistical analysis reveals that, in line with H4, female students attend Mass more regularly ($r_s=-.115^*$), those from settlements with up to 10.000 inhabitants ($r_s=-.204^{**}$), and those whose adults in war-stricken counties ($r_s=.185^{**}$). Interestingly, the test reveals a statistically significant relationship ($r_s=-.139^{**}$) between participation and the year of study. As the year of study increases, the share of abstainers increases while the number of regular Mass participants decreases. The share of regular participants among first- and second-year students is twice as high (20%) than among fifth-year students (10.1%).

Importance of religion in life

The importance of religion in the life of the respondents was measured by the desirability of living in accordance with the teachings of their faith. The

result is in line with the responses of highly religious European countries (Voas & Day, 2010), as more than a quarter of respondents (29.0%) consider it a desirable life goal. However, for the majority of respondents (42.9%), it is an undesirable and completely undesirable life goal, and for a quarter, it is neither a desirable nor an undesirable (28.0%) life goal. In the extreme categories of the scale, there are three times more of those who are completely undesirable than those who are extremely desirable.²⁵ We notice two differences in relation to the research results found among American students (Sherkat, 2003). A considerable part of our respondents distances themselves from religion in participation but also in the importance they attach to it in life. Differences suggesting distance from religion during studies have also been noted. ANOVA ($F_{(6,13)}=5.004^{**}$) found that first-year students ($M=2.96$) show a lower level of undesirability of this goal than students in the fifth ($M=2.30$) years of study. No differences were found with regard to the region where the students grew up.

In line with H3, the RS experience affects ($r_s=.384^{**}$) the desirability of living in accordance with the teachings of the faith (Table 7). However, the findings contradict H5 because the NRSR and PRSR categories classify this life goal as undesirable on average ($M<2.5$), which makes both categories different from RSR. Even with RSR, the mean value does not exceed 3.5, which means that it is placed in neither a desirable nor an undesirable life goal. Specifically, for less than half

²⁵ In line with H2, we come across a difference even here because, at the national level (Nikodem & Zrinščak, 2019), there are twice as many respondents (63.9%) who claim that religion is important and very important in their lives.

Table 9: Testing the differences in the importance of agent influence with respect to the pattern of (non) religious socialization.

		N	M	SD	df	F	Post-hoc
<i>Influence of the mother</i> (Tamhane)	1. NRSR	58	2.38	1.400	2	108.115**	1<3 2<3
	2. PRSR	270	2.04	1.036			
	3. RSR	294	3.43	1.172			
<i>Influence of the father</i> (Tamhane)	1. NRSR	58	2.40	1.426	2	63.143**	2<1<3
	2. PRSR	270	1.87	1.032			
	3. RSR	294	2.98	1.218			
<i>Influence of other relatives</i> (Tamhane)	1. NRSR	58	1.52	.863	2	66.022**	1<2<3
	2. PRSR	270	2.01	1.150			
	3. RSR	294	2.99	1.286			
<i>Influence of the school religious education teacher</i> (Tamhane)	1. NRSR	58	1.24	.823	2	46.980**	1<2<3
	2. PRSR	270	2.11	1.222			
	3. RSR	294	2.75	1.209			

of RSRs, this is mostly and extremely desirable (45.9%), and for a quarter of them, it is a completely or mostly undesirable life goal (25.5%). More than half of the remaining two groups of students classify life in accordance with the teachings of the faith as undesirable and just over a tenth as a desirable life goal.

Influence of agents on the respondents' attitudes toward religion

The arithmetic means of the answers (Table 8) reveal that the respondents consider the influence of all primary and secondary socialization agents on their attitudes toward religion, except the mother, to be weak. The most numerous answer in all items was *not at all*, and only a few more assessed the influence of the mother as *somewhat*.

We have previously determined that there are connections between RS and AR patterns, with a trend of religious passivation in the PRSR and RSR categories. Since NRSRs have distanced themselves the least from the content of socialization in childhood, does this mean that they recognize the greater influence of socialization agents compared to the other two categories? Analysis of the variance (Table 9) reveals that this is not the case, as NRSRs assess the influence of both parents as weak with a tendency toward moderate, and the PRSRs assess the influence of their parents as even weaker. RSRs recognize the greatest influence of agents, although even here, only the mother's influence leans toward significant influence.

