THE POLITICIZATION OF SINGLEHOOD

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Abstract

In my thesis I analyze parliamentary and media debates on single women and their right to assisted reproduction that took place in Slovenia in 2000 and 2001. Through my analysis I first show that the category of single women in 2000 and 2001 became highly politicized. I continue with an analysis of the construction of this category in these debates from the perspective of heteronormativity. I argue that the way the discourse on single women was framed reaffirmed the normativity of heterosexuality. Because singlehood, asexuality and non-sexuality could represent a challenge to the notion of "natural" (hetero)sexuality, if properly theorized, I call for more attention to these categories in feminist and queer approaches to sexuality. Finally I consider the functions of the analyzed discourse from the perspective of Foucault's theory of bio-politics and anatomo-politics to argue that the discourse functioned with a disciplinary effect of producing not only properly heterosexual bodies but properly sexual bodies. In the course of making this argument I also engage in a consideration of regulatory power technology and the question of a neutral citizen of a bio-political State.

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Table of contents:

1 INTRODUCTION: THE POLITICS OF SINGLE WOMEN

In spring 2001 everyone in Slovenia was discussing a matter which at first sight concerned a very small number of people. The question of the heated debate was whether single women should have access to assisted reproduction technologies (ART). It came up with the adoption of the new Infertility Treatment and Procedures of Biomedically-Assisted Procreation Act which changed the previous Health Measures in Exercising Freedom of Choice in Childbearing Act from 1977, and was eventually decided on a referendum. Some ten years later, already a student of Gender Studies, I accidentally picked up a book which included an analysis of that debate written by Majda Hrženjak (2001), a quite well-known Slovenian sociologist and feminist. My head filled with all the theories I was discovering in different courses, I was amazed by the various aspects of the discourse which I still remembered but which were left unanalyzed in her report. At the same time, I also remembered the question which was bothering me even then: why? Why did the attention of the whole nation turn to the few single women who might want to have children with the help of ART? Why was this so important?

My interest in the issue of single women deepened further after I did some preliminary research. As the Act of which the final version was decided on a referendum in 2001 was actually an amendment of an Act which was adopted in 1977, I went back to old newspapers and magazines from 1977 to see how the debate was shaped then. However, there was not any. After checking the two main newspapers and two main political magazines and two women's magazines, all I found was a very short article about the adoption of the Act. No fuss, no alarms about the dangers of "artificial reproduction," and certainly no mention of single women. There was no hot debate in 1978 when the first IVF baby was born (in the UK)

either. Moreover, the two main women's magazines that were issued then contained no articles on "how to be single," "happy divorcees," "how to find a partner," "how to deal with loneliness" or similar topics which can be found in just about any issue of today's women's magazines. Searching through five years of women's magazines (1976-1980) and looking also for more subtle forms of discussion on singlehood, my search bore no results. A search through the national library database with the keywords "single" and "singlehood" returned only relevant results dated after 1990. Single people just seemed to have not been discussed in Slovenia before the 1990s. But again a question appeared: why? Why suddenly in the 90s and end of 90's in particular did single women come in the centre of attention?

Even after this project my question of why remains unanswered. While many possible explanations occurred to me in the course of writing this thesis, an answer (if one answer is even possible) would require a great deal of archival work and a broader and deeper consideration of political and economic circumstances in which texts about single women, or singlehood in general, started appearing in Slovenia but also elsewhere. In Slovenia the political and economic changes which took place with the break up of Yugoslavia and the founding of Slovenia as an independent state would have to be taken into account. These changes also had as a result a degree of greater openness[1] to the influences from Western countries, so one would also have to consider how the cultural influence of other countries shaped the discourses on singlehood in Slovenia. The project of a genealogy of singlehood would be much bigger than I could possibly afford to do for this thesis. In this work I thus chose to focus on one specific discourse on single women: the debate on single women and their right to assisted reproduction as it unfolded in 2000 and 2001. My initial question transformed into two more specific questions which were leading me through the analysis:

[1] I do not mean to claim that Yugoslavia was leading the same kind of closed politics as countries of the Soviet block, but the influence of the Western markets and culture in Slovenia was greater after 1991.

how was the category of single women constructed in this discourse? and what functions did the particular construction of the category serve in the broader context of social organization and politics?

Firstly I argue that the category of single women was constructed in very heteronormative terms on both sides of the debate and that the discourse on single women reinforced the notion of normalcy of (hetero)sexuality. Secondly, and following from my first argument, I use a Foucauldian framework of bio-politics and anatomo-politics to argue that although the discourse revolved around an issue of State regulation of reproduction, the disciplinary function of the discourse was more important than the regulatory function. Finally, I argue that the focus on single women, their sexuality and their reproduction, represents an expansion of discourses on sexuality, on sexual acts and sexual relationships to include categories or states of non-sexuality; that it is not anymore only how and why one engages in sexual acts and relationships that is under scrutiny in various discourses, but also how and why one does not engage in sexual acts and relationships.

The main part of my analysis is divided into three chapters; i.e. chapters 2-4, and I chose to interweave the theory on which I base my analysis into the analysis itself. In Chapter 2, I first analyze the discourse from the perspective of various explicitly political notions and connotations with which the category of single women became invested. I do so to point out the explicitly political character of this category as it got established in 2000 and 2001. Of course I do not mean to claim that another discourse on single women could be anything but political, but it is because of the notions of "democracy," "liberal," "conservative," "nation," "civilization," and so on, which got reconstructed through the debate on single women, that the category of single women figured far more prominently in public and the debate reached a

far greater public than it might have otherwise. This was not the first time that the category was mentioned in public media, but because of the explicit politicization of single women in this debate, the category as such was then on everyone's minds.

In Chapter 3, I analyze the discourse from the perspective of heteronormativity, and in it I mostly focus on the arguments of those who were defending single women's right to assisted reproduction, as it was they who were claiming to be challenging the traditional norms. I argue that their rhetoric was based on heteronormative assumptions, and as such reinforced the notion of "normal," "healthy" heterosexuality, instead of challenging it. The arguments of the conservatives and the Roman Catholic Church are not the focus of my analysis in this part because of the relative obviousness of heteronormative understanding of family, reproduction and partnership in their positions.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the discourse and the construction of the category of single women from the perspective of the functions they might have served, and the chapter is therefore mostly theoretical. I use Foucault's theory of bio-politics and the two main power technologies of modern States: disciplinary power and regulatory power, and consider the discourse in terms of both and in terms of their interdependence. Through this discussion I argue that the discourse and the particular construction of the category of single women functioned with a disciplinary effect: "producing" not only heterosexual bodies, but *sexual* bodies.

In the next section of this chapter I provide a brief theoretical framework which is intended to situate my research in the existing bodies of literature. As my thesis is not divided into a theoretical part and analysis, but instead I discuss the theory on which I base my analysis

together with the analysis itself, the next section serves only to mention some of the theoretical perspectives from which my topic could be viewed and to explain the particular perspective I have chosen. This is followed by two sections in which I provide the basic background of the analyzed discourse and explain the research design and the method I have used.

1.1 Approaching Singlehood and Single Women's Reproduction

Singlehood has in recent decades received much attention both in popular media as well as in scholarly literature. Demographers and sociologists have in the last few decades noticed an increase in the number of single people (most literature known to me deals with Western countries such as Germany and USA, although the trend has also been noted in Slovenia) and much of the sociological literature tries to explain the social changes and circumstances that underlie this phenomenon (as evidenced by a drop of marriage rates and an increase of divorce rates, as well as an increase in the number of single parents) (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; Ule and Kuhar 2003). The changes in the labor market (e.g. Beck's theory of individualization), in gender roles and in attitudes towards relationships (again Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995 and 2002; also for example Giddens' [1993] study of the transformation of intimacy; or for Slovenia: Ule and Kuhar, 2003) are often used in explanations of the growth of the category of singles. The category obviously includes people in various stages of life and a variety of life-styles, but especially the category of people aged between 30 and 50 without a long-term relationship has received attention also from the perspective of their own personal reasons behind their singlehood (e.g. Stein, 1976; or Spreitzer and Riley, 1974) as well as the stigmatizing effect of "singlism" (DePaulo and Morris, 2005 and 2006) they are facing in their everyday lives (also see Keiser and Kashy, 2005). Very little research has however been devoted to the representation of singles in

various discourses and to the social and (more specifically) discursive construction of the category of singles. My project aims to at least begin to fill this gap with an analysis of one particular discourse on single women that took place in Slovenia in 2000 and 2001 in connection with their right to assisted reproduction.

The way singlehood is presented in the media, how categories of "singles," "single women" or "single men" are constructed in particular debates is connected not only to temporary political events but also to more general power relations. While the appearance of new discourses on "singlehood", "single men" and "single women" have many common points, my analysis focuses only on the category of single women. This discourse and the analysis can be placed within a more general discussion of heteronormativity (Rich, 1994 [1980]; Rubin, 1994 [1984] and 1997 [1975], Warner, 1991; Butler; 2004 [1988]), where, however, a major gap exists both in queer theory and in feminist theory in the research on singlehood as an alternative to normative heterosexual relationships as well as in research of asexuality and non-sexuality.[2] Being single of course does not mean that one is necessarily asexual or abstaining from sexual acts, neither does being asexual mean that one is necessarily single. However, in the discourse that I am analyzing, single women were often presented as also not engaging in sexual acts (but not as being generally indifferent towards sexuality or as being asexual), which is why my analysis also treats the discourse on single women from the perspective of a discourse on sexuality.

[2] I am making a distinction between asexuality and non-sexuality here, because asexuality has in recent years come to denote a sexual identity and also a related political identity and as such implies a certain fixity of asexuality. I am using non-sexuality to denote non-engagement in sexual acts or relations, which can be temporary and does not include identification with asexuality. I do not equate singlehood with asexuality or non-sexuality, but I do think that both singlehood and asexuality can represent a challenge to the normative heterosexuality and the related heterosexual monogamous relationship. I discuss asexuality, non-sexuality and singlehood in more detail in Chapter 3.

At the same time, the fact that marital status is generally in a close relationship with reproduction and that the discourse I am analyzing explicitly deals with reproduction, I also situate my analysis in the wider areas of research on women's reproductive roles, assisted reproduction, State regulation of reproduction, and the relationship between women and the State. The cruciality of reproduction (and its social construction) for women's social position has long been recognized by feminist scholars (e.g. Firestone 1993 [1970] but also de Beauvoir, 2009 [1949] to start with, the body of feminist literature on reproduction has since 1949 grown immensely), as has the influence State regulations on reproduction have on women's lives one the one hand (to name only a few: Kligman, 1995, 1997; Jetter, Orleck and Taylor, 1997; Hartman, 1987; Anagost, 1995; Laslet and Brenner, 1989; Ginsburg and Rapp, 1995) and the role that reproduction plays in shaping women's status as citizens and as members of a nation (aside from Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1989 and Peterson 1999; see also for example Benton, 1991; Pateman, 1988, 1992; Walby, 1994; Lister, 1989, 1991; Yuval-Davis 1997; Nilsson and Tetreault, 2000; Voet, 1998).[3] Scholars such as Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis (1989) or Spike V. Peterson (1999) for example claim that one of the primary relations of women to the State (and to the nation) is as biological reproducers.

Moreover, just the area of assisted reproduction (especially with new technological developments) has in the past few decades been a subject of much research and many opposing views on its potentially revolutionary or liberatory role. Some feminists have claimed that assisted reproduction can represent liberation from the patriarchal family. It can represent a threat to the existing “patriarchal order," as it takes reproduction out of the normative family and related State control (Spallone in Hanson, 2001; p. 301). On the other

[3] The bodies of literature on all these subjects: feminist theory of reproduction in general, State regulation of reproduction, the gendering of citizenship and influence of reproduction on different relations to the State and to the nation, are huge. A useful overview of perspectives on the "politics of reproduction" is given by Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp, 1991.

hand, however, assisted reproduction technology and medicalization of not only pregnancy, but generally of the whole reproductive cycle can be seen as quite the opposite development: as a subjugation of women to institutionalized male power. Feminist theorists such as Nancy Ehrenreich have analyzed the increased medicalization of pregnancy as a "colonization of the womb" (Ehrenreich, 1993) by male dominated medical institutions, giving them an ever greater control not only over reproduction, but also over women's bodies (on feminist approaches to ART see also for example: Franklin, 1997; Franklin and Ragone, 1998; as well as Ginsburg and Rapp, 1995).

At the same time, the fact that the discourse I am analyzing in this work evolved around issues of sexuality and reproduction and their control, places my analysis also firmly in the framework of Foucault's theory on bio-politics and anatomo-politics (Foucault, 1990 [1976] and 2003). Although the discourse could be read and explained within the notions of classical liberal theory and my analysis could fit within the framework of the "sexual contract" (Pateman, 1988) and patriarchy, I believe that Foucault's theory of bio-politics enables a more nuanced explanation. In contrast with the notion of patriarchy, which implies the understanding of power as possessed and held over others (e.g. the power of men over women Pateman, 1988), Foucault's (1990) understanding of power as exercised and existing in relations provides a better tool for analysis. Although in Chapter 4 I argue for a kind of reconciliation of bio-political and liberal theory, my analysis and my main arguments follow a bio-political theoretical framework.

