

Article

University Students Say YES to Religious Freedom—But Under Which Conditions? Profiles of Support in Croatia and Italy

Teuta Stipišić Marušić 

Independent Researcher, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia; stipisicteuta@gmail.com

Abstract

This article examines whether support for religious freedom among university students in Croatia and Italy forms distinct profiles and which factors are associated with profile membership. Drawing on questionnaire data from university students in Croatia (N = 603) and Italy (N = 714), with 1170 complete cases included in the cluster analysis, K-means cluster analysis identified three profiles: Consistent Supporters (36.0%), Conditional Supporters (39.2%), and Restrictive Supporters (24.8%). Consistent Supporters combined strong endorsement of religious freedom with support for pluralism, recognition, and accommodation. Conditional Supporters endorsed religious freedom in positive absolute terms but combined this with the strongest assimilation orientation, weaker pluralism and recognition, and more selective institutional accommodation. Restrictive Supporters displayed the weakest support across most dimensions. Multinomial logistic regression showed that dominant Church favouritism and institutional religious privileging were associated with higher odds of both Conditional and Restrictive rather than Consistent membership. Croatian respondents, those with more right-wing political orientations, and those with weaker family religious socialization were also more likely to belong to both less-consistent profiles, whereas religious affiliation and self-rated religiosity were not independently significant in the final model. The findings demonstrate that support for religious freedom is multidimensional and may remain positive while becoming conditional in its public and institutional application.

Keywords: religious freedom; religious pluralism; conditional support; religious privilege; institutional accommodation; university students; Croatia; Italy

1. Introduction

Religious freedom is widely debated across the social sciences and is increasingly understood as a multidimensional phenomenon rather than as a single and unambiguous right. Different approaches have emphasised its simultaneous connection with individual liberty, equality between religions, public expression, and the social and institutional recognition of religious difference (Scolnicov 2011; Fox 2015; Breskaya and Giordan 2019). From a sociological perspective, this means that support for religious freedom may involve different understandings of what the right entails and how far it should extend beyond individual belief and practice. The distinction between religious diversity and religious pluralism is particularly important in this respect: the presence of religious difference does not in itself imply its equal recognition, accommodation, or acceptance in public life (Giordan 2014; Beckford 2014). In this sense, attitudes toward religious freedom may become more selective when religious difference involves public visibility, religious symbols, or institutional accommodation (Carol et al. 2015; Bilodeau et al. 2018; Scott 2023).



Academic Editor: Carl-Mario Sultana

Received: 17 August 2026

Revised: 21 September 2026

Accepted: 30 September 2026

Published: 4 October 2026

Copyright: © 2026 by the author.

Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland.

This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the [Creative Commons Attribution \(CC BY\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license.

On the other hand, the boundaries of religious freedom are also related to the position religion occupies within wider social and institutional arrangements. State–religion relations can produce different levels of recognition and access for dominant and minority religions, creating forms of religious hierarchy even where religious freedom is formally protected (Richardson 2006, 2014; Durham 2012). At the same time, recognizing religion as part of a society’s cultural or historical tradition is not necessarily equivalent to supporting the institutional privilege of a dominant Church. Research from Croatia, for example, shows that perceptions of Catholic privilege can coexist with strong support for equal rights for all religious groups and with acceptance of the social presence and broader socio-cultural role of traditional Churches, alongside limited support for their political involvement (Zrinščak et al. 2014). These distinctions make it important to separate personal religiosity and religious belonging from attitudes toward the social, legal, and institutional position of the dominant religion.

Religious embeddedness may nevertheless become relevant when religion is connected with wider collective identities. Previous studies show that religiosity and religious affiliation can acquire meanings extending beyond personal belief, particularly when they are intertwined with national identity, religious homogeneity, inherited cultural traditions, or majority-group belonging (Bohman and Hjerm 2014; Kumpes 2018; Guglielmi and Piacentini 2024; Shady 2022). The implications of such embeddedness for attitudes toward religious difference are therefore likely to depend on the broader cultural and institutional context in which religion is situated rather than on religiosity alone. Croatia and Italy provide two relevant settings for examining these processes. Both are predominantly Catholic societies in which the Catholic Church retains cultural and public importance, but they differ in the historical development of state–religion relations, the connection between Catholicism and national identity, and the extent and visibility of religious diversification. In Croatia, Catholicism became strongly intertwined with national and cultural belonging during post-socialist transformation and State-building, whereas in Italy a persistent Catholic cultural presence increasingly developed alongside greater religious diversification and the public visibility of minority religions (Zrinščak 1998; Maldini 2006; Kumpes 2018; Garelli 2010, 2013; Pace 2014; Giordan and Zrinščak 2018). Recent comparative research also indicates that religious freedom, religious pluralism, and religion–state relations are perceived differently across the two contexts (Breskaya and Giordan 2026).

Against this backdrop, this article examines how university students in Croatia and Italy understand and support religious freedom. Rather than treating support for religious freedom as a concept ranging from support to opposition, the study investigates whether distinct patterns of support can be identified across several dimensions: the perceived meaning of religious freedom, support for general religious freedom rights, the perceived importance of those rights, attitudes toward the public presence of religion, religious diversity and pluralism, institutional restriction and accommodation, assimilation, and the recognition of religious difference. The central question is therefore not simply whether young people support religious freedom, but under which conditions they support it and where they draw its boundaries. Based on questionnaire data collected among university students in Croatia (N = 603) and Italy (N = 714), the study addresses three research questions. First, it examines what distinct profiles of support for religious freedom can be identified among young people. Second, it explores the substantive characteristics of the resulting Consistent, Conditional, and Restrictive Supporter profiles. Third, it investigates which sociodemographic, political, religious, cultural, and institutional orientations are associated with membership in these profiles. K-means cluster analysis is used to identify different configurations of support, while multinomial logistic regression is employed to examine the factors associated with belonging to each profile. By combining respondents’

perceived meanings and general evaluations of religious freedom with attitudes toward its concrete public and institutional applications, the article seeks to move beyond a simple distinction between supporters and opponents. The paper proceeds as follows. First, it develops a theoretical framework concerning the multidimensional and potentially conditional character of support for religious freedom, drawing on perspectives from the sociology of religion, religious pluralism, and the sociology of religious freedom. Second, it considers the Croatian and Italian contexts, with particular attention to religious composition, dominant religious traditions, and the institutional position of religion. Third, it describes the research design, sample, measures, and analytical strategy. Fourth, it presents the religious freedom supporter typology and examines the factors associated with profile membership. Finally, the article discusses what the identified profiles reveal about the conditions, limits, and internal consistency of support for religious freedom among university students in Croatia and Italy.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Religious Freedom as a Multidimensional and Conditional Support

Religious freedom represents one of the fundamental human rights, but defining its meaning remains a complex task. Blurred attempts to define religious freedom produce unclear meanings and unclear tendencies to disclose what is encompassed under the protection of religion. Hence, protecting religious freedom requires defining it in order to protect it, but, as Cross (2015) stated, definitions can also be dangerous, meaning that definitions may exclude or include something in a way that causes the loss of a dimension of protection within the definition itself. Different researchers have approached religious freedom through socio-religious theories of religious economy (Finke 1990, 2013; Finke and Stark 1992), political secularism (Fox 2015), social constructivist and socio-legal perspectives (Richardson 2006), and the judicialization of religious freedom (Richardson 2015; Mayrl 2018). These approaches contributed to broadening the analysis of religious freedom beyond exclusively legal or historical dimensions (Breskaya and Giordan 2019).

Reasoning on the duality of religious freedom, Scolnicov (2011) states that, on one side, the expressive activity of belief, criticism, and inquiry encompasses the concept of freedom, while, on the other side, the sphere of identity encompasses the concept of equality. Since there is a right to choose religion, unlike, for example, to choose race, religion is both a matter of liberty and a matter of equality. The first concept, freedom, embodies the individual perception of religion, while the second concept, equality, is related to “equality between religions” (Scolnicov 2011, p. 31) and identifies religion through the view of collectivism, highlighting the identity aspect of religion. In this sense, “the right to equality, or non-discrimination, on the grounds of religion is complementary to the right to freedom of religion” (Scolnicov 2011, p. 33). Fox (2015, p. 4), by contrast, refers to “multiple conceptions of religious freedom”, distinguishing between the freedom to exercise religion and the principle that all religions should be treated equally.

The study of the social perception of religious freedom extends this argument by treating religious freedom as a multidimensional concept that connects societal and subjective meanings. Breskaya and Giordan (2019) distinguish five domains through which its social meaning is produced: individual and religious-group autonomy, religious freedom as a societal value, religion–state governance, its status as an international human-rights standard, and the impact of judicialization. These domains do not necessarily carry equal importance for all social actors. Individuals and groups may strongly endorse one dimension, such as freedom of personal belief, while placing narrower boundaries around public religious expression, equality between religious groups, or institutional accommodation (Breskaya and Giordan 2019). This multidimensional understanding has subsequently been further

developed within a broader sociology of religious freedom, in which religious freedom is understood through the interaction between individual meanings, social conditions, institutional structures, and different contexts in which the right is interpreted and implemented (Breskaya et al. 2024).

The distinction between religious diversity and religious pluralism further clarifies these different meanings. Religious diversity describes the factual presence of different religions and worldviews within a society. Religious pluralism involves an additional normative and institutional level: how this diversity is valued, publicly recognised, regulated, and accommodated, and how relations between different religious and non-religious groups are organised in everyday life (Giordan 2014; Beckford 2014). The existence of religious diversity therefore does not automatically mean that all groups are treated equally or that their public presence is accepted. At the level of social practice, the boundaries of religious freedom become especially visible when religious difference moves beyond private belief and enters public and institutional settings.

