

In Touch with the Intimate Side: Emotions in the Definition of Femininities and Masculinities

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In this paper I discuss the (re) shaping of perceptions and ways of living femininities and masculinities. Focusing on two aspects: internal dynamics of sexual and intimate relationships as well as the management of emotions within such relationships, I theorize how gender perceptions and roles are lived in contemporary urban Maputo in complex ways that combine the embodiment of the concepts, philosophies and experiences resulting from the rapid changes occurring in the country intertwined with the legacy of colonialism and local cosmologies. I show how emotions and sexual practices constantly contribute to define and re-define notions of being a man, being a woman, having pleasure, showing love, amongst others - shedding light to non-normative heterosexuality in order to contribute to the telling of the plural stories of the African continent. The research is part of an ongoing PhD thesis that used ethnographic research to understand dynamics of sexuality and relationships amongst young adult men and women from the middle class and elites in Maputo city in Mozambique.