I consider the discourse on single women and their right to assisted reproduction through the lens of the two "power technologies" which according to Foucault (2003) characterize the modern State: disciplinary power, which produces docile bodies, and regulatory power, which

works through normalization. Reproduction of the population, birth rates, mortality and the health of the population are at the centre of the regulatory power, while sexuality can be seen as the point in which both these power technologies operate (Foucault, 2003). At first sight, the discourse I am analyzing clearly falls within the realm of regulatory power, as it quite explicitly concerns State regulation of reproduction, however I argue in my final chapter that the discourse had a much more important disciplinary effect.

1.2 Brief background of the Slovenian debate

The debate on single women's access to assisted reproduction took place in Slovenia in 2000 and 2001 with the adoption of the new Infertility Treatment and Procedures of Biomedically-Assisted Procreation Act (hereinafter 2000 Act) which changed the previous Health Measures in Exercising Freedom of Choice in Childbearing Act from 1977 (hereinafter 1977 Act). The latter was adopted as a republic act under the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and applied in its form from 1977 until 1994 when it was partially invalidated, because the 1977 Act regulated only procedures of artificial insemination and not also all other procedures which had in the meantime become available due to technological development (IVF, ICSI, PGD, cloning, surrogacy, etc.). In 1994, all procedures of assisted reproduction were stopped until the amendment of the Act. In July 2000, an amended version of the Act, which was now entitled the Infertility Treatment and Procedures of Biomedically-Assisted Procreation Act was adopted in the Parliament.

The 2000 Act explicitly stated that the entity entitled to procedures of assisted reproduction is a heterosexual couple, either married or living in a long-term (at least 1 year) extra-marital partnership (Article 5). The 1977 Act was in this regard more ambiguous and allowed for interpretation, which in effect allowed single women to access assisted reproduction

technology in the period between 1977 and 1994. The 1977 Act stated that the health measures in exercising freedom of choice in childbearing are intended to help a couple, but it did not posit a long-term heterosexual relationship explicitly as a condition. Further it stated that any adult, sane, healthy woman of reproductive age is entitled to medical help in reproduction (1977 Act, Article 34, Paragraph 1) if she has been proven to have problems conceiving, either because of her or her partner's infertility (1977 Act, Article 32). As the 2000 Act removed any ambiguity in terms of the entity entitled to these procedures, some members of the Parliament saw this as discrimination against single women.

In the last reading of the ACT, a few MPs from the centre-left party LDS (Liberal Democracy of Slovenia), which was at the time of the adoption of the Act in opposition, thus proposed an amendment to Article 5 which would also allow single women to have access to ART. The amendment did not pass and the Act was adopted in the form that allowed access to ART only to heterosexual (extra)marital couples. In November 2000, after a change of government, LDS, which was now the largest party in the new government, again proposed an amendment of Article 5 of the 2000 Act. With the centre-left coalition now having the majority in the Parliament, the amendment passed. However after the amendment was adopted, a group of MPs from various, now oppositional, centre-right parties (SDS, NSi, SNS, SLS-SKD, SMS[4]) filed a motion for a referendum. The question of whether single women should have access to assisted reproduction technology was thus decided on a referendum 17th June 2001. Slovenians decided that single women should not have access to ART with 72.36% of voters marking AGAINST and 26.38 % FOR[5] and the Infertility

[4] SDS – Slovenska demokratska stranka (Slovenian Democratic Party), NSi – Nova Slovenija – krščanska ljudska stranka (New Slovenia – Christian People's Party), SNS – Slovenska nacionalna stranka (Slovenian National Party), SLS-SKD – Slovenska ljudska stranka and Slovenski krščanski demokrati (Slovenian People's Party and Slovene Christian Democrats – the two parties merged in 2000), SMS – Stranka mladih Slovenije (Youth Party of Slovenia).

[5] The remaining 1.26 % were invalid voting papers.

Treatment and Procedures of Biomedically-Assisted Procreation Act kept the wording from 2000.

1.2 Research design and method

In my project I have analyzed the discourse on single women and their right to assisted reproduction as it unfolded in 2000 and 2001 and as it appeared in print media of that time. I have decided to focus on print media first of all because of the relative ease of access, but also because this form requires the text to be structured in a coherent way, which makes it easier[6] for the researcher to discern the overall argument that someone is making and the underlying assumptions and the logic of that argument. Print media were also the venue where the debate was broadest and where general public had the most opportunity to voice their opinions. For my research I took the time frame of 2 months around the adoption of the Act in 2000 (one month before and one month after) and 6 months around the referendum on the amendment in 2001 (5 months before and 1 month after). The majority of articles and comments however appeared in the month around the adoption of the Act and in the three months around the referendum (with articles appearing only roughly 10 days after the referendum).

I searched through two main daily newspapers (those reaching the largest number of readers), *Delo* and *Večer*, including the weekly supplement of the *Delo* newspaper, *Sobotna priloga Dela*, one weekly newspaper *Nedeljski dnevnik*, two weekly political magazines *Mladina* and *Mag*, the former being very centre-left to leftist and the latter very centre-right to rightist, and two women's magazines, *Jana* and *Ona*, which devote a major part also to political questions and broader social issues that concern women. In case of *Mladina* I searched through their

[6] An analysis of e.g. television or radio debates of the time would also have to take into account the ways in which TV or radio hosts moderated particular shows thus influencing the structure of arguments by various speakers.

online archive for issues in 2001, as whole issues are available online and through the paper format for 2000, as there is no electronic format available for that period. All other newspapers and magazines were read in paper format. I included in my analysis articles, columns, editorials and also letters to the editor that were published on the question of single women's right to assisted reproduction or dealt with the issue of singlehood or single women from any other perspective. I included also two parliamentary debates (transcripts are available on the website of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia) on the issue, one from July 20th 2000 when the Act was adopted (which was also when the amendment to Article 5 was first proposed) and the second from May 3rd 2001 when the motion for a referendum passed the parliamentary hearing. I chose to include those two debates because the opinions expressed in those two parliamentary debates were not only reported on in all print media, but also commented on, criticized and defended and developed into further arguments.

In my analysis I used Fairclough's (1992 and 2003) and Tonkiss's approach to discourse analysis, as it enabled me to uncover the main arguments of the debate, their structure and the assumptions that the arguments were based on. This approach allowed me to view the discourse as social practice existing in the nexus of text and context, and thus research how people shape and construct their relation to the social world (Tonkiss, 1998; p. 249). I focused on the rhetorical organization of the discourse and in my analysis I first tried to recognize key themes appearing in this particular discourse. In this work I only quote a limited number of sources on one theme, as the comments and arguments were repetitive, and were very often even phrased in more or less the same terms. The approach also led me to pay close attention to the assumptions on which some arguments were made and to the silences in the discourse. Particularly in Chapter 3 I followed Fairclough's structure of the argument (consisting of

Grounds + Backing, Warrant and Claim), because of which I was able to effectively point out the heteronormative construction of the arguments that were made in the debate.

2 CONSTRUCTION OF POLITICAL NOTIONS THROUGH THE CATEGORY OF SINGLE WOMEN

Public debates on reproduction are more often than not charged with political connotations and the positions of different sides in such debates often ensue from broader political positions. Reproduction however also serves as the locus for the shaping of politics and political positions. Gal and Kligman thus note the "striking fact" (Gal and Kligman, 2000; p. 15) that in most post-state-socialist countries reproduction was among the first issues dealt with by newly formed governments after 1989. They claim that abortion was the issue on which newly forming political parties constructed their politics. Another telling example of the shaping of politics and political positions through questions of reproduction can be seen in the fact that in USA the question of the constitutional right to abortion is brought up before every presidential elections and in the weight the position towards abortion carries in dividing the electorate (see for example Luis Bolce's [1988] study on abortion and presidential elections, or Killian and Wilcox's [2008] study on party switching because of attitudes toward abortion).

In the case of Slovenia, abortion and freedom of choice in reproductive matters was hotly debated during the drafting of the new Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia in 1991, but has not been "on the menu" since. Although no major regime change was in the air in 2000, when the debate on single women and assisted reproduction opened, it was a time of changes in the government and its political orientation. In this chapter I will analyze the discourse on single women and assisted reproduction from the point of view of construction of political positions and reification of conservative versus liberal political positions. At the same time a

particular notion of "politics" and the relationship between politics and citizens were (re)constructed in the discourse. I will show how a certain perception of the State was constructed through the discourse on single women. Finally I will point out the role of the category of single women and their reproduction in the construction of national feelings and notions of nationhood. In short I want to show in this chapter how the category of single women served in this discourse as a juncture of numerous political notions to argue that the category of single women in 2000 and 2001 in Slovenia became highly politicized.

2.1 Singlehood liberal or conservative style

For most of its life as an independent state until 2000 Slovenia was led by the party Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS) (1992 – 2000), which was by far the most influential party in the period of transformation of this new country. LDS was a centre-left party and the main representative of liberal and social-liberal political positions in Slovenia at that time. A couple of months before the adoption of the Infertility Treatment and Procedures of Biomedically-Assisted Procreation Act the Parliament passed a vote of no confidence in the then government led by LDS and a coalition of centre-right parties formed a temporary government, which was leading Slovenia for roughly seven months before new regular elections. The Act was thus passed under the temporary centre-right government, and it posed a heterosexual relationship (marital or extra-marital) as a condition for eligibility for biomedical assistance in procreation. In the procedure of adoption of the Act the MPs of LDS opposed this condition. At the elections in October 2000 LDS again got the relative majority of votes and formed a new government in November 2000. One of the first legislative acts the new government proposed was an amendment of the Act adopted in July, which enabled also single women to have access to assisted reproduction technologies. After the LDS amendment was passed in the Parliament a group of MPs from different centre-right parties (who were

then in opposition) filed a motion for a referendum on the question of single women's right to assisted reproduction.

The perception that the debate on single women's right to assisted reproduction in the first place served as an arena for the struggle between liberal and conservative political positions was voiced already during the parliamentary session on the adoption of the Act and was taken up in all the media I have analyzed. LDS was for example charged with using the question of single women as a "market niche for the election campaign in the fall" (National Assembly, 2000; Mravljak) and newspapers came up with titles such as "Pre-election insemination campaign" (Šeško, 2000; p. 42). Susan Gal, in her analysis of the abortion debate in Hungary, comes to a conclusion that debates on reproduction are central in making political claims by different sides; political claims that are mostly quite distant from the actual argument, (Gal, 1994; pp. 285-286; also see Gal and Kilgman, 2000; p. 22). The fairly strict division of positions towards single women's right to assisted reproduction between liberal and conservative (or centre-right and centre-left) political parties and continuous claims that the referendum question is actually about the general value system in the Slovene society are a case in point. Single women at that time served as the category on which notions of what constitutes liberal and conservative values were reified, and through which both sides claimed moral superiority.

In the struggle for recognition of the higher value of either liberal or conservative political position both sides used very similar Janus-faced rhetoric. Articles on the one hand often referred to the political past of the other side. The main rightist magazine was constantly implying and even openly stating that the proponents of the amendment are using "Comintern-like propaganda techniques" (Slivnik, 2001a; p. 19), "tyrannical propaganda"

(Slivnik, 2001a; p. 19) and that they are being led by "ex-Party" members (Slivnik, 2001b; p. 19), while the main leftist magazine characterized the opponents as "patriarchal" and even "fascist" and referred to them as "Guardists" (a term which has an obvious connection with the White Guard, an anti-communist group that collaborated with the Italian fascists during WWII) (Štefančič, 2001). Political histories played an important role in gaining support from the public on an issue that at first sight had little to do with either communism or fascism. Past affiliations were used especially to evoke feelings of resentment against the state-socialist regime and the liberal parties, who were presented as the descendants of the Communist Party.

On the other hand the discourse was at the same time looking into "the dark future." Opponents of single women's right to ART were in the public discussion continuously presenting images of society with unlimited genetic engineering, claiming that such rights would open the door to cloning, creation of hybrids, and commercialization of human reproduction (e.g. Musek in Puc, 2001a; p. 45). Its proponents were on the other side using images of an authoritarian state, and claiming that this referendum could only be the beginning of limitations on the freedom of choice (Žerdin, 2001). With a similar claim that what is at stake are the rights of women in general and their equal legal status in society one editor writes:

> Do not be mistaken, this is not a referendum on single women, as it is being shouted all the time, this […] will [either] throw Slovenian women into hell or put us on a step to Europe. (Obolnar, 2001a; p. 5)

The category of single women was effectively used as a mean to portray the horrors that might await Slovenians, if they make the wrong choice, and to claim superior judgment and political ability in leading Slovenia into and in the new international arena of the European Union.