Previous research shows that attitudes toward such forms of religious expression and accommodation may be more selective than general support for religious freedom (Carol et al. 2015; Bilodeau et al. 2018; Scott 2023). In this sense, general endorsement of religious freedom may coexist with more restrictive attitudes toward its concrete application. This distinction between general principles and their social implementation has become increasingly important within the sociological study of religious freedom. Breskaya et al. (2022b) emphasise the need to examine how general principles of religious freedom are interpreted and implemented within specific historical, structural, and socio-religious contexts. They further argue that religious freedom should be studied within the historical and structural conditions in which it is implemented, including the pluralisation of societies and the different ways in which state–religion relations are organized (Breskaya et al. 2022b). Empirical studies demonstrate why this distinction matters. Carol et al. (2015), in their analysis of the accommodation of religion, highlight that support for religious rights is not merely a product of individual religiosity but is also shaped by institutional context and majority–minority religious relations. Similarly, attitudes toward religious symbols in public space and resistance to their expression may take different forms and arise from different motivations (Bilodeau et al. 2018), making it important to distinguish between opposition to religious symbols in general and opposition specifically directed toward the symbols of religious minorities. Scott (2023) similarly identifies an “accommodation gap” in support for religious expression in public space. Taken together, these perspectives suggest that religious freedom cannot be adequately reduced to one general level of support. It concerns individual liberty and equality between religions, private belief and public expression, religious diversity and pluralistic recognition, as well as the institutional accommodation of religious difference. Support may consequently remain positive at a general level while becoming conditional when religious difference enters different levels of public institutions and dimensions of public life.

2.2. Religious Embeddedness and Institutional Privilege: Distinct Sources of Conditionality

The social meaning of religious freedom can be shaped both by an individual’s embeddedness in a religious tradition and by attitudes toward the position that dominant religion should occupy within society and in relation to the State. These dimensions may be connected, but personal religiosity, religious affiliation, and family religious socialization should not automatically be understood as support for the cultural, legal, or institutional privilege of the dominant Church. Religious freedom is not defined only through legal and institutional structures; its meanings are socially constructed and reflected in individual at-

titudes toward religious diversity, public expression, minority recognition, and the position of dominant religion.

Previous empirical research does not suggest one simple and uniform relationship between religiosity and religious freedom. Research conducted among young people in Croatia found that personal religiosity and religiosity inside one's own community had a positive effect on attitudes toward religious freedom and that those who attended religious services more often had a more positive view toward religious freedom (Kompes 2018). At the same time, research on cultural differences indicates that religiosity can also be associated with stronger resistance toward multicultural societies. Mesić and Bagić (2011), examining attitudes toward cultural differences among Croatian citizens, identified sex, religiosity, and nationality among the relevant predictors and found a combination of general openness and tolerance toward cultural differences with weaker support in the sphere of minority legal rights.

Research developed within the SPRF framework similarly demonstrates that religious socialization matters for the construction of religious freedom meanings without suggesting that its effects are necessarily uniform. In their comparative analysis of young people in Italy and Russia, Giordan et al. (2020) found that family religious socialization played an important role in constructing the meaning of religious freedom in both contexts, while differences remained across particular dimensions of religious freedom. Subsequent comparative work likewise treats social perceptions of religious freedom not as simple individual predispositions but as meanings constructed through socialization into wider religious and political cultures (Breskaya et al. 2022a).

The relation between religion and pluralism is particularly relevant in this respect. Empirical research by Zaccaria et al. (2018a, 2018b) has shown that a positive view toward diversity and trust in religious out-groups positively impacts attitudes toward religious freedom and the political rights of non-citizens. These findings point to the contextual character of religious embeddedness. Religious involvement may strengthen the personal relevance of religious rights, but its relationship with attitudes toward religious difference can change when religious belonging becomes closely connected with majority identity, national belonging, or religious homogeneity (Bohman and Hjerm 2014; Kompes 2018).

Religious embeddedness should therefore be understood in relation to the wider cultural and institutional setting in which religious identities acquire their social meaning. Religious affiliation and religiosity do not operate only as individual beliefs or practices but may also connect individuals to broader social identities, inherited cultural traditions, and understandings of national belonging. This connection becomes particularly relevant in contexts in which the majority religion has historically been intertwined with national identity. Guglielmi and Piacentini (2024) show that religious and national identities remain interconnected and that the intergenerational transmission of religious values forms part of wider processes through which collective identities and group boundaries are reproduced. Similarly, Shady (2022) demonstrates that affiliation with a majority religion may retain national significance even among individuals whose personal religious commitment is limited. Family religious socialization can therefore be understood not only as the transmission of religious beliefs and practices but also as one mechanism through which attachment to the dominant religious tradition is reproduced across generations. In contexts where religion forms part of the majority cultural framework, stronger religious embeddedness may consequently acquire boundary-making significance for attitudes toward religious difference.

This expectation does not imply that religiosity is inherently associated with restrictive attitudes toward religious freedom. Rather, it assumes that the consequences of religious embeddedness depend on the wider religious, cultural, and institutional context in which

it is formed. This distinction is consistent with research showing that different meanings and social functions attributed to religion relate differently to religious freedom. Breskaya et al. (2020), for example, found that perceiving religion as promoting service and dialogue and the advancement of religious freedom was positively associated with attitudes toward religious freedom, whereas viewing religion as a source of national and cultural identity did not itself predict the SPRF index in their Italian sample. Religious commitment, the cultural meaning of religion, and support for its privileged institutional position should therefore remain analytically distinct.

The latter distinction becomes especially important when moving from religious embeddedness to state–religion relations. As Richardson (2006) argues, patterns of social control applied to new religions and minority faiths can reveal wider societal values and the condition of religious freedom itself. The development of legal pluralism consequently depends on the openness, flexibility, and perception of society toward religious diversity: the more society is opposed to accepting religious diversity, the lower the level of legal pluralism (Richardson 2014).

Durham (2012) approaches state–religion relations through two continuums: the level of State involvement or interference in religious affairs and the level of identification or separation between State and religious institutions. Within this framework, endorsed religions and preferred sets of religions are particularly relevant because they allow particular traditions greater respect, cooperation, access, or recognition due to their historical and cultural position. The problem is therefore not simply whether the State supports or restricts religion, but whether such support is distributed equally. A formally tolerant system may reproduce religious hierarchy when one Church or selected religions receive legal status and institutional access unavailable to others.

Empirical research on the social perception of religious freedom provides support for the relevance of these institutional arrangements at the individual level. Breskaya et al. (2021), analysing Italian university students, found that an endorsed Catholic Church model and State control over religion had predominantly negative relationships with dimensions of SPRF, though respondents with stronger religious identities were more supportive of endorsed models of state–religion relations. Their findings are particularly relevant because they demonstrate that individual religious identity and attitudes toward institutional arrangements can be connected but are not identical dimensions of religious freedom perception. More recent comparative research develops this point further. Breskaya et al. (2022a) found that religious pluralism, passive secularism, and democratic orientations were robust predictors of different dimensions of SPRF. The relationship between institutional religion and religious freedom is therefore not independent of context but forms part of the social construction of religious freedom within particular religious and political environments. While religious freedom is formally grounded in principles of equality, its public and institutional application may consequently be shaped by historically established religious hierarchies. Lauwers (2023) approaches Christian privilege as a structural dimension of religious inequality, emphasizing that such privilege may be embedded in cultural practices, public institutions, and understandings of what is considered normal, traditional, or culturally legitimate. Helbling and Trautmüller (2016) similarly show that State support of religion can shape attitudes toward the accommodation of religious difference. Where existing religious arrangements are closely connected with longstanding traditions and everyday practices, extending accommodation to other religious groups may be perceived not only as granting equal rights but also as challenging established cultural and institutional arrangements.

A similar tension can be observed in the Croatian context. Drawing on existing survey data, Zrinščak et al. (2014) note that perceptions of State privilege toward the Catholic

Church coexist with strong support for equal rights of religious groups. Furthermore, [Zrinščak et al. \(2014\)](#) indicate that Croatian citizens tend to accept the socio-cultural role and social presence of traditional Churches while showing considerably less support for their political involvement. This combination is theoretically important because it demonstrates that equality, cultural recognition, public religion, and institutional privilege do not necessarily form one coherent dimension. Religion can be understood as personal belief, affiliation, practice, and family socialization; as a socially and culturally recognised tradition; or as a basis for institutional hierarchy and privilege. These meanings may overlap, but they should not be treated as interchangeable, as they are analytically distinct dimensions of religion.

2.3. Croatia and Italy: Contextual Paths of Religious Freedom

The impact of historical and socio-political factors on the sphere of religious freedom can vary across different contexts. The Croatian and Italian cases share a historically strong Catholic presence, but the social and institutional position of religion has developed differently in the two settings. These differences concern democratic trajectories, levels of religious diversification, the relationship between dominant religion and national identity, and the public recognition of minority religions. Such differences provide an important contextual background for examining religious freedom, pluralism, public visibility, accommodation, and equal recognition in the two countries.

Croatia's path to establishing democracy was shaped by the fall of the communist regime, war, and the creation of a new State, bringing processes of national and religious transformation to the forefront of socio-political change. The liberation of religion from its former social position accompanied the strengthening of Croatian national identity, while Catholicism gained renewed and empowered status, taking a stronger role in developing political and cultural order ([Maldini 2006](#); [Zrinščak 1998](#)). Confessional affiliation consequently extended beyond personal religiosity and became tied to nationality, culture, tradition, and nation-building ([Kumpes 2018](#)). The Catholic Church's participation in the transitional period additionally strengthened its position as an institution associated with preserving and reinforcing the national spirit ([Marinović Jerolimov and Zrinščak 2006](#); [Marinović Bobinac and Marinović Jerolimov 2006](#)).

This interdependence of national and religious identity also shaped the position of minorities. The complexity of the relationship between national and religious identities, combined with the legacies of the former regime, made exclusion difficult to classify as solely national or solely religious because both boundaries often operated in an intertwined manner ([Dimitrijević 2012](#); [Kumpes 2018](#); [Štiks 2015](#)). The adaptation of religious communities to the new political order and the exercise of their rights and freedoms were strongly conditioned by the events of the 1990s ([Zrinščak 1998](#)). The construction of a strong collective identity and the protection of symbols of nationhood also produced tensions in majority–minority relations, while religious affiliation became a reaching arm of broader national, social and cultural belonging ([Marinović-Bobinac 1996](#); [Radović 2013](#); [Maldini 2006](#); [Kumpes 2018](#)). In this sense, the socio-political context of Croatia raises questions about how the afterlives of past arrangements continue to shape the boundaries of contemporary understandings of religious freedom, religious difference, and equal recognition.

