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Sex Education in Croatia

Tensions between Secular and Religious Discourses

Nataša Bijelić

CESI (CENTRE FOR EDUCATION, COUNSELLING AND RESEARCH)

ABSTRACT This article explores the influence of the Catholic church on educational policy, more specifically on sex education, in Croatia. It explores tensions between secular and religious discourses regarding the introduction of a sex education programme supported by the Catholic church into Croatian schools. The presence of the Catholic doctrine in the educational system provided the basis for the introduction of sex education with a religious framework, namely the GROZD sex education programme. The GROZD (Glas roditelja za djecu [Parents' Voice for Children]) programme triggered a public discussion that soon became a polarization between liberal (i.e. secular) and traditional (i.e. religious) discourses. In the discussion, the traditional/Catholic value system was used as a justification for the introduction of a sex education programme that was seen by opponents as harmful.

KEY WORDS Catholic church ◆ Croatia ◆ sex education ◆ sexual and reproductive rights ◆ youth

INTRODUCTION

In the Catholic tradition, terrestrial life is treated as having secondary importance because Catholics should endure suffering in the hope of heavenly reward. On the other hand, earthly church institutions have developed a concomitant interest in any temporal matter that affects the church's institutional interests (Ramet, 1990: 3). This insightful comment about the duality of the Catholic tradition is also applicable to the Croatian context. One of the Catholic church's historical interests is in the regulation of sexuality (Weeks, 1989). In Croatia, one of the ways this interest has materialized is through the introduction of a sex education programme into schools.

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A number of research projects and analyses have supported the argument that after the demise of socialism in 1990, the public role and influence of the Catholic church increased in Croatia (Borowik et al., 2004; Vrcan, 2001; Zrinšćak, 2004). The focus of this article is not the privileged position of the Catholic church since 1990 because that would call for a detailed analysis beyond the scope of this text. Rather, I focus on one of the consequences of such a privileged position, namely the church's influence on educational policy – more specifically on sex education. This article explores the tensions between secular and religious discourses regarding the introduction of a sex education programme supported by the Catholic church into schools. It starts by outlining the presence of the Catholic doctrine in the educational system, which provided the basis for the introduction of sex education within a religious framework – namely the GROZD (Glas roditelja za djecu [Parents' Voice for Children]) sex education programme. The GROZD programme triggered a public discussion, which soon became dominated by a polarization between liberal (i.e. secular) and traditional (i.e. religious) discourses. The traditional/Catholic value system was used to justify the introduction of a sex education programme that its opponents believed would cause harm.

The perspective of this article is affected by my own specific positioning within the process: first, as a member of the expert group that proposed a liberal programme of sex education and, second, as a member of a civic coalition that advocates against the discriminatory and religiously based GROZD programme being taken up in schools.

THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The privileged status enjoyed by the Catholic church in Croatia, here understood as an institution with a structure and hierarchy, was established by a series of international agreements that the Republic of Croatia signed with the Holy See. The four agreements were signed in 1996 and 1998. The agreements were prepared secretly, without public knowledge or discussion, and after being signed entered parliamentary procedure (Zrinščak, 2004). The Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Education and Culture is especially important for this discussion because it ensured the privileged position of the Catholic church in the educational system. This agreement states that the values of Christian ethics have to be taken into consideration in the whole educational system, i.e. in all public kindergartens, schools and universities (Zrinščak, 2004: 309); this includes the teaching of the Catechism in pre-schools, elementary and secondary schools.[1]

In 1999, Catholic dogma was introduced into the educational system through the teaching of the Catechism in kindergartens and the state

schools. The decision to introduce Catholic instruction was a government decision made without any public or parliamentary debate (Zrinščak, 2004). Around 90 percent of pupils in elementary school attend Catholic instruction and 75 percent in secondary schools (Zrinščak, 2004). The introduction of Catholic instruction and the Catholic monopoly in education raised concerns about the division of children of different confessions as well as children who are non-believers, but these arguments were completely disregarded (Zrinščak, 2004: 309). In elementary school, pupils who do not want to attend religious education are free for that school hour. Elementary schools, however, do not offer an alternative subject for pupils while their peers are attending Catholic instruction. The social pressure on these children, although not documented, is high. In order to fit in (or because they have no other place to go), these children often end up in a religious education class despite not being believers.[2] In secondary school, pupils can choose between a subject called 'ethics' and Catholic instruction.

