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ON THE POLITICS OF SEXUALITY IN CROATIA DURING THE 1990s, THE DISCOURSES THAT SHAPED IT AND ITS CURRENT SYMPTOMS

SUMMARY

Issues of sexuality – e.g. the attempt to introduce sexual education in schools or advocating the rights of sexual minorities – have been generating great public interest in Croatia in the last twenty years, and have been a cause of antagonisms. My analysis of the discourse of the official national politics of sexuality in the 1990s has shown that issues related to sexual education and sexual freedoms can be traced back to the politics of creating Croatian national identity during the 1990s. These politics relied on a variety of discourses from the past (including the scientific discourse of the 19th century, the eugenic discourse and the Catholic tradition), and some of the antagonisms refer back to these earlier discourses. The aim of this article is to shed light on some of them.

When the Croatian nation state was being formed, the aim of the politics of sexuality was to establish a patriarchal society with clearly defined and delineated "male" and "female" roles, so as to prevent the "extinction" of the nation. Therefore, any departures from the prescribed roles were strongly condemned, which meant that homosexuals, single men and women who did not want to have children were stigmatized. Homophobia, hatred towards sexual minorities and a society divided on the issue of what sort of sexual education to provide to children were all an expression of this discourse and this politics of sexuality.

Key words: biopolitics, the politics of sexuality, marginalization, gender, nationality, Catholicism, identity