Open Peer Review on Qeios

Meanings and Communication of the Visual Representations of Headloading in the ‘Lazy Nigerian Youths’ Facebook Conversation

Trevor Vermont Morgan[1]

1 University of Nigeria

Funding: No specific funding was received for this work.

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Abstract

This study examines the implicatures of headloading representation used in an online conversation termed, ‘Lazy Nigerian Youths’ (LNY). The social media conversation was prompted by a statement made by Nigeria's president in which he indirectly referred to the youths as ‘lazy’. Youths took to social media to vent their displeasure with the statement using various headloading images. The conversation spurred my investigation of concept of headloading as symbolic. Here, I analysed LNY images of headloads from Facebook using visual semiotics. This study expands the socio-economic and political frontiers of headloading. It deepens understanding of how various visual cultural practices in mediated spaces could reveal society's social structure and power status. Headloading, then signifies marginality, socio-economic struggle, and voice of dissent.

Keywords: Headloading, Visual Narrative, Social Media, Lazy Nigerian Youths, Online Protest.

Introduction

In April 2018, a Nigerian's Presidential speech at the Commonwealth Business Forum in London led to a social media conversation that was later tagged "Lazy Nigerian Youths." At the event in London, the president responded that: “We have a very young population. More than 60% of the population is below the age of 30. A lot of them haven’t been to school, and they are claiming that Nigeria has been an oil-producing country; therefore they should sit and do nothing and get housing, healthcare, education free” (Amah and Adebayo, April 21 2018: para. 3)

With the impression that they were criticized or maligned, Nigerian ‘youths’ took to their different social media handles and platforms, especially Facebook, to respond and vent their disapproval of the socio-political statement. The Facebook conversation, the Lazy Nigerian Youth (LNY) was a certain counter-narrative (Christine, 2007). The counter-narrative here underlined the perceived government’s inability to provide social and political benefits, which are promises of several

political campaigns. LNY protest sought to disavow the ‘political discourse’ that all was well, and that Nigerian youths were lazy.

There is also a connection between this conversation and the kind of visual ‘détournement’ described by Kiziltunali (2018), which took place in Turkey. In the event, government’s attack was redirected through imaging. Kiziltunali maintains that the protest in Turkey was “a collective movement that involved a group of social protesters who thought certain things in society were going wrong in terms of the surroundings in which they lived (2018:2).”

The author’s idea of détournement’ showed that the activists twisted the government's attacks on the people to contradict the government. Contents of digital media can be ambivalent, and as Patel (2021) puts it, “it can be easily remediated, reprogrammed, redistributed and reconfigured using apps and the internet. The ability to transfigure content, giving it new and unexpected meaning, makes digital content an ideal bearer of stories and shifting narratives that are an integral part of everyday activism and meaning-making...” (para. 3; Couldry, 2008). This assertion is even more true in the use of social media.

Nigerians use social media to daily oppose the ills of society in politics, education, the economy, and other areas such as insecurity and terrorism (Ibrahim, 2013). According to Internet World Stats (2020), out of over 154 million internet users in Nigeria, over 31 million use Facebook, of which the majority are youths. This shows why social media space like Facebook is a sphere of huge conversation, political discourse and protest. Nigerian youths expect much from their leaders and this has yet to come through, and such dashing hopes spark discontent at the slightest of actions (Smith, 2007; Akor, 2017); (Downing, 2008; Ibrahim, 2013; Woodstock, 2014; Agbo, 2016). So one safely define the “Lazy Nigerian Youths” as an online visual protest.

Various writers have defined the online visual experiences and social mediation with protest-making and socio-political tendencies (García-Jiménez et al., 2014; Ibrahim et al., 2016; Mercea et al., 2016; Rovisco and Veneti, 2017; Lee, 2018). Lee writes: “A growing amount of research speaks to the role of social media in mobilizing citizen protests” (2018: 1523). Writers such as Bohler-Muller and van der Merwe (2011) underscore social media's potential to produce political and social change.

Moreover, Rovisco and Veneti (2017: 272) in ‘Picturing Protest: visuality, visibility and the public sphere,’ highlight “how and why certain visual images picturing protest events and social movements are rendered visible or invisible in the public sphere.” Although anchored on protest in social media spaces, Rovisco and Veneti focus on how the visual, such as “image memes, photographs, posters, videos”, is mediated and its potential to generate public debates in a participatory culture (that is, social mediation).

