

PANTEION UNIVERSITY Centre for Gender Studies

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

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for Gendered Realities of the 21st century'**

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ABSTRACT

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How men and women picture the opposite sex: Images of emotions and sexuality.

Over the last five decades, the development of the feminist movement, the sexual liberation, the women's entry into the world of education and labour market, as well as the massification of media and information, resulted in blurring the distinction between the 'private' and the 'public', in changing the traditional male and female social roles, in the redefinition of roles and sex identities as well as in the reconstruction of the way in which people experience and express their feelings and sexuality and deal with them.

Recent research however, suggests that the above changes had not affected people in a deeper psychological level leading to a crisis in all types of social relationships. And although, men and women are called upon to stand together on a more "equal" basis, both in the workplace and in the family and social life, they still have not developed effective methods to deal with this new "equality". As highlighted by research into the relationships and communication between the sexes, the resulted crisis is due to the way 'sexuality' and 'emotions' are dealt within the framework of the new type of social interaction based on "equality."

The *goal* of this study is to research how men and woman in contemporary Greece understand themselves and examine their emotions towards the opposite sex. The study focuses on how sexuality is expressed and managed in daily life, i.e. within the framework of intimate relationships, work and social life. In socio-psychological terms, what is of interest to us is how men and women picture their relationship with the opposite sex and deal with their emotions and sexuality within three different contexts: (a) couples, (b)

relationships with the opposite sex in a professional setting and (c) friendships between people of the opposite sex.

For the research purpose, the qualitative method via in-depth interviews is adopted. The subjects will be selected by a combination of two methods, i.e. the "typical case" and the "multiple variation". The findings from the analysis of the interviews will be related to the representation of 'emotion' and 'sexuality' from both men and women and to the ways in which these representations affect communication and relationships between the two sexes.

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