Italy's religious context developed through a different sequence. Catholicism remained deeply connected with Italian culture and collective identity, yet religious and cultural diversity became increasingly visible through immigration and through the growing public presence of minority communities ([Garelli 2010, 2013](#); [Pace 2014](#)). Italian public and legal arrangements were initially shaped in a context characterised primarily by outward migration and by maintaining ties with Italians abroad. With the subsequent growth

of immigration and religious and cultural diversification, this framework increasingly confronted a social reality in which minority communities became more visible and their claims for recognition and rights more prominent (Zincone 2010; Zincone and Basili 2013; Zaccaria et al. 2018b).

The diversification of Italian society did not remove the influential position of the Catholic Church. Instead, the Church had to navigate a more plural religious environment while maintaining its public role. One response was to emphasise its continuing importance in Italian social life while advocating for immigrants and supporting religious tolerance and interreligious dialogue (Giordan and Zrinščak 2018). This adaptation created a context in which a strong Catholic identity could coexist with greater everyday exposure to religious diversity. Nevertheless, traditional favouritism toward the Catholic Church, visible in state–religion relations and public perceptions of other religions, continued to create difficulties for minority communities seeking equal status and recognition (Garelli 2010, 2013; Pace 2014).

Both settings carry a strong Catholic historical background and both continue to recognise the cultural relevance of the Catholic Church. Their difference concerns the historical processes through which dominant religion became connected with national identity, the timing and visibility of religious diversification, and the ways minority claims entered public and institutional life. This broader emphasis on context is consistent with sociological approaches which argue that religious freedom should be studied through the historical, political, religious, and structural conditions within which its social meanings are constructed (Breskaya et al. 2022b, 2024).

Recent comparative findings provide a particularly direct basis for distinguishing the Croatian and Italian contexts. Breskaya and Giordan (2026), using data from university students in Croatia and Italy, show that support for religious freedom, religious pluralism, and different forms of religion–state relations do not follow identical patterns across the two countries. Italian respondents expressed stronger support for religious pluralism, freedom from religion, and several claims concerning the manifestation of religion, whereas Croatian respondents showed stronger support for internal aspects of religious freedom, particularly individual autonomy (Breskaya and Giordan 2026). Their findings further show that State neutrality and religion–state identification relate differently to dimensions of religious freedom in the two settings. Differences between Croatia and Italy should therefore not be understood as a simple contrast between a more religious and a more secular society, but as differences in the social and institutional conditions under which religious freedom, pluralism, and the public presence of religious difference are recognised and supported.

3. Research Design

3.1. Research Questions and Hypotheses

Given that the aim of this study is to identify distinct patterns of support for religious freedom and to examine the factors associated with membership in the resulting profiles, the following section presents the research questions and hypotheses guiding the analysis. Together, they address both the multidimensional character of religious freedom support and the religious, cultural, and contextual factors that may shape its boundaries.

H1. *Stronger support for dominant Church favouritism and institutional religious privileging will be associated with a greater likelihood of belonging to the Conditional or Restrictive Supporter profiles rather than to the Consistent Supporter profile (Religious Privileging Hypothesis).*

H2. Respondents more strongly embedded in the dominant religious tradition, as indicated by Roman Catholic affiliation, higher self-rated religiosity, and stronger family religious socialization, will be more likely to belong to the Conditional or Restrictive Supporter profiles rather than to the Consistent Supporter profile (Religious Embeddedness Hypothesis).

H3. Croatian respondents are expected to be more likely than Italian respondents to belong to the Conditional or Restrictive Supporter profiles rather than to the Consistent Supporter profile (Croatia–Italy Differentiation Hypothesis).

RQ1. What distinct profiles of support for religious freedom can be identified among university students?

RQ2. What substantive characteristics distinguish the identified profiles of religious freedom support?

RQ3. Which sociodemographic, political, religious, cultural, and institutional factors are associated with membership in the identified supporter profiles?

In order to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses, the analysis included control and background variables, variables used to construct the RF Supporter Typology, and variables used in the multinomial logistic regression analysis (see Table 1).

Table 1. Conceptual Scheme of Variables Included in Analysis.

Background Variables	Indicators Used to Construct the RF Supporter Typology	Explanatory Predictors of RF Supporter Profile Membership
Country	Perceived Meaning of Religious Freedom	Religious Affiliation
Sex	Support for Religious Freedom Rights	Family Religious Socialization
Age	Perceived Importance of Religious Freedom Rights	Self-Rated Religiosity
Political Orientation	State Restriction on Public Presence of Religion	Cultural Identification
Cultural Socialization	Religious Diversity and Pluralism Orientation	National-Cultural Role of Religion
	Restriction of Religious Clothing and Symbols at the Workplace	Dominant-Church Favouritism
	Restriction of Religious Symbols in Public Schools	Institutional Religious Privileging
	Prayer Accommodation in Schools	
	Teacher Headscarf Accommodation	
	Accommodation of Minority Religious Symbols	
	Assimilation-Oriented View	
	Recognition of Diversity	

3.2. Sample

The analyses presented in this article are based on the combined Croatia–Italy sample, encompassing a total of 1317 university students. Of the total sample of 1317 respondents, 1170 had complete data on all 12 clustering indicators and were retained for the cluster analysis, while 147 respondents were excluded because of missing data. A comparison of retained and excluded cases on selected sociodemographic characteristics and the three core religious-freedom measures showed no substantively meaningful differences in age, sex, political orientation, religious affiliation, cultural socialization, Support for Religious Freedom Rights, Perceived Importance of Religious Freedom, or Perceived Meaning of Religious Freedom. Excluded cases were somewhat more likely to belong to the Croatian subsample, although the association was very small ($\varphi = 0.066$). Full results of this

comparison are reported in Supplementary Table S7. The analyses were conducted on a joint sample because the primary objective was to identify an overall typology of religious freedom support across the two samples.

The study used a non-probability convenience sample of university students in Croatia and Italy. Because data collection took place during the COVID-19 pandemic and university teaching was organised differently across the two settings, recruitment and questionnaire administration were adapted to the circumstances in each country. In Croatia, data were collected between October 2021 and February 2022 through an anonymous online questionnaire, with the assistance of university colleagues, professors from different faculties and departments in Zagreb. The introductory page of the questionnaire provided information about the aims of the study, anonymity and confidentiality, and participants' right to discontinue participation at any time. A total of 823 questionnaire entries were registered. After excluding respondents who did not provide substantive responses or who completed only the sociodemographic section without proceeding to the religious-freedom section, 603 Croatian questionnaires were retained for analysis.

In Italy, students were recruited at the University of Padova using paper-and-pencil questionnaires and telephone interviews, depending on the organisation of teaching during the data-collection period. For the paper-and-pencil component, professors were contacted and asked for permission to devote part of their class time to questionnaire administration. Before questionnaires were distributed, students were informed about the aims of the study, anonymity and confidentiality, and their right to decline participation. For the telephone component, students were contacted by email using student contact lists provided through university teaching contacts. The email explained the purpose of the study, anonymity and confidentiality, the approximate duration of the questionnaire, and the voluntary nature of participation, and invited interested students to provide a telephone contact and suitable time for the interview. In total, 1736 students were contacted for the telephone component and 168 participated, corresponding to a response rate of approximately 9.7%. The final Italian sample comprised 714 respondents. Comparative characteristics of the Croatian and Italian subsamples are reported in Supplementary Table S1. Country was subsequently included in the multinomial logistic regression to assess whether profile membership differed between Croatian and Italian respondents after accounting for individual sociodemographic, religious, cultural, and institutional characteristics. Because data-collection mode differed systematically between the two samples, with online administration in Croatia and paper-and-pencil and telephone administration in Italy, potential mode effects cannot be fully excluded. Observed differences between Croatian and Italian respondents therefore cannot be attributed uniquely to national contexts.

3.3. Measures

The study employed an expanded and updated version of the Social Perception of Religious Freedom (SPRF) questionnaire, originally developed and tested in Italy (Breskaya and Giordan 2019). The instrument was subsequently adapted for administration in the Croatian sample, with attention to preserving the conceptual meaning of the original measures. The analysis used two separate and non-overlapping sets of variables. Twelve indicators were used exclusively to construct the RF Supporter Typology, while a separate set of twelve background and explanatory variables was used to examine associations with profile membership in the multinomial logistic regression. Variables used to define the supporter profiles were not entered as predictors in the regression models. The cluster analysis was based on five multi-item measures and seven single-item indicators, whereas the regression models included three multi-item scales, four single-item measures, and five categorical variables. Appendix A presents the exact item wording, means, standard

deviations, and reliability coefficients for all indicators used in the cluster analysis and for the substantively specific regression measures. The remaining regression predictors, which are not presented separately in the Appendix A, were country (Croatia or Italy), sex (male or female), age (18–24 or 25 and older), political orientation (1 = left, 10 = right), religious affiliation (Roman Catholic, religious minority, non-religious), and self-rated religiosity measured on a five-point scale.

Composite measures were calculated as the mean of their constituent items. Internal consistency was generally satisfactory to excellent, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.614 for Support for Religious Freedom Rights to 0.890 for Family Religious Socialization¹. Because the State Restriction on Public Presence of Religion index consisted of only two items and showed relatively low internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.409$), it was interpreted with caution rather than treated in the same way as the other multi-item scales. Its relatively low alpha ($\alpha = 0.409$) should be interpreted in light of the small number of items; the two items were positively correlated ($r = 0.263$), a result broadly comparable to the correlation reported by Leofreddi (2023) ($r = 0.23$). Reliability coefficients were not applicable to the single-item indicators. Negatively worded items were reverse-coded where necessary so that higher values consistently indicated a stronger presence of the construct, while references to Croatia or Italy were adapted to the corresponding national version of the questionnaire (see Appendix A).