Moreover, Vatican treaties violate the constitutional provision that all religious communities shall be equal before the law (Padjen, 2004). These agreements have precedence over national law[3] and all international human rights conventions that the Republic of Croatia has ratified. Consequently, international human rights conventions, including those relevant to the protection of reproductive and sexual rights, have less legal power than the agreements concluded with the Holy See (Škrabalo and Jurić, 2005: 179).

Catholic teaching on human sexuality and reproduction is unambiguous and is a part of Catholic instruction.[4] The church advocates the protection of human life from conception and is opposed to abortion. It approves sexual activity only within heterosexual marriage and is against mechanical or chemical contraceptives. Homosexuality is viewed as incomplete sexual orientation and to practise homosexual behaviour is seen as sin. Simultaneously, international human rights treaties, ratified by Croatia, provide the legal foundation for the right to sex education that should be accurate and objective and free of prejudice and discrimination (Zampas and Kebriaei, 2007: 4). Additionally, some national policies also oblige the state to introduce accurate sex education free of discrimination. Consequently, this leads to a discrepancy in the educational system. This discrepancy enables the parallel existence of a sex education programme based on religious and secular teaching. Thus, we have the juxtaposition of Catholic teaching on sexuality ensured through Vatican agreement and secular teaching ensured through human rights treaties and national legislation. This juxtaposition has produced tensions between secular and religious discourses regarding the introduction of sex education. Agreements with the Vatican are concordats, which according to Padjen (2004: 104) are international legal acts *sui generis* in several respects: the

Catholic church as one of the concordat parties is neither a nation-state nor an international organization; a concordat is not registered with the UN secretary general and since a concordat involves divine law, the Holy See is not in a position to accept the decision of a third party, even if it were an international court or tribunal, for the settlement of disputes. Having in mind the legal force of the Vatican agreement, Catholic instruction and its teaching on sexuality is almost impossible to eliminate from the educational system. Undoubtedly, Catholic instruction in schools has laid down the foundations for the introduction of religiously based sex education.

THE PROBLEMATIC CONTENT OF THE GROZD PROGRAMME – THE MODULE ON HUMAN SEXUALITY

The latest programme backed by the Catholic church directly promoting Catholic morals and values regarding sexuality is the programme offered by the GROZD Association. In 2006, the GROZD Association presented three experimental programmes on health education:[5] health education for elementary schools, for the three-year secondary schools[6] and for high schools. These programmes contain a module on human sexuality that ignores scientific facts and offers a value system that places sexual intercourse in the domain of heterosexual marriage and procreation. The human sexuality and sex education values supported by GROZD are love, restraint (until marriage) and faithfulness (Udruga GROZD, 2006a: 10; 2006b: 10; 2006c: 10).

By claiming that 'human sexuality represents a gift' that can reach its real purpose 'through the gifts of love between two persons of different sex' (Udruga GROZD, 2006a: 10; 2006b: 10; 2006c: 10), GROZD promotes a particular value system that is in accordance with the Catholic doctrine (Katekizam katoličke crkve [Catechism], 1994: 573–87) and not with the socially accepted values of the Republic of Croatia such as freedom and gender equality (Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, Art. 3). Most of the subjects taught in the GROZD programme are related to Catholic instruction, which is a part of the curriculum.