However, while the category of single women served as the locus of the struggle between liberal and conservative politics, another thing became very apparent in the debate. Even more than a group through which political affiliation was expressed, the group of single women served to express a general mistrust of politics in general and distancing of the general public from what was perceived as politics. Editors, journalists and readers who wrote letters to various newspapers and magazines expressed contempt for the exploitation of the group of single women for the purposes of the political duel between the main options.

> You are being convinced that you are judging the fate of a handful of the unfortunate single women, but in reality they are reestablishing the balance between the left and the right political option. […] And women without a man, the unfortunate few are unfortunate for the second time, as they are additionally disgraced, double-crossed and manipulated. (Jeklin, 2001b; p. 3)
>
> Or to say it straight out: it seems that we are once again witnessing a game of political chess on the recognizably Slovene red-black [the colors refer to the colors of partisans and Guardists during WWII] chess board. […] Some may even still find it interesting, most find it boring to death, and some think that such games are simply too expensive and unproductive. Especially, since the referendum question is going to be used for far less important things than reproduction and happiness of little Slovenes. (Lainšček, 2001; p. 44)

Many authors claimed they feel "politically abused" (Muck, 2001b; p. 45), that politicians are purposefully dividing the nation (Muck, 2001a; p. 45) or distracting the people with "bones to pick" (Obolnar, 2001c; p. 5).

The quotes above show the distancing of the authors and the public from what they perceived as a political game. The assumption underlying such claims that single women are (ab)used

for political struggles (above quotes of Bernarda Jeklin and Feri Lainšček) or to divert attention from real political issues (above quote of Sabina Obolnar) is that sexuality and reproduction of single women are not *the real* political issues. The claim of above passages is that politicians are using an otherwise apolitical matter for political struggles (if sexuality and reproduction of single women was seen as essentially a political question, then their political struggle would be seen as legitimate). To understand why single women were being manipulated by political parties the readers had to make the same assumption as was made by the authors (consciously or not): that sexuality and reproduction of single women are in its core non-political, private. Thus what I would add to the abovementioned theory of Gal and Kligman (Gal, 1994; and Gal and Kligman, 2000) is that discourses on reproduction also serve to shape the notion of what is political itself. While it seems that the political/private divide was being blurred in the discourse with intimate matters being dragged into the political arena, the discourse actually reinstated sexuality and reproduction as a private matter. As the authors expressed their contempt for political manipulation that was being played out on the group of single women, they at the same time affirmed the otherwise non-political character of sexuality. And obviously the rhetorical device functioned to gain truth value for the claims these authors made. Their claims gained weight as they first exposed the political game played by others, and by doing so their position was presented as more objective, as not being a part of the political game.

Accusations that the other side is either using ideology for manipulation or is being deluded by ideology were used by both the proponents and the opponents of the amendment, and worked in a similar way as the abovementioned distancing from politics. The most visible proponent of single women's right to assisted reproduction dr. Spomenka Hribar for example called for those who were for the amendment to take part in the referendum, to go and give

their votes, by stating that the opponents would surely give their votes, because they are led by ideology. She stated that "fundamentalists always vote, because they are always directed by radical ideology. Leftist voters think things are self evident and thus do not find necessary to vote." (Hribar in Puc, 2001b; p. 16). The opponents on the other side claimed that the amendment is a sign of "radical liberalism" (Štamberger, 2001; p. 96) and even "radical postmodernism" [he is using the phrase to mean that everything is allowed, there are no moral boundaries left] (Slivnik, 2001a; p. 19) which are prevalent among the proponents of single women's right to assisted reproduction. Such accusations had two underlying claims. First of all, the authors by accusing the others of being ideological (and even radical or fundamentalist) claimed a politically neutral position for their own statements. The unwritten assumption was that their statements are therefore not ideological. Second of all, there was a common assumption that a non-ideological position is possible. What got constructed in this discourse then was an idea the politics of reproduction and sexuality can be non-ideological; i.e. that it is possible to tell the Truth about sexuality and reproduction and that this Truth falls outside of political.

2.2 Single women as a test for democracy

I will attend to the questions of State control of reproduction and citizenship in more detail in the Chapter 4, but there is one point I should mention already in this part. As discourses on reproduction are often fundamental in the construction of the relationship between the citizens and the State (Gal and Kligman, 2000; p. 21) I find it necessary to point out the ways in which the State was posited in the discourse on single women and their reproduction and the function that I believe such a construction of the notion of the State served. I would take Gal and Kligman's point even further and claim that the debate and the referendum functioned to

produce State subjects; that is, subjects that recognize the regulatory system of the State in which they live, and agree to a democratic organization of the State. While the "real democratic values" of either side might have been questioned in the debate, the value of democracy and the rule of law never were. I will show in this section that the framing of the discourse in terms of legal rights and democratic values, and in terms of the agency Slovenian citizens were given to decide on this particular regulation reinstated them as subjects in a democratic State.

Both sides in the debate used the language of human rights and rights of citizens to promote their arguments. The proponents of single women's right to assisted reproduction most often referred to Article 55 of the Slovene constitution which warrants freedom of choice in matters of reproduction and imposes on the State the obligation to implement measures which enable its citizens to exercise this right. The opponents on the other hand mostly referred to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, claiming occasionally that according to that Convention the child has the right to know its biological parents (National Assembly, 2001; Kregelj-Zbačnik) and occasionally that the Convention obliges the signatory states to protect the best interests of the child, and that being born to a single woman would not be in child's best interest (Zupančič, 2001; p. 15). The use of legal norms in the discourse affirmed the juridical power of the State and its citizens as both subjects in the legal regime, but since they were given the power to decide on a matter within that regime, it also as actors. Newspaper articles with titles such as "The State to Its Citizens" (Hribar, 2001; p. 15) reinstated the agency of Slovenians as citizens. The author ended this article with the statement that the referendum question was not really whether single women can have access to assisted reproduction, but the question that lies behind it: whether Slovenia is a democratic State or an authoritarian State (Hribar, 2001; p.15).

Many claimed that democracy itself is endangered by the referendum, and at the same time reaffirmed the importance State protection:

> Single woman today became the problem of the entire Slovene society. Slovenia gained its independence, became an independent State, implemented democracy, protected human rights and the freedom of choice. The initiators of the referendum told us to mark "against" and make this country once again totalitarian. (Vlaj, 2001; p. 6)

By stating that the Slovenian State protected human rights etc., the author of the above quote reaffirmed the State as the entity or organization in which people actually obtain rights and freedom. Statements such as the above reinstated the relation between the State and its citizens, a relation in which the citizens are given rights as human beings by the State, but also a relation in which the citizens freely decide on the specific form of the State.

2.3 Giving birth to the nation

Finally I should note the construction of the notions of a nation and national identity that took place in the discourse on single women. Taking Benedict Anderson's (1983) concept of nation as an "imagined community" I want to show how certain ideas about national belonging and the Slovene nation were reinstated. With this concept Anderson is not trying to make a distinction between an actual community and an imagined one, rather he claims that all communities apart from the smallest "face-to face contact communities" are imagined. (Anderson, 1983; p. 6) Nationality according to Anderson's theory thus exists in the consciousness of a tie among members of a community, where membership is at the same time conferred through this consciousness. As national belonging and national identity exist primarily if not exclusively as discursive constructs, they need to be constantly reaffirmed. Because the amendment to the Act which was under question at the referendum also included

the sanctioning of import of gametes, single women who would need donor gametes became the threat to the nation.

Articles with titles such as "Will we be getting Slovenians with import?" (Vončina, 2001; p. 5) and "Having a child with foreign sperm" (Grujičić, 2000) were expressing concerns about the genetic purity of the Slovenian nation. Articles quoted "experts" (in this case, the expert was a gynecologist) in their concerns that such procedures might result in "low quality goods" (Vončina, 2001; p. 5). Unfortunately such claims were made even by some members of the parliament, acting as members of the Committee on Health Care, Labor, Family, Social Policy and the Disabled:

> One cannot reckon that there will be no need to import, let's call them exotic labor force, yellow race or similar. It may happen that such seed, i.e. a seed of such race is imported and spreads here. But I do not want to go into this, as I am no racist. (The Committee on Health Care, Labor, Family, Social Policy and the Disabled quoted in Hrženjak, 2001; p. 113)
>
> It has been said that the donors are in the first place from abroad. This could lead to exotics; we will have Asian people and we will have black people. (The Commitee on Health Care, Labor, Family, Social Policy and the Disabled quoted in Hrženjak, 2001; p. 113)

Such statements, made in the Parliament resonated in public, but even in cases where authors were expressing exacerbation over the apparent racism of public officials, the underlying assumption of such statements remained unquestioned. That is, the assumption that there exists a biological basis of the Slovene nation. Proponents of single women's right to assisted reproduction also occasionally used the argument that, if they are not allowed access to ART in Slovenia, they will be forced to get the procedure done abroad and "we will be importing foreigners" (Grujičić, 2000; p. 46). For a nation whose identity had been largely built on the

basis of language and who has had its own nation state for only 10 years at that time, the perception of a nation as a biologically/genetically tied community was a relatively new phenomenon. Representation of single women as a potential threat to the "genetic purity" of Slovenes thus functioned in the service of imagining the community and it also moved the imagined tie from one existing on the level of culture to one existing on the level of "nature."

While relatively new in the Slovene space, the view of the nation as a biological entity is a fairly well-researched phenomenon. Especially in theory that deals with different positioning of women and men in relation to the nation this view is often considered in the theory of the gendering of the nation (see e.g. the texts of Katherine Verderey, 1996; Michele Rivkin-Fish, 2006; Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, 1989; and V. Spike Peterson, 1999). One of the major roles of women in nation building processes according to Anthias and Yuval- Davis (1989) (or Peterson) is as "biological reproducers of ethnic/national groups" (p. 8) and this role was particularly emphasized in my case of single women. However more than on the practical level of policies directed at encouraging women to give birth to more "purebred Slovenes," single women in my case functioned as a discursive category through which notions of national identity and women's role in the nation were reconstructed. References to the "nation, whose birth rate is constantly falling" (Štamberger, 2001; p. 94; also Pangos, 2001; p. 7) and an "aging nation" (Dina, 2001; p. 4) together with titles such as "A child: a wife's gift to the father and to the nation" (Kopač, 2000) and "Give me good mothers and the nation is rescued" (Natlačen, 2001) reinforced the notion that the main role of women in a nation is one of a mother.

The construction of a "biological community" and the role of women in that community was I believe an important aspect of the debate on single women. That is not to say that the eventual

outcome of the referendum did not have an effect on the lives of those single women who might have wanted to use assisted reproduction technology. But the way single women were represented in the context of nationalism had a much more general effect on the perception of the Slovene nation and on the position of all women in it. I will address the heteronormative construction of single women in the next Chapter, but I should mention here that the representation of single women as potential biological threat to the nation, posed women in general as a receptacle of either foreign or native semen. On the one hand the discourse on single women reinstated the role of women as reproducers of the nation but on the other hand it made this role an emphatically passive one.

Anthias and Yuval-Davis note another role of women in relation to the nation that is significant for my analyzed discourse, that is, the role of women "as signifiers of ethnic/national differences" (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1989; p. 9). They claim that women act not only as transferors of cultural values but also often as "their actual symbolic figuration" (ibid.). In my case the category of single women served not so much to symbolize particularly Slovene values, but to express views on the progress of civilization in Slovenia. Particularly the advocates of single women's right to assisted reproduction often used comparisons with Western countries to advance their arguments (Repovž, 2001; p. 4). Accusing the opponents of being "patriarchal" (National Assembly, 2000; Stopar) and "backward" (Puc, 2001b; p. 16), the proponents of single women's right to assisted reproduction used the category of single women as a symbol of the level of democracy in Slovenia. The question of single women thus became "a question of the level of civilization" (Grujičić, 2001; p.12). At the same time articles appeared in which other ex-Yugoslav countries were marked as patriarchal, as countries in which women's sexuality is under the

control of religion and men, and in which children born out of wedlock are stigmatized (Lupša, 2001; p. 11).

Divisions East/West and North/South were thus drawn on the category of single women and the discourse took on an orientalizing character. The movement of the boundary of East or South is best described as "nesting orientalism" (Bakić-Hayden, 1995). Slovenia was on the hand placed among the more developed West/North in relation to other ex-Yugoslav republics, but at the same time its position either in the advanced West or the primitive East depended on its attitude towards single women. As the particular construction of the other in this discourse was one where the difference was based on the level of "civilization" rather than mystification of otherness the concept of "balkanism" coined by Todorova (1994 and 1997) might be even more appropriate. The category of single women served to draw not only national but also civilizational boundaries. At the same this binary: civilized-European versus primitive-Balkan, was also transferred onto categories within Slovenia to claim superiority of political positions reinforcing the binary in the process (see Helms, 2008, for a discussion of such "fractal recursions"; p. 91). Progress, modernization and civilization were in this discourse conflated into the notion of women's emancipation, which further equaled the ability of women to have children without a male partner.