When asked an additional direct question about the decisive influence, almost half of the sample (46.3%) replied that no one has decisively influenced their views on religion, one-quarter mentioned their family and its members (25.6%), and one-tenth the Church (10.7%), religious education teachers (8.3%), and other influences (9.0%). The RS pattern is also related to this variable ($r_s = -.298^{**}$). Two-thirds of NRSRs (69.0%) claimed that no one has decisively influenced them, and a fifth (22.4%) acknowledge the influence of family members. Also, the majority of PRSRs (55.6%) claimed that no one has had a decisive influence on them, and one-tenth of the respondents stated: the Church and religious education teachers. The majority of RSRs (38.8%) stated the key role of family members, but it should be noted that the share of those who claimed to have created their own views on religion in this category is only slightly lower (33.7%). The intersection of this response with self-identification reveals a twofold assessment of the influence of the Church and religious education teachers ($r_s = -.237^{**}$). Convinced atheists (21.5%) and non-religious (16.7%) obviously cite them as a form of a negative and RSRs as a positive influence.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Traditional religiosity is constantly present in Croatian society, so even the half-century marginalization of religion and the church in socialism did not seriously disrupt it. The collapse of socialism

has led to a “radical deprivation of religion” (Vrcan, 2001), and the RS is an integral part of growing up for the vast majority of respondents (H1). For some parents, enrolling children in religious education at school is a continuation of family socialization, while others do so to ensure that children receive the holy sacraments, and the transmission of religiosity becomes part of formal socialization. The fact that more than half of parents who practice atheistic education also enroll their children in religious education speaks of an ingrained tradition but also points to the power of social conformism.

The RS experience affects the differences in all analyzed students’ AR indicators (H3). In addition to maintaining the worldview and patterns of behavior mediated by socialization, we find a different degree of deviation from them in all categories. A slight deviation from the experience of primary socialization in NRSRs is found in the belief in God and self-identification and very weak in participation. On the other hand, a significant part of RSRs distances itself from religion and the Church, albeit on a more modest scale than suggested by Voas and Crockett’s (2005) findings. Distancing is less visible in self-identification and belief in God and more in disbelief and doubt in remaining dogmas and sporadic participation in Masses. From the aspect of the success of the transition to religiosity, the most interesting category is PRSR. This research does not confirm Kelley’s thesis, from which H5 was derived because neither the predominantly religious national context nor the ARES experience prevented the majority of PRSRs from becoming religiously passive during their student years and even completely distancing themselves from religion and the Church. This supports the thesis that RS, and especially ARES itself in the absence of family upbringing in religion, is not a guarantee of AR at student age.

More than half of PRSRs are nonreligious in all AR indicators, which makes them, contrary to H5, more similar to NRSRs than RSRs. Secularization tendencies are also found among RSRs in all AR indicators. Distancing oneself from a religious worldview in which the majority is, at least formally (ARES), socialized is most evident in not accepting life in accordance with the principles of faith as a life goal that even the majority of RSRs do not consider desirable.

In their research of political attitudes, Boehke, Hadjar, and Baier (2007) argue that parents whose worldview is marginal to the *zeitgeist* of a particular society will seek to reduce or eliminate external influences in primary socialization to make the transmission of family values more successful. Applying an analogy in the analysis of RS in a highly religious Croatian society, it was to be expected that NRSRs

would recognize the greater influence of parents in shaping their attitudes than RSRs. However, the results reveal just the opposite – NRSRs recognize the crucial family influence twice, and the PRSRs even four times less than RSRs. It would be expected that PRSRs would adhere to the socially dominant pattern, i.e., be as religious as the RSRs; however, most of them are “going against the current.” More successful transmission of religiosity is associated with the recognition of stronger family influence and, according to previous findings (Petts & Desmond, 2016), the greater influence of the mother. Distancing oneself from religion and the Church is associated with minimizing the influence of all agents of socialization and emphasizing autonomy in creating attitudes about religion, which fits into the concept of individualization and self-socialization characteristic of late modernity.

To explain the weak AR of UNIRI students, it is not enough to take into account the level of secularization in the area of primary socialization of the majority of respondents (Istria and Primorje) because only a tenth of respondents had no RS experience in their childhood. Moving away from religion and the Church is clearly a generational phenomenon (Voas & Crockett, 2005) because students are generally less religious than the average population (H2). Furthermore, it is evident that passivation and indifference towards religion grow with the year of study, which means that students, emancipating themselves from family influence and control, in new life circumstances move away from worldviews and patterns of behavior from childhood.

