



## Reading Dina Ligaga's *Women, Visibility and Morality in Kenyan Popular Media From Nigeria*

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CONTEMPORARY CONVERSATIONS: ROUNDTABLE ON DINA LIGAGA'S  
*WOMEN, VISIBILITY AND MORALITY IN KENYAN POPULAR MEDIA*



## Reading Dina Ligaga's *Women, Visibility and Morality in Kenyan Popular Media From Nigeria*

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Straddling the fields of gender, media and linguistic studies, *Women, Visibility and Morality in Kenyan Popular Media* engages with the media representation of an “ideal” woman in Kenya. Dina Ligaga renders a textual analysis of what it takes to be a woman in contemporary Kenya within the context of the cultural, political and secular prejudices with which Kenyan women grapple. Drawing from a large body of data mined from various media sources, digital, print and radio, the author has been able to cleverly utilise the data to present her arguments. The book thus not only provides a template for gathering and analysing data from the media, but also represents adequate evidence that too much data does not always make research clumsy – it enriches research by providing different perspectives on the research arguments.

Though the book is about Kenyan women and their portrayal in public spaces and popular culture, Ligaga's findings mirror similar situations in other African locations. The 2019 BBC documentary on sexual harassment in Nigerian and Ghanaian universities has opened the eyes of the public to the circumstances and spaces (such as the so-called Cold Room at the University of Lagos) where sexual violence regularly takes place.<sup>1</sup> The Nigerian digital media has been agog with narratives of sexual harassment in Nigerian universities; new media framing of this phenomenon sometimes contributes to gendered stereotypical representations of females in its portrayal of women as willing accomplices. Despite the availability of data on debates and narratives about the issue of sexual harassment in Nigerian universities, academic research on it is quite scarce – Nigerian scholars seem to be neglecting this scourge at the detriment of the female students. But in a significant intervention, the Lagos Studies Association Women's Mentoring Network has dared to break the culture of silence by compiling a bibliography of research on sexual violence in universities and organising seminars on sexual violence on campus in order to provide practical and supportive intervention for women, and to create a space for female academics to intensify their voices in areas where they have hitherto been marginalised. With the efforts of these scholars, the end of sexual harassment and violence against women in academia is attainable.

The first chapter of Ligaga's book enlightens the reader about the realities of public policing of the female body. Public policing is achieved through controlling and managing female visibility (the ways in which society recognises or fails to recognise women as humans and acknowledges their existence) and intertextuality (the narrative continuity