The programme's methodology proposes 'separate classes for male and female students' and that male and female students should learn about both genders but in 'different scope and order', meaning that, for example, young men should learn more about young men (Udruga GROZD, 2006a: 20; 2006b: 20; 2006c: 20). This methodological recommendation restricts information to young people and therefore violates their right to complete information regarding sexuality.

The theme of masturbation is presented according to Catholic teaching, stressing the need to 'develop the ability to control one's sexual excitement

and the capability to overcome the possible habit of masturbation' (Udruga GROZD, 2006a: 33; 2006b: 33; 2006c: 73).

The themes of contraception and abortion are unacceptably dealt with from the standpoint of women's human rights, gender equality or medical science. This programme teaches that there is no safe sex and provides information only on natural contraception (never mentioning condoms) and falsely claiming that 'contraceptives change the essence of the sexual intercourse because they don't respect the complete nature of the relation between man and woman, which is complicated, yet fascinatingly harmonious' (Udruga GROZD, 2006b: 72; 2006c: 59). By presenting value-oriented statements closely related to Catholic doctrine, the GROZD programme is potentially placing young people, especially young women, in danger and once again is violating their right to accurate, complete and scientific information on sexuality and reproductive health.

Regarding the issue of abortion, GROZD represents the stand taken by the Catholic church. The programme teaches that 'when thinking about abortion, the solution that goes against life is never and for no one the "only" or a good solution' (Udruga GROZD, 2006b: 61; 2006c: 62). This teaching is in contradiction to Croatian law and international standards of reproductive rights and health because it restricts women's reproductive rights and advocates a ban on abortion. This teaching is not only illegal but imposes a religious worldview on young people attending state schools while the data from public opinion surveys support the secular attitude to abortion: 65 percent of the Croatian population support women's right to abortion (GFK, 2004).

Teaching on sexual intercourse offers a religious view on the subject by stating that 'sexual intercourse represents the physical part of one person's devotion to another and that using sexual intercourse for pure fulfilment of attraction makes a person less capable of real, original devotion' (Udruga GROZD, 2006a: 75). Simultaneously, by also stating that 'sexual intercourse . . . achieves its full purpose in a complete relationship based on love between man and woman living in a lasting community of faithfulness (marriage)' (Udruga GROZD, 2006b: 49; 2006c: 49), this religious view openly discriminates against gays and lesbians. Additionally, a statement such as 'homosexual intercourse stands against the very nature of sexual intercourse' (Udruga GROZD, 2006b: 46; 2006c: 46) serves to perpetuate homophobia in the educational system.

The GROZD programme also discriminates against any form of family life that is not based explicitly on heterosexual marriage. Teaching that 'the reasons for divorce often lie in the wrong motives for entering marriage and in the bad predispositions of persons entering marriage, i.e. their inability for real love' (Udruga GROZD, 2006b: 61; 2006c: 62), the programme discriminates against persons who are cohabitating or are divorced, and also against their children.

THE INTRODUCTION OF SEX EDUCATION INTO CROATIAN SCHOOLS

The national curriculum for primary and secondary schools had not included mandatory and comprehensive sex education. Instead, there were some extra-curricular programmes implemented by various non-governmental organizations and health clinics (e.g. the Teen STAR programme, MEMO AIDS programme). The process of introducing sex education into Croatian schools began in 2005. A year before, the Catholic church had stepped up the pressure for the introduction of sex education based on religiously acceptable principles. The following examples outline the controlling position that the church has in the educational system and demonstrate the strong impact the Catholic worldview has on educational policy.

Through Catholic teaching, the church is directly involved in the educational system but it also has an indirect influence on educational policy. The indirect influence of the church is illustrated by the example of the unsuccessful attempt to introduce the MEMO AIDS[7] programme into schools. In 2004, the church publicly condemned MEMO AIDS, in particular attacking the programme for its recommendation that secondary school students be taught about condom use. Condoms were considered by the church to be insufficiently reliable and ethically unacceptable for HIV/AIDS protection. MEMO AIDS was intended to be introduced as an optional programme into a substantial number of secondary schools in Croatia, with the support of the Ministry of Health and the UN's Global Fund. After the church's reaction, there was a drop in schools' take-up of the programme. One statement from the church was enough to influence the behaviour of a number of head teachers (Škrabalo and Jurić, 2005: 197).