On the other hand, Langdon (2014) queries the efficacy of online participation with visual forms to produce physical results in social and political terms. He is of the opinion that “while there may not be clear avenues for viewers to take action on the issues raised, online works such as this can raise awareness, educate viewers, and rally individuals to pursue social and political causes through sparking conversations that have been excluded or dropped from public discussion” (p.133). However, he highlights that the social and political issues as two major themes of online visuality,

citing the examples of Ibrahim Hamdan's *Images of Revolution* and its connection with the Arab uprising of 2011.

Social media have continued as sites for various civil, social and political actions for individuals, groups, governments and nations. Users express themselves in several multimodal instances of images, words and colours. The nature of these sites positions them to function the way they do. For example, "the dynamics of Facebook's platform architecture" or those of other social media platforms account for the visibility of posts circulated in them (Helmond et al., 2019), the content and quality of visuality to a great extent inform the viability of protest, participation and conversation.

In the LNY protest, young people told their own stories visually. One intriguing thing is how images and comments were used in rhetorical ways to disprove the 'lazy' label. Many of the images showed young people in various kinds of 'hustling' activities such as street hawking, loading and unloading. One could observe how carrying loads and wares on the head is common. A key Facebook post was that in which users posted a photograph of a young man carrying an impossibly enormous bags of cement as a headload (see Fig 1). Headloading is a practice in many African and other developing nations in which loads are moved to their destinations by carrying them on human heads. This practice has an immemorial history.

It is important, at this juncture, to highlight the idea and practice of headloading. Basically, headloading has been positioned as a practice of human porterage—"the oldest and most widespread traditional form of transport, not only in Nigeria but also in many other parts" by which people can move themselves and move goods, Ogunremi (1975: 1). Similarly, Porter et al. (2007) place the practice of headloading under intermediate mobility and transport and livelihood patterns among youths and women. Another dimension to headloading practice is investigating the health impacts of pedestrian headloading in sub-Saharan Africa with reference to women and children (Porter et al., 2013). They show the various headloading types and their complexities and identify five major components of the potential harm of the practice: energy costs; long-term bio-mechanical impact; risk of acute injury; maternal and foetal health; and psychosocial effects.

Women and youths have been at the high point of headloading practice (Porter et al., 2013; Porter, 2008; Porter et al., 2007). Porter et al. (2007) draw a strong connection between youths seeking livelihood and headloading, which is common in the rural setting. The question of livelihood as a reason for headloading, differs from the 'adaptive need' created to move agricultural produce around. There is sense in linking poverty, lack of education or professional skills with headloading.

Furthermore, headloading is classified as part of family obligations, by which young people provide items like water and bundles of firewood and move domestic products to and from the markets. Other forms include moving materials such as sand, bags of cement water, or concrete mixtures in building sites. However, while connecting headloading with mobility, Osborn (2018) underpins headloading practice with the history of containerisation in West Africa.

Carrying loads on the head is associated with indigenous societies globally, especially among women. The focus on women here seems to be the inspiration for naively and stereotypically representing many African arts as 'women with headloads'. From her perspective, Livingston (2021: 132) holds that "it was sheer biological capacity bodies that was of interest to those who sought their labor, employing them as headloading porters, stevedores, miners, and farmers." This is

usually a Western romanticized perception of Africans (Hall, 1997). Beyond existing perceptions of the social practice, headloading images are analysed in this study for deeper insights. It is this socio-cultural practice that metamorphosed into a socio-political and socio-economic protest.

Most of the images of the LNY protest were used ironically to disapprove of the notion that the youths were ‘lazy’. Such images, in real terms showed diverse activities of the young people which could be considered strenuous and tasking, or not expected to be known of Nigeria considering it to be a wealthy state that should provide infrastructures and job for its large population of young. It is also essential to see how this post's comments help boost the popular understanding carried in the image. In the LNY narrative, the tone in the comments alongside the images show certain impunity and defiance against that which defines ‘weight-lifting’ and headloading youths as laziness.

Therefore, I problematize this unusual engagement of headloading representation in the LNY online conversation arguing that the Facebook conversation holds deep shades of understanding in its context of use and loaded with various and socio-political semiosis. The LNY narrative as the motivation for this study connects with my prior experiences to interrogate the headload phenomenon. I examine the representation of the headloading for possible deeper socio-political insights, bearing in mind the visual and linguistic undertones in the protest. The question, therefore is, what social, political or economic meanings does the LNY protest hold through its headloading visual representation?