As I have stated in the beginning my intention in this chapter was not so much to examine the particular relations between single women and official politics, the State or the nation, but to point out the various explicitly political connotations with which the category of single women was imbued in the particular discourse I am analyzing. I wanted to show here the numerous political notions which got (re)constructed through this category, because of which the discourse on single women reached (or drew in) most of the Slovenian public. Less than

making a contribution to the theories mentioned in this chapter, my aim was to show the politicization of single women in the discourse that took place in Slovenia in 2000 and 2001.

3 THE HETERONORMATIVE CONSTRUCTION OF SINGLEHOOD

> *…while LGBT activists are campaigning against blatant oppression and overt discrimination, at the same time all around us a heteronormative social fabric is unobtrusively rewoven, thread by thread, persistently, without fuss or fanfare, without oppressive intent or conscious design.*
>
> (Kitzinger, 2005; p. 478)

3.1 Heteronormativity and compulsory sexuality

In this Chapter I will analyze the representation of the category of single women from the point of view of construction of notions of proper sexuality and femininity in the parliamentary and media debate on single women's right to ART. My analysis is informed by the concept of heteronormativity as it has been developed and popularized by queer theory (e.g. Michael Warner's "Fear of a Queer Planet," 1991; and Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble,* 2006 [1990]). The concept is based on earlier problematizations of heterosexuality and of hierarchies of sexualities as organizing principles of society. Especially Adrienne Rich's text on "compulsory heterosexuality" (1994 [1980]) and the classic and still relevant text by Gayle Rubin (1994 [1984]) set up the theoretical bases for a later criticism of heterosexuality as a social norm. Rubin's hierarchy of sexual acts (Rubin, 1994) and her point in taking sexuality as a "vector of oppression" (Rubin, 1994; p. 22) and inequality is still being referred to in most texts on heteronormativity and the oppressiveness of the current sexual regime. With her analysis of "sexual hierarchy" (Rubin, 1994) she not only fundamentally challenges our

notions or morality in relation to sex, but also provides ground for a critique of society from the perspective of exclusion and inequality based on sex and sexual preferences.

Considering the framework in which literature on heteronormativity was emerging, it is hardly surprising that most texts criticizing the heteronormative organization of society come from theorists who themselves belong to a "sexual minority" or write from the perspective of one. A large body of literature thus exists on forms of heterosexism and homophobia, which deals with explicit and implicit discrimination of LGBTQI people in everyday lives, ranging from physical and verbal violence to structural inequality, discrimination in the workplace and legal discrimination, to silences about the lives and experiences of LGBTQI people in various discourses. While I am not trying to denounce the importance of both this literature and the LGBTQI struggle for recognition and non-discrimination, the specific political aims with which these texts were written also limited the ways in which heteronormativity could be challenged theoretically. I am here for example thinking of asexuality, which queer theory largely ignores, but also of research of heterosexuality itself, which only started emerging with queer theory.

After the initial wave of scholarly interest in the construction of "deviancy" from normative sexuality and the inequalities produced by this construct, the focus of various scholars turned to the social construction of heterosexuality itself (most notably again Butler 2006[1990], also see Sue Wilkinson's and Celia Kitzinger, 1993 and 1994). With queer theory the construction and everyday reification of the norm thus finally came into the centre of theoretical attention (although as mentioned many feminists can be taken as the foremothers and forefathers of queer theory, as well as one should not leave out the influence of Foucault's *History of Sexuality* (1990 [1976]) which came out long before that). I here understand heterosexuality

as inseparably connected with the production of two distinct oppositional genders, where "one way in which this system of compulsory heterosexuality is reproduced and concealed is through the cultivation of bodies into discrete sexes with “natural” appearances and “natural” heterosexual dispositions" (Butler, 2004; p. 905) (for an account of embedded-ness of gender in a heterosexual matrix also see e.g. Sedgewick, 1990; pp. 30-32; Rubin, 1997; and Weiss, 2001).

I am thus taking up the concept of heteronormativity as denoting practices, institutions and modes of thinking and understanding that build on and reinforce the assumption of the naturalness of two oppositional sexes and their mutual attraction (Warner, 1991; and Kitzinger, 2005). Heteronormativity obviously privileges heterosexuality and its related constructs (oppositional sexes, nuclear family headed by a different-sex couple, "natural" reproduction) as the norm, which on the one hand can be publicly displayed and which on the other hand passes as unquestioned in most discourses. Heteronormativity is however not coterminous with heterosexuality; while heterosexuality has its opposition in homosexuality, heteronormativity does not have its oppositional organization in e.g. "homonormativity" (Warner, 1991; and Berlant and Warner, 1998; p. 548). "Homonormativity" is impossible, because homosexuality as a concept only makes sense in an organization with different (oppositional) sexes, i.e. in a heteronormative organization, (a possible oppositional organization to heteronormativity would be a sort of "queertopia" in which there would be no sex categorization). Jillian Todd Weiss (2001) goes even further in her analysis of the gender system, claiming that heteronormativity is actually a "misnomer" (p. 124), because understanding heterosexuality as a norm would logically mean that it is possible for a minority to deviate from the norm, but the heterosexual legal, social and conceptual

organization of two oppositional genders attracted to each other does not allow room for an understanding of individuals outside of this categorization.

Obviously a heteronormative organization is equally normative for individuals who clearly identify themselves as heterosexual or who are in the privileged position of never having to think about it, as it is for those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, transgender or under any other "deviant" sexual identity. Also obviously the normativity of heterosexuality is experienced in a more apparent way and has more dire consequences for those whose sexuality or sexual identity does not conform to the norm. As I have already said above it is then hardly surprising that most texts (actually all I know of) written on the oppressive character of heteronormative organization are written from the perspective of "alternative" sexualities. At the same time however the theory written from such a perspective, excludes from its scope an alternative *to sexuality*. Moreover, theory critical of heteronormativity is mostly built on the assumption of some sexuality and sexual orientation, which might be socially constructed, fluid, changeable, depending on context, but it is unavoidably there. Considering that feminist and queer theory have (in my opinion quite successfully) defended the position of social construction of sexuality, sexual pleasure, desire and identity, the lack of theoretical positions on asexuality and non-sexuality is quite astonishing[7]. While better researched (at least in some aspects), singlehood as an alternative to relationships (in whichever form) has also received little (or no) attention from the position of deconstruction of singlehood as a discursive category. Even if one assumes that self-identified asexuals, people who do not identify as asexual but also do not identify as in anyway sexual, or single people (with all the various life situations that this might involve) experience less

[7] Asexuality has been receiving some public attention in the past few years, particularly with the AVEN organization (www.asexuality.org), which is devoted to raising awareness about asexuality and providing a space for those who identify themselves as asexuals. However it has received close to no scholarly attention so far, not considering psychological and psychiatric articles which treat the phenomenon as pathology. One exception is Lukaš Sedlaček's MA thesis (2007) and his current Phd research on asexuality.

discrimination, inequality and symbolic or physical violence, the way these categories are constructed reifies the notions of "normal," "natural," "healthy" (hetero)sexuality.

I do not mean to equate singlehood with asexuality, nor imply that single people do not engage in sexual acts. Singlehood can refer to a number of different life-styles, attitudes towards relationships and towards sexuality and stages in life. Singlehood can be a transitional phase or a permanent decision. The debate on single women which I am analyzing in this thesis mostly referred to women between 30 and 45[8] who did not have a long-term partner, and a variety of reasons for singlehood were included in the debate. They were also mostly presented as non-sexual, i.e. as not engaging in sexual acts in that particular period of their life, but not also as asexual, i.e. as indifferent to sexual activity altogether. Asexuality as it is currently conceptualized (e.g. by AVEN) refers to a relatively stable sexual identity.[9] Although I find such conceptualization of asexuality somewhat problematic, I do not want to enter into a broad discussion on the politics of sexual identities, so I use the term non-sexuality to refer to non-engagement in sexual acts (for whichever reason), which does not imply a sexual identity nor permanence of absence of sexual activity. The reason I am mentioning singlehood together with asexuality and non-sexuality in the above paragraph is because of their common potential to disrupt notions of "natural" sexual coupling.

[8] This was so partly because of the specificity of the debate which revolved around women in their reproductive age (in this debate and in Slovenian legal framework defined as up until the age of 44) and partly because of the heteronormativity of the debate, because of which women younger than 30 were considered as "still having the chances of finding a partner".

[9] I find the category asexual as it is presented by AVEN problematic because a conceptualization of asexuality as a fixed sexual orientation is in my opinion rather essentializing, not only of asexuality but of sexuality in general. As such it works to reaffirm the deviance of asexuals instead of deconstructing the norm of (hetero)sexuals. AVEN does state that "minority will think of themselves as asexual for a brief period of time while exploring and questioning their own sexuality" (AVEN, 2012) and they welcome those as well, but asexuality as it is currently conceptualized by AVEN denotes a relatively fixed sexual identity. A theoretical challenge that would pose asexuality as state which might not be fixed, but fluid and changeable in the same way as all other sexual orientations, is I think necessary for queer theory to challenge the notions of "innate desire" and "natural sexuality". A broad discussion on the political effectiveness of sexual identities (is essentialism politically necessary and when?) however far exceeds the scope of this work.

In a similar way as asexuality can disrupt the notion of a "natural" sexuality, singlehood can have a disruptive effect for the notions of a "natural" need for intimate relationships. By this I do not mean only single people who have never been in any intimate relationship, I am also referring to the way even periods of singlehood are presented as only an intermediary phase between relationships or after relationships, thus reaffirming the "naturalness" of coupledom. It for this reason that I think the silence about the construction of these categories in queer theory is a serious omission of a perspective on sexuality and of course on heterosexuality. Because asexuality and singlehood as alternatives to sexuality and sexual relationships could be challenging the notion of (hetero)sexuality as natural, the way these categories are constructed is an important thread in the weaving of the "heteronormative social fabric" (Kitzinger, 2005; p. 478). My analysis in this chapter aims to at least begin filling this gap.

In this chapter I will analyze the construction of the category of single women in the particular debate I have studied from the perspective of heteronormativity, to point at the ways the normalcy of (hetero)sexuality is reinforced even when the speakers have no discriminatory intentions. Although I include certain positions of the opponents of single women's right to assisted reproduction, I mostly focus on the positions presented by the advocates of "non-discrimination of single women" (Hribar, 2001; p.15)[10]. I include in this part a greater number (but not exclusively) of arguments presented in the parliamentary debates on the issue, as all the arguments I quote here were not only reported in all the major newspapers, they were repeated in and rephrased in various articles, comments, columns and letters to editor. I argue that despite the claims of advocates of single women's right to ART to

[10] Various different actors were involved in the debate, but the positions opposing single women's right to assisted reproduction were mostly represented by the Roman Catholic Church and centre-right conservative parties. I do not think that finding that the conservative position or the position of the Roman Catholic Church reaffirms notions of proper femininity (and masculinity of course) and proper (hetero)sexuality would be much of a novelty to anyone. That is why I have instead chosen to analyze the "liberal" view, which was often claimed to be challenging such traditional notions.

be challenging the "traditional […] ways of life" (National Assembly, 2001; Rupar) and even challenging "control over women's sexuality" (National Assembly, 2001; Batteli), the way the debate was framed did no such thing. I show with the following analysis that the debate followed a strictly heteronormative framework of binaries, thus supporting the existent social arrangements. It reconstituted the notions of proper femininity and heterosexuality as the norm even in arguments with which the advocates for single women wanted to challenge this same norm.

3.2 Single women as a category of lack

The discourse on single women's right to assisted reproduction already in the beginning created the category of single women as different and problematic, as women who obviously deviated from the norm and whose equal rights had to be discussed. Their advocates, however, instead of challenging the norm reinstated the sameness of single women in heteronormative terms. The main binary that essentially framed the debate was the opposition women-in-a-heterosexual-relationship/single-women. In this binary, women in (extra)marital heterosexual relationships were taken as the norm, their right to access to ART was never questioned, and their appropriateness for raising a child was never discussed. An advocate of the rights of single women thus ended his initial presentation (this was the first presentation of the amendment) of his MP-group's position with the following sentence: "Therefore I would like to remind you that we as MPs are representatives of all the people, *even single women*" (National Assembly, 2000; Merlo). By stating single women explicitly the MP was exposing this group as in some way different, as a group that was in some way so marked that it did not self evidently belong under "all the people." Headlines such as "A referendum against the different!" (Damjanić, 2001; p. 9) and "Rubbish" (Jeklin, 2001a; p. 3) (the author was bitterly

ironic about the way everyone different is treated in Slovenia, thus the title) further contributed to the construction of single women as deviant.

Authors in magazines and newspapers (such as the above quoted) were of course responding to the initial framing of single women, but the debate on whether single women should have the right to assisted reproduction already from the beginning implied that a) single women are different from "normal" women, which is why they are singled out from the more general category of women; and thus b) their equal right to ART is not self evident, it must be discussed, it must be determined that they are also worthy of a particular right. Their deviancy was accentuated also by the fact that the amendment to the Act envisaged that single women would have to defend their case for conceiving with ART in front of a Commission, formed for this purpose. No such provision was made for women with a male partner. So by saying that "freedom of choice on whether to bear children includes *even single women*" (National Assembly, 2000; Merlo), the advocates for single women might have wanted to act in the name of equality, but they were simultaneously all the time emphasizing the difference of single women. The difference of single women was their lack of a male partner. The underlying assumption, which was reaffirmed through the construction of single women as a category of a lack, was that having a male partner is "natural," as it never came under question. The emphasis that was put on the deviation of single women reaffirmed the norm which was not being discussed.

