

## **The Making of Love: Women, 'Telenovelas' and Brazilian Pentecostalism in Maputo, Mozambique**

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With the liberalization of mass media since the 1990s, the Brazilian prominence in Mozambican media has increased. Most notably is the diffusion and popularity of *telenovelas* (soaps). This development coincided with the arrival of Brazilian Pentecostal missionaries who introduced counseling practices about love, marriage and sexuality. Although the *telenovelas* and the Brazilian Pentecostal discourses do not necessarily share the same views, for many Mozambican female converts the openness about intimate matters and the bodily gestures portrayed by soap stars and Brazilian pastors is comparable. Both inform these women's ideals of 'romantic love' in specific ways. In this paper I explore how urban women train their bodies in new modes of 'Brazilian love' as to imbue Maputo with new public norms of love, such as openly embracing and kissing their partner. Young Mozambican women are actively involved in developing new sexual and marital practices and relations. Urban educated women in particular seek for possibilities to openly discuss courtship, marriage and sexuality and to appropriate novel ways of loving and relating that are compatible with their new socio-economic positions in the public domains of the city. In a society where affection is, generally, expressed in rather hidden ways, viewing images of people showing explicit affection in the *telenovelas* and in the Brazilian churches make a powerful impression on them. A particular Brazilian type of sensual love portrayed in the *telenovelas* gains a specific spiritual format in the Brazilian Pentecostal churches. By performing exceptionally bodily formats of love during Pentecostal services, women aim to create romance, happiness and faithfulness. At the same time, this public performance of love carries various ambiguities because of its confrontational character in relation to local accepted norms.