Methods

This study is qualitative and it follows an interpretivist paradigm. As a visual culture research, its main data are images of the headloading phenomenon. The goal here is to provide understanding around the cultural practice through the visual reading of the images (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). The following subsections are the key methods of this research including collection and analysis of data.

Headloading images as visual data

Among the several images of the LNY conversation, Facebook posts are hugely significant to my perception of the social practice of headloading. While I do not necessarily intend to trace the LNY narrative this study hinges on seeing headloading beyond its common social practice among Nigerians and other Africans. This would inevitably connect the discourse to the economic and the socio-political.

First, I deal only with the headloading images of the protest used in on Facebook, which are actually photographs. The conversation or protest spanned different social sites manifesting with various photographs. In selecting the images of headloading, I narrowed down by purposively considering and selecting from the available options and relevance in communicating my position (Gentles et al., 2015; Etikan et al., 2016). As a rationale for my selection, out of the images of the conversation, I have selected those that show clear and close-up images of headloading, that is, those with human figures carrying loads on their heads for better visual modality. Another rationale for my selection is based on the spread or how viral the images were posted or reposted. In order to avoid repetition only two images of the headloading are

selected.

The original sources of these images may not be known, yet, they gained certain originality in the Facebook conversation showing the place of modern digital tools in the construction of visuality (Patel, 2021). Again, such images used might have been recycled across the internet for different posts, as social media users can manipulate and retool images from one source to another using photo-editing applications. In other words, images derive meaning from audience and conversations that follow them (Rose, 2001), which signals a form of intertextuality of visual images. Selected images are shown below.

Figure 1. "'Lazy' Nigerian youth waiting for oil money." Available at: *https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1869683626383971&set=a.101637556521929&type=3&theatre* (accessed on April 20, 2018)

Figure 2. Here are some of the millions of Nigerian youths hawking… Available at: https://web.facebook.com/Nigeria1stNews/photos/a.724991650910519/1652324864843855/?type=3&_rdc=1&_rdr (accessed April 19, 2018)