Another example was the public scandal that emerged in 2004 over the showing of the American documentary *Silent Scream* during a Catechism lesson in one secondary school in Zagreb. The documentary contains scenes of foetus curettage at the later stage of pregnancy and represents an example of anti-choice propaganda. The Ministry of Education concluded that the film was unsuitable as educational material. The minister informed the Cardinal of the Catholic church about the decision, and the Cardinal concurred. Only after consensus with the church was reached on the case, were schools informed about unsuitability of the film for educational purposes (Škrabalo and Jurić, 2005: 187).

That same year, civil society organizations were the first to criticize and draw public attention to the Teen STAR programme and initiated legal and advocacy initiatives to urge reform of its problematic content. Teen STAR[8] is a government-approved extra-curricular sex education programme. It is an abstinence-based programme supported by the Catholic church. It has been taught in a small number of primary and secondary schools. The action against Teen STAR included complaints to the Offices

of the Ombudspersons for Children's Rights and for Gender Equality, who were both highly critical of the programme. They found several aspects of the Teen STAR programme to be in violation of the Croatian constitution, national laws such as the Gender Equality Law and the Law on Same-Sex Communities and the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

In a social atmosphere where Catholic morals and values are directly or indirectly part of the educational system, the Ministry of Education decided, in light of these events, to resolve the problem and tackle the issue of sex education. For that purpose, a number of various experts were engaged and two committees were formed. During this process, tensions between secular and religious discourses emerged. In the first committee, members of the Catholic church were overrepresented. The committee proposed the introduction of a health education programme into schools. This proposal was obviously a compromise between the liberal (i.e. more secular) and conservative (i.e. more religious) members of the committee. The liberal members concluded that for the purposes of overcoming the ideological tensions that existed among committee members, the best would be a compromise solution, i.e. health education.

The second committee decided that the GROZD programme should be introduced into schools, providing they change the sex module. GROZD never did introduce changes; moreover the Ministry requested that the committee reconsider approving the GROZD programme without revision.

REACTIONS AGAINST THE GROZD PROGRAMME

The decision to introduce the GROZD programme into schools triggered an immediate reaction from civil society organizations, who were later joined by other protagonists in the public debate. There was a juxtaposition of secular and religious discourses in the public debate. Representing the secular side were the Civic Coalition to Stop High-Risk Sexual Education and the Ombudspersons for Children's Rights and for Gender Equality. On the other side were the GROZD Association and the Catholic church.

The Civic Coalition to Stop High-Risk Sexual Education was established at the beginning of 2007 as a direct consequence of the Ministry of Education's decision to introduce the GROZD programme as a pilot into schools for the school year 2007/8. The Civic Coalition is an advocacy network of some 130 civil society organizations, networks, institutions and 350 individuals concerned with issues of human rights, sexual and reproductive health and the rights of youth and gender equality. The Coalition has denounced the GROZD programme as unacceptable because it promotes attitudes on human sexuality that are contrary to modern scientific findings, that breach Croatian constitution and laws, are not in the

interests of public health and violate international human and gender equality rights. The Coalition advocates that the GROZD sex education pilot programme be halted. Another of its goals is to stop the implementation of an unsuccessful public policy on the reproductive and sexual health rights of young people that the Croatian government has been promoting since 2005 (Civic Coalition to Stop High-Risk Sexual Education, 2007). Finally, the Coalition advocates for the implementation of a single, standardized education programme on human sexuality based on scientific facts and in accord with international conventions and treaties. It is important to stress that the Coalition as an advocacy network does not have its own proposed sex education programme.