3.4. Methods of Analysis

The analysis proceeded in several stages. First, exploratory factor analyses using principal components extraction were conducted to examine the dimensionality of the multi-item measures with three or more items used in constructing the supporter profiles, while their internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. To assess the comparability of these measures across the two national samples, the analyses were additionally conducted separately for Croatia and Italy. As an additional check, the six-item Family Religious Socialization scale used in the regression analysis was examined in the same way. Full country-specific results are reported in the Supplementary Materials². Descriptive statistics were then calculated to summarize the main characteristics of the variables. K-means cluster analysis was subsequently employed to identify distinct patterns of support for religious freedom. Two-, three-, and four-cluster solutions were compared using within-cluster sum of squares (WCSS), the Calinski–Harabasz index, parsimony, and substantive interpretability. The stability of the retained three-cluster solution was additionally assessed using multiple starting configurations and repeated random split-half robustness checks³. Full diagnostic results are reported in Supplementary Tables S5 and S6. Finally, multinomial logistic regression was conducted to examine associations between sociodemographic, political, religious, cultural, and institutional characteristics and membership in the identified supporter profiles.

3.5. Construction of the RF Supporter Typology

The religious freedom supporter typology was constructed using a combination of multi-item scales and selected single-item indicators capturing respondents' perceived meaning of religious freedom, support for religious freedom rights, the perceived importance of those rights, attitudes toward state restrictions on the public presence of religion, religious diversity and pluralism orientations, support for concrete forms of institutional restriction and accommodation, and attitudes toward assimilation and the recognition of religious difference. All 12 indicators were standardized prior to the K-means cluster analysis to ensure their comparability and to prevent differences in measurement scales and variance from disproportionately influencing the solution (see Table 2).

Table 2. Indicators Included in the Construction of the RF Supporter Typology.

Construct/Variable	Operationalization	Content	Higher Scores Indicate
General Meanings and Orientations toward Religious Freedom			
Perceived Meaning of Religious Freedom	Multi-item scale	Meanings attributed to religious freedom, including freedom of religious or non-religious identification and expression, protection from state interference, non-discrimination, legal equality, democratic rights, and peaceful coexistence.	Stronger endorsement of the perceived meaning of RF
Support for Religious Freedom Rights	Multi-item scale	Support for concrete rights related to religious choice, expression, practice, and organization.	Stronger support for RF rights
Perceived Importance of Religious Freedom Rights	Multi-item scale	Perceived importance of religious freedoms concerning worship, public expression, association, and dissemination of religious views.	Greater perceived importance
State Restriction on Public Presence of Religion	Two-item scale/index	Support for confining religious expression to the private sphere and for state control over religion's public presence.	Stronger restrictive orientation
Religious Diversity and Pluralism Orientation	Multi-item scale	Positive evaluation of religious diversity and multiple religious perspectives, together with the rejection of religious homogeneity and diversity-related threat.	Stronger pluralist orientation
Institutional Visibility and Accommodation of Religion			
Institutional Restriction on Religious Expression	Single items	Prohibition of religious clothing and symbols in workplace and in educational institutions.	Stronger restriction
Institutional Accommodation of Religious Expression	Single items	Support for institutional accommodation of religious practices, religious attire, and minority religious symbols in educational settings.	Stronger accommodation
Assimilation-Oriented View	Single item	Expectation that religious and cultural minorities should assimilate to the dominant culture.	Stronger assimilation-oriented view
Recognition of Diversity	Single item	Support for recognizing religious and cultural differences in both public and private spheres.	Stronger recognition/diversity-oriented view

Note: The two indicators of institutional restriction and the three indicators of institutional accommodation were entered separately into the cluster analysis and were not combined into composite scales. Their original coding was retained; therefore, higher scores on the restriction indicators reflect stronger support for limiting religious expression, whereas higher scores on the accommodation indicators reflect stronger support for accommodating religious practices, attire, and symbols in institutional settings. Detailed item wording and measurement properties are presented in the Measures section.

The selection of indicators was theoretically guided by Breskaya and Giordan's (2019) multidimensional framework of the social perception of religious freedom. Because the revised SPRF questionnaire used in this study did not operationalize all five original conceptual domains in equal depth, the cluster analysis focused on the dimensions and specific aspects represented in the available instrument, including individual and group autonomy, religious freedom as a societal and human-rights value, religion–state governance, public religious expression, pluralism, and the recognition and accommodation of religious difference (see Table 2).

To determine the preferred solution, K-means models with two, three, and four clusters were examined using the same 12 standardized indicators and evaluated using both objective fit measures and substantive interpretability. The approximate within-cluster sum of squares (WCSS) decreased from 11,604.08 for the two-cluster solution to 10,777.25 for the three-cluster solution and 10,158.19 for the four-cluster solution. The reduction in within-cluster variation was therefore larger from two to three clusters (7.13%) than from three to four clusters (5.74%). The Calinski–Harabasz index was highest for the two-cluster solution ($CH = 233.47$), compared with the three-cluster ($CH = 170.45$) and four-cluster ($CH = 144.14$) solutions, indicating that no single statistical criterion unequivocally favoured the three-cluster solution.

The two-cluster solution produced two broad groups, comprising 625 and 545 respondents, which primarily distinguished a more consistently supportive profile from a less supportive and more restrictive profile. Although simpler, this solution did not distinguish the substantively important Conditional configuration in which general endorsement of religious freedom coexisted with selective institutional accommodation, weaker pluralist recognition, and a strong assimilation orientation. The four-cluster solution produced groups of 152, 272, 382, and 364 respondents. It retained recognisable Consistent and Conditional profiles but mainly increased complexity by dividing the restrictive end of the typology into two narrower variants. The three-cluster solution was therefore retained as providing the most informative balance between statistical fit, parsimony, and substantive differentiation⁴. It produced three adequately sized and substantively distinct profiles, subsequently identified as Consistent, Conditional, and Restrictive Supporters. The profile labels were assigned post hoc based on the relative pattern of standardized cluster centres across the indicators included in the analysis. Cluster membership was saved as a categorical variable and used as the basis for subsequent profile comparisons and multinomial logistic regression analysis.

Additional stability analyses were conducted to assess the robustness of the retained three-cluster solution. Across nine full-sample runs using independently generated starting configurations, the exact retained solution was recovered in three runs, while the lowest-error alternative reproduced the same substantive Consistent, Conditional, and Restrictive configurations. The repeated split-half robustness analysis, based on five independently generated 50:50 partitions yielding ten half-samples, likewise recovered the same broader three-profile configuration in all ten half-samples. Because the full-sample cluster centres were used as common starting values in the split-half analyses, these results are interpreted as robustness checks rather than independent replications. Full results of the cluster-solution comparison and stability analyses are reported in Supplementary Tables S5 and S6. The substantive characteristics of the three profiles are presented in the Results section.

4. Results

4.1. Identification and Characteristics of the Religious Freedom Profiles

The K-means cluster analysis identified three distinct profiles of support for religious freedom. The analysis included 1170 respondents with complete data on all 12 clustering

indicators, while 147 respondents were excluded because of missing values. *Consistent Supporters* comprised 421 respondents (36.0%), *Conditional Supporters* 459 respondents (39.2%), and *Restrictive Supporters* 290 respondents (24.8%). The profiles were interpreted based on the relative pattern of standardized final cluster centres presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Standardized Final Cluster Centres of the Three Religious Freedom Supporter Profiles.

Indicators	Consistent Supporters	Conditional Supporters	Restrictive Supporters
Perceived meaning of religious freedom	+0.49	−0.10	−0.56
Support for RF rights	+0.63	−0.14	−0.64
Perceived importance of RF rights	+0.62	−0.05	−0.82
State restriction on public presence of religion index	−0.46	+0.23	+0.24
Religious diversity and pluralism orientation	+0.73	−0.34	−0.54
People should be prohibited to wear religious clothes and religious symbols at the workplace	−0.48	−0.10	+0.94
No religious symbols of any religion should be allowed in public schools	+0.13	−0.30	+0.35
Students should be offered time, space and a room in schools to do their prayers	+0.07	+0.31	−0.60
The state should not prevent female teachers from wearing a head scarf for religious reasons	+0.45	+0.17	−0.92
The state should allow the presence of symbols of religious minorities in public schools, since Catholic symbols are present there	+0.34	+0.17	−0.74
Assimilation-oriented view	−0.65	+0.61	−0.01
Recognition of diversity	+0.65	−0.21	−0.60
N	421	459	290
%	36.0	39.2	24.8

Note: Values represent standardized final cluster centres. Positive values indicate scores above the combined-sample mean, whereas negative values indicate scores below the combined-sample mean. The indicators retained their original direction: higher scores on state restriction, institutional restriction, and assimilation indicate more restrictive orientations, whereas higher scores on the remaining indicators indicate stronger endorsement, accommodation, pluralism, or recognition. Bold values indicate the number and percentage of respondents in each cluster.

• Consistent Supporters

Consistent Supporters displayed the strongest and most coherent support for religious freedom. They scored above the sample mean on the perceived meaning and importance of religious freedom, support for concrete religious freedom rights, religious diversity and pluralism, and the recognition of religious difference. They were also supportive of the institutional accommodation of religious expression, particularly teachers' religious clothing and minority religious symbols in public schools. One exception to this generally accommodationist pattern concerned the item stating that no religious symbols of any religion should be allowed in public schools, on which Consistent Supporters scored slightly

above the combined-sample mean (+0.13). Because the item applies the same restriction to all religions, this pattern may reflect a general secular-neutrality orientation toward public schools rather than selective opposition to minority religious expression. At the same time, they exhibited the lowest levels of state restriction and workplace restriction, as well as the lowest support for assimilating minority groups into the dominant culture. This profile therefore represents an understanding of religious freedom that consistently connects its general meaning and individual rights with pluralism, accommodation, and the public recognition of religious diversity.

- **Conditional Supporters**

Conditional Supporters expressed strong support for religious freedom in absolute terms, although their standardized scores on its perceived meaning, importance, and concrete rights were close to or slightly below the combined-sample mean. They supported several forms of institutional accommodation, particularly prayer facilities, teachers' religious clothing, and minority religious symbols in public schools. At the same time, however, they displayed the strongest assimilation orientation, somewhat greater acceptance of state restriction, and below-average support for religious pluralism and the recognition of difference. Their support can therefore be understood as conditional: religious freedom is generally accepted, but religious difference is expected to remain compatible with or adapt to the dominant cultural framework.