As a deviant category the reasons for single women's lack of a partner were put under inquisition. They were continuously talked about as a group that is somehow deficient in more than just lacking a male partner. In the Parliament the advocates of single women came up with examples of disabled women with psychological traumas or disorders:

> No, no, there are also fertile women who have trouble conceiving – I am talking about the disabled. It has been mentioned several times that they are less attractive, and have problems in getting pregnant. (National Assembly, 2000; Kacin)
>
> […] how many women […] cannot have intercourse with a man because of psychosomatic disorders. (National Assembly, 2000; Kacin)

"Traumatized women" (National Assembly, 2001; Keber) and "women in deep personal distress" (National Assembly, 2001; Kacin) were presented, most probably with the intention of gaining sympathy for single women. Adversaries of the single women's right to ART contributed to the representation of single women as "abnormal" with notions of "women who [...] feel horrible hatred towards men" (National Assembly, 2001; Rupar) and women "who should find psychiatric help" (National Assembly, 2000; Jelinčič).

Such characterizations of single women continued in the press. Spomenka Hribar who was the most active advocate of single women's right to ART in an interview gave examples of women who were raped or abused in childhood (Šeruga, 2001; p. 5), Vasilij Cerar, one of the few gynecologists advocating for single women's right to ART, gave an example of a woman who "had problems with intercourse, she was afraid of pain. God knows why." (Cerar in Zajec, 2001; p. 13). The then Minister of Health and one of the proposers of the amendment, Dušan Keber, wrote a touching story about Marta, who lost a leg as a child and because of the accident eventually retreated into social isolation. When he met her again as an adult, her "unattractive, dull look, which she did not try to change with any remedies, and her disability" (Keber, 2001; p. 13) made him believe she is single and childless. He noticed a "shadow of alcohol over her face" (ibid.), and finally she admitted her single-and-childless status, saying she has nothing to live for (ibid.). In the course of debate Marta was joined by others, some with hypothetical names, some unnamed, and some with their own true stories, but all of them victims of "unfortunate circumstances" (…) and some or other form of psychological or

physical disability. Such representation of single women constructed the notion of singlehood as something that happens to these women, and not as a possible (rational or even valid) choice.

Aside from stories of single women who are in one way or another challenged, two other "kinds" of single women were often presented in the media by the advocates for single women: women who lost their male partners in the course of infertility treatment, and women who did not find a partner because of their careers or just bad luck (Šeruga, 2001; p. 5). The first "kind" of single women were to prove that even single women can be proven infertile, because the opposing argument was often that insemination of single woman is not a treatment of a medical condition, as she is likely to be fertile (the Catch 22 of the debate and the Act was that infertility could only be proven with a year of regular sexual relations with the same partner that does not result in conception). The examples of women introduced as Vesna (Zwitter, 2000; p. 30), Mojca and Barbara (Grah, 2001; p. 15-16) and several others lost their husbands and male partners to accidents, sudden fatal illnesses and sometimes to other women. The second "kind": "women, who just were not lucky with men in life" (Hribar, 2001; p. 15) were to provide a less extreme example of singlehood, which is nevertheless worthy of sympathy. But as with the examples from the above paragraph; singlehood was again presented as the result of unfortunate circumstances and not choice, which instead of challenging, reinforced the normativity of heterosexual relationships.

By claiming that single women are single because of personal problems, bad luck with men, or because of some disability, a perception that singlehood is not a consequence of one's will was created. The advocates of single women's right to ART claimed that single women deserve our sympathy, or at least to be given equal rights, since they cannot help being single.

But by trying to gain sympathy for single women, they reaffirmed heterosexual relations as something that is unquestionably desired by all. The discourse re-constructed heterosexual desire as a natural essence that may remain unfulfilled or obscured by some personal trauma, but is nevertheless always there, as something that is present in all, unquestionably, *even* in single women. If this desire is for some reason not expressed, this has to be because of some "psychological problems," and the decision for living without a male partner cannot be a rational choice, a choice of a different desire or simply absence of need for an intimate relationship with anyone. Saying that single women are not single by their own will can thus in no way challenge the "traditional relations," when it is reinstating their "truly feminine" heterosexual desires and when it explicitly posits sexuality as natural. Such a discourse posits single women as only lacking the partner, but not also the wish to have a partner. Paradoxically their advocates often had to present them as abnormal in other ways, so that their sexual normality could remain unchallenged. This also provides a clue to why the question of lesbians was widely avoided in the debate.

3.3 The silence about lesbians

Although some voices were heard that the debate on access to ART showed the homophobic character of the Slovene society (e.g. the then Human Rights Ombudsman wrote an article in the largest newspaper: Hanžek, 2000; p. 7), that the negation of the possibility of lesbian parenthood is offensive (an open letter to the National Assembly published in both main newspapers and one of the women's magazines: Grief, 2000; p. 31), and that the Catholic Church and the conservative MPs are stigmatizing lesbians (Grief in Železnikar, 2000), lesbian motherhood was generally not discussed. Even those with the most zeal in defending single women's rights, were far less zealous when it came to lesbian couples. In the Parliament as well as in various articles in favor of single women's right to ART a clear

distinction between single women and lesbians was made, and the advocates of the former distanced themselves from the question about the latter.

For example in the Parliament one of the advocates of the amendment quickly responded to the claim made by one of the adversaries that the amendment would enable access to ART for lesbians:

> Well who is making an equation between single women and lesbians? Who is making this equation? We, the advocates of this amendment, never did! (National Assembly, 2000; Kopač).

and the same speaker later in the debate, when stating that this question should be dealt with separately:

> That women living with another woman, i.e. lesbian couples, could be using this procedures. Theoretically this is of course possible. […] But we also have a case of Denmark, where its legislation states that single women are allowed to, but explicitly excludes lesbians. That is also possible. (National Assembly, 2000; Kopač)

While opponents of single women's right to ART sometimes voiced concerns that allowing access to single women would open the door to homosexual parenthood, these concerns were either not replied to by the advocates of single women or were met with statements that the legislation would not provide this possibility and that this question would have to be discussed separately.

Silences within a discourse can be an important indication of how the meaning is constructed within it (Tonkiss, 1998; p. 258). By excluding the issue of lesbian couples from the debate, the advocates of the amendment reaffirmed the "normalcy" (in being heterosexual) and at the same time "deficiency" (in lacking a partner) of single women. As the argument went, they are not normal only in as much as they do not have a male partner, but because this is not their

own fault, they should be given equal rights. Including lesbians could importantly challenge the heteronormative framework of the discourse, as the normalcy and naturalness of heterosexual desire would have to be questioned, if one was to claim that lesbians should also be given equal rights to parenthood.

The argument that lesbians should not have equal rights to parenthood because they might provide an unhealthy environment for the psychosexual development of a child (the argument was occasionally voiced, but in less "refined" terms) is quite illogical if taken together with the assumption that heterosexual desire is natural and inborn. A more "logical" variation of this was that lesbians simply hate men, and thus might be abusive towards a child if it happens to be a boy (The Committee on Health Care, Labor, Family, Social Policy and the Disabled quoted in Hrženjak, 2001; p. 113). I will not go into an analysis of homophobia that was expressed in this discourse, because I want my analysis to show the heteronormative construction of singlehood that went unnoticed. Explicitly homophobic statements did provoke protests against hate speech, but the fact that nobody challenged the notion of "normal," "healthy," "natural," "inborn" (hetero)sexuality, and that single women were constructed as "normally heterosexual" by their advocates went unnoticed. This silence reaffirmed the unquestioned norm of heterosexuality.

3.4 Perfect and imperfect families

The difference of single women was thus also emphasized by the second binary which shaped the discourse i.e. perfect family/imperfect family. The discourse was to a large degree framed by the opposition of two rights: the right of single women to not be discriminated against and to freely make choices about their reproduction, and the right of the child to know her/his parents and to be raised in an environment which is in his/her best interest. Opponents of the

single women's right to ART clearly argued that a single-parent family deprives the child of this right and is imperfect thus not adequate for raising a child (e.g. Zupančič, 2001; pp.14-15). Such argumentation obviously posits a family headed by a heterosexual couple as normal and even healthy and a family headed by a single woman as different and unhealthy.

However from my perspective the response to this binary by the advocates of single women is more problematic. They presented arguments, which criticized the so called "perfect family":

> [s]uch arguments, that a child needs to have a father for normal development, do not withhold criticism at all, considering that in many families - data shows even 70 percent - children suffer violence, especially because of parents, i.e. father, i.e. father who is an alcoholic, among other. (National Assembly, 2000; Žnidaršič)

This same critique was expressed also by the Lesbian section of the Student Cultural and Art Centre (Greif, 2000; p. 31), and the problem of alcoholic and abusive fathers was exposed by the then Human Rights Ombudsman (Hanžek, 2000; p. 7) a group of feminist scholars and activists (Rener et al., 2001; p. 31) as well as numerous other journalists, editors, and people who wrote letters to the editor. A second type of response to the notion of a "perfect family" further addressed the so called "syndrome of an absent father" (Obolnar, 2001b; p. 5) and put in the foreground two facts. The first was that there is already a high number of single-parent families in Slovenia of which most are headed by a woman, and the second that even in two-parent (heterosexual) families the father is often absent, both physically and emotionally (e.g. Obolnar, 2001b, p. 5; Vuk Godina, 2000; p. 23). The claim was that: "[children] *in most cases despite everything* grow up to be competent people, who can face the challenges of the environment." (National Assembly, 2001; Keber).

While these criticisms were justified and did challenge the perception that a two-parent family is *always* a perfect family, it did not really challenge such a family being the norm. The first

argument, which was really pervasive, implied a connection between families that are imperfect because of fathers' abusive behavior and families that are imperfect because of a lack of a father. It thus set up families in which there is no father as imperfect, exactly in the point where the advocates were trying to challenge the categorization to perfect and imperfect families. The underlying statement was that in some cases a fatherless family is better that a family with an abusive father. The problem with this is that it presents the issue as choosing between two evils and as the last resort for a single woman. This connection prevented a discussion on single-parent families as just as normal or even as a choice of equal worth and it also prevented questioning the construction of the notion of a "normal" family.

A two-parent (and by all means heterosexual) family was reaffirmed as the norm and apart from dysfunctional cases of the normative family, it was given the privileged position of not being discussed. The advocates never dared to claim that even a two parent family with no violence or abuse, a "perfect" family, is not *the* perfect family. Single-parent families thus remained marked as deviant, as preferred only to even worse possibilities, or as forms that should be tolerated. A statement such as: "I am finally wondering why all the intolerance, lack of acknowledgement, lack of acceptance for difference" (National Assembly, 2000; Stopar) sounds like an open-minded position. But underneath tolerance there is always already a value judgment. One does not have to tolerate someone who is equal or even better.

The normativity of the heterosexual two-parent family was also reaffirmed by claims that there is only a very small number of women who would choose such procedures, with which the advocates for single women tried to reassure the public that the amendment to the Act would not mean a change in social values and organization (e.g. Hrastar, 2001). The *normal* family thus did not need to feel threatened. The then Minister of Health thus stated:

> Family will still exist, because heterosexual relationships exist, love exists, all this exists, and there is no doubt in it. And this Act does not deal with family. This Act only deals with a minority, who has not created families. (National Assembly, 2001; Keber)

With this, the Minister again reinstated the family within heterosexual norms, norms which single women do not fully fulfill. He even defined the family as only a heterosexual family, as a form that exists because of "heterosexual relationships" (ibid.), because of heterosexual love. In this logic, all other forms of families which did not come out of heterosexual love would not even be considered families. Instead of claiming that families can be multiple, in various forms, with various roles and biological and social connections, such defenses only underscored the position that a family can only be a two-parent (or at least initially two-parent) heterosexual family.

An assumption that is hiding underneath the above statement (and which again never got challenged) is also that two-parent heterosexual family is a normal family because it is created "naturally," by "natural" heterosexual reproduction. This brings me to the another binary that formed the discussion specifically in relation to family formation, i.e. the opposition between natural reproduction and artificial reproduction, in which natural reproduction is the dominant desired form, and artificial reproduction constructed as only a supplementary form. I am here again informed by Warner's text (1991) on heteronormativity in which he connects a heterosexual organization with the growth economy of population; the two coming together particularly in what he calls "reprosexuality - the interweaving of heterosexuality, biological reproduction, cultural reproduction, and personal identity." (Warner, 1991; p. 9). Reprosexuality according to Warner involves more that just compulsory sexuality: "it involves a relation to self that finds its proper temporality and fulfillment in generational transmission" (ibid.). Reprosexuality posits reproduction as the "natural" function or principle of sexuality, from which the "natural" status of heterosexuality is deduced. If according to

Warner this logic is faulty as it presumes that sexuality is fixed and that people have only either same-sex or different sex relations, and further that different sex relations have reproduction as its only or ultimate purpose (ibid.), assisted reproduction takes the challenge to the "repro dogma" (ibid.) even further. Assisted reproduction technologies enable separation of reproduction from sexual intercourse and thus represent a danger to heteronormative relations, existing as such under the auspices of "natural reproduction."

