

Instagram in Nigeria



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Lagos, Nigeria

snapitoga Have a wonderful new week friends! I am looking forward to some shoots in pipeline and exciting new opportunities 🙏
#nigeria #snapitoga #positivevibes #cameramen #paparazzi #lategram #nigerianmen

kshitizanand What a cheerful shot dost

snapitoga @kshitizanand Thanks a lot Happy Horizons 🙏😊

davidho_woo 😊🌸



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Connecting Dreams:

Europe in Africa, Africa in Europe

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Cover Image: by Devesh Uba (@snapitoga)¹

¹ Devesh Uba, 'Instagram Post by @snapitoga', 5 February 2018, www.instagram.com/p/Be0HbsiF0SY/?utm_source=ig_share_sheet&igshid=1vgi5n4lk1rzd.

Introduction

At the end of May 2015, a power crisis hit Nigeria. For around two weeks electricity production dropped to a virtual standstill, almost shutting down the economy.² As the Guardian Nigeria explains ‘Nigeria is Africa’s largest oil producer, but suffers from a stunning shortage of power. The millions of barrels of bony light pumped do not translate into energy that ordinary Nigerians can use.’³ A research done by O.A. Somefun at the Federal University of Technology Akure, Nigeria, in 2015 attributes the erratic power supply to corruptness in deals made by previous governments.⁴ According to Light Up Nigeria, having stable access to electricity is not a luxury, but a basic need.⁵ Not having access to electricity however, halts economic development.⁶ Mike Asukwo, a famous cartoon artist in Nigeria, made the following cartoon showing the sale of a generator as the Nigerian Dream.

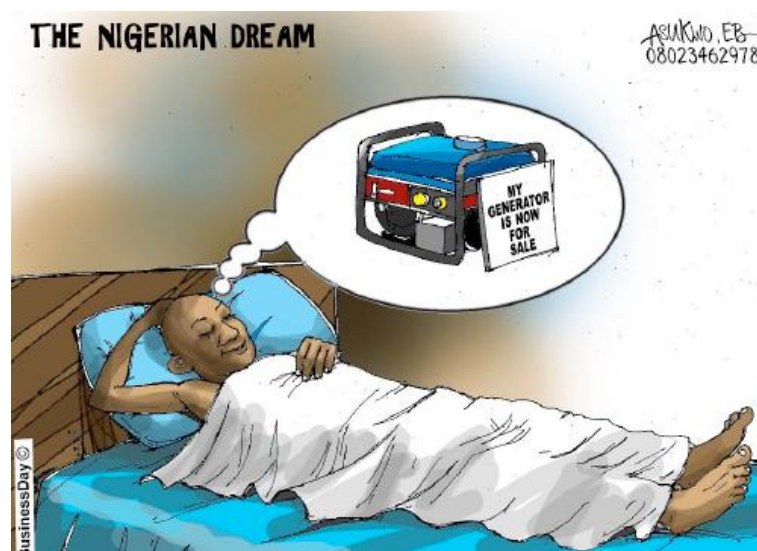


Figure 1: The Nigerian Dream by Mike Asukwo⁷

Generators are only needed when there is no stable supply of electricity. Since the government is bound to corrupt contracts, Nigerian electricity supply is erratic. Figure 1 portrays a Nigerian Dream where the government is free from these contracts and that a fair, honest and dependable government is ruling Nigeria. This comes close to the utopia of a student of the Faculty of Law at the University of Lagos, K.C. Uwandu:

² O.U. Paul and et al, ‘Electricity Crisis in Nigeria. The Way Forward’, *American Journal of Renewable and Sustainable Energy* 1, no. 4 (2015): 183.

³ Russel Duke, ‘Nigeria’s Power Crisis Defined’, accessed 3 March 2018, <https://guardian.ng/infrastructure/nigerias-power-crisis-defined/>.

⁴ O.A. Somefun, ‘The Erratic Electric Power Supply in Nigeria. Causes and Remedy’, *Technical Report*, 2015, 1.

⁵ Ethan Zuckerman, ‘Introduction’, in *Global Dimensions of Digital Activism*, ed. Lorrie LeJeune and Ethan Zuckerman, globaldigitalactivism.org, 2015.

⁶ Somefun, ‘The Erratic Electric Power Supply in Nigeria. Causes and Remedy’, 6.

⁷ Zuckerman, ‘Introduction’.

*'The Nigerian Dream is our aspiration, dream, vision and zeal to make our nation great; a nation where peace and justice reign.'*⁸

The book in which he describes his Nigerian Dream is a motivational piece for his country(wo)men to work collaboratively in achieving this dream for the country. The young Nigerian population is aware of this collective dream, and although individuals give their own interpretations (as discussed in chapter 2), it is something that is pursued in Nigeria.

In 2015, the UNDP's Human Development Index ranked Nigeria 152 out of 188 countries in the world regarding development.⁹ Thus, Nigerians are looking to themselves to search new ways to move up the ladder and gain wealth. One of the connecting technologies Nigerian youth uses is the social medium Instagram. This platform aired in 2010.¹⁰ Especially among the young Nigerian population whose possibilities are limited by their restricted futures (chapter 3), an increase in online entrepreneurship has evolved. Instagram is a platform that is almost entirely mobile, which suits the Nigerian situation as electricity is scarce, and thus most connections run via handheld devices. Our research is guided by the question: *How is Instagram used as a platform to express and realize the Nigerian Dream of young entrepreneurs?* To answer this question we will look at different Instagram accounts and conduct interviews with their owners to find out in which way Nigerians are utilizing Instagram to express and realize their goals. This paper is the academic translation of our project, the visual part is our Instagram page @connecting.dreams. Via this page we interviewed Nigerian entrepreneurs, posted their stories and attempted to instigate discussions.

In chapter one we elaborate on our methodology and the viability of online research via Instagram. In the second chapter the Nigerian Dream is conceptualised. The third chapter touches upon the restricted futures of the Nigerian youth caused by the current social, political and economic situation in Nigeria. In chapter four the technological developments of photography, mobile phones, internet, and social media are elaborated on. These technologies are the basic prerequisites to use Instagram and conduct a business via the medium. The fifth chapter contains the results of the research we conducted for this project. This chapter has been divided up in three parts that reflect different ways of making money via Instagram: promoting, selling, and services. In the final chapter we conclude and reflect upon our research project.

In the first chapter we reflect on our own experiences with using Instagram as a research tool. The second chapter uses primary sources such as K.C. Uwandu's book on the Nigerian Dream, online public forums, Instagram interviews and secondary sources on the American Dream, to come to a

⁸ Kingson C. Uwandu, *The Nigerian Dream: The Passion, the Vision, the Hope* (Lagos: Gani Fawehinmi Students' Chambers', Faculty of Law, University of Lagos, 2011), 2.

⁹ UNDP, 'Human Development Report 2016 Human Development for Everyone Briefing Note for Countries on the 2016 Human Development Report Nigeria', http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/NGA.pdf, 2.

¹⁰ Linnea Laestadius, 'Instagram', in *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods*, ed. Luke Sloan and Anabel Quan-Haase (London, 2017), 575.

comprehensive account of the Nigerian Dream. Chapter three builds on Alcinda Honwana's article 'Waithood, Restricted Futures and Youth Protests in Africa', texts on youth unemployment in Nigeria and two current (online) movements: #lazynigerianyouth and the music video 'This is Nigeria' by Falz. The fourth chapter 'Technological Developments' looks at linking technologies in a postglobal Nigeria, concepts introduced by Mirjam de Bruijn and Rijk van Dijk in their introduction 'Connectivity and the postglobal moment. (Dis)connections and social change in Africa', in: *The social life of connectivity in Africa*. Chapter five relies foremost on the interviews we conducted with Nigerian entrepreneurs via Instagram, third party interviews and personal blogs.