- **Restrictive Supporters**

Restrictive Supporters expressed the weakest and most restrictive pattern of support. They scored below the sample mean on the perceived meaning and importance of religious freedom, support for concrete religious freedom rights, religious diversity and pluralism, recognition of difference, and all three indicators of institutional accommodation. They also exhibited the strongest support for prohibiting religious clothing and symbols in the workplace, together with greater acceptance of restrictions on religion in public institutions. Unlike Conditional Supporters, however, Restrictive Supporters were not distinguished by a strong assimilation orientation; their restrictiveness was expressed primarily through weaker support for pluralism, recognition, and institutional accommodation and stronger support for restrictions on public religious expression.

- **Why all three groups can still be called "supporters"?**

The typology was based on the assumption that support for religious freedom is multidimensional. Respondents were classified according to patterns across the perceived meaning of religious freedom, support for religious freedom rights, the perceived importance of those rights, public and institutional restriction, pluralism, accommodation, assimilation, and the recognition of religious difference. Importantly, all three profiles expressed positive support for religious freedom. Mean scores on the Perceived Meaning of Religious Freedom scale were approximately 4.76 among Consistent Supporters, 4.45 among Conditional Supporters, and 4.22 among Restrictive Supporters. Mean support for concrete religious freedom rights also remained above the neutral midpoint of the five-point scale in all three profiles: approximately 4.11, 3.67, and 3.39, respectively. The profile labels therefore capture different strengths, forms, and boundaries of religious freedom support rather than a simple distinction between supporters and opponents (see Figure 1).

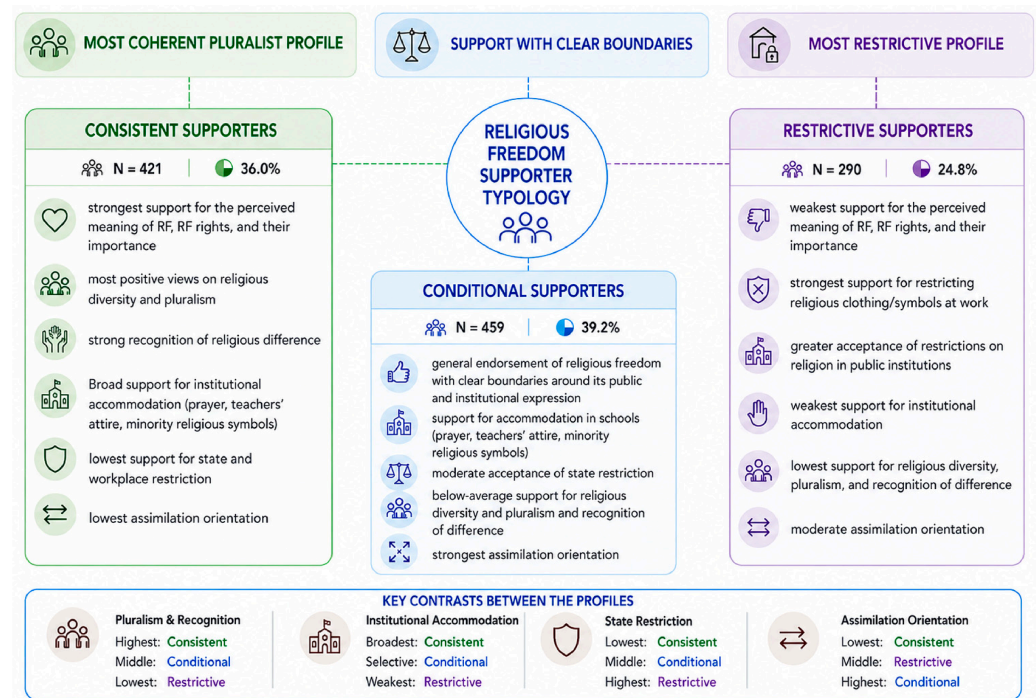


Figure 1. Typology of Religious Freedom Supporters—characteristics from cluster analysis⁵.

4.2. Predictors of Religious Freedom Supporter Profiles

To examine the factors associated with membership in the three religious freedom supporter profiles, a series of multinomial logistic regression models was estimated, with Consistent Supporters specified as the reference category. The models therefore assessed the likelihood of belonging to the Conditional or Restrictive Supporter profile rather than to the Consistent Supporter profile.

Model 1 included background characteristics: country, sex, age group, political orientation, and cultural socialization. **Model 2** additionally introduced religious affiliation, self-rated religiosity, and family religious socialization. **Model 3** further incorporated cultural identification, the national-cultural role of religion, dominant Church favouritism, and institutional religious privileging. Country, sex, age group, cultural socialization, and religious affiliation were entered as factors, whereas political orientation, self-rated religiosity, family religious socialization, cultural identification, the national-cultural role of religion, dominant Church favouritism, and institutional religious privileging were entered as covariates. Results are presented as odds ratios (ORs) with 95% confidence intervals. Cases with missing values on variables included in each model were excluded listwise, resulting in analytic samples of 1111 respondents in Model 1, 1100 in Model 2, and 1088 in Model 3. All three models significantly improved upon the intercept-only model. Model 1 was statistically significant, $\chi^2(10) = 167.20$, $p < 0.001$, with a Nagelkerke pseudo- R^2 of 0.158 and an overall classification accuracy of 50.0%. Model 2 was also significant, $\chi^2(18) = 203.46$, $p < 0.001$, with a Nagelkerke pseudo- R^2 of 0.191 and 52.2% of respondents correctly classified. The final model provided the highest explanatory performance among the three models, $\chi^2(26) = 324.60$, $p < 0.001$, with a Nagelkerke pseudo- R^2 of 0.292 and an overall classification accuracy of 55.5%. Overall, the explanatory power of the models was moderate. The goodness-of-fit statistics were non-significant for Models 2 and 3, indicating acceptable fit to the observed data. In the final model, Pearson's test was non-significant ($p = 0.294$), as was the deviance test ($p = 0.972$). The full regression results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Multinomial logistic regression predicting religious freedom supporter profile membership.

Predictors	Conditional Supporters vs. Consistent Supporters			Restrictive Supporters vs. Consistent Supporters		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)
Model 1 Sociodemographic and socialization background						
Political orientation (1 = left, 10 = right)	1.341 *** (1.237–1.454)	1.285 *** (1.179–1.401)	1.191 *** (1.084–1.309)	1.376 *** (1.259–1.504)	1.401 *** (1.275–1.540)	1.346 *** (1.215–1.491)
Age 25+ (ref. 18–24)	1.012 (0.620–1.652)	1.005 (0.613–1.647)	0.984 (0.585–1.656)	1.263 (0.756–2.111)	1.287 (0.767–2.159)	1.194 (0.698–2.040)
Country (ref. Italy)	2.641 *** (1.964–3.552)	2.168 *** (1.577–2.980)	1.508 * (1.044–2.179)	1.732 ** (1.238–2.422)	1.859 ** (1.297–2.663)	1.721 ** (1.142–2.592)
Sex (ref. female)	1.035 (0.728–1.471)	1.114 (0.775–1.601)	1.106 (0.750–1.631)	2.175 *** (1.519–3.114)	2.050 *** (1.416–2.968)	1.880 ** (1.275–2.773)
Exclusively national cultural socialization (ref. cross-cultural)	0.944 (0.653–1.365)	0.773 (0.514–1.164)	0.751 (0.486–1.161)	0.775 (0.519–1.160)	0.719 (0.462–1.119)	0.736 (0.463–1.169)
Model 2 Religious background and religious socialization						
Level of religiosity	—	1.228 * (1.032–1.462)	1.116 (0.926–1.344)	—	0.980 (0.811–1.186)	0.913 (0.748–1.116)
Family religious socialization	—	0.894 (0.739–1.081)	0.800 * (0.651–0.984)	—	0.751 ** (0.607–0.929)	0.699 ** (0.558–0.876)
Non-religious (ref. Roman Catholic)	—	0.730 (0.468–1.139)	1.095 (0.681–1.760)	—	0.672 (0.418–1.079)	0.917 (0.557–1.510)
Religious minority (ref. Roman Catholic)	—	0.498 (0.231–1.074)	0.576 (0.251–1.320)	—	0.534 (0.223–1.278)	0.601 (0.234–1.543)
Model 3 National-religious and institutional orientations						
Cultural identification	—	—	1.007 (0.922–1.098)	—	—	0.994 (0.904–1.092)
National-cultural role of religion	—	—	0.894 (0.746–1.071)	—	—	0.650 *** (0.533–0.794)
Dominant church favouritism	—	—	1.306 ** (1.079–1.580)	—	—	1.610 *** (1.301–1.992)
Institutional religious privileging	—	—	2.190 *** (1.763–2.721)	—	—	1.614 *** (1.262–2.064)
Overall model statistics						
Model 1: N = 1111; $\chi^2(10) = 167.20$, $p < 0.001$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.158$; correctly classified = 50.0%.						
Model 2: N = 1100; $\chi^2(18) = 203.46$, $p < 0.001$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.191$; correctly classified = 52.2%.						
Model 3: N = 1088; $\chi^2(26) = 324.60$, $p < 0.001$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.292$; correctly classified = 55.5%.						

Note: Entries are odds ratios with 95% confidence intervals in parentheses. The reference outcome is Consistent Supporters. Reference categories for categorical predictors are Italy, female, cross-cultural socialization, and Roman Catholic. Model 1 includes background characteristics; Model 2 adds religious background and family religious socialization; Model 3 adds national-religious and institutional orientations. Model statistics refer to the full multinomial model. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Preliminary diagnostics indicated no problematic multicollinearity among the predictors, with variance inflation factors ranging from 1.12 to 1.77.

4.2.1. Conditional Supporters vs. Consistent Supporters

In Model 1, Conditional rather than Consistent profile membership was associated with a more right-wing political orientation and with membership in the Croatian subsample. Following the inclusion of religious characteristics in Model 2, self-rated religiosity was also significantly associated with Conditional rather than Consistent profile membership.