"Natural reproductive behavior" was in the discourse equated with a heterosexual act that results in conception, thus constructing a particular notion of "natural." Medical procedures were concordantly constructed as only helping nature:

> our family-law professor […] repeated several times […] that we should imitate nature, and enable people only what nature deprived them of, and unusual and unnatural procedures are out of the question. (National Assembly, 2000; Kregelj-Zbačnik)

Biotechnological reproduction was further maintained in the role of assistance only through references to medicine and medical expertise, and through claims that biotechnological reproduction is *only* treatment of infertility. The above statement made by an adversary of single women's right to ART is problematic first of all because she draws a connection between family law and nature and thus posits family as being a natural formation. She also does not anywhere explain why she believes that biotechnological reproduction would be more unnatural (even according to her understanding of nature) in case of a single woman than in case of a heterosexual couple, since from a genetic point of view, which she seems to be taking, gametes of both sexes are in fact present whether the impregnated woman is single or not. Moreover, in cases where a heterosexual couple uses donated gametes, gametes that are used in the procedure do not belong to the same two people who are having a heterosexual relationship (and who are engaging in heterosexual acts). The unnaturalness of the procedure in case of single woman in this logic is that she does not have a (hetero)sexual relationship

(and supposedly does not engage in heterosexual acts), while a woman with a male partner does; it has nothing to do with the result of sexual relations or the manner in which an embryo is finally conceived. Such logic had the effect of not only quite conspicuously constructing heterosexuality as "natural," but also of constructing singlehood, not being in a heterosexual relationship, and not having sexual intercourse as "unnatural."

However again what I find more problematic than just the fact that arguments such as the above were being presented, is the fact that even advocates for single women used the same notions of "natural reproduction." Most of the responses to arguments such as above either focused on showing that single women can in fact be proven to be infertile (I mentioned examples of this argumentation in section 3.2) which was the reason the preferred "natural reproduction" was impossible for them, or they avoided the question of nature altogether. A few individuals pointed out that even in case of a heterosexual couple in which the man is infertile, one could not technically talk about an treating infertility of the woman who receives the donor gamete, as she is actually fertile. (e.g. Grah, 2001; p. 15; Hribar, 2001; p. 15). Even the latter were however quick to point out that "natural" reproduction was of course preferable, but unfortunately not always possible, for one reason or another. All of these "counter arguments" further reinforced the binary of natural reproduction/artificial reproduction, but more importantly they reinforced the idea of "natural reproduction." It was never pointed out that even the most "natural" reproduction, with no interference of any kind of medicine or technology, is always loaded with cultural meanings, takes a certain cultural form and is the result of an act that is unavoidably cultural, thus also political. Keeping assisted reproduction as the inferior form, as only assistance to the "desired" "natural reproduction," maintained the heteronormative notions of "reprosexuality" (Warner, 1991; p. 9). Of course, singlehood and non-sexuality were presented as unnatural because of already

existing notions of "natural" sexuality and reproduction, but the relation goes both ways: it was also through the construction of singlehood as "unnatural" that what is "natural" got constructed.

3.5 Femininity and passivity

Although the adversaries of single women's right to ART often questioned the femininity of single women, not only with explicit claims that they lack femininity or that it is underdeveloped (Rugelj, 2000; p. 7), but also with claims that they are "suffragettes" (Kršinar, 2001; p. 3) and even "feminazis" (Rasiewicz, 2001; p. 93), who hate men and are disregarding their natural roles (Rugelj, 2000; Rasiewicz, 2001; National Assembly, 2000; Jelinčič), I will not go into analysis of such positions. They surely contributed to the construction of the proper role of women, proper femininity, and the notion of the inappropriateness of public agency, autonomy or independence for women in this discourse, and the above quoted men were joined by a number of less radical statements made that nonetheless had the same effect. But this is less interesting for my purpose than the fact that passivity was promoted in the construction of the category of single women even by their advocates.

The debate on the Act already with its title put women in a passive position: the literal translation would not be Infertility Treatment and Procedures of Biomedically-Assisted Procreation Act (this is the official English translation of the Act), Infertility Treatment and Procedures of Biomedically-Assisted Insemination Act. And the term that was being used consistently with few exceptions even by the defenders of single women's rights was the word for insemination rather than procreation. This put women in general in a passive role in reproduction, as they do not procreate, they are being inseminated; it is being done to them. The female body was in this discourse constructed as inseminable, as a body to which

something can be done, and as a body which can be entered (either by a penis or an instrument); instead of, for example, as a body that is productive, that takes or envelops. The binary of man/woman in which the man is the active agent and woman the passive object, was being reproduced with the vocabulary used in the debate.

Single women, however, were not only presented as passive in their procreative role, but also in their decision-making. First of all, as I have already shown above, the discourse suggested that they do not rationally decide to stay single but this was presented as something that happens to them. Moreover, they were passivized, with the continuous use of phrases such as "to allow their insemination," "to give them the right," etc. This presented single women as an object of decision making, in which they have little say, thus putting them in a passive role even from this perspective. Even in claiming their right to choice, its advocates were quick to add: "and the Commission should either grant them their wish or not" (National Assembly, 2001; Kacin). The references to "expert" knowledge needed to decide on whether single women should have access to ART were widely used throughout the discourse.

While legal language and references are generally present in parliamentary procedures, medical expertise was being consistently called upon in the debates. And already the fact that in case of adoption of the amendment a Commission was to be formed that would decide on the suitability of single women for the procedure (from a psychological and social perspective), whereas for women with a partner no such test was foreseen, testifies to the way single women (and consequently women in general) were dispossessed of their agency. The logic of such a Commission was that a woman cannot make a decision on reproduction on her own; she either needs a male partner or a Commission to make the decision for her. Such passivization reaffirmed the heteronormative framework in which the feminine pole of the

binary masculine/feminine is connected with passivity. Paradoxically numerous women stepped up as public figures and were actively engaged in the fight for "women's rights," and all the while their rhetoric was constructing the feminine as passive.

3.6 The construction of the heterosexual norm through the deviancy and normalcy of single women

If I follow Fairclough's structure of argument as consisting of Grounds, Warrant (+ Backing) and Claim (Fairclough, 2003; p. 81) the main arguments on both sides can be summarized as follows:

1. Opponents: having a male partner is normal for a woman (Grounds); single women lack a male partner (Warrant); single women are not normal (Backing); unequal treatment of single women is therefore justified (Claim).

Proponents: having a male partner is not always possible (Grounds); single women want to have a male partner (Warrant); single women are normal in their desires (Backing); unequal treatment of single women is therefore not justified (Claim).

2. Opponents: a heterosexual two-parent family is the normal environment for a child (Grounds); single women do not provide a normal environment for a child (Warrant); single women should not be encouraged to have children (Claim).

Proponents: a heterosexual two-parent family is sometimes worse than a single-parent family (Grounds); single women can provide a better environment than a bad heterosexual two-parent family (Warrant); single women should be enabled to have children (Claim).

3. Opponents: assisted reproduction is only a medical treatment for infertility (Grounds); single women cannot prove infertility (Warrant); single women should not be entitled to assisted reproduction (Claim).

Proponents: assisted reproduction is a medical treatment for infertility (Grounds); single women can also be infertile (Warrant); single women should also be entitled to infertility treatment (Claim).

And lastly an argument about which both sides agreed can be deduced: natural reproduction is preferred over artificial reproduction (Grounds); natural reproduction takes place in heterosexual relationships (Warrant); heterosexual relationships are the natural form of relationships (Claim).

I showed with my analysis that in none of the arguments did the advocates of single women's equal rights actually posit single women as equal. Their identity, constructed through the discourse, was always the identity of a lack. Instead of challenging the normativity of (hetero)sexual desire, the proponent of single women reinstated the normalcy of heterosexuality by representing single women as normal in their desires (which just unfortunately remained unrealized). Instead of questioning the preference for the heterosexual nuclear family, they have reaffirmed it as *the* "perfect family," and other forms as preferable only when the "normal" family becomes dysfunctional. Instead of confronting the public with the unnatural and political character of any sexual relation, reproduction or relationship, they have reconstituted heterosexuality, heterosexual acts and reproduction in heterosexual relationships as "natural." Instead of addressing the position of women in the man/woman binary, they have maintained their passivization. In none of the arguments was the normativity of heterosexual relations ever questioned. Moreover the advocates for single women who claimed to be "free of patriarchal prejudices" (National Assembly, 2000; Stopar), were actually constantly re-instating a heteronormative framework.

By pointing at the heteronormative construction of the category of single women in this discourse my analysis in this part also emphasizes the ways "heteronormative social fabric is unobtrusively rewoven" (Kitzinger, 2005; p. 478) in practices, which usually go unnoticed by theorist criticizing the normativity of heterosexuality. Singlehood could potentially represent a challenge (not only in this discourse but even in general) to the normativity of heterosexual coupling, which is why I believe it deserves (together with asexuality and non-sexuality) far more attention by queer theorists than it has so far been getting.

4 THE BIOPOLITICS OF SINGLEHOOD

As the debate on single women's right to assisted reproduction unfolded, various individuals and institutions got involved and presented their position not only on assisted reproduction and single women's right to it, but as I have tried to show in the previous chapter also on singlehood and coupledom, sexuality and non-sexuality, where many notions on sexuality might not have been presented explicitly, but were included in the discourse as the taken-for-granted assumptions. On the one hand, the debate was revolving around a very specific question of State regulation of reproduction of a particular group of citizens, but on the other hand a set of general notions about "natural," "healthy," "proper" sexuality was (re)constructed and reaffirmed in the discourse. In this chapter I thus want to explore the implications of this discourse on single women and their access to assisted reproduction in terms of State regulation of reproduction and in terms of production of disciplined bodies that "fit" into a particular, i.e. heteronormative, social organization. For this purpose I draw on Foucault's theory of bio-politics (Foucault, 2003 [1975-1976] and 1990 [1976]) and his thesis of sexuality as the centre-point of power technologies that emerged in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries (Foucault, 2003). Through an examination of the two bio-political power technologies, i.e. regulatory power and disciplinary power (Foucault, 2003) and their functioning in the discourse on single women and ART, I argue that the relatively new focus of public media, various institutions, legislative bodies and scholars on single women and even singlehood generally is an expansion of power to new categories, states or situations.

4.1 Biopolitics, State and Power

In his lecture Society Must Be Defended (2003) Foucault claims that the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw an emergence of two new "power technologies": disciplinary power and regulatory power (Foucault, 2003) (the former appearing prior to the latter). While the first was focused on individual bodies, disciplining the individual body for the sake of higher productivity, the second emerged with a range of new "life sciences" and was focused on the body of the population, on the "man-as-species" (Foucault, 2003; p. 242). According to Foucault the object of knowledge and control of the regulatory power is the health of the population, which includes the control over the fertility of the population, i.e. birth rates, as well as its mortality, i.e. the prevalence of diseases within a population. If disciplinary power functions through institutions, producing individual "'docile' bodies" (Foucault, 1995) regulatory power functions on a collective level through "forecasts, statistical estimates and overall measures" (Foucault, 2003; p. 246) to influence not the state of an individual body but the average state of the collective, in other words to "optimize a state of life" (Foucault, 2003; p. 246). Particularly it is the "invention" of the population as the core object of governing[11] that characterizes the bio-political nature of modern nation-states, but also both the "anatomo-politics of the human body" (Foucault 2003; p. 243) and the "bio-politics of the human race" (ibid.) that are still the main modes of power in modern states. And it is both of these modes of power that are of interest in my case of the debate on single women's reproduction.

Any discourse on singlehood is unavoidably tied to its opposite phenomenon i.e. "coupledom," where the latter is the norm against which all deviations are measured. Singlehood generally as a phenomenon then falls in the realm of sexuality, which is in

[11] Governing in my understanding includes not only legal regulations, directed at the population as a whole, but also numerous "life sciences" which study the society or "man-as species" (Foucault, 2003; p. 242).

Foucault's theory located at the cross-section of both power technologies. As bodily behavior, sexuality is the subject of disciplinary control, producing individual bodies that not only behave in certain ways, but also bodies that are sexualized in specific ways. And as a practice through which the society reproduces it is a matter of regulatory power; it is through the control of sexual practices that the health of the population, the average of its hereditary characteristics, can be influenced (Foucault, 2003).