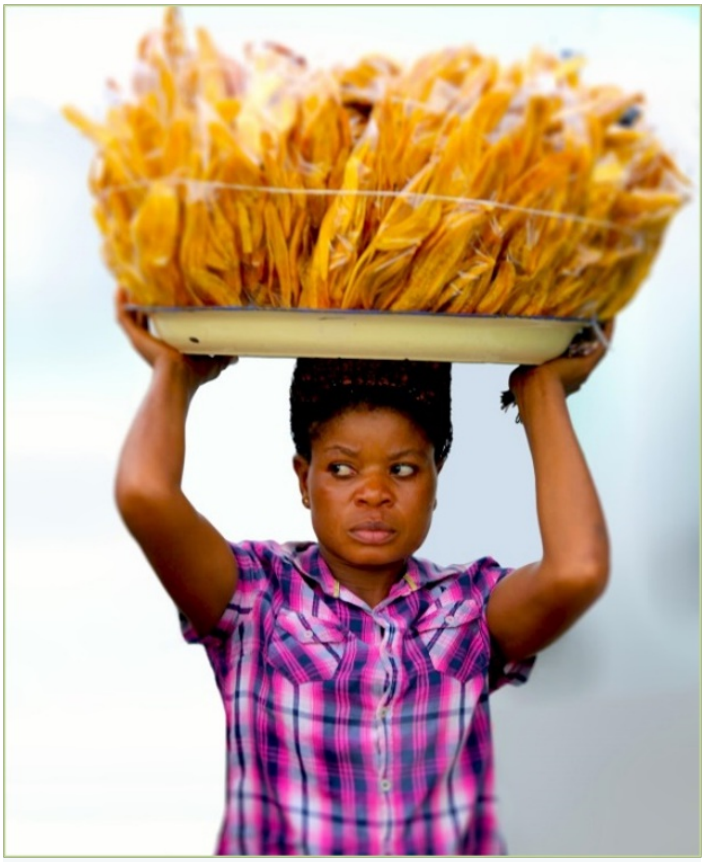

Figure 3. *"Lagos 2007" series,*
Victor Politis, 2008. Photograph

Theoretical Framework

As a visual narrative, I frame this study essentially using Roland Barthes' semiotic model (1977). Barthes' concept of denotation and connotation is a semiotic order of signification showing layers of meaning that support visual interpretation. Going beyond Saussure's semiotic model, Barthes developed an extended order of meaning-making for reading linguistic texts and interpreting visual signs. His work deals essentially with interpretation at different levels of meaning. It provides a good tool for unveiling implied and applied meanings in visual representation. At the level of connotation, a wider possibility of meanings is afforded beyond denotation (Fiske, 2011). Barthes discussed the production of meaning from signs: at the basic level, signs give denoted meanings, while deeper and cultural meanings are constructed at the connotative level. This latter level provides ways to understand visual metaphors and to unveil implied expressions of works of art, thus moving beyond denotative interpretation to cultural meanings. It affords the tools to interpret and analyse works for varied underlying cultural meanings. This applies to such socio-cultural practice as headloading.

At the denotation level, Barthes 'analogon' conveys the sense that a photograph or an image depicts reality—that is, natural, without an 'agenda.' This level of interpretation shows the obvious, the commonplace as manifested in the sign. Barthes discusses photographs as "a message without a code" (Barthes, 1977: 17). Although this is deceptively simple, a photograph still contains layers of denotation and connotation. This shows that while the image may look 'real,' meaning is not always obvious. Denotation provides a descriptive presentation of the sign. As the first-order message, it is 'plainly

objective' in the sense of cursory reading. Today, with the many possibilities of digital apparatus and software applications, questions of objectivity and photographic authenticity have been raised. However, what is clear here is that the interpreter describes what he sees on the sign as representing something else. This level of semiotic interpretation is generally known by members of the same socio-cultural group, because they are likely to share the same worldview.

Connotation in Barthes' (1977) semiotic model offers a dimension in which images as signs can be read beyond the first order of signification. It is context-dependent and refers to "the sociocultural and personal associations (ideological, emotional, conceptual) of the sign" (Chandler, 2007: 138). No sign is the actual object just as metaphors are symbolic, and are a means of expression. Hence, they require interpretations. For Barthes, connotation begins a series of what he refers to as second-order messages. The second order of signification includes the symbolic and the mythical. In the process of articulating connotation, certain elements are to be noticed. One can clearly draw from an inventory of historical and cultural structures that elicit meaning when examining visual works at a connotative level.

This level of meaning-making is subjective. It can be personal, social or emotional, thus showing the arbitrary characteristic of symbolic signs in semiotic analysis. Although in common use, myth refers to fables and ancient entities, Barthes' linking of myth with semiotics speaks about the ideological—"the dominant ideologies of our time" (Chandler, 2007: 144). In other words, each given period of time or cultural setting has its own ideologies or ways of seeing to which construction of meaning can be linked (Fiske, 2011). I prefer to combine connotation with myth at this instant. I engage with myth as an extended connotation in connection with the symbolic and cultural interpretations of signs and representations in this study, as supported in Van Leeuwen (2001). Chandler refers to myth as an extended metaphor rather than belief. This follows the understanding provided in "Myths Today", the second section of "Mythologies," in which Barthes (1973) holds that modern cultural phenomena can be selected and invested with meaning and function as discourse. He writes:

> *everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse. Myth is not defined by the object of its message, but by the way in which it utters this message… everything then can be a myth? Yes, I believe this, for the universe is infinitely fertile in suggestion (Barthes, 1973: 109)*

Visual interpretation of LNY Headloading

While I explore the concept of headloading from a wide range I make particular references to denotations and connotations of the images in Figure 1 and 2. My analysis basically moves from a denotative description of the images as visual texts. The visual here shows the representational information contained in the images, while the connotation provides social perspectives and deeper reflections on these images.

Denotation of visual images

The denotative reading here does not go down to identify the most basic elements and forms of the images, rather I give a

generalised description of the photographs as relevant to this study. The first piece (Fig 1) was posted or reposted on Facebook by users as part of the several images used by Facebook users or “youths” in the LNY conversation. This photograph shows an energetic and muscular young man standing behind a parked truck to unload it. The five persons seen in this photograph are about their ‘normal’ business to unload the goods, bags of cement from the truck. Five 50kg bags of cement (which equals 250kg of weight) are being loaded and arranged on his head by his co-labourers. With its ashen look, the general modality of this image is low as a result of the cement dust on the labourers and the truck. The cement brand shown by the bag's design is known to Nigerians as manufactured and distributed by Dangote industries. Although the workers may be used to this kind of ‘weight-carrying’ business, the weight shown in this piece is visually a heavy one for an ordinary individual.