A number of questions arise about the reasons for the observed trends and possible further directions of change, and the answers to them go beyond the spatial limitations of this text. Are secularization trends among students an indication of “a self-reinforcing spiral of secularization” (Kelley, 2015)? Do global changes in the socio-cultural context of growing up mediated by new technologies (Lövheim, 2012), shape students’ worldview more strongly than the content of traditional RS? Is it a transient decline in religiosity at this stage of life, which will be reversed by establishing one’s own procreation family, or is it the opposite – the level of religiosity within a particular cohort in life unchanged (Voas, 2015) and the majority of current students are Christians only nominally? Is it a diffusion of moral evolution coming from developed countries, whose students represent the avant-garde and hint at future secularization trends (Inglehart, 2021)? Will, according to the principle of stratified diffusion (Willmot and Young), student attitudes and patterns of behavior expand to other young people and, in the future, become a normative posi-

tion in society? Is there a partial change in patterns of social desirability that leads to ideological and religious polarization at play?

The not-so-distant past warns us that one should be very careful in predicting further trends of people's attachment to religion and the Church in this region. The deep-rooted equality of the confessional and the national identity carries with it the smoldering potential of conflict, a convenient means to which the elites resort for the purpose of political mobilization and gaining legitimacy (Vrcan, 2001).

Finally, the limitations of this study arising from the specificity of the sample and the region in which the research was conducted should be emphasized.

Students whose patterns cannot be mechanically replicated on all young people were interviewed, but, at the same time, it should be borne in mind that this is a group from which the social elite will be recruited tomorrow, which will dictate the rhythm of future social changes. Furthermore, UNIRI has a regional character, and although the region variable is statistically weakly related to indicators of religiosity, it should be emphasized that the largest part of the surveyed students grew up in the counties with a lower level of religiosity. Nevertheless, one should not ignore the finding that, for a significant part of students, regardless of regional affiliation and despite the RS experience in childhood, "religion plays a very minor role (if any) in their lives" (Voas, 2009, 164).

POVEZAVE MED RELIGIOZNO SOCIALIZACIJO V OTROŠTVU IN AKTUALNO RELIGIOZNOSTJO V ŠTUDENTSKIH LETIH: PRIMER HRVAŠKIH ŠTUDENTOV UNIVERZE NA REKI

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POVZETEK

Po razpadu socializma je Hrvatska doživela verski preporod in postala ena izmed najbolj religioznih nekdanjih socialističnih držav. Vera in religioznost sta iz zasebno toleriranega, a družbeno nezaželenega, postali del družbene normale, uradna verska socializacija pa prevladujoča oblika vzgoje otrok. Prispevek analizira povezavo med vzorci (ne)religiozne socializacije in religioznostjo v študentskih letih, in sicer na podlagi spletne ankete, ki je bila izvedena leta 2021 na vzorcu študentov Univerze na Reki (N=624). Glede na vzorec socializacije ločimo tri kategorije: (1) versko socializirane anketirance, ki so jih starši vzgajali versko in so hodili k šolskemu verouku; (2) delno versko socializirane anketirance, ki so hodili k šolskemu verouku, vendar jih starši niso vzgajali ne versko ne neverško; (3) anketiranci, katere so starši vzgajali neverško in niso hodili k šolskemu verouku. Rezultati razkrivajo, da socializacijski vzorec pomembno vpliva na razlike med vsemi analiziranimi kazalniki religioznosti študentov. Ob ohranjanju svetovnonazorskih in vedenjskih vzorcev, sprejetih s socializacijo, ugotavljamo odstopanje v vseh kategorijah. To odstopanje se večinoma kaže kot oddaljevanje od vere in cerkva anketirancev, ki imajo na podlagi svojih izkušenj eno ali obe obliki verske socializacije. Niti visoko religiozen nacionalni kontekst, niti izkušnja uradne religiozne socializacije, nista zagotovilo za religioznost v študentskih letih, če družinske religiozne socializacije ni bilo. Odmik od svetovnega nazora, v katerem je večina vsaj formalno socializirana, se najbolj kaže v nesprejemanju življenja po načelih vere kot zaželenega življenjskega cilja.

Ključne besede: (ne)religiozna socializacija, aktualna religioznost, dejavniki socializacije, študenti, sekularizacija, Hrvatska

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