The Ombudspersons for Children's Rights and for Gender Equality issued statements to the Ministry of Education criticizing the sex education component of the GROZD programme. The Ombudsperson for Children's Rights asserted that the programme's portrayal of marriage as the preferred partnership and its negative depiction of divorce do not comply with Croatia's Family Law but are discriminatory. She also noted that the GROZD programme presented value-laden messages about homosexuality, as opposed to developing children's ability to understand the diversity of values, and to then make their own independent decisions. She noted that parts of the GROZD programme are not scientifically based, and, as a result, violate Croatia's own national curriculum policy (Office of the Ombudsperson for Children, 2007).

The Ombudsperson for Gender Equality asserted that the programme's sex education component violated Croatia's law on gender equality and discrimination on the basis of gender, marriage, family status or sexual orientation. Specifically, she noted that the GROZD programme failed to distinguish between sex and gender roles, thus potentially hindering the elimination of stereotypes. In her opinion, the programme's teaching on the true meaning of intercourse in heterosexual marriage discriminates against unmarried people and divorced people, and children born out of wedlock, and violates Croatian constitutional and statutory gender equality protection. Another of the programme's doctrines, that homosexual acts are unnatural, she interpreted as discriminatory and in violation of Croatia's Same Sex Union Law, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of same-sex unions and/or homosexual orientation (Office of the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality, 2007).

The teachings of the GROZD programme transgress sexual and reproductive rights by restricting access to accurate and complete information regarding sexuality issues. It ignores gender relations and gender roles that women are forced to perform and discriminates against homosexual sexual relations. Anti-choice teaching on abortion undermines women's autonomy and life choices, and also their right to equality. The programme ignores the prevalence of violent sexual intercourse that women

are often subjected to. Promoting heterosexual marriage is discriminatory because it places women in only one possible type of relationship and thus discriminates against women who live in non-married relationships or homosexual relationships or who are single and also discriminates against the children of single-parent families. Also discriminatory is the characterization of persons who divorce as incapable of real love. This reinforces women's unequal status, and ignores the fact that women also divorce because they are the victims of domestic violence (Zampas and Kebriaei, 2007). Despite the negative reactions to the programme, the Ministry proceeded to approve its implementation in schools.

TENSIONS BETWEEN SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS DISCOURSES IN THE PUBLIC DEBATE

Religious/traditional discourse is influenced by nationalism and intersects with the Catholic church and its religious values. This symbiosis of religion and nationalism is the product of Croatia's recent past. During the Communist period there was a rigid separation of church and state. Religion was considered as non-progressive and often belonging to the private sphere (Zrinščak, 2004). The strong tide of secularism was a direct consequence of this period. After the political changes in 1990, when the first democratic elections were held, the status and the role of the church and relations towards religion changed drastically. The new nationalist political system formed a special bond with the Catholic church (Mirescu, 2003). The Catholic church became a symbol of national identity and religion was used for political purposes, while politics became influenced by religion (Vrcan, 2001). Religion served to strengthen nationalist/ethnic identity, a factor supported by the historical role of the Catholic church in maintaining the separate Croat identity (Zrinščak, 2004). Secular and religious discourses are characterized by different social values and political positions. Representatives of the religious discourse hold more traditional values, which include patriarchal, authoritarian, ethnocentric and national features, while representatives of the secular discourse hold more modern, liberal values and support gender equality and non-discrimination (Labus, 2005).

Feminist theorizing considers sex education to be a domain regulated and controlled by men, where sexual knowledge is the outcome of a male-dominated society (Jackson, 1999; Lees, 1993). The GROZD programme represents a conservative approach to sex education and as such is concerned with morality, religious values, ideals of family life and a patriarchal gender order (Lees, 1993). In the GROZD sex education programme, where Catholic sexual norms are dominant, a relationship between sexuality, cultural tradition and gender is being reproduced. A naturalized

gender order is an integral part of the programme and the role of gender here is to control female sexuality. Moreover, the GROZD Association considers gender to be a 'feminist fabrication' (Kalogjera Brkić, 2007a).[9]