Relevance and limitations

In Nigeria around sixty percent of the population is below the age of 30. Nigeria's president Buhari said at a Commonwealth event in London on 18 April 2018 the following out this youth: 'A lot of them haven't been to school and they are claiming, you know, that, Nigeria has been an oil producing country therefore they should sit and do nothing and get housing, healthcare, education free.'¹¹ This paper sheds light on the entrepreneurial youth of Nigeria who use Instagram to achieve economic success, and therefore challenge Buhari's statement as many Nigerians did themselves on social media. Instagrammers, as well as people on Twitter and Facebook posted photos or videos of themselves working and added the hashtag #lazynigerianyouth or #lazynigerianyouths. Between 18 April 2018, the date of Buhari's speech, and 28 April 2018 over ten thousands posts on Instagram were accompanied by either one of two of the hashtags. It is also used for online sales of products as well as for calls to vote Buhari out in the elections of 2019, since he and his government should be the ones providing jobs for these (non-)educated Nigerian youth.

Not everyone in Nigeria has equal access to smart phone technology. Based on the statistics discussed in chapter 4,2 less than 10% Nigerians has access to a smart phone. Due to the high costs of purchasing a smart phone and the high cost for data roaming and the limited access to electricity, only the wealthier population has the ability to own a smart phone. This means that our research represents Nigerian entrepreneurs who have already gained enough wealth to belong to the select group of smart phone owners. Moreover, Instagram is a medium mainly used to promote visually attractive posts. Main branches of industry that use Instagram are e.g. food, art, travel, and fashion.¹² This has effect on the pool of businesses that use Instagram, which is also visible in the type of businesses that we have approached.

¹¹ Munachim Amah and Bukola Adebayo CNN, '#LazyNigeriaYouth: President Buhari Faces Backlash on Social Media', CNN, accessed 27 April 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/04/20/africa/nigeria-young-people-buhari-backlash/index.html>.

¹² Saige Driver, 'Social Media for Business: A Marketer's Guide', Business News Daily, accessed 11 June 2018, <https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/7832-social-media-for-business.html>.

Chapter 1: Methodological Essay

In this methodological essay, the following question is posed: *How can Instagram open the online world (of Nigerians) to academics?* We answer this question on the basis of our experiences with our Instagram page and activities. As noted before, we had three goals with our Instagram page. The first goal was to contact Nigerian entrepreneurs. We searched for them by looking at hashtags such as #nigerianentrepreneurs or #lazynigerianyouth and by using the discover function on Instagram. We contacted them by sending messages via Instagram chat. If they did not respond to our messages and put their WhatsApp number/email address on their Instagram page, we sent them an email or WhatsApp message. Our second goal was to make @connecting.dreams a platform on which we shared the content we collected, such as photos, quotes and answers on the questionnaires we had send to Instagramming entrepreneurs. The third goal was to attempt to instigate discussions on the cartoons, photos, quotes, stories and questions we shared on our page.

Our first plan was to contact an even number of Instagrammers who made it – those who could make a living from Instagram – and those that had not made it yet. Moreover, we wanted to have an even number of men and women. Unfortunately not everyone responded, so we changed our approach to try and contact a larger number of Instagrammers and hoped for a couple to respond via WhatsApp/Instagram chat on a fewer number of questions or on our questionnaire (adjusted to their business) via email. This however means that we no longer have a single questionnaire that was answered by all respondents, but rather different interviews about different topics. This made it harder to establish similarities and differences between the respondents, but made the topics we discussed more divers.

The medium Instagram gives academics the possibility to get in contact with, in our case, Nigerian entrepreneurs without actually going to Nigeria. Making an Instagram page is done in few steps and only asks for a mobile phone and access to internet. The platform itself gives multiple options for doing research. The visuals can be analysed, as well as e.g. hashtags, comments, and activities of Instagrammers. Besides that, researchers can receive personal responses via Instagram chat and on their own page. Moreover, since the world is becoming more digital every day, people, and especially the youth, use other resources than the traditional media, such as newspapers. Instagram brings the researcher close to what happens in society, especially among the youth. One should however not forget that Instagram is used by a select group of people, in our case by the city-based middle class.

Instagram has a culture of helping each other. Instagrammers promote each other to others, so they can gain more followers and possibly more income. We chose to repost posts of our informants and they responded very positive on this. If an account has a significant number of followers in the target group of the informant, reposting would generate a larger reach for the Instagrammer. The

promise of reposting, if an Instagrammer would fill in a questionnaire or comment on posts could result in more responses.

Creating an account with a significant number of followers takes time, as well as creating trust. No real relation has been established beforehand between the informant and the academic. This could explain why not everyone we contacted has responded, as well as why others asked if they could trust that we would use their material in their best interest. We have posted an introduction on the project and ourselves on Instagram, as well as our personal Instagram pages and the link to the description of the course for which we do this research, to occur as trustworthy as possible. Nevertheless, the precautions we took did not always result in responses. To find Instagrammers is a time-consuming project, and fruitless if they do not respond. Therefore, we advise academics who want to use Instagram as research tool to make it a long term project. Only with a long termed research project the full potential of Instagram can be achieved..

Furthermore, the political situation is essential to keep in mind. In Nigeria, tensions are running high (see chapter 3). A couple of the questions we asked and posts made on our Instagram were politically motivated. People might have felt uncomfortable or insecure to share their personal standings on certain topics with strangers. On the other hand, the platform Instagram offers anonymity. This can result in people asking or saying things because they feel the safety of a screen. After chatting for a while with @lifeofapriince, he asked for personal pictures of the one that he was texting with. Our response was that we wanted to stay professional, after which he did not respond to our messages anymore. Lastly, the questions and the chats are only a result of online interviews. This restricts direct responses and asks for sophisticated questions, because after a couple of questions the interest in chatting with us often declined. Thus, it is necessary to put using Instagram as a research tool in the context of the society, the platform and the interview technique(s).

Moreover, it is important to understand the platform and the possibilities the social medium provides. After working with the app for some time, we discovered that we could use the business feature of Instagram. This gave us insight into statistics, such as which posts reached the biggest audience and how people found our profile. In future research via Instagram, academics can analyse the results of their page and adapt to the patterns of their followers – such as when they are online – and which kind of posts or hashtags attract new followers or responses. (See figure 2-5)