However, this association was no longer significant after national-religious and institutional orientations were introduced in the final model. In Model 3, a more right-wing political orientation remained associated with greater odds of Conditional membership ($OR = 1.191$, $p < 0.001$), while stronger family religious socialization was associated with lower odds of belonging to this profile ($OR = 0.800$, $p = 0.034$). Dominant Church favouritism increased the odds of Conditional rather than Consistent membership ($OR = 1.306$, $p = 0.006$), while institutional religious privileging was also strongly associated with greater odds of Conditional membership ($OR = 2.190$, $p < 0.001$). Croatian respondents also remained more likely than Italian respondents to belong to the Conditional profile ($OR = 1.508$, $p = 0.029$) (see Table 4).

4.2.2. Restrictive Supporters vs. Consistent Supporters

Restrictive profile membership showed a persistent association with political and sociodemographic characteristics. A more right-wing political orientation, male sex, and membership in the Croatian subsample were significantly associated with Restrictive membership in Model 1 and remained independently associated with Restrictive membership in the fully adjusted model. In Model 3, each one-point shift to the right on the political-orientation scale increased the odds of Restrictive rather than Consistent membership by approximately 35% ($OR = 1.346$, $p < 0.001$). Men had nearly twice the odds of belonging to the Restrictive profile compared with women ($OR = 1.880$, $p = 0.001$), while Croatian respondents had higher odds than Italian respondents ($OR = 1.721$, $p = 0.009$). Stronger family religious socialization was associated with lower odds of Restrictive membership ($OR = 0.699$, $p = 0.002$). Dominant Church favouritism ($OR = 1.610$, $p < 0.001$) and institutional religious privileging ($OR = 1.614$, $p < 0.001$) both increased the likelihood of belonging to the Restrictive rather than the Consistent profile (see Table 4).

In the final model, support for a general national-cultural role of religion was associated with lower odds of Restrictive membership ($OR = 0.650$, $p < 0.001$), when considered alongside dominant Church favouritism and institutional religious privileging. This pattern suggests that the cultural recognition of religion should be distinguished from support for hierarchical or legally privileged institutional arrangements. Overall, the final model indicates that Conditional and Restrictive Supporters share several characteristics but are not simply weaker and stronger versions of the same profile. A more right-wing political orientation, weaker family religious socialization, membership in the Croatian subsample, dominant Church favouritism, and institutional religious privileging were associated with both less-consistent profiles. In addition, support for the national-cultural role of religion was associated with lower odds of Restrictive, but not Conditional, membership. By contrast, age, cultural identification, cultural socialization, religious affiliation, and self-rated religiosity did not independently distinguish either profile from Consistent Supporters in the fully adjusted model. The results therefore suggest that the boundaries of religious freedom are associated less with personal religiosity as such than with political orientation and support for hierarchical and institutionally privileged arrangements between religion, society, and the State (see Table 4 and Figure 2).

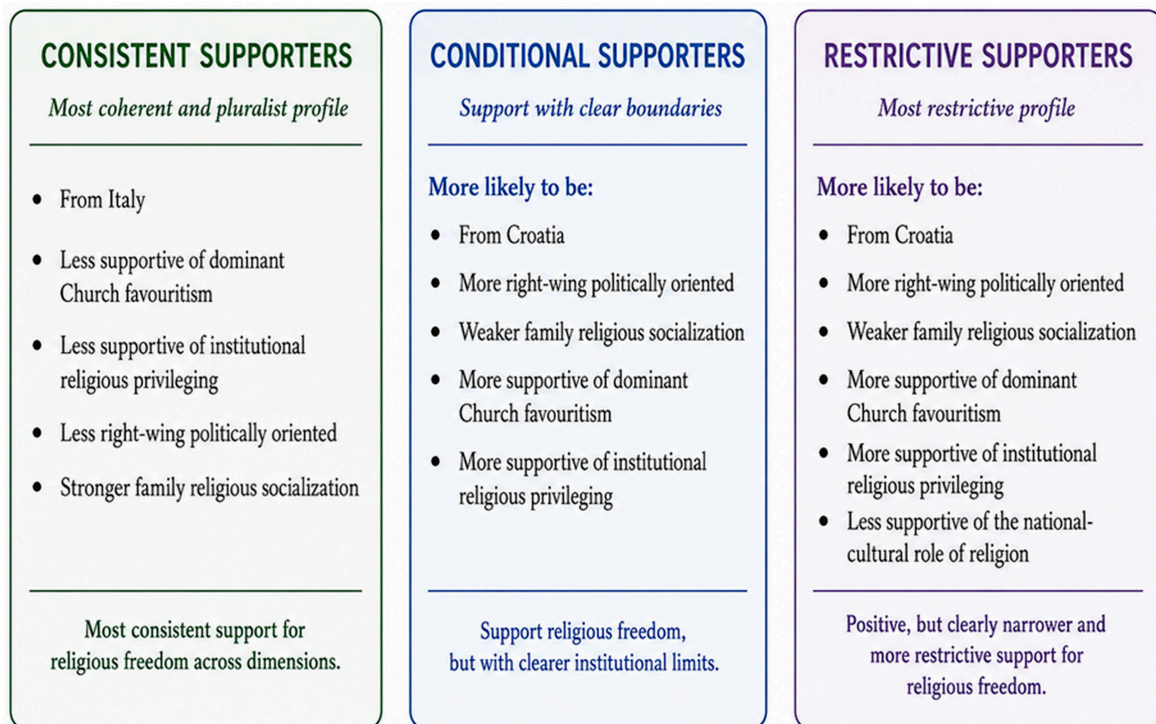


Figure 2. Regression-Based Characteristics of Conditional and Restrictive Supporters Relative to Consistent Supporters⁶.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

This study set out to examine how support for religious freedom is structured among university students in Croatia and Italy and, more importantly, under which conditions such support becomes conditional or restrictive. It sought to identify distinct supporter profiles, understand how these profiles differ, and examine which political, religious, cultural, institutional, and contextual factors are associated with profile membership. To address these questions, three hypotheses concerning religious privileging, religious embeddedness, and Croatia–Italy differentiation were tested alongside the exploratory research questions.

In relation to RQ1, the analysis identified three distinct profiles of religious freedom support: Consistent, Conditional, and Restrictive Supporters. The resulting profile structure showed that endorsement of religious freedom can remain positive while its extension to concrete public and institutional settings becomes conditional or restrictive. The findings support the central premise of this study that support for religious freedom cannot be adequately understood as a single continuum extending from support to opposition. Although respondents in all three profiles attributed positive meanings to religious freedom and expressed support for religious freedom rights above the scale midpoint, they differed substantially in the consistency with which support for religious freedom was extended to pluralism, public religious visibility, institutional accommodation, and the recognition of religious difference, as well as in their assimilation orientations. This finding reflects the multidimensional character of religious freedom emphasized by Scolnicov (2011), Fox (2015), and Breskaya and Giordan (2019), as well as the distinction between religious diversity and its pluralistic recognition (Giordan 2014; Beckford 2014). The Conditional Supporter profile is particularly important for understanding these boundaries. Members of this profile expressed positive support for religious freedom and supported several forms of institutional accommodation, while simultaneously displaying the strongest assimilation orientation, below-average support for religious pluralism and recognition, and somewhat greater acceptance of State restriction. Their position therefore represents a distinct configu-

ration rather than simply moderate support between the Consistent and Restrictive profiles: religious freedom is accepted, but religious difference is expected to remain compatible with or adapt to the dominant cultural framework. This pattern corresponds with the distinction between the general acceptance of religious freedom and its concrete social implementation (Breskaya et al. 2022b), as well as findings showing that support may become more selective when religious difference involves public visibility or institutional accommodation (Carol et al. 2015; Bilodeau et al. 2018; Scott 2023).

A particularly important finding is that support for dominant Church favouritism and institutional religious privileging distinguished the profiles more clearly than religious affiliation or self-rated religiosity. The multinomial logistic regression findings provide support for the *Religious Privileging Hypothesis* (H1). Dominant Church favouritism and institutional religious privileging were associated with higher odds of belonging to both the Conditional and Restrictive profiles rather than to the Consistent profile. These findings suggest that the consistency of religious freedom support is related to whether unequal legal, political, or institutional arrangements favouring the dominant religious tradition are accepted. This interpretation is consistent with discussion of religious hierarchies, emphasis on the distribution of recognition and privilege, and more recent research on dominant religion privilege and State support for religion (Richardson 2006, 2014; Durham 2012; Lauwers 2023; Helbling and Trautmüller 2016). Although the regression predictors were distinct from the indicators used to construct the supporter profiles, some of the broader political, cultural, and institutional orientations examined in the regression are theoretically related to the wider normative domain of religious freedom. Their associations with profile membership may therefore also reflect broader normative coherence across related attitudinal domains. At the same time, the two analyses remain analytically distinct, as none of the indicators used to construct the profiles were subsequently entered as predictors in the regression models.

By contrast, the *Religious Embeddedness Hypothesis* (H2) was not supported, and the result for family religious socialization ran in the opposite direction to that hypothesized. Neither Roman Catholic affiliation nor self-rated religiosity independently distinguished Conditional or Restrictive Supporters from Consistent Supporters in the fully adjusted model, while stronger family religious socialization was associated with lower, rather than higher, odds of belonging to both less-consistent profiles. This finding suggests that stronger religious socialization within the family does not necessarily translate into more restrictive boundaries of religious freedom. One possible interpretation is that stronger family religious socialization may reinforce the personal salience and positive meaning of religion and religious freedom without necessarily translating into more restrictive attitudes toward religious difference. This interpretation is consistent with previous research showing that family religious socialization contributes to the construction of religious-freedom meanings, with effects that may vary across different dimensions and contexts (Giordan et al. 2020), and with comparative work emphasizing that social perceptions of religious freedom are constructed through socialization into wider religious and political cultures (Breskaya et al. 2022a). More broadly, the contrast between the non-significance of religious affiliation and self-rated religiosity and the stronger role of dominant-Church favouritism and institutional religious privileging suggests that religious embeddedness and support for hierarchical or privileged institutional arrangements should remain analytically distinct.

Regarding the *Croatia–Italy Differentiation Hypothesis* (H3), Croatian respondents were more likely than Italian respondents to belong to both the Conditional and Restrictive profiles rather than to the Consistent profile, even after sociodemographic, political, religious, cultural, and institutional characteristics were taken into account. These findings support H3 by demonstrating a difference between the Croatian and Italian subsamples.