Foucault poses the mechanisms of "bioregulation" as State mechanisms (Foucault, 2003; p. 250), but does not claim that the regulation of biological characteristics takes place only on the State level. On the contrary, he lists several "sub-State institutions" (Foucault, 2003; p. 250) including medical institutions where regulatory power technologies, directed at the population as a whole, function. Although he claims the relation between disciplinary institutions and State regulations is not one of two completely distinct mechanisms, but a more complicated one, where these two power mechanisms might overlap, Foucault nevertheless sets up this dichotomy (albeit it is not a "complete" one) (ibid.). I would say the interconnectivity of the two power technologies goes even further than Foucault indicates in his lecture. In so far as the normalizing effect of regulatory power depends on a number of sciences, from demography to biology and medicine it seems pointless to make a separation between the institutions in which the knowledge about the population is produced and the State. Moreover I will point out in the continuation of this Chapter that the discourse on single women and ART, which at first sight could be taken as the functioning of regulatory power, actually functioned with a disciplinary effect. The interconnectivity and interdependence of these two power technologies and their effects is at the centre of my argument.

Here I need to also emphasize that I do not understand or mean to present the State as a unified entity with a clear and unequivocal aim, which would be focusing on sexuality for its own agenda. Neither do I mean to present the State as an entity which holds and wields power over its citizens. I rely on Foucault's explanation of power and power relations, as he explains it in *the History of Sexuality: Vol. 1* (1990). There he notes power as exercised not possessed, as existing in different kinds of relationships, where power relations are the "immediate effect" (p. 94) and the "internal conditions" (ibid.) of differentiations and inequalities. Importantly he also notes that power relations are always productive. And finally he claims that "power relations are intentional and non-subjective" (ibid.) or in other words their "logic is perfectly clear, the aims decipherable, and yet it is often the case that no one is there to have invented them and few who can be said to have formulated them (p. 95). It is through the notion of power as relational that the State can be understood; "the sovereignty of the state, the form of the law […] are only the terminal forms power takes" (Foucault, 1990; p. 92).

The State can then be taken as an expression or an effect of power relations in a society. In a narrow sense of the word the State corresponds to the strict sense of government, and in my understanding includes also a vast array of State institutions, such as hospitals, research centers etc. In a broader sense it relates also to the broader understanding of the word government as directing the action of individuals, or "structure[ing] the possible field of action of others" (Foucault, 1982; p. 790). It is I believe this sense of the State that is applied when Foucault writes:

> I don't think that we should consider the "modern state" as an entity which was developed above individuals, ignoring what they are and even their very existence, but, on the contrary, as a very sophisticated structure, in which individuals can be integrated, under one condition: that this individuality would be shaped in a new form and submitted to a set of very specific patterns. (1982; p. 783)

4.2 State control of reproduction and the neutral citizen

Foucault's theory of bio-politics and regulatory power has been taken up by several feminist scholars who wanted to explore the direct goal of State policies in controlling reproduction of its population. Particularly in cases of very radical pro-natalist or anti-natalist policies the influence of State regulations on not only the reproduction of the population but also to the way women experience (and construct) their bodies has often been a matter of investigation. Susan Greenhalgh (1994) for example explored the effects of China's one-child birth program on the reproduction practices of women in rural areas. Gail Kligman (1995 and 1997) researched Ceusesco's pro-natalist policy and the resorts women took under the policy of strict ban of abortion, Geraldine Heng and Janadas Devan (1992) wrote on explicitly classed (i.e. favouring the college educated middle and upper middle class) pro-natalist policy in Singapore, and the list could go on and on. Most studies on States' involvement in reproductive practices do not claim that the relation is unidirectional; in most cases women in these articles are not passive subjects, but find various ways of dealing with State policies, finding ways around them or accommodating them in their everyday lives. But at the same time all of these studies do show that States are invested in controlling the quantity and (for the lack of a better word) quality of reproduction, controlling who should reproduce and in what numbers. It would be misleading to attribute the interest of feminist scholars in reproduction entirely to the influence of Foucault's theory of bio-politics. The claim that the "private is political" has been leading feminist scholars of the second wave before Foucault issued *The History of Sexuality* (1990 [1976]) or lectured on bio-politics, and even before the second wave feminists recognized the centrality of reproduction and its politics (the way it is understood, constructed and regulated) for women's lives (e.g. Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*). Rather, one could say that Foucault's description of regulatory power that

emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is in line with feminist claims on the political character of private practices.

So let us suppose that one of the reasons (not the only one) for the multiple discourses around sexuality, which construct normative heterosexual marital sexuality through careful examination of any deviations (Foucault, 1990), is the regulation of the quantity and quality of the population. However if we accept the supposition that modern (bio-political) States are invested in regulating reproduction as a way of regulating the health (the quality) of the and the size (the quantity) of the population, then the discourse on single women as it was framed does not really make much sense. It is not just the fact that single women were eventually denied access to assisted reproduction in Slovenia that does not make sense in the framework of a bio-political State, it is the fact that biomedical procreation even comes up as problematic, as a deviation from the norm that is odd. If sexuality is the locus of regulatory power because of it procreative function as Foucault claims (Foucault, 2003; p. 251) why would separation of sexuality from reproduction be problematic, when reproduction at least in this case is put in the hands of medical institutions and in the hands of the State (in its narrow sense). The possibility of controlling reproduction directly, without the intermediary messy element of sexuality, should be a dream-come-true for a bio-political State, i.e. for a State whose main politics is directed at "improving" the biological characteristics of its population. Again I do not mean to present the State as a unified entity. What I mean to say is that certain groups will be in a better position to define what is health, what is the desired (medical, biological, mental) state of the society and to shape the discourses on sexuality and its deviant forms so as to construct a norm that privileges that group. But why would the shaping of the individuality (Foucault, 1982; p. 783) of single women, which with assisted reproduction

becomes even more closely connected to exactly those State institutions, come up as problematic?

The relationship between the State and reproduction is taken one step further in the theory of Ruth Miller. In her analysis of legal discourse she poses that "the transformation in the relationship between sexual and reproductive identity on the one hand and political identity on the other" has brought about "a situation in which citizens can be known only biologically and sexually [and in which] juridical status alone is irrelevant to contemporary politics." (Miller 2007; p. 7). In other words, Miller's thesis runs counter to feminist scholars who critiqued the public / private division, because of which women are not given equal citizenship rights in the liberal State, to claim that it is actually women who are the "neutral citizen" (Miller, 2007) of the bio-political State. Miller takes Foucault's theory of bio-political power to its (in my opinion) extreme point, where biological reproduction is the essential element of political participation, and the womb is its paradigmatic space. Miller challenges the liberal model of the State in which the citizen is gendered as male. To quote:

> Rather than understanding men as the norm and women as artificial facsimiles of men, it makes far more sense in a biopolitical framework to understand women as the norm and men as their copies. It is the womb that has become the predominant biopolitical space, it is women's bodily borders that have been displaced onto national ones, and it is women who have taken the concept of consent to its logical conclusion. It is thus the citizen with the womb who has become the political neutral - and rather than grudgingly granting women the artificial phalluses assumed by liberal theory, one can in fact advance an argument that men instead have been granted the artificial wombs assumed by its biopolitical counterpart. (Miller, 2007; p. 149)

However Miller's claim of women as neutral citizens of the bio-political State (Miller, 2007; p. 149) seems to leave aside the power relations in the shaping of this State and its citizens, or

only mentions them in passing (Miller, 2007; p. 152). If one assumes a bio-political framework for the understanding of political identity instead of a classical liberal one, that is if one accepts that the sphere of family and reproduction (sexuality) are in fact at the centre of modern politics and not pushed into the non-political, private, where the State does not interfere (which is the liberal private/public division), then Miller's argument is indeed logical. It is not just the critique of the public/private divide that is at stake here; in this point Miller does not depart from the position of feminist theorists such as e.g Wendy Brown (1992). Miller's departure from Brown and other feminists who work in the framework of liberal theory (e.g. Carole Pateman; 1988) comes in the continuation of this critique. While Brown claims that this division pushes women into the so called private, and out of the sphere "where rights are conferred and exercised" (Brown, 1992; p. 17), thus limiting their political identity, Miller comes to the conclusion that it is in the sphere of reproduction that women have *the* political identity. In a bio-political State the reproductive identity is *the* political identity. We therefore need to consider the position of women in modern States in terms of political *inclusion* and not exclusion.

But first of all I have to wonder to what degree has the bio-political reality taken over the juridical one. Has the transformation of the political sphere really been complete or could one claim that both models coexist, overlap and at points contradict each other? My question in relation to the above quoted passage would be posed in terms of how to understand the power relations in which "men […] *have been granted* [emphasis mine] artificial wombs" (Miller, 2007; p. 149). That is, even if one is to understand this granting of access to wombs (and by extension to women) only in terms of marital contracts or kinship organization, one cannot go past the unequal power relations within e.g. family, and within the broader society, which underpin men's access to wombs. When Miller critiques (which I would agree with) e.g.

Wendy Brown's notion of the liberal State, she disregards other domains which Brown (1992) includes in her understanding of the State as masculinist, like the capitalist and the prerogative domains. Again I do not want to assume an oppressive model of understanding power, where power would be in the hands of some, and exerted upon others. But understanding power as relational does not mean that all are equally positioned in power relations, nor that the subjectivities produced in power relations are equally privileged. Moreover I would understand the granting of access to wombs in broader terms, where men gain access to the bio-political space not only through individual women, but also partly through the State, through institutions and through knowledge, which they are better positioned to shape.

The first point I thus want to make in relation with single women's access to assisted reproduction concerns the gendering of the State and the power relation between women and the State. In so far as reproduction moves outside the family and into the hospital, women's bodies, their reproductive capacities and the way women come to understand themselves and their bodies also moves from construction in relations with their partners to construction in relations with medical experts. Nancy Ehrenreich termed the unequal power relations in which women's bodies, uteruses and reproductive cycles get to be defined and controlled through medical discourses and through the expert knowledge and practices of physicians (as well as judges) "the colonization of the womb" (Ehrenreich, 1993). Ehrenreich as well as certain other feminist scholars (e.g. Gena Corea, 1987) engaged in research of pregnancy and reproduction claim that medicalization of reproduction in general (and assisted reproduction even more so I would say) has put women's bodies in the hands of male and masculinist medical and judicial institutions.

This argument leads me into the questions of gendering of scientific (and non-scientific) knowledge and knowledge production; questions which are far beyond the scope of this work, but questions which have been under scrutiny of feminist scholarship for quite some time. Ehrenreich and Corea are only two of the feminist authors who bit into the issue of gendered epistemology, but they did so on an issue that is relevant for my purpose. Sandra Harding (1980) for example deals to a greater extent with the epistemological privilege accorded to men's experience in social science research, and Alison Kelly (1985) explores how science is constructed as masculine through the gender of those that are recognized as scientists, through its representation, through "re-contextualization of gender" (Kelly, 1985; p. 138) and through the masculine ideal of rationalization and ways of thinking. One should consider then in what way are discourses (and institutions) through which women construct their bodily experiences gendered. Who is in the position to define women's bodies as rapable or inseminable? In my understanding such discourses and institutions of knowledge production cannot be seen as separate from the State. And as I have already stated above, men may be seen as having access to wombs also through the State, its institutions and knowledge production. From this perspective the liberal model might not be completely obsolete, and I would argue for a kind of reconciliation of bio-political and liberal theories. Accepting Miller's argumentation on the womb-owner as the neutral citizen, but at the same time acknowledging the unequal power relations in the construction of the "womb-owner" brings together both theories of political identity: bio-political and liberal.

The second point I want to make in relation to the positioning of women as "neutral citizens" and the granting of "artificial wombs" in Miller's terms (2007) concerns the masculine bio-political identity. The expansion of various medical technologies around reproduction and the possibility of procreation outside of heterosexual relationships, actually even without the

direct presence of the male semen donor, could be said to push women in an ever closer relationship with the State. At the same time this development is breaking the "traditional" family roles through which men obtained access to the womb as the "paradigmatic biopolitical space" (Miller, 2007; p. 29) and thus their (bio)political identity. If men could be said to have access to wombs through familial relations, and gain their bio-political identity through them, the breaking of familial ties and the closer relationship of women to the State in financial and biological-reproductive aspects, could pose a problem for the masculine bio-political identity. In a bio-political framework making an issue out of single women's access to assisted reproduction might not be because assisted reproduction is problematic in relation women – State but in relation women – men.

The debate in the parliament and in the media can then also be taken from the perspective of a critique of masculinity. As I have shown in the previous chapter, one of the arguments of single women's advocates emphasized the "imperfection" of families in which the father is abusive or alcoholic or simply absent physically or emotionally. I pointed out there that this nevertheless contributed to the construction of a two-parent heterosexual family as the norm, but at the same time, such articles did offer a critique of a quite common form of masculinity. It was not only the violent husband and father that was on trial in the media debate on single women: one women's magazine in particular also attacked the irresponsibility of modern fathers who devote all their time and energy to their careers (Obolnar, 2001b; p. 5), who do not even take care of their children financially (Obolnar, 2001c; p. 5) and who want to be fathers but do not want to take parenting leave (Obolnar, 2001d; p. 5). Another author wrote on the discrepancy between the changing role of women and the stubborn insistence of men to keep their privileges:

> Single women usually have a better opinion of men than married [women]. Because they don't have one. And they don't have the personal experience of the progress of society [the tone is ironic]. You know, in the ugly past the husband was working and the wife took care of the kitchen, children and religious matters. In a more modern and equal society women go to work, but men have not made much of an advancement in their cleaning, cooking, caring and other similar skills. (Jančič, 2001; p. 48)

And yet another wrote about men "who have not so far been able to have a quality relationship except with themselves" (Muck, 2001b; p. 45).