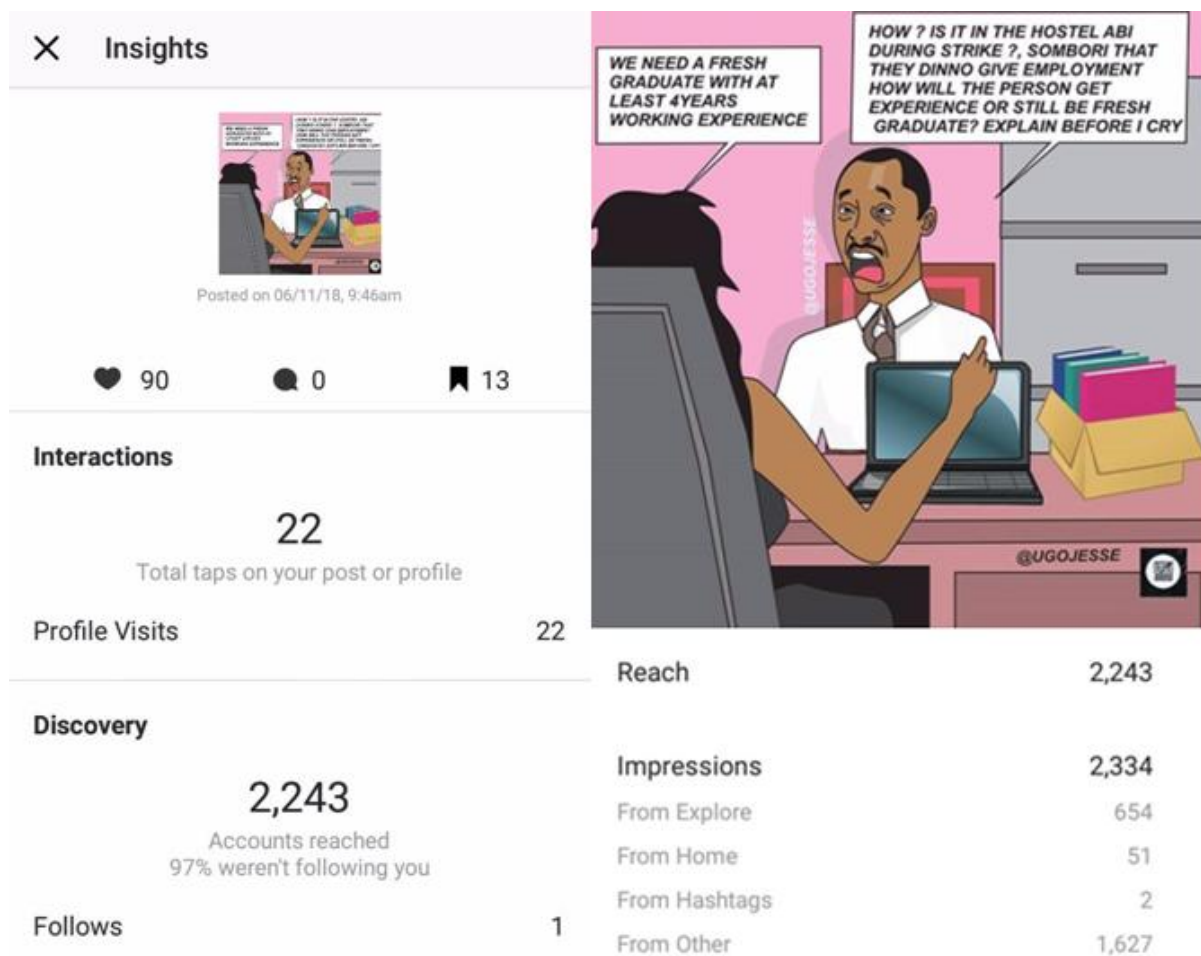


Figure 2: Reach of the cartoon of @ugojesse (top right) we reposted on 11 June 2018.¹³

Instagram can bring researchers closer to the society it aims to research by the multiple features of the social medium. However, the social part, such as winning of trust and followers, costs a lot of time and dedication. This does not always results in data. People can also delete their Instagram pages, make it private or delete pictures or comments. And therefore there is no consistency in their pages. Instagrammers can pretend to be someone else than they are and will not always respond on Instagram chat – for example because they do not have the Instagram chat update downloaded. We suggest academics to use other linking technologies such as WhatsApp and email to add to the contact and research via Instagram. Furthermore, an analysis of the target group is needed and an investment in advertisements to reach this group. For a few Euros a post can be showed on the feed of a specific target group, which will increase the reach and therefore also research possibilities.

¹³ Statistics of 12 June 2018.



Figure 3: Top locations followers @connecting.dreams¹⁴

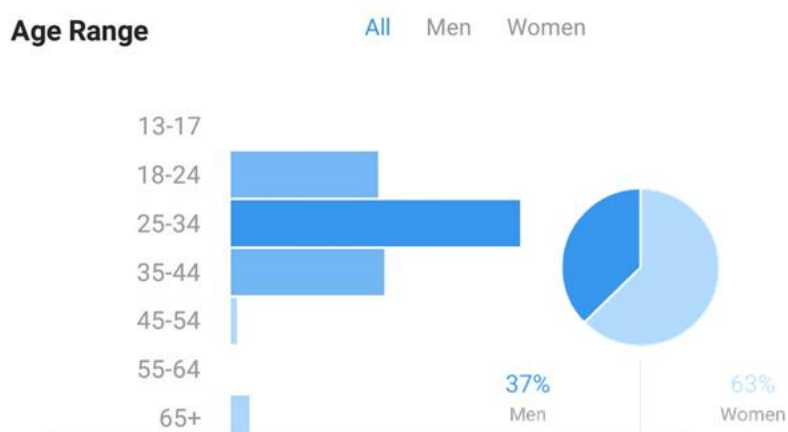


Figure 4: Division men/women and age range followers @connecting.dreams¹⁵

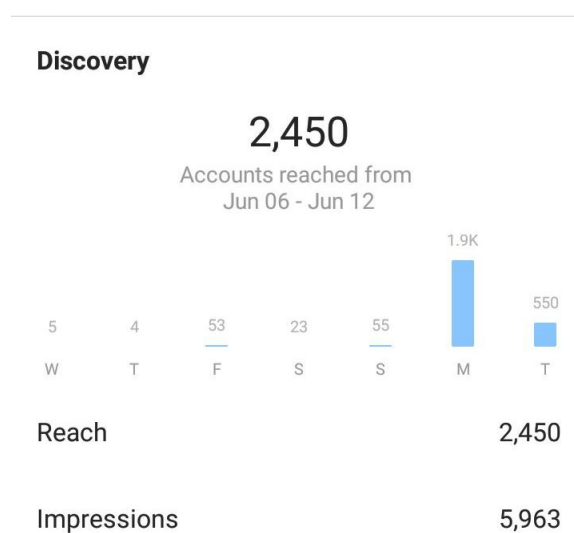


Figure 5: Discovery of @connecting.dreams between 6 June and 12 June 2018¹⁶

¹⁴ Statistics of 13 June 2018.

¹⁵ Statistics of 13 June 2018.

Chapter 2: The Nigerian Dream

Nigerians have dreams and aspirations, just like most people around the world. However, people who have a shared environment and background can portray similar dreams that are specific to their collective. In this chapter we will conceptualise the Nigerian Dream, we hypnotise that the utopia of Nigerians for Nigeria, especially the Nigerian youth, have certain aspects in common. We bring together different actors describing a or the Nigerian Dream to give a comprehensive overview of Nigerian Dreams. The conclusion of our chapter will therefore be leading for the rest of our paper on the expression and realization of the Nigerian Dream through Instagram.

2.1 Conceptualising the Nigerian Dream

A politician who has used the phrase Nigerian Dream in the past is governor Fashola of Lagos. In a speech made at the presentation of a book dedicated to him in 2013, he said the following:

‘The Nigerian dream is not elusive. It is because we have not confronted and felt about what it has become for us. We haven’t defined it. The American dream is more attractive to us. But the Nigerian dream happens here every day. It is the Nigerian dream that makes me stand here.’¹⁷

Fashola mentions a few interesting points here. First of all, that the Nigerian Dream has not been defined. Secondly, that the American dream is more attractive. We will first address the first point, regarding the definition of the Nigerian Dream.