In the public debate surrounding sex education, the religious discourse stressing traditional values predominated, while the secular discourse stressing the provision of accurate and value-free information on sexuality and respect for sexual/reproductive rights became largely invisible. Feminists have argued that the regulation of women and their sexuality often stands for national culture (Yuval Davis, 1997: 22). The restrictive nature of GROZD's teaching on sexuality can be equated with national tradition and culture. For GROZD, national culture comprises strong national and patriarchal features. The GROZD Association considered traditional values to be crucial in sex education. In its support, the association mobilized Croatian academics and doctors of science, who signed a statement stating that health education needs to be value oriented. More specifically, 'values such as marriage, family and respect of parents have to be part of the programme because these values are important to Croats' (Glavina and Žonja, 2007).

A particular traditional/religious value system is employed as a justification for specific teachings that control female sexuality and reinforce gender inequalities. Human rights are considered by some to be the imposition of external values that strip societies of their cultural identity (Kim, 1993: 59), and such a view was shared by religious circles in the public debate on sex education.

The public debate on sex education programmes was a discussion about values. Values had a central place in this debate because the polarization between the conservative and liberal stance with regard to sex education was constantly stressed.[10] According to GROZD, values are the lynchpin of its sex education programme because in the organization's view every sex education programme in schools should respect the value system of the parents and also the value system and cultural context of the country ('Health/Sex Education for Schools – The Situation in Croatia', 2007); the programme is supported by all major religious communities in Croatia. The GROZD Association emphasizes education that supports values and states that the parents themselves have the right to choose the programme they want their children to follow.

Like the GROZD Association, the Ministry of Education also asserted that a sex education programme is a private matter for parents. Parents ought to be able to choose for their children between a traditional and liberal programme according to their values. Feminist theory recognizes such a public/private distinction as problematic. The private domain is often understood as one of individual interactions and interpersonal relations, while the public domain is a domain of institutions (Kim, 1993: 66–7). The decision to introduce sex education is the responsibility of the

Ministry, i.e. the public domain, but simultaneously this responsibility is shifted to parents, i.e. to the private sphere. The notion of sex education as a private matter served as justification for introducing a programme that reinforces gender inequalities. Using the patriarchal public/private divide, the Ministry of Education has invoked cultural tradition to support gender inequalities through the sex education programme. The public/private distinction has entered into the public debate as a justification for state non-intervention because the decision on a sex education programme is considered to be part of a society's culture.

On the opposite side to this was a discourse on human rights neither as visible nor as powerful in the public discussion on sex education. In this approach values are not the central concern. This discourse is concerned with providing value-free information in order to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of young people. The human rights discourse was invisible in the public debate because it was equated with the liberal value orientations of its protagonists. What was missing in the debate, however, was the fact that sexual and reproductive rights are embedded in the legal system and therefore do not just represent the liberal value orientations of some of the protagonists in the debate.

The GROZD Association stated that their programme was being attacked by the radical homosexual and feminist lobby, which declared their values to be scientifically unfounded and illegal ('Health/Sex Education for Schools – The Situation in Croatia', 2007). In addition, Catholic circles stated that 'at the moment when a loud minority, no matter what their goals are, impose their values on the majority, it is necessary to shake up the sleepy majority' (Baloban, 2007). The value system of the 'majority', i.e. the Catholic value system, was being utilized as justification for GROZD's discriminatory teaching on sex. This demonstrates how their religious discourse was being presented as dominant and thus more valid in the public debate.

The Catholic church even denounced the involvement of the Ombudsperson for Children's Rights in a public discussion about health education as inappropriate (Pavičić, 2007) and thus undermined the importance of the rights approach. Reactions from the state institutions to the Ombudsperson's complaints showed a bias towards the religious stance. An adviser to the Minister of Education stated, just like the GROZD supporters, that it was quite clear that the GROZD programme did not violate anyone's constitutional rights (Kalogjera Brkić, 2007b). Furthermore, the Minister of Health stated that he would not take into account the opinion of the Ombudsperson for Children's Rights because she was not a medical doctor and thus displayed a total ignorance with regard to the decision-making process on sex education (Kustura, 2007).