“Here are some of the millions of Nigerian youths hawking...” (Fig. 2) is another visual posts used in the LNY protest. In this montage of images, one can see some young people engaged in street hawking. In the heavily populated road or street shown in this piece, the hawkers are seen carrying their wares by hands, while some are carrying them on their heads. Among the wares they sell are cookies, soft drinks, water in bottles, and those in sachets. In the first two part of the montages piece, one can see how the hawkers have to contend with moving vehicles to be able to navigate their way through the street and to sell their wares. So, these hawkers are on the move. This piece, like that in Figure 3, actually shows that headloading is one of the means through which Nigerian youths market their products.

Connotation and Discourse

On the connotative dimension, the image in Figure 1 suggests the idea of ‘hard labour’ or ‘hard work.’ Hard work in itself is not wrong but when it has the potential to adversely affect human health, it becomes a concern. Considering the prominent figure in the foreground, the ‘overwhelming’ load raises questions about our shared humanity and humanitarianism. How could one be perceived or aided by others in their precarious moments, when they bear what seems unbearable? Beyond the carrier, in this piece, others labourers can be seen watching the headloader positioning the load, allowing him to move or to collapse, thereby highlighting the questions of human nature and the human other. It seems that the main goal of the ‘hard workers’ is to, as much as possible, and quickly too, unload the truck and earn some money and leave for another point of money-making.

As further signification, headloading activities in images Figures 1 and 2 also cover different levels of entrepreneurial activities. However, hawking by headloading contrasts with mega business conglomerates that move goods by trucks and machines. For instance, a pertinent point from Figure 1 is perhaps the enormous financial disparity expressed—that which exists between the labourers and the mogul of this business, the richest African, Alihu Dangote (Forbes, 2020), who maintains a vast economic gamut in Nigeria and across Africa. It shows the stratification of society between the bourgeois top class and the low income working class, whose job is to secure the wealth of those occupying the top.

As seen in Figure 2, young people hawking on the streets only affords businesses with lower economic fortune proportionate with the common and fewer wares marketed. Furthermore, considering the expansiveness of Nigerian markets, one would need to understand the energy required to hawk wares across long distances, negotiate the market

interiors for several hours, and under tropical temperatures. So, it is obvious that the hawkers are at the lower social and financial realm and can only advance their lucrativeness and survival by headloading.

In these images (Figs. 1 and 2), one finds a form of human struggle caught through cultural and visual representation (Andermahr, 2015). Headloading and hawking combined portends struggle and class struggle enunciated through the impact of protracted carriage of headload, and further through social conditioning and disparagement. No one is absolutely enthused with heavy weights and street roaming with all its hassles, however the hawker is merely enthused by cheap gains to make a living. Else, he or she could benefit from cheap capital base, exclusion of the cost of market space, and perhaps, its non-taxable opportunity. This practice inadvertently classifies its practitioner as being on a social and financial margin.

Looking at Figure 1, the instance, headloading connoting the spectacle is evident. In one case, the enormous weight-carrying could be a theatrical engagement in which the headloader, notwithstanding how he derives his energy, is search of credit. In another sense, such spectacle or display is important for the carrier of the load if he or she needs to advertise their wares (See Fig 3). In rethinking the connection between the labourers and their employer, it becomes obvious that both them are pursuit of the spectacular, a shared desire to make it (Debord, 1967). However, while the low working class is visible here, the business owner is invisible in such a labouring space as seen the photograph.

Furthermore, an overview of selected portion of comments on this Facebook post of Figure 1 adds to the implications and meaning of this image: (a) “If this is what it takes to be hardworking, then I humbly admit "I am lazy" Must I kill myself before I die?” (b) “This is to show B that Nigerian youth are not lazy oo” (c) “You are shortening ur life-span on earth” (d) “Very very very lazy.” (e) “This is suicide not hardworking” (f) “Imagine me, an investor, and one president tells me 6 out of 10 youth in his country na lazy people. I will carry my money and ran away!” “Chai na only God go deliver us from old and moribund elders who have outlive their usefulness”.