On the other side, i.e. the side of the adversaries of single women's right to ART, the arguments mostly revolved around the necessity of the father for the healthy development of a child; a point which actually indicates that the presence of the father is not unquestionably necessary anymore. Comments that "single women want to prove that men have become unnecessary and unimportant" (Savnik, 2001; p. 24), or that single women "have erased men from their consciousness and will do the same to their offspring" (Markeš, 2001; p. 27) or that "fatherhood must not be allowed to die out" (Gregorc, 2001; p. 24), and similar statements, may or may not have been meant completely seriously. But the seriousness with which adversaries of single women's right to ART did defend the role of the father as necessary, is indicative of the dilemmas that the question of single women has caused for the masculine reproductive (i.e. bio-political) identity. Moreover, the opponents of the amendment stated that granting single women the right to assisted reproduction is discriminatory against men, if they are not granted an equal right to procreate with the help of (interestingly) "artificial wombs" (Vertnik, 2001; p. 73) or surrogate mothers[12] (Šeško, 2001; p. 44; also e.g. Zupančič, 2001; p. 15).

[12] The Infertility Treatment and Procedures of Biomedically-Assisted Procreation Act bans surrogacy.

The critique of (the dominant or hegemonic form of) masculinity that was articulated by some advocates for single women and the insistence of their adversaries on the necessity of a father for the development of a child point to the breaking of the traditional family roles of men. Headlines such as "My daddy is the medical center" (Vončina, 2001a) and cartoons where the wife in bed with a doctor tells her husband to greet her biomedical insemination expert (Kočevar, 2000), point to (even if satirically) the ever more intimate relationship of women with the State and the possibility of replacement of male roles in the family by State institutions. In the framework of bio-politics single women's reproduction brings to the surface the already quite problematic nature of men's political identity[13].

4.3 Disciplining the bodies and the production of a sexual individual

I now turn to the second power technology which operates in the sphere of sexuality according to Foucault (2003) i.e. disciplinary power. I have already noted in the first section of this chapter that I understand the relationship between disciplinary power technology and regulatory power technology as one of mutual constitution, where sexuality is not only at the junction or the locus of both technologies, but where one is conditioned and supported by the other. Various discourses on sexuality and institutions (including the family) produce properly (in the sense of determining what constitutes "healthy" sexuality and what perversity) heterosexual bodies, which reproduce the population, and the notion of "natural" reproduction underpins the construction of heterosexual bodies and, accordingly, (heteronormative) social organization. There are two main points I want to make in this section: first that the way the discourse on single women's access to assisted reproduction was shaped and the way notions of natural and artificial reproduction were constructed functioned with a disciplinary effect;

[13] Unfortunately, to my knowledge nothing has yet been written on masculine bio-political identity, and I think this can be a fruitful area of further research.

and second that the attention that the category of single women received represents an expansion of disciplinary power technology.

I pointed out above that merely in terms of control of reproduction, single women's access to ART should not be problematic, but that it can pose a problem in terms of a masculine bio-political identity. What I want to add in this part though is that singlehood and non-sexuality can represent a challenge also to heteronormative social organization. I want to again repeat Butler's thesis that heterosexuality as a system of social organization relies among other things on a "cultivation of bodies into discrete sexes with 'natural' appearances and 'natural' heterosexual dispositions" (Butler, 2004; p. 905). Heteronormativity does not only mean that heterosexuality is the preferred or privileged form of sexuality; heterosexuality "as a system of social organization" (ibid.) also organizes bodies into male and female, into the binary of men / women.

Insofar as the society is organized on the principles of heteronormativity, not only properly heterosexual bodies need to be produced (in various discourses on sexuality) but *sexual* bodies need to be produced. It is in this framework that separation of sexuality from reproduction can pose a disruption of existing power relations and social organization. It is then not only that the State, in a broad understanding of it, is interested in disciplining the bodies into properly (hetero-) sexual ones so as to regulate the reproduction, it also constructs notions of healthy reproduction to discipline the bodies of its population into a particular social organization. Or to make this statement a little clearer, so that I would not be seen as personifying the State: discourses and power relations in the society act on bodies and "shape" them into properly (hetero-)sexual bodies which a) reproduce in proper ways and numbers and/but also which b) fit into a particular social organization.

My previous chapter was devoted to showing how in the discourse (both the debate in the Parliament and in the media) on single women's access to ART the category of single women was constructed in very heteronormative terms. There I not only tried to show that the heteronormativity of the discourse excluded alternative sexualities and posited heterosexual behavior and heterosexual relationships as the privileged, undiscussed, unquestioned norm. That was a part of my argument, as was the fact that it was (and is) through the construction of deviancy that the heterosexual norm was (and is) shaped. But also the discourse functioned so that it constructed singlehood, i.e. non-involvement in any relationship, and non-sexual behavior as deviant and sexual behavior as "normal," "natural," "healthy," as the norm. Further, it was the regulation of reproduction, which in this case did not go through the intermediary element of sexuality, that was disciplining bodies into sexual bodies. In other words, the logic that locates sexuality in the centre of regulatory (and disciplinary) power because it is through sexuality that reproduction of the population can be controlled (Foucault, 2003; p. 251), goes somewhat the other way here: it was through the regulation of reproduction that sexuality was "controlled." Regulation of reproduction in this case functioned so as to discipline bodies into properly heterosexual and *sexual* bodies. And this is the reason why I emphasized the interconnectivity and interdependence of both kinds of power technologies in the first section of this Chapter.

Finally I need to refer the reader back right to the beginning of this thesis. I wrote in the introduction that one of the things that provoked my interest in this discourse on single women was the complete absence of any discussion on singlehood or single women in the print media at the time when Health Measures in Exercising Freedom of Choice in Childbearing Act was adopted, i.e. in the second half of 1970s. There was no mentioning of

single women in relation to the regulation of biomedically assisted reproduction at the time when that Act was adopted or a year later when the first IVF baby was born (although a sperm bank existed at that time in Ljubljana). Even more interestingly, in the media debate in 2000 and 2001 it came out that actually a number of single women *had* had children with the help of ART between 1977 and 1994, when all assisted reproduction procedures were suspended. The numbers vary between 50 and 150, but what I find more intriguing than the actual number is the fact that this provoked no debate[14] on the topic before. Further, I found no mentioning of singlehood or single women in general, not even in women's magazines of the time (women's magazines today deal extensively with the status of singlehood; as the analysis of their representation in Cosmopolitan in Slovenia by Vesna Kobal shows [2011]). A search with the keywords "singlehood," "single women" or "single" in the national library system also returned only (relevant) hits dated after 1990, with the majority after 2000. This leads me to see singlehood as a category which has been receiving public attention only recently and which has been constructed as such in the last few decades. Surely single people existed before, but a detailed analysis of the reasons for singlehood, and the presentation of singlehood as not only a personal "problem" but as a social problem are, I believe, a relatively recent phenomenon.

Insofar as discourses on sexuality produce individuals that are sexual in particular ways (Foucault, 1990), the new focus on singlehood can be seen as an expansion of these discourses onto situations and categories that would otherwise fall outside of discourses on sexuality. This can be seen as an expansion of the disciplining effect to a category into which we all potentially fall, since we are all potentially single. Although singlehood does not

[14] A debate on the topic would not be out of place in Slovenia at the time. A variety of topics connected with sexuality and reproduction were discussed in the magazines I have searched through, including e.g. prostitution and same-sex relationships, which were treated with quite a high level of tolerance. This is only to point out that the absence of the debate on ART in the media at that time was not due to tabooing of the topics, as it might have been the case in some countries of the Soviet block. On the subject see e.g.: Ramet, 1999, or Rusinow, 2008.

necessarily imply a non-sexuality, in this case the reasons for the non-sexual behavior of the category of single women were questioned. The expansion of discourses on singlehood and non-sexuality means that it is not only how you do your sexuality that is under the watchful eye of various disciplines, but also how you do not do your sexuality.

And so I want to also finish this chapter with reference to Foucault, as it was his theory that has been leading me through it. If the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have been marked by a proliferation of discourses which put under scrutiny "the sexuality of children, mad men and women and criminals; the sensuality of those who did not like the opposite sex; reveries, obsessions, petty manias or great transports of rage" (Foucault, 1990; pp. 38-39), and at the same time by a movement of discourses away from the heterosexual couple, which became "only" a referent, a quiet norm, what we can witness at the end of the twentieth and beginning of twenty-first century (as evident in Slovenia) is an expansion of discourses onto those who do not want to have sex or sexual relationships (either temporarily or permanently), onto non-sexuality. I do not mean to equate the transformation that occurred in the 18th and 19th centuries with this new focus on single women (at least in Slovenia, although I would dare guess that a proliferation of discourses on single people and single women is far more general), but allow me to end with a wild speculation, a provocation of a sort. The transformation of the sphere of sexuality that Foucault writes about coincided with the rise of capitalism, and not by accident; capitalism needed disciplined bodies and it needed the population to grow (Foucault, 1990; p. 141). The new focus on single women in Slovenia roughly coincides with its transition into consumer capitalism. If the disciplining of bodies and regulation of the population through sexuality served capitalism in terms of production, maybe the new "sexualization" serves it in terms of consumption.

CONCLUSION

The question that was leading me through my research and analysis concerned the political character of the category of single women and my most general aim was to point at the politics "behind" public discourses on singlehood. In pursuing this aim I analyzed a particular discourse on single women that took place in Slovenia in 2000 and 2001. I argued in my thesis that singlehood and single women in particular by the end of the 1990s become highly invested with various political notions of "liberalism," "conservatism," "nationhood" and "citizenship," but that this politicization of single women actually has a disciplinary function. Through Foucault's theory of bio-politics and anatomo-politics I argued that the heteronormative construction of the category of single women in the particular discourse I have analyzed worked to discipline bodies into properly heterosexual bodies and properly *sexual* bodies. With my analysis of heteronormative construction of the category of single women I also wanted to point out the gap that exists in theoretical approaches which aim to deconstruct heterosexuality as the norm. I believe that singlehood, asexuality and non-sexuality when viewed from the perspective of queer theory could pose a challenge to the normativity of heterosexuality, and I hope my thesis at least in some way provokes more research on this subject.

I also argued in this work that the relatively new focus (in Slovenia that is) of various discourses on singlehood represents an expansion of discourses on sexuality which now take under scrutiny also non-sexuality. The question which sparked my interest in the first place, i.e. why, still remains unanswered, but I tried to imply one possible answer, which could be considered in future research on discourses on singlehood. I noted that the focus on singlehood could be considered in terms of "sexualization" of culture, in which the "properly

sexual" individuals do not represent anymore in the first place producers of goods but consumers. The changes in capitalism in the corresponding changes in subjectivity would have to be studied, if one was to develop this argument further.[15] For the particular case of Slovenia the context of post-state-socialism and its legacy would have to be considered.

Obviously these are also the limitations of my study. The fact that I have analyzed a very particular discourse on single women (i.e. a discourse on their right to assisted reproduction) also partially framed my theoretical approach to theories of discourses on sexuality and reproduction, more specifically to bio-political theory. I am sure that a variety of different perspectives could be taken for an analysis of this same discourse, a consideration of influence of the state-socialist legacy on the attitudes towards single women and their reproduction being just one possibility. At the same time I am also sure that a more general theoretical study of singlehood would find much of the specificities that I included in my analysis simply inapplicable. I tried to balance my work between these two poles; on the one hand positioning my analysis in the particular cultural context and on the other hand still being able to emphasize the gaps the exist in much more general theoretical frameworks.

While my thesis offers one answer to the questions of how singlehood was represented, how the category of single women was constructed and what functions such a construction served, it also opens a set of new questions. How was the particular construction of the category of single women in Slovenia in 2000 and 2001 connected with the economic and political changes in Slovenia in the 1990s? How is the category of single people constructed in other discourses, popular and scientific? What factors influence the expansion of discourses on singlehood? How can singlehood be theorized about from the perspective of challenges to

[15] One possible starting point could be *Sexual Citizenship* (1993) by David T. Evans, but one ground for such an argument could also be found in psychoanalytic theory ranging from e.g. Christopher Lasch's *The Culture of Narcissism* (1979) or Renata Šalecl's recent *Choice* (2010).

heteronormativity? How does the evermore intimate relationship of women with the State affect the masculine bio-political identity? I would like to end this thesis with the hope that its value will be more in the questions it poses and research it provokes than in the answers it provides.

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