Fashola’s speech was held two years after the Uwandu published his viewpoints of the Nigerian Dream. Uwandu defines the dream as a dream to make a nation great, peaceful and just, as we can see from the quote in the introduction. The Nigerian Dream aims to lift Nigeria to a new level, a Nigerian utopia – ‘a Godly nation built on trust’.¹⁸ Uwandu is optimistic and believes that Nigeria will be the best country in the world in the nearest future.¹⁹ But regardless of Uwandu’s personal aspiration for his country, his definition of the Nigerian Dream is one we can take a closer look at. He believes in democracy, rule of law and Godly principles.²⁰ He is against ‘westernization’ and believes it is an evil lurking around and criticises the young for they live by the ‘get quick rich syndrome and die tomorrow’.²¹ The ‘get quick rich’ syndrome refers to the pattern of young people who are too impatient to complete their seemingly unrewarding educations, drop out of school in order to set up a

¹⁶ Statistics of 13 June 2018.

¹⁷ ‘Nigerian Dream Is Not Elusive - Fashola’, *The Nation Nigeria* (blog), 15 November 2013, accessed 17 April 2018, <http://thenationonline.net/nigerian-dream-elusive-fashola/>.

¹⁸ Uwandu, *The Nigerian Dream*, viii.

¹⁹ Uwandu, 26.

²⁰ Uwandu, 34.

²¹ Uwandu, 82–83.

business in the bigger cities.²² Some aspects of Uwandu’s version of the Nigerian Dream can also be found in the Nigerian national anthem that has been in place since 1978.

<i>‘Arise, O compatriots, Nigeria’s call obey to serve our Fatherland with love and strength and faith. The labour of our heroes past shall never be in vain, to serve with heart and might one nation bound in freedom peace and unity.</i>	<i>O God of creation direct our noble cause guide our leaders right help our youth the truth to know in love and honesty to grow and living just and true great lofty heights attain to build a nation where peace and justice shall reign.’</i>
--	--

Figure 6: The national anthem of Nigeria²³

Especially the last sentence: to build a nation where peace, and justice shall reign is closely related to earlier definitions of the Nigerian Dream. Another important aspect is the notion of ‘unity’. In the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), ethnic diversity was one of the key causes of division. It is thus not surprising that the national anthem focuses on the notion of unity.

When the internet is consulted on the Nigerian Dream, blogposts regarding this topic can be found. On the internet forum Quora online respondents answer the question: ‘What is the Nigerian Dream?’. One of the respondents, Malobi, replies that the Nigerian Dream is ‘to be able to put on the gen[erator] whenever you want to’, and he prefers the generator to be as modern as possible.²⁴ Generators are seen as part of the Nigerian Dream, signalling that electricity place a large role in the notion of the Nigerian Dream, and thus a more practical approach than Uwandu and Fashola have provided. Malobi argues that having a generator on is expensive due to high fuel costs, other respondents second that by saying that the Nigerian Dream is in part ‘to hammer’.²⁵ ‘To hammer’ means ‘to make it – riches, money, cars, social status or influence. To hammer is to gain anything tangible that will take you away from the gaping abyss that is poverty in Nigeria.’²⁶ The forum users seem to have accepted the high costs related to using electricity, and thus want to make enough money to be able to use electricity at all times. Uwandu prefers a just society, where there is no

²² Olugbenga Adesida, Arunma Oteh, and Nordic Africa Institute, *African Voices, African Visions* (Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 2001), 127.

²³ ‘The National Anthem of Nigeria’, Facts.ng, 18 September 2014, accessed 17 April 2018, <https://www.facts.ng/national-identity/the-national-anthem-of-nigeria/>.

²⁴ ‘What Is the Nigerian Dream?’, Quora, accessed 3 April 2018, <https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-Nigerian-dream>.

²⁵ ‘What Is the Nigerian Dream?’

²⁶ Sheba, ‘In Lagos, Everyone Is Trying To Hammer, And The Nail Is F*cking Bent’, *Medium* (blog), 12 February 2016, accessed 30 April 2018, <https://medium.com/i-just-got-back-for-the-suya-and-the-chapman/in-lagos-everyone-is-trying-to-hammer-and-the-nail-is-f-cking-bent-7809d458521a>.

corruption, which should lead to more reasonable fuel and electricity access and prices.²⁷ However, not everyone is as optimistic about the possibility of Nigeria reaching this status, and therefore say that ‘the Nigerian dream is to leave Nigeria.’²⁸

For many on the forums, the Nigerian Dream contains the ability to provide for themselves and their family, to have status and to not have to live in poverty. The forum users have a more practical approach to the Nigerian Dream, but their actual goals are similar. Uwandu and the people on the forum believe the Nigerian Dream to essentially be the same thing: the end of inequality and for people to have been provided their basic needs. Which basic needs need to be addressed will be elaborated on more extensively in chapter 4. Thus the concept of the Nigerian Dream refers to the possibility for Nigerians to live in a just and peaceful society where they can ‘make it’, gain status and be able to provide for themselves and those around them.

2.2 How to reach the Nigerian Dream

In the following section we take a closer look at Fashola’s other comment in his speech, the pursuing of the American Dream. The American dream helps us understand the Nigerian dream better through a comparison the two dreams. It will bring to light special characteristics of the Nigerian dream and how this dream can be reached.

Two years before Fashola’s speech, in 2011 the President of the United States, Barack Obama, mentioned the American Dream in a speech:

*We may have different backgrounds, but we believe in the same dream that says this is a country where anything is possible. No matter who you are. No matter where you come from. That dream is why I can stand here before you tonight. That dream—that American Dream.*²⁹

The American Dream offers ‘the promise of equal opportunity and success as a reward for hard work’ to Americans and immigrants, argue Michelle Knight et al. in their article for which they interviewed several immigrants with the aspiration to achieve the American Dream. Their dream is achieving economic success and social mobility through education and hard work.³⁰ Professor Mirjam de Bruijn and Inge Ligtvoet met young people in Enugu, Nigeria in 2014. De Bruijn and Ligtvoet state that the adagio of most Nigerians is: ‘Work hard and trust God, and you will succeed in life.’³¹ Both dreams,

²⁷ Uwandu, *The Nigerian Dream*, 81, 83.

²⁸ ‘What Is the Nigerian Dream?’

²⁹ Michelle G. Knight, Rachel Roegman, and Lisa Edstrom, ‘My American Dream’, *Education and Urban Society* 48, no. 9 (2016): 828.

³⁰ Knight, Roegman, and Edstrom, 828–29.

³¹ Fenneken Veldkamp, ‘The Nigerian Dream: Being Successful in Enugu’, *Counter Voices in Africa* (blog), 22 December 2014, accessed 24 April 2018, <https://mirjamdebruijn.wordpress.com/2014/12/22/the-nigerian-dream-being-successful-in-enugu/>.

the Nigerian and the American, are focussed on achieving a goal, albeit wealth or happiness or the ability to provide for those around them. Another similarity is that there should be a basis provided and then the ‘dreamers’ have the ability to pursue their goal themselves.