Many a times, Nigerians speak in codes, clichés, proverbs or figures of speech as could be seen in the comments above, part of the reason being that since English is used as second language there could be an interference or intervention of local languages. This hybridisation of indigenous languages with English results in pidgin or Nigerian English (Ibhawaegbele and Edokpayi, 2012). However, the comments above can help to drive an understanding that straddles the connotative and mythical semiosis of the visuals. Certain cultural approach to meaning making can then be decoded therefrom.

Ultimately, headloading practice shows a struggle for survival. In its representational mode it reveals various attempts and desires towards improved livelihood. The level of poverty in Nigeria confirms this reality. Adebayo (2018: para. 1-4) in a fairly recent account by World Poverty Clock instantiates this position:

> *Nigeria has overtaken India as the country with the largest number of people living in extreme poverty, with an estimated 87 million Nigerians, or around half of the country's population, thought to be living on less than $1.90 a day. The findings, based on a projection by the World Poverty Clock and compiled by Brookings Institute, show*

> *that more than 643 million people across the world live in extreme poverty, with Africans accounting for about two-thirds of the total number… Despite being the largest oil producer in Africa, Nigeria has struggled to translate its resource wealth into rising living standards.*

In 2019 more than 40% of Nigeria's population was classified as poor (NBS, 2020), The current online report by World Poverty Clock puts Nigeria's population of extreme poverty to 50%, which reflects 14.5% of the global in extreme poverty (World Data Lab, 2020; World Bank, 2016). It is important to underscore that the Global South nations house the world's extreme poor (Kharas et al., 2018). This fact involving Africa and Nigeria clarifies why several means are explored for survival, of which headloading is one.

Headloading, represented in the LNY conversation, is a metaphor for lived experience of struggling and smiling (Chabal, 2009). It underscores the different kinds of jobs or servitude under which people survive. There is a connection between the struggle of survival under headloads and the practice of scavenging unhealthy heaps of rubbish, to sort out recyclable discards for sale and income across Nigeria's towns and cities. It is therefore antithetical to premise survival on suffering.

Questions around desire to survive can further be underpinned by a critical consideration of Figure 1. Survival instinct is alive in everyone. However, this piece lends credence to the weights and burdens borne daily in many economies such as Nigeria, and environments bereft of the much needed basic infrastructures for livelihood. In Nigeria, for instance, the burden and struggle to realise basic food for the family, settle bills, and fund children's education is a herculean task for the most part of the population. A dimension to this struggle derives from the nature of family relations and dependency known in Nigeria. Undoubtedly, the burden reverberates not only in families, but the nation itself is also distraught in many ways (Agbo, 2018).

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper has examined selected Facebook images of headloading drawn from Lazy Nigerian Youths conversation. My analysis has attempted to construct meaning through the visual representation of headloading practice beyond the commonplace. However, here, I further use Obiora Udechuckwu's (2002) representation of the "Nightsoilman" headloading [Fig. 4] to draw a concluding discussion on this study. In connection with the struggle experience of headloading, this representation substantiates the hypothesis that places headloaders in various classes of marginality.

This piece, showing the most unbecoming form of headloading practice, refers to headloaders whose job was to handle nightsoil (excrement) during the colonial and early postcolonial era in Nigeria. Persons involved in this practice of headloading were referred to as 'people of the night' because they waited for the cover of darkness to do the job, which entailed moving certain distances to dispose of the excrement. In other words, shamefacedness is connected with the headloading practice, especially considering that one could suddenly and accidentally bump into his familiars. This may explain why some headloaders who hawk goods cover their faces with caps or glasses. Here, the carrier covers the face with cap, which helps to disguise him or cover him from splashes of excrement.

Figure 4. Obiora Udechuckwu, Nightsoilman, 1964, Oil on canvas; Source: Artist

In this artwork, the artist acknowledges issues of packaging (Osborn, 2018), loading and transporting systems, the secrecy and the facelessness, the timing, the stigma and the psychology, the health or aesthetic sensibilities, as well as the menial stance associated with this ‘economic practice’ (Udechukwu, 2002). Udechukwu’s Nightsoilman painting rendered in bright hues of white, yellow ochre and brown tones shows light shining in the darkness and how light is needed to navigate the pathway. The nightsoil job was also locally termed, ‘people of the night’, suggesting activities of individuals whose ‘work’ thrive under the cover of the night and so are not proud of their job. However, there is a certain conflict of interest in thinking of headloading as practice of the spectacle and secrecy. The practice therefore signals power and social relations between the rich and poor. The social low expresses living with minimal possibilities as deductible from the LNY narrative.