The pattern is consistent with the contextual differences discussed above concerning the historical and institutional development of dominant religion, religious diversification, and minority recognition in Croatia and Italy (Zrinščak 1998; Maldini 2006; Marinović Jerolimov and Zrinščak 2006; Kumpes 2018; Garelli 2010, 2013; Pace 2014; Giordan and Zrinščak 2018). However, because data-collection mode differed systematically between the two samples, potential mode effects cannot be fully excluded, and the observed difference cannot be attributed uniquely to national context. It should therefore be interpreted as a difference between the Croatian and Italian subsamples rather than as an independent country effect.

Taken together, the cluster and regression findings indicate that Conditional and Restrictive Supporters should not be understood simply as weaker and stronger expressions of the same orientation. Both profiles were associated with a more right-wing political orientation, weaker family religious socialization, membership in the Croatian subsample, dominant Church favouritism, and institutional religious privileging. However, their substantive configurations differed. Conditional Supporters combined the strongest assimilation orientation with continued support for several forms of institutional accommodation, whereas Restrictive Supporters displayed a broader pattern of weaker support for religious freedom, pluralism, recognition, and accommodation. Moreover, the national-cultural role of religion was associated with lower odds of Restrictive, but not Conditional, membership, further suggesting that cultural recognition and institutional privileging do not operate identically across the two less-consistent profiles.

A broader consideration of the research also requires acknowledging several limitations. First, the study is based on a non-probability sample of university students and the findings cannot be generalised to the broader youth populations of Croatia and Italy. Second, different modes of data collection were used across the two countries, with on-line administration in Croatia and paper-and-pencil and telephone administration in Italy. Because data-collection mode differed systematically between the two samples, potential mode effects cannot be fully excluded, and observed differences between Croatian and Italian respondents cannot be attributed uniquely to national context. In addition, the cross-sectional design does not permit temporal or causal inferences, and the regression results should therefore be interpreted as associations with profile membership rather than as evidence of causal relationships. Finally, cluster solutions depend on the indicators included and should be understood as an exploratory typology rather than fixed categories. Future research should examine whether the three-profile structure can be replicated in broader age groups, representative samples, and additional national contexts.

Overall, this study demonstrates that support for religious freedom among young people is neither uniform nor unconditional. The three profiles capture different strengths, boundaries, and conditions of support rather than a simple division between supporters and opponents. Most notably, these boundaries were associated with stronger support for dominant Church favouritism and institutional religious privileging, whereas religious affiliation and self-rated religiosity did not independently distinguish the profiles. Political orientation, weaker family religious socialization, and membership in the Croatian subsample were also associated with profile membership.

Supplementary Materials: The following supporting information can be downloaded at: <https://www.mdpi.com/article/10.3390/rel17101169/s1>, Table S1: Comparative Characteristics of the Croatian and Italian Subsamples; Table S2: Country-Specific Reliability and Principal Component Diagnostics; Table S3: Country-Specific Component Loadings for the One-Component Measures; Table S4: Country-Specific Component Loadings for Support for Religious Freedom Rights; Table S5: Comparison of Two-, Three-, and Four-Cluster Solutions; Table S6: Stability and Sensitivity Analyses of the Retained Three-Cluster Solution; Table S7: Comparison of Retained and Excluded Cases on Selected Sociodemographic Characteristics and Core Religious-Freedom Measures.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Ethical review and approval were not required for this study under the institutional and regulatory requirements applicable at the time of the research. Formal written confirmation of this status was obtained from the University of Padua.

Informed Consent Statement: Voluntary participation in the survey was ensured. Survey responses were collected without identifying information and were treated confidentially. All participants were informed about the aims of the study, anonymity and confidentiality, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to decline or discontinue participation before taking part.

Data Availability Statement: The data are not publicly available or archived. The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author due to considerations related to participant privacy.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Appendix A

Reliability of Computed Scales and Item Means and Standard Deviations	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha
Perceived Meaning of Religious Freedom			
Freedom to choose my religious/non-religious identity	4.73	0.58	0.811
Freedom to speak on religious matters openly and freely	4.55	0.68	
Protection from state interference on religious issues	3.94	1.01	
Non-discrimination against religious minorities on the basis of religion	4.70	0.63	
Equality of various religions in society before the law	4.61	0.74	
An important right in a democratic society	4.39	0.83	
Non-violent coexistence for all religions in every society	4.61	0.72	
Support for Religious Freedom Rights			
It is important for everyone to be free to change their religion	4.64	0.62	0.614
Everyone should be free to teach their religion, either in public or in private	3.89	1.02	
Everyone should be free to observe dietary practices prescribed by their religion	4.17	0.91	
Everyone should be free to invent a new religion	2.78	1.15	
Every religious leader/group should be free to renew their religion	3.58	0.98	
Every religious group should be free to establish houses of worship in the localities of their choosing	3.45	1.03	
Perceived Importance of Religious Freedom Rights			
Freedom to worship	4.63	0.60	0.771
Freedom to wear religious clothes/symbols in public places	4.23	0.93	
Freedom to establish religious group	3.64	1.03	
Freedom to express religious views in the media	3.84	1.01	
Freedom to write, issue and disseminate religious publications	3.92	0.92	

Reliability of Computed Scales and Item Means and Standard Deviations	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha
State Restriction on Public Presence of Religion Index *			
State should be neutral and treat equally all religions and confine religious expression to private sphere	3.35	1.22	0.409
It is better if state controls religion and does not allow it to be present in public sphere	2.38	0.99	
Religious Diversity and Pluralism Orientation			
Having people from different religion in Croatia/Italy is enriching	4.27	0.79	0.756
Having many different religious points of view is good for Croatian/Italian society	4.15	0.87	
Increasing numbers of religions groups in Croatia/Italy cause unrest and tension	3.31	1.04	
In Croatia/Italy it would be better to pay attention to one dominant religion and culture	4.02	0.98	
Institutional Restriction on Religious Expression			
People should be prohibited to wear religious clothes and religious symbols at the workplace	2.04	0.98	Single item
No religious symbols of any religion should be allowed in public schools	2.95	1.32	Single item
Institutional Accommodation of Religious Expression			
Students should be offered time, space and a room in schools to do their prayers	2.94	1.10	Single item
The state should not prevent female teachers from wearing a head scarf for religious reasons	3.94	1.13	Single item
The state should allow the presence of symbols of religious minorities in public schools, since Catholic symbols are present there	3.57	1.13	Single item
Assimilation-Oriented View			
We should tolerate differences in private sphere but assimilate “different culture or religion” to major/ dominant culture	2.80	1.12	Single item
Recognition of Diversity			
The right to have one’s ‘difference’ (minority religiosity, ethnicity, etc.) should be recognised and supported in the public and the private spheres	4.21	0.83	Single item
Cultural Identification			
How would you place your identification with Croatian/Italian culture	6.89	2.05	Single item
Cultural Socialization (0 = exclusively socialized in the national culture; 1 = cross-cultural socialization)	0.20	0.40	Binary Variable

Reliability of Computed Scales and Item Means and Standard Deviations	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha
Family Religious Socialization			
My parents (relatives) talked with me on religious issues	2.97	1.38	0.890
I grew up in a religious family	2.81	1.39	
We had religious symbols at home	2.54	1.38	
We prayed together with my family	2.42	1.42	
We read religious texts together with my family	1.96	1.23	
We celebrated religious holidays together in the family	3.79	1.23	
National-Cultural Role of Religion			
Religions should strengthen the national spirit	3.25	1.13	0.793
Religions should take responsibility with the state for national culture	3.16	1.18	
Dominant-Church Favouritism			
The Catholic Church as part of Croatian/Italian identity should be favored in society	2.12	1.14	Single Item
Institutional Religious Privileging			
State should guarantee special legal status of Catholicism and support close ties between Catholicism, politics, and culture	2.25	1.15	0.867
State should guarantee special legal status of a preferred set of religions and recognize special role of them in cultural and political spheres	2.17	1.10	
* For the two-item State Restriction on Public Presence of Religion index, the inter-item correlation is reported alongside Cronbach's alpha because alpha is sensitive to the number of items. The two items were positively correlated ($r = 0.263$; $\alpha = 0.409$). * The two negatively worded items included in the Religious Diversity and Pluralism Orientation scale were reverse-coded prior to scale construction and analysis. Accordingly, the reported means and standard deviations refer to the reverse-coded values, with higher scores consistently indicating a more positive orientation toward religious diversity and pluralism. * For the binary cultural socialization variable, the mean represents the proportion of respondents coded 1 (cross-cultural socialization).			

Notes

- Country-specific reliability analyses showed broadly comparable patterns in the Croatian and Italian subsamples. Full country-specific reliability coefficients are reported in the Supplementary Materials.
- Sampling adequacy was assessed using the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity. Components with eigenvalues greater than 1 were initially retained, with Varimax rotation applied when more than one component emerged. Three of the four multi-item measures yielded a clear one-component solution in both national subsamples. Support for Religious Freedom Rights produced a second component with an eigenvalue marginally above 1 in both Croatia and Italy. Because the Kaiser criterion may overestimate the number of components when eigenvalues only marginally exceed 1, this result was interpreted together with the component-loading pattern and the substantive coherence of the measure (Hayton et al. 2004; Pallant 2016) (see Supplementary Materials, Tables S2–S4).
- As an additional country/mode sensitivity analysis, the retained three-cluster solution was re-estimated separately in the Croatian and Italian subsamples. Full results are reported in Supplementary Table S6, Panel C.
- As a sensitivity check, the retained three-cluster solution was compared with an earlier specification excluding the Perceived Meaning of Religious Freedom scale. After aligning clusters by their substantive profiles, overall membership agreement was 89.5%: 96.2% among Consistent, 89.7% among Conditional, and 81.8% among Restrictive Supporters. An additional sensitivity analysis excluding the State Restriction on Public Presence of Religion index ($\alpha = 0.409$) yielded 95.1% overall individual-level membership agreement with the retained solution; full results are reported in Supplementary Table S6, Panel D.