Although the governor of Lagos, Fashola, names the Nigerian Dream, the Dream is bottom-up. It is a dream of ordinary (young) Nigerian, such as one of Ligtvoet’s informants, Oge. Oge bought a generator on the day De Bruijn and Ligtvoet visited his workshop where he makes shoes and bags. ‘The generator (...) symbolizes his wish for independence. This generator means liberation of the caprices of the odd functioning electricity company.’³² As mentioned by Uwandu, corruption of the government is a huge problem in Nigeria. Oge’s wish is to ‘build an empire of skilled shoe and bag makers, to create a community of independent young people, avoiding contact with the destructive Nigerian State mentality of corruption and neglect. By doing so, he can build a new Nigeria.’³³

Young immigrants in America also strive for a certain kind of freedom. A well-paid job that provides potential opportunities. One of the interviewees of Knight et al., Ade said: ‘my American Dream definitely connects to feeling like I have power over the way that me and my community get to seek a fulfilled life.’³⁴ The American Dream of Ade is a dream for herself and her immigrant community, Oge’s Nigerian Dream, however, reaches further: it is a utopia for the whole country in the end. Achieving the American Dream is possible through education, as one Nigerian participant said: ‘[T]he whole reason we uprooted and left Nigeria was about education.’³⁵ The opportunity to reach the dream is available in the United States already through education, while in Nigeria the inhabitants have to shape these opportunities themselves. The country is relatively rich and has a substantial middle class, but insecurity is a common felt emotion, and generators are filling the streets of Nigeria.³⁶

The research done with the informants we will address further in Chapter 5, but it is interesting to note their view on the Nigerian Dream in this chapter. We have found that the dreams of Instagrammers we spoke to are quite similar to what we have discussed in this chapter. @Jadesubomi emphasises that ‘Nigeria belongs to us and if we allow the older politicians to dictate the future we are in trouble and the damage will not be able to be fixed.’³⁷ @Official.anubis links the Nigerian dream to a united Nigeria with a shared heritage. The older generation ‘is unconsciously stopping [culture] from evolving.’³⁸ He believes in his Nigerian heritage rather than his Yoruba heritage: ‘the greatness of Nigeria as a whole’ and he finds ‘Nigeria way more beautiful united than divided by cultural differences’.³⁹ @Lifeofapriince does connect the Nigerian Dream to having a regular power supply, as

³² Veldkamp.

³³ Veldkamp.

³⁴ Knight, Roegman, and Edstrom, ‘My American Dream’, 838.

³⁵ Knight, Roegman, and Edstrom, 840.

³⁶ Veldkamp, ‘The Nigerian Dream’.

³⁷ Jaiyeola Adesubomi, Questionnaire via email, @jadesubomi, 31 May 2018.

³⁸ Adewale Samuel, Instagram Chat with @official.anubis, 28 May 2018.

³⁹ Samuel.

he responds to the image of selling your generator as when ‘Nigeria will change from 2hour supply to 24 hours then you can dream of selling your means of survival.’⁴⁰ His hope for Nigeria is that there will ‘be peace, a trouble free Nigeria, a Nigeria where tourist and foreign business men will come and invest from different country, a Nigeria where our currency will have value over things and property.’⁴¹ Some have indeed left Nigeria to for example study, but as @dumkajohnson says ‘home is home and will always be home no matter where I go’.⁴²

⁴⁰ Prince, Instagram Chat with @lifeofapriince, 17 May 2018.

⁴¹ Prince.

⁴² Zerubbabel Dumka Lebari, Instagram Chat with @dumkajohnson, 27 May 2018.

Chapter 3: Restricted Futures

Although Africa's poverty is declining, in some countries the education system is still strained, unemployment rates remain high and livelihoods are insecure. This effects the possibilities of the young (educated) people on the labour market. Often, youth moves to the urban centres and there, young people are increasingly forced to survive in 'an oversaturated informal economy.'⁴³ Professor Alcinda Honwana argues: 'Waithood represents a period of suspension between childhood and adulthood, in which young people's access to adulthood is delayed or denied.'⁴⁴ Although they are said to be adults, they are not yet able to earn a living, be independent, provide for their relatives and become taxpayers.⁴⁵

3.1 Youth (un)employment

In 2017, 61.6% of the Nigerians within the age group 15-34 are unemployed, the National Bureau of Statistics reported. Shakirudeen Taiwo, journalist for the Business Insider of Pulse, a new media publisher, concludes from these numbers that the 'Nigerian government must double its factors towards creating jobs and enabling an environment for business to grow.'⁴⁶ The government is responsible for the lack of jobs. In a report of the Economic Policy Research Department of the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research from 2015 the youth employment and job creation in Nigeria is evaluated. The Department states that one of the causes of youth unemployment is, just as Taiwo concludes, that the government is not creating jobs for them. Other causes they ascribe to the unemployment of youth are that they are not skilled and do not have flair for entrepreneurship, the inadequate education curriculum and the faulty orientation given by some of the parents.⁴⁷

The challenges of the creation of jobs for youth are among others, due to lack of funds, inappropriate technology, and multiple taxations. The recommendations of Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research contain trainings for youth so they can become not only self-employed, but also become empowered by skills and knowledge. Consequently, they can increase the national productivity. Funding opportunities need to follow these trainings, so they can be provided with start-up capital to establish their own business.⁴⁸ However, as @girlhubafrica points out, the 'ideas of many

⁴³ Alcinda Honwana, 'Waithood, Restricted Futures and Youth Protests in Africa', n.d., 2; Deon Filmer, *Youth Employment in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Africa Development Forum (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2014), 1.

⁴⁴ Honwana, 'Waithood, Restricted Futures and Youth Protests in Africa', 1.

⁴⁵ Honwana, 1.

⁴⁶ Shakirudeen Taiwo, 'Youth Unemployment: 61.6% of Nigerian Youth Are Unemployed – NBS Says', accessed 10 June 2018, <http://www.pulse.ng/bi/politics/youth-unemployment-61-6-of-nigerian-youth-are-unemployed-nbs-says-id6790731.html>.

⁴⁷ Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, *Youth Employment and Job Creation in Nigeria: Context and Sectoral Trends* (Ibadan: Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research NISER, 2015), xi.

⁴⁸ Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, xii–xiv.

Nigerians are buried because there is no starting capital.’⁴⁹ Girl Hub Africa is a team of advocates who want to reduce the rate of unemployment amongst youth in Africa by exposing them to volunteering opportunities.

Young Nigerians lack or have been lacking social, political and economic support, despite youth showing promises, argues Beem Hassana Beeka in her dissertation on ‘Entrepreneurship as a Viable Career Choice for Nigerian Youth.’ Beeka points to the factors that influence Nigerian youth, such as ethnicity and diversity in business and poverty, intolerance and insecurity in the country, and low investment in education. Rural-urban migration causes often exploitation and growing youth poverty.⁵⁰

Diane Singerman suggests that waithood goes together with passivity, Honwana indicates that young people are not merely waiting, they are proactive to create new forms of ‘being and interacting with society.’⁵¹ In Nigeria, where the economy is shedding more jobs than creating them, graduates become self-employed instead of job seekers. Surveys indicate that Nigerians between 15 and 35 years old dominate the small business sector.⁵² President Buhari also links youth unemployment with waiting. He said that the youth is claiming that ‘they should sit and do nothing and get housing, healthcare, education free.’ This triggered a lot of response by mostly young Nigerian entrepreneurs on social media, as many said that this comment of Buhari did not reflect the entrepreneurial drive of the Nigerian youth.⁵³

When we approached Hannah Temitope Adeboga from @lushskincare_, she directly informed us that she was not a #lazynigerianyouth. She explained that Nigerians use the hashtag out of sarcasm and irony, ‘because we are not truly lazy.’⁵⁴ One of our informants’ (Victoria Fatokun, known as @havdaffstores on Instagram) opinion on #lazynigerianyouth shows the proactive side of waithood: ‘In my opinion Nigerian youths are not lazy as they are striving to maximize their potentials and excel despite the unfavourable economic situations.’⁵⁵ Habiba Kehinde, owner of @digitallucyng, also points at the creativity of a lot of Nigerian youths, since they are creating opportunities for themselves, ‘as there are no jobs available or social (service) support systems to help.’⁵⁶

⁴⁹ GirlHubAfrica, Instagram Chat with @girlhubafrica, 20 June 2018.