The semiosis of the headloading narrative of the LNY points to a protest and angst of the marginal in society who are incited or pushed against different ‘walls’ of the economic, the political and/or the social. This concerns hugely those of the lower social structure. As a counter-narrative, the more significant part of the participants in the conversation visually or rhetorically, through comments disclaimed the assertion of laziness against the youth. Moreover, it is clear how headloading in a socio-economic context indexes subservience and struggle for individuals, groups of people and the

nation as a whole.

In this study, therefore, headloading has come to largely symbolise the shared burden of people experiencing poverty, and it is very disconcerting if a country like Nigeria, which boasts itself of rich natural resources, cannot proffer certain basic infrastructure to a significant part of its population. The reading of headloading from this standpoint could engender sensitive reactions and commentaries, potential for a socio-political engagement. Ultimately, headloading images of the LNY conversation underpins a visuality that focuses on those on the margins of the social structure and my interpretation advances the ideological position and sociocultural aesthetic that provides insight into several other unusual cultures and lived experiences of the world.

References

- Adebayo B. (2018) Nigeria overtakes India in extreme poverty ranking.*CNN.* United States of America: Turner Broadcasting System, Inc.
- Agbo G.E. (2016) Photography, Facebook and Virtualisation of Resistance in Nigeria. University of Western Cape, South Africa.
- Agbo G.E. (2018) The Struggle Complex: Facebook, Visual Critique and the Tussle for Political Power in Nigeria. *Cahiers d'études africaines* LVIII (2) 230: 469-492.
- Akor C. (2017) From Subalterns to Independent Actors? Youth, Social Media and the Fuel Subsidy Protests of January 2012 in Nigeria. *Africa Development* XLII: 107-127.
- Amah M. and Adebayo B. (April 21 2018) 'We are not lazy,' Nigerian youth lash out at President Buhari on social media. *CNN International.* https://edition.cnn.com/2018/04/20/africa/nigeria-young-people-buhari-backlash/index.html.
- Andermahr S. (2015) "Decolonizing Trauma Studies: Trauma and Postcolonialism"—Introduction.*Humanities* 4: 500–505.
- Barthes R. (1973) Mythologies. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Barthes R. (1977) *Image Music Text,* Translated from French by S. Heath, 1977. London: Fontana Press.
- Bohler-Muller N. and van der Merwe C. (2011) The potential of social media to influence socio-political change on the African Continent. *Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) POLICY brief.* http://www.ai.org.za/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2011/11/No-46.-The-potential-of-social-media-to-influence-socio-political-change-on-the-African-Continent.pdf., 1-9.
- Chabal P. (2009) *Africa: The Politics of suffering and smiling,* London: Zed Books.
- Chandler D. (2007) *Semiotics: the basics,* Abingdon and New York: Routledge.
- Christine A.S. (2007) When Counter Narratives Meet Master Narratives in the Journal Editorial-Review Process. *Educational Researcher* 36: 14-24.
- Couldry N. (2008) Mediatization or mediation? Alternative understandings of the emergent space of digital storytelling. *New Media and Society* 10: 373–391.
- Debord G. (1967) *The Society of the Spectacle,* Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, 1994, New York: Zone Books.

- Downing J. (2008) Social Movement Theories and Alternative Media: An Evaluation and Critique. *Communication, Culture & Critique* 1: 40-50.
- Du Plooy-Cilliers F. (2014) Research Paradigms and Traditions. In: Plooy-Cilliers Fd, Davis C and Bezuidenhout R-M (eds) *Research Matters.* Cape Town: Juta and Company Ltd, 18-35.
- Etikan I., Musa S.A. and Alkassim R.S. (2016) Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics* 5: 1-4.
- Fiske J. (2011) *Introduction to Communication Studies,* Abingdon: Routledge.
- Forbes. (2020) Africa's Richest 2020: Steady State With Some Volatility On The Margins. *Africa Forbes.* February 6, 2020 ed. Online: Forbes.
- García-Jiménez L., Zamora-Medina R. and Martínez-Fernández R. (2014) *The Construction of Symbolic Power: Comparing Offline and Online Media Representations of Occupy the Street in Spain*.
- Gentles S.J., Charles C., Ploeg J., et al. (2015) Sampling in Qualitative Research: Insights from an Overview of the Methods Literature. *The Qualitative Report* 20: 1772-1789.
- Hall S. (1997) The Spectacle of the 'Other'. In: Hall S (ed) *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices.* London: Sage Publication Ltd, 223-290.
- Helmond A., Nieborg D.B. and van der Vlist F.N. (2019) Facebook's evolution: development of a platform-as-infrastructure. *Internet Histories* 3: 123-146.
- Ibhawaegbele F.O. and Edokpayi J.N. (2012) Code-Switching and Code-Mixing As Stylistic Devices in Nigerian Prose Fiction: A Study Of Three Nigerian Novels *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* 2: 12-18.
- Ibrahim B.H. (2013) Nigerian Usage of Facebook During 2012 Occupy Nigeria Protest: Between Networked and Real Public Spheres. *Researcher* 5: 55-64.
- Ibrahim J., Jeffery B. and Waddington D. (2016) Politics, Consumption or Nihilism: Protest and Disorder after the Global Crash. *Contention: The Multidisciplinary Journal of Social Protest* 3: x-x
- Internet World Stats. (2020) *Internet World Stats*. Available at: https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm.
- Kharas H., Hamel K. and Hofer M. (2018) Rethinking global poverty reduction in 2019. *Brookings.* Online: Africa Growth Initiative.
- Langdon M. (2014) *The Work of Art in a Digital Age: Art, Technology and Globalisation*, New York: Springer Science+Business Media.
- Lee S. (2018) *The Role of Social Media in Protest Participation: The Case of Candlelight Vigils in South Korea*
- Livingston J. (2021) African Studies Keyword: Body. *African Studies Review* 64: 129-143.
- Mercea D., Iannelli L. and Loader B.D. (2016) Protest communication ecologies. *Information, Communication & Society* 19: 279-289.
- NBS. (2020) 2019 Poverty and Inequality in Nigeria: Executive Summary. Abuja: National Bureau of Statistics.
- Ogunremi D. (1975) Human Porterage in Nigeria In the Nineteenth Century- A Pillar in the Indigenous Economy. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 8: 37-59.
- Osborn E.L. (2018) Containers and mobility in West Africa. *History and Anthropology* 29: 21-31.
- Patel S. (2021) Digitally mediated spaces defined. In: Patel S (ed) *Digitally Mediated Spaces and Social Movements:*

Research on George Floyd's death and influence on social movements. https://medium.com/digital-public-square/digitally-mediated-spaces-defined-716ea9d96205, accessed 29 January 2022.

- Porter G. (2008) Transport planning in sub-Saharan Africa.*Progress in development studies* 7: 251-257.
- Porter G., Blaufuss K. and Acheampong F.O. (2007) Youth, Mobility and Rural Livilihoods in Sub-Saharan Africa: Perspectives from Ghana and Nigeria. *Africa Insight* 37: 420-431.
- Porter G., Hampshire K., Dunn C., et al. (2013) Health impacts of pedestrian head-loading: A review of the evidence with particular reference to women and children in sub-Saharan Africa. *Social Science and Medicine* 88 90-97.
- Rose G. (2001) *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials,*London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Rovisco M. and Veneti A. (2017) Picturing protest: visuality, visibility and the public sphere.*Visual Communication* 16: 271-277.
- Smith D.J. (2007) *A Culture of Corruption: Everyday Deception and Popular Discontent in Nigeria,*New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Udechukwu O. (2002) Of Nightsoilmen, Refugees, and Politicians: Or, Peculiar Situations, Peculiar Responses. In: Ottenberg S (ed) *The Nsukka Artists and Nigeria Contemporary Art.* Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 100-116.
- Van Leeuwen T. (2001) Semiotics and Iconography. In: Theo van Leeuwen and Carey Jewitt (eds)*Handbook of Visual Analysis.* London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 92-118.
- Woodstock L. (2014) *Media Resistance: Opportunities for Practice Theory and New Media Research*.
- World Bank. (2016) Poverty Reduction in Nigeria in the Last Decade. In: Zimmermann R (ed)*Poverty Global Practice: Africa Region.* Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- World Data Lab. (2020) Nigeria. *World Poverty Clock.* Online: World Data Lab.