A focus on youth themselves was also missing from the public debate. On the level of values, young people who nevertheless consider them-

selves to be religious have in fact opposing attitudes on sexuality to those propounded by their religion and church (Marinović Jerolimov, 2002: 123). The existence of secular values and attitudes regarding sexuality among religious youth offers a different perspective on the GROZD concept of sex education. This discrepancy may suggest that religiously based sex education that targets religious youth will not be effective.

CONCLUSION

This examination of the proposed introduction of the GROZD programme demonstrates how the influence of the Catholic church in an educational system can be repressive in relation to the sexual and reproductive health and rights of youth. By engaging with a particular value system sexual and reproductive rights are violated. This discriminatory teaching has been justified by the claim that sex education should respect the value system of the parents and the cultural context of the country. By invoking tradition and the religious value paradigm, GROZD has reinforced gender inequality, simultaneously undermining the concept of human rights in the public debate. There has been a strong tendency, even pressure, for educational policy to be consistent with the opinions of the Catholic church. The final decision by the Ministry of Education on the actual implementation of the GROZD programme will show if this is to be the case in the future as well.

NOTES

1. Elementary school in Croatia has eight grades, starting at ages six or seven through to 14 or 15. Elementary school is obligatory. At the age of 14 or 15 pupils enrol into secondary school, where they might stay for three or four years. Some students enrol into craft or technical schools, which offer three- or four-year courses. On completion of secondary school students might go on to university.
2. The Croatian newspaper *Feral Tribune* recently reported on pupils who feel pressurized into attending Catholic instruction. The paper considers this to be a growing phenomenon (Lasić, 2007: 17).
3. According to Article 140 of the Croatian constitution, international agreements are an integral part of Croatia's legal system and take precedence over national law (Škrabalo and Jurić, 2005: 179).
4. In the curricula of Catholic instruction for elementary schools, 17 school hours in total are dedicated to human sexuality in the last three grades (pupils aged 12–14 years) (Hodžić, 2003: 14).
5. The experimental GROZD health education programme comprises five modules, one being human sexuality, which teaches about sex.
6. 'Three-year secondary school' refers to the craft and technical schools that some secondary students attend (see note 1).

7. MEMO AIDS is an HIV/AIDS prevention programme aimed at youth that provides information and develops skills. The programme is implemented by peer educators. It was developed by the Reproductive Health Centre at the Children's Hospital Zagreb.
8. Teen STAR originated in the US (www.teenstar.org; Croatian branch: www.teenstar.hr). The GROZD module on human sexuality is identical to the Teen STAR programme. For detailed analysis, see 'Parallel Analysis . . .' (2007).
9. Interview with Dr Aleksandar Štulhofer, a member of the second committee, published on the website of the newspaper *Jutarnji list* (Kalogjera Brkić, 2007a).
10. The majority of newspaper articles that covered the issue of health education stressed this liberal/conservative division, e.g. the liberal Forum for Freedom of Education Programme vs the conservative health education programme represented by GROZD (see, for example, Cvrtila, 2006; Kalogjera Brkić, 2007b; Kalogjera Brkić and Jureško, 2006; Kustura, 2006).

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Nataša Bijelić *has been working for the past seven years as a researcher and educator on the issues of gender, gender-based violence and adolescent sexuality at a feminist, non-governmental organization, the Centre for Education, Counselling and Research (CESI). She is also a board member of the Civic Coalition to Stop High-Risk Sexual Education. Address: CESI (Centre for Education, Counselling and Research), Nova cesta 4, 10 000 Zagreb, Croatia. [email: natasa.bijelic@zg.htnet.hr]*

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