⁵⁰ Beem Hassana Beeka, ‘Entrepreneurship as a Viable Career Choice for Nigerian Youth’ (Sheffield Hallam University (United Kingdom), 2015), 30–38.

⁵¹ Diane Singerman, ‘Youth, Gender, and Dignity in the Egyptian Uprising’, *Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies* 9, no. 3 (1 October 2013): 1–27, 152–153; Honwana, ‘Waithood, Restricted Futures and Youth Protests in Africa’, 3–4.

⁵² Beeka, ‘Entrepreneurship as a Viable Career Choice for Nigerian Youth’, 39; Olajire Adeola Adegun, ‘Entrepreneurship Education and Youth Empowerment in Contemporary Nigeria’ 4, no. 5 (2013): 746.

⁵³ CNN, ‘#LazyNigeriaYouth’.

⁵⁴ Hannah Temitope Adeboga, Instagram Chat with @lushskincare_, 15 May 2018.

⁵⁵ Victoria Oluwatayo Fatokun, Questionnaire via email, @havdaffstores, 7 June 2018.

⁵⁶ Habiba Kehinde, Questionnaire via email, @digitallucyng, 18 May 2018.

3.2 Protests

Honwana notices a shift in the way young Africans are responding to the issues of youth unemployment and waithood. Young men and women have been proclaiming their discontent with this situation in popular culture, on social media and in political demonstrations. Online this reflects in songs and posts on their blogs, Facebook or Twitter accounts. Over the past few years, youth took over more and more of the national political stage, by e.g. street protests.⁵⁷ In April and May of 2018, we encountered different protests against the contemporary situation by Nigerian youth on Instagram. For the sake of this paper, we will stick to the online critique, this critique can have national political implications however.

Consequently #lazynigerianyouth is not only used to show (Buhari) the entrepreneurship and hard work of young people in the country. It is goes together with calls to vote Buhari out in the elections of 2019, since he and his government should be the ones providing jobs for these (non-) educated Nigerian youth.⁵⁸ An example is the Twitter post of @pstgospelLinus “Don’t worry come 2019, the same youths that are lazy and not educated will vote you out.”⁵⁹ Zobam, owner of @stylebeatmagng, writes in one of her Instagram posts: ‘I think this statement that has disturbed us this much should be a call to action. We most times shy away from our responsibilities, not because we don't know how but because we don't show concern, work towards things that affect our lives and pursue it squarely. We are too lazy to drive away those leaders that have been recycling themselves since our parents were babies.’ @jadesubomi, Adesubomi Jaiyeola, seems to agree with the statement that the Nigerian youth is lazy. ‘[They] don’t know the power of [being] innovative and [being] the leaders of tomorrow. Nigeria belongs to us and if we allow the older politicians to dictate the future we are in trouble and the damage will not be able to be fixed, also we don’t know that for true change to come we must begin to get involved in society affair and create the change we want.’⁶⁰

A protest song that refers to #lazynigerianyouth aired on Youtube on 25 May 2018. The song is written by Falz and is called ‘This is Nigeria’. It is a remake of ‘This is America’ by Childish Gambino. ‘This is America’ takes on gun violence in America.⁶¹ ‘This is Nigeria’ puts forward the many problems in Nigeria. Part of the lyrics goes: “This is Nigeria. No electricity daily. Young people are still working multiple jobs. And they talk say we lazy.”⁶² On Instagram, Falz is encouraging his followers to vote for a better government. On @falzthebahdguy, he spread messages like ‘Stand up and react,’ and ‘Go there and get your PVC’, among his more than three million followers. The

⁵⁷ Honwana, ‘Waithood, Restricted Futures and Youth Protests in Africa’, 6.

⁵⁸ CNN, ‘#LazyNigeriaYouth’.

⁵⁹ Fikayo Olowolagba, ‘Nigerians React to Buhari’s Comments That “Youths Are Lazy”’, *Daily Post Nigeria* (blog), 19 April 2018, <http://dailypost.ng/2018/04/19/nigerians-react-buharis-comments-youths-lazy/>.

⁶⁰ Adesubomi, Questionnaire via email, @jadesubomi.

⁶¹ Lisa Respers France CNN, “‘This Is America’: The Childish Gambino Video Explained”, CNN, accessed 10 June 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/05/07/entertainment/childish-gambino-this-america-video/index.html>.

⁶² Falz VEVO, *Falz - This Is Nigeria*, accessed 10 June 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UW_xEqCWrm0.

hashtag #getyourpvc (Personal Voting Card) has been linked to almost five thousand posts on Instagram by 10 June 2018. The song and also the hashtags Falz refers to are still growing examples of protests against waithood and the political situation in Nigeria via social media.

Inge Ligtvoet, PhD student in the research programme Connecting in Times of Duress, works on the urban middle class youth in southern Nigeria.⁶³ Her focus is everyday resistance and social media use by this group. She sees setting up one's own business as part of this everyday resistance. As this research so far showed, setting up a business is often done because the government is not providing jobs, so youth become self-employed. In the interview we held with Ligtvoet, she hypnotised that social media is used by youth to fill a gap. Youth in Nigeria wants to use their voice and influence, which is impossible via the traditional channels, such as television or newspapers. The only technologies needed to share your views on social media is a phone and access to the internet, smart phones do not need to be expensive in Nigeria.⁶⁴ New technologies also raise young people's expectations, since it connects them to global cultures, argues Honwana. These expectations are constrained by the limited opportunities and prospect in their own lives.⁶⁵ The new technologies can, as this chapter has shown, be used to critique Nigerian youth's restricted future.

3.3 Empowerment

Influencing the immediate environment, Nigeria and the world and empowering others are common noted dreams of Instagramming entrepreneurs. @digitallucyng offers social media management and advisory services to small and medium businesses. When asking her what the dreams of social media entrepreneurs are, she answered: 'Financial independence/freedom, creating brands that impact our country and the world.'⁶⁶

Nigerian young entrepreneurs lack often the funds (as will also become visible in chapter 5.2), but they are not always held back by it. Photographer Andrew Esiebo informed us that he was touched by a visit to a business venture, YB Innovations, a branding and printing company. When asking on his thoughts on #lazynigerianyouth, he wrote: 'Nigeria youths are fighters for a better life in spite of their challenges or problems they face in the country they still try to make a better living.'⁶⁷ YB Innovations is founded by a young Nigerian who is now 25 years old. This young man started his business as a student without loans from banks or support from the government. Now his business is striving well and he has eighteen people working for him. 'This guys is a reflection of many Nigeria youths.'⁶⁸

⁶³ 'Inge Ligtvoet', Leiden University, accessed 10 June 2018, <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/staffmembers/inge-ligtvoet>.