- 5 Figure 1. The graphical design of Figure 1 was created with the assistance of generative AI. All data, statistical results, labels, and substantive content were provided and verified by the author; generative AI was not used to generate or alter the data, analyses, or their interpretation.
- 6 Figure 2. The graphical design of Figure 2 was created with the assistance of generative AI. All data, statistical results, labels, and substantive content were provided and verified by the author; generative AI was not used to generate or alter the data, analyses, or their interpretation.

References

- Beckford, James A. 2014. Re-Thinking Religious Pluralism. In *Religious Pluralism: Framing Religious Diversity in the Contemporary World*. Edited by Giuseppe Giordan and Enzo Pace. Cham: Springer, pp. 15–29.
- Bilodeau, Antoine, Luc Turgeon, Stephen White, and Ailsa Henderson. 2018. Strange Bedfellows? Attitudes toward Minority and Majority Religious Symbols in the Public Sphere. *Politics and Religion* 11: 309–33. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Bohman, Andrea, and Mikael Hjerm. 2014. How the Religious Context Affects the Relationship between Religiosity and Attitudes toward Immigration. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37: 937–57. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Breskaya, Olga, and Giuseppe Giordan. 2019. Measuring the Social Perception of Religious Freedom: A Sociological Perspective. *Religions* 10: 274. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Breskaya, Olga, and Giuseppe Giordan. 2026. Across the Loop: Comparing Perceptions of Religious Freedom, Pluralism, and Secularism in Italy and Croatia. *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 24: 83–103. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Breskaya, Olga, Giuseppe Giordan, and James T. Richardson. 2024. *A Sociology of Religious Freedom*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Breskaya, Olga, Giuseppe Giordan, and Sergey Trophimov. 2022a. Social Construction of Religious Freedom: A Comparative Study among Youth in Italy and Russia. *Religion, State & Society* 50: 254–76. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Breskaya, Olga, Giuseppe Giordan, and Siniša Zrinščak. 2021. Social Perception of Religious Freedom: Testing the Impact of Secularism and State-Religion Relations. *Social Compass* 68: 282–300. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Breskaya, Olga, Giuseppe Giordan, and Siniša Zrinščak. 2022b. Religious Freedom: Thinking Sociologically. *Religion, State & Society* 50: 246–53. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Breskaya, Olga, Leslie J. Francis, and Giuseppe Giordan. 2020. Perceptions of the Functions of Religion and Attitude toward Religious Freedom: Introducing the New Indices of the Functions of Religion (NIFoR). *Religions* 11: 507. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Carol, Sarah, Marc Helbling, and Ines Michalowski. 2015. A Struggle over Religious Rights? How Muslim Immigrants and Christian Natives View the Accommodation of Religion in Six European Countries. *Social Forces* 94: 647–71. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Cross, Frank B. 2015. *Constitutions and Religious Freedom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dimitrijević, Vojin. 2012. Constitutional Ethno-Nationalism after Fifteen Years. In *After Yugoslavia: Identities and Politics Within the Successor States*. Edited by Robert Hudson and Glenn Bowman. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 20–25.
- Durham, W. Cole, Jr. 2012. Patterns of Religion State Relations. In *Religion and Human Rights: An Introduction*. Edited by John Witte, Jr. and Martha Christian Green. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 360–78.
- Finke, Roger. 1990. Religious Deregulation: Origins and Consequences. *Journal of Church and State* 32: 609–26. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Finke, Roger. 2013. Origins and Consequences of Religious Freedoms: A Global Overview. *Sociology of Religion* 74: 297–313. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Finke, Roger, and Rodney Stark. 1992. *The Churching of America, 1776–1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Fox, Jonathan. 2015. Religious Freedom in Theory and Practice. *Human Rights Review* 16: 1–22. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Garelli, Franco. 2010. *Catholicism in Italy in the Age of Pluralism*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Garelli, Franco. 2013. Flexible Catholicism, Religion and the Church: The Italian Case. *Religions* 4: 1–13. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Giordan, Giuseppe. 2014. Introduction: Pluralism as Legitimization of Diversity. In *Religious Pluralism: Framing Religious Diversity in the Contemporary World*. Edited by Giuseppe Giordan and Enzo Pace. Cham: Springer, pp. 1–12.
- Giordan, Giuseppe, and Siniša Zrinščak. 2018. One Pope, Two Churches: Refugees, Human Rights and Religion in Croatia and Italy. *Social Compass* 65: 62–78. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Giordan, Giuseppe, Sergei Trophimov, and Olga Breskaya. 2020. Religious Socialization and Perception of Religious Freedom in Italy and Russia: Findings from a Comparative Research on Youth. *Studi di Sociologia* 58: 429–44. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Guglielmi, Simona, and Arianna Piacentini. 2024. Religion and National Identity in Central and Eastern European Countries: Persisting and Evolving Links. *East European Politics and Societies* 38: 455–85. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Hayton, James C., David G. Allen, and Vida Scarpello. 2004. Factor Retention Decisions in Exploratory Factor Analysis: A Tutorial on Parallel Analysis. *Organizational Research Methods* 7: 191–205. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Helbling, Marc, and Richard Traunmüller. 2016. How State Support of Religion Shapes Attitudes toward Muslim Immigrants: New Evidence from a Sub-National Comparison. *Comparative Political Studies* 49: 391–424.
- Kompes, Marijana. 2018. Povezanost religioznosti te stavova i iskustava o vjerskoj slobodi kod religiozno deklariranih mladih u Hrvatskoj. *Nova Prisutnost* 16: 213–27.

- Kumpes, Josip. 2018. Religioznost i stavovi prema imigrantima u Hrvatskoj. *Migracijske i Etničke Teme* 34: 275–320. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Lauwers, A. Sophie. 2023. Religion, Secularity, Culture? Investigating Christian Privilege in Western Europe. *Ethnicities* 23: 403–25. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Leofreddi, Asia. 2023. Two Models of Political Secularism and Religious Freedom in Italy and Croatia: Findings from a Survey among Youth. *Religions* 14: 1292. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Maldini, Pero. 2006. Renewed Religiosity and Democratisation of the Croatian Society. *Društvena Istraživanja* 15: 1105–25.
- Marinović-Bobinac, Ankica. 1996. Manjinske crkve i tolerancija. *Društvena Istraživanja* 5: 399–414.
- Marinović Bobinac, Ankica, and Dinka Marinović Jerolimov. 2006. Religious Education in Croatia. In *Religion and Pluralism in Education: Comparative Approaches in the Western Balkans*. Edited by Zorica Kuburić and Christian Moe. Novi Sad: CEIR, pp. 39–71.
- Marinović Jerolimov, Dinka, and Siniša Zrinščak. 2006. Religion Within and Beyond Borders: The Case of Croatia. *Social Compass* 53: 279–90. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Mayrl, Damon. 2018. The Judicialization of Religious Freedom: An Institutional Approach. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 57: 514–30. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Mesić, Milan, and Dragan Bačić. 2011. Stavovi hrvatskih građana prema kulturnim različitostima. *Migracijske i Etničke Teme* 27: 7–38.
- Pace, Enzo. 2014. Increasing Religious Diversity in a Society Monopolized by Catholicism. In *Religious Pluralism: Framing Religious Diversity in the Contemporary World*. Edited by Giuseppe Giordan and Enzo Pace. Cham: Springer, pp. 93–114.
- Pallant, Julie. 2016. *SPSS Survival Manual: A Step by Step Guide to Data Analysis Using IBM SPSS*, 6th ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press/McGraw-Hill Education.
- Radović, Milja. 2013. *Citizenship and Religion in the Post-Yugoslav States*. CITSEE Working Paper Series 2013/35. Edinburgh: CITSEE, University of Edinburgh.
- Richardson, James T. 2006. The Sociology of Religious Freedom: A Structural and Socio-Legal Analysis. *Sociology of Religion* 67: 271–94. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Richardson, James T. 2014. Religious Diversity, Social Control, and Legal Pluralism: A Socio-Legal Analysis. In *Religious Pluralism: Framing Religious Diversity in the Contemporary World*. Edited by Giuseppe Giordan and Enzo Pace. Cham: Springer, pp. 31–47.
- Richardson, James T. 2015. Managing Religion and the Judicialization of Religious Freedom. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 54: 1–19. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Scolnicov, Anat. 2011. *The Right to Religious Freedom in International Law: Between Group Rights and Individual Rights*. London: Routledge.
- Scott, Colin. 2023. Supporting the Right to Wear Religious Symbols: The Importance of Perceived Commitment to the Nation. *Politics and Religion* 16: 90–109. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Shady, Stephanie N. 2022. Territory and the Divine: The Intersection of Religion and National Identity. *West European Politics* 45: 744–66. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Štiks, Igor. 2015. *Nations and Citizens in Yugoslavia and the Post-Yugoslav States: One Hundred Years of Citizenship*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Zaccaria, Francesco, Francis-Vincent Anthony, and Carl Sterkens. 2018a. Religion and Civil Rights in Italy: An Empirical Exploration among Secondary School Students. In *Religion and Civil Human Rights in Empirical Perspective*. Edited by Hans-Georg Ziebertz and Carl Sterkens. Cham: Springer, pp. 91–119.
- Zaccaria, Francesco, Francis-Vincent Anthony, and Carl Sterkens. 2018b. Religion for the Political Rights of Immigrants and Refugees? An Empirical Exploration among Italian Students. In *Political and Judicial Rights Through the Prism of Religious Belief*. Edited by Carl Sterkens and Hans-Georg Ziebertz. Cham: Springer, pp. 45–70.
- Zincone, Giovanna. 2010. *Citizenship Policy Making in Mediterranean EU States: Italy*. EUDO Citizenship Observatory Country Report. Florence: European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.
- Zincone, Giovanna, and Marzia Basili. 2013. *Country Report: Italy*. Revised and Updated Version. EUDO Citizenship Observatory Country Report. Florence: European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.
- Zrinščak, Siniša. 1998. Religija i Hrvatsko društvo. *Društvena Istraživanja* 7: 339–57.
- Zrinščak, Siniša, Dinka Marinović Jerolimov, Ankica Marinović, and Branko Ančić. 2014. Church and State in Croatia: Legal Framework, Religious Instruction, and Social Expectations. In *Religion and Politics in Post-Socialist Central and Southeastern Europe: Challenges Since 1989*. Edited by Sabrina P. Ramet. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 131–54.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.