⁶⁴ Inge Ligtvoet, Interview on the Social Media use by Nigerian youth, Leiden University, 8 March 2018.

⁶⁵ Honwana, 'Waithood, Restricted Futures and Youth Protests in Africa', 4.

⁶⁶ Kehinde, Questionnaire via email, @digitallucyng.

⁶⁷ Andrew Esiebo, Questionnaire by email, @andrewesiebo, 10 June 2018.

⁶⁸ Esiebo.

Empowering others is an answer that more entrepreneurs gave us. Such as Victoria Oluwatayo Fatokun's (@havdaffstores) personal dream. She dreams of having 'internationally recognized business brand that will meet the fashion needs of people, employ[ing] many people and add[ing] to the economic growth of Nigeria and Africa.'⁶⁹ Aqin of @aqinbespoke also dreams of positively influencing his immediate environment, besides expanding his bespoke brand. Victoria's personal dream, links to the Nigerian Dream with the focus on the collective. When asked about her personal dreams, Hannah Temitope Adeboga from @lushskincare_ answered:

*'I have a passion for beauty and I try as much as possible to give back to the society in which I find myself by empowering my community. (...) By empowering my immediate community, I simply mean I can choose to train someone that doesn't have the financial capability to pay for the regular training [fee and] by that way he/she will be able to start a business on his/her own and earn a living instead of waiting on the government to provide with jobs.'*⁷⁰

The dreams of Nigerian entrepreneurs are in this way not only dreams to grow their own business (which becomes visible in chapter 5), but also to train others and influence the Nigerian economy. As Hannah commented on one of our posts: 'We rise by lifting others!', and @mothernatureflowers told us she has a lot to thank for because others have helped her start her business 'all those who encouraged our efforts to go into the flower business here in Nigeria. It's a tough niche to break into because not many appreciate what flowers can do for them.'⁷¹ And last but not least, Noble Igwe says that 'the ability to empower the society with the people I employed is another reason to be grateful.'⁷²

⁶⁹ Oluwatayo Fatokun, Questionnaire via email, @havdaffstores.

⁷⁰ Temitope Adeboga, Instagram Chat with @lushskincare_.

⁷¹ Instagram Chat with @mothernatureflowers, 28 May 2018.

⁷² Noble Igwe, Questionnaire by email, @noble_igwe, 1 June 2018.

Chapter 4: Technological developments

In this paper we argue that Instagram is a linking technology with transformative powers for young entrepreneurs in Nigeria. ‘In processes of linking and making new connections and decisions, we can see new social constellations coming into being and social transformations taking place.’⁷³ In this chapter the appropriations of several technologies by Nigerians are central. These technological developments situate (the possibility of) Instagram usage in Nigeria and show ways in which Nigeria has become globalized. De Bruijn and Van Dijk introduced the term ‘postglobality’. They state that we can no longer speak of globalization, but are now in a stage of intensification of connections and mobility for Africa. Local realities ‘are being shaped and reshaped in view of global connectors.’⁷⁴ Instagram is one of these connectors between groups in Nigeria, but also a connector with the global. The technologies: photography, mobile phones and internet are closely related to the technology Instagram and will be discussed in this chapter.

4.1 Photography

A little more than a decade ago, the only way to get quality photos in Nigeria, was to go to a photo studio. The technology developed rapidly over the course of the past ten years. Digital cameras and new lenses have made it easier to become a professional photographers, contributing to the growth of this profession. Some Nigerians who started off as hobby photographers now own photo studios. However, as Felicia Omari Ochelle on the only platform *Ventures Africa*, amateur photography is constructing a new Nigeria. Not everyone will become a professional and earn money with photography. Social media, Ochelle argues, encourage to take pictures and by this Nigeria will be seen through the eyes of the Nigerians, instead of through colonial eyes.⁷⁵ When photography was introduced in Africa it became immediately part of colonial life. In West Africa this instruction went more slowly than in South and East Africa, but, as Stephen Sprague argues, local photographers started working at least in the 1930s.⁷⁶ Photography has been appropriated in different forms.

The interior of Nigeria came completely under British rule after 1900.⁷⁷ The Yoruba, an ethnic group mainly living in the southwest of Nigeria, quickly appropriated photography in their own culture. The Yoruba are exceptional for the extent to which they have integrated photography in their

⁷³ Mirjam de Bruijn and Rijk van Dijk, ‘Introduction: Connectivity and the Postglobal Moment: (Dis)Connections and Social Change in Africa.’, in *The Social Life of Connectivity in Africa*, ed. Mirjam de Bruijn and Rijk van Dijk (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 4.

⁷⁴ Bruijn and Dijk, 5.

⁷⁵ Felicia Omari Ochelle, ‘How Amateur Photography Is Constructing a New Nigeria’, *Ventures Africa* (blog), 26 June 2015, accessed 27 April 2018 <http://venturesafrica.com/how-amateur-photography-is-constructing-a-new-nigeria/>.

⁷⁶ Stephen F. Sprague, ‘Yoruba Photography: How the Yoruba See Themselves’, *African Arts* 12, no. 1 (1978): 52.

⁷⁷ Sprague, 52.

culture argues Stephan Sprague in 'Yoruba Photography: How the Yoruba See Themselves.' Their interest in photography probably came from their tradition of figurative art. Besides that, the Yoruba had an economic system which made the commission, production and trading of pictures possible.⁷⁸ The Yoruba have a specific position in which the subject confronts the camera, is pictured in his or her surroundings and wears traditional clothes. More modern Nigerians were depicted in modern dress and had different poses. Sprague sees Western influences in photos of Yoruba youth in the 1970s. Yoruba ladies dress in modern styles, they adapted a squatting pose, which conflicts with the traditional pose: 'The impression is that of a young lady who, while maintaining her proper place in traditional society, has turned her fascinated eyes to the modern world (figure 6).'⁷⁹



Figure 6: The squatting pose: postcard-size print collected by Sprague from photographers in Ila-Orangun, Nigeria.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Sprague, 52, 59.

⁷⁹ Sprague, 55–56.

⁸⁰ Sprague, 55.

The Yoruba culture also has a panegyric tendency. This has been translated into photography, argues Adélékè Adééó, who sees this tendency especially in the *Ovation* magazine. This is a photo album magazine with photos of weddings, funerals, birthdays and so on, of the rich of Nigeria, or as the publisher Dele Momodu said: “We do not cover just the rich, but also the poor who have risen through the ranks and become successful.”⁸¹ Here we encounter again the importance of success and the additional place this gives one in the culture.

4.2 Mobile Phone

Around 45 per cent of the Nigerian population, amounting to around 83 million people, have a telephone subscription. Mobile phones are a lot more popular than fixed telephones, which is logical as only 0.2 per cent of the Nigerians have access to a fixed telephone line. Thus, the mobile phone is the means of communication to relate over larger distances. The mobile phone is being appropriated in Africa, used to connect modernity with traditional values, integrating it in daily life. An example of this is the medicine man who uses the phone to connect to the spirit world, with which he communicates in order to carry out his work of healer.⁸² In the years that followed the introduction of the GSM in Nigeria, which was in 2001, rumours spread that the mobile phones could transfer infertility, madness and murder. This is, according to Daniel Jordan Smith who wrote about ‘Cell Phones, Social Inequality, and Contemporary Culture in Nigeria’ a testament of how dramatically the new technology of the mobile phone affected Nigeria.⁸³ Moreover, the phone is changing social and economic hierarchies.⁸⁴ In South-Eastern Nigeria, the mobile phone is also called *oku na iri ego* in the Igbo vernacular, the literal translation is: ‘the fire that consumes money’. Owning and using a mobile phone is very pricey. Not everyone has the economic means to own a phone or have enough credit to call. The latter results in sending text messages or the so called flash calls - ringing the line just once and hoping that the receiver has enough credit to call back. Care-free cell phone usage therefore results in recognition and prestige. Especially ordinary citizens have remained extremely disconnected in the early years after the introduction of the phone.⁸⁵

More than fifteen years later, social inequality and mobile phone ownership are still a fundamental element of Nigerian society. ‘The basic desire of the average Nigerian youth is,’ in the words of Mercy Kolawole, postgraduate student Cultural and Media Studies at the University of

⁸¹ “Dele Momodu (Bob Dee): Q & A,” *Gisters*, “www.gisters.com/profiles/bob_q_a.html” (this website, accessed 7 Nov. 2004, no longer exists), in: Adélékè Adééó, ‘From Orality to Visuality: Panegyric and Photography in Contemporary Lagos, Nigeria’, *Critical Inquiry* 38, no. 2 (2012): 332.

⁸² Bruijn and Dijk, ‘Introduction: Connectivity and the Postglobal Moment’, 4–5.

⁸³ Daniel Jordan Smith, ‘Cell Phones, Social Inequality, and Contemporary Culture in Nigeria’, *Canadian Journal of African Studies/La Revue Canadienne Des Études Africaines* 40, no. 3 (1 January 2006): 497.

⁸⁴ Mirjam de Bruijn, Francis Beng Nyamnjoh, and Inge Brinkman, ‘Introduction’, in *Mobile Phones: The New Talking Drums of Everyday Africa*, ed. Mirjam de Bruijn, Francis Beng Nyamnjoh, and Inge Brinkman (Bamenda: Langaa Research and Publishing Common Initiative Group, 2009), 16, 21.

⁸⁵ Smith, ‘Cell Phones’, 500–503, 520.

Ibadan, Nigeria, ‘to own a [s]mart[.]phone, so they can ‘browse’ the Internet.’⁸⁶ While calls and text messages are still being made, the progression of technology and introduction of data tariffs made the Nigerian youth turn to social network platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger.⁸⁷ The basic needs on mobile phones are Internet access and speed, argues Kolawole. The iPhone is the national status symbol, having a ‘Chinko’, a cheap phone with limited features, puts one therefore very low in class.⁸⁸

Having a phone with ‘street-cred’ does, however, not mean that youth are always able to stay connected. Electricity and network difficulties, characterising Nigeria, disrupt this.⁸⁹ As seen in the introduction and in chapter 2, stable access to electricity, which is also need for the recharging of telephones, is not a given in Nigeria. Generators to compensate for the electricity shortfall have high fuel costs and are thus expensive. The high price of electricity is combined with the high prices for internet and data usage, which we will discuss in the next section. Thus only those with higher incomes can afford a smart phone, and all the extra costs revolving around it.

4.3 Internet/Social Media

For long, Africa’s media image has been shaped by non-Africans. However, just as with photography, Africans used the media introduced to them by westerners for their own interest. Especially social media give Africans the opportunity to interfere in conversations on Africa and its future and shape new images of Africa.⁹⁰ In 2015, around 51 per cent of the Nigerian population had access to internet in some shape or form.⁹¹ The Nigerian government acknowledges the potential internet provides, and has decided to implement development plans for the improvement of internet in Nigeria.

The Nigerian National Broadband Plan 2013-2018 has been set up with the goal to ‘ensure that the infrastructure necessary to provide ubiquitous broadband services is available and accessible to all citizens at affordable rates’.⁹² The key issues here are the infrastructure and the availability and accessibility at affordable rates. At the start of the project, one of problems was that internet cable landings on the shores were all landing in Lagos, making the rest of the country harder to connect to the internet.⁹³ Lagos’ good internet connectivity has not gone unnoticed. CBS news did a report

⁸⁶ Mercy Kolawole, ‘Internet Access in Nigeria: Mobile Phones, Issues, and Millennials.(Report)’, *Journal of Pan African Studies* 10, no. 10 (1 November 2017): 156.

⁸⁷ Juliet Gilbert, “‘They’re My Contacts, Not My Friends’: Reconfiguring Affect and Aspirations Through Mobile Communication in Nigeria’, *Ethnos* 83, no. 2 (1 April 2018): 244.

⁸⁸ Kolawole, ‘Internet Access in Nigeria’, 155–56.

⁸⁹ Gilbert, “‘They’re My Contacts, Not My Friends’”, 244.

⁹⁰ Melanie Bunce, Suzanne Franks, and Chris Paterson, ‘Introduction’, in *Africa’s Media Image in the 21st Century: From the ‘Heart of Darkness’ to ‘Africa Rising’*, ed. Mel Bunce, Suzanne Franks, and Chris Paterson, Communication and Society (Routledge (Firm)) (London ; New York: Routledge, 2017), 1, 4–5.

⁹¹ ‘Nigeria Internet Usage, Population, and Telecommunications Reports’, accessed 14 May 2018, <https://www.internetworldstats.com/af/ng.htm>.

⁹² BUSINESS UNUSUAL LTD et al., ‘The Nigerian National Broadband Plan 2013 - 2018’, 2013, 12.

⁹³ LTD et al., 13.

Over the past year, the media landscape has not changed very much, it has mainly intensified. The statistical data on social media reflect the domination of Facebook, also in Nigeria. According to Statista, 41% of the Nigerian population uses Facebook, and another 24% also uses Facebook Messenger. Other main social media platforms used in Nigeria are WhatsApp, Instagram, Youtube, GooglePlus, Twitter, Snapchat, Skype and LinkedIn.⁹⁸ Research conducted amongst Nigerian youth showed that 94.7% of Nigerian youth who use social media, used Facebook. GooglePlus, 2go, Skype and Twitter are runner-ups with 90, 84.2, 73.7 and 72.1% respectively.⁹⁹ Social media users often use multiple social media platforms for different goals. For mobile messaging, users often go to Facebook Messenger and/or WhatsApp. Publishing of blogs is often via Wordpress or Squarespace, and the sharing of videos is often via Youtube or Vimeo, whilst photos are often placed on Instagram or Flickr.¹⁰⁰ Users of social media use these different platforms for their different uses based on the content they wish to interact with.

4.4 Instagram

Instagram is a world-wide social media platform which allows its users to post images (albeit pictures, cartoons or videos) and gives them an option to annotate their images with text and hashtags.¹⁰¹ Using hashtags makes images findable, but Instagrammers can also use a hashtag to hook onto a trending topic such as #lazynigerianyouths or to create a page which includes all posts with the same hashtag such as #lagosboutique. Users who endorse or promote certain products or brands can receive money for this. Instagram accounts with large amounts of followers can earn thousands of USD with an Instagram post.¹⁰² But even smaller accounts, the so-called micro-influencers, have the ability to earn money with their posts.¹⁰³ In Nigeria, around 3.6 million people use Instagram according to Social Media marketing platform Napoleon Cat (Mar 2017).¹⁰⁴ On a population of 190 million (2017)¹⁰⁵ this is a mere 2 per cent. However, if we set this numbers against the amount of people who own a smart

⁹⁸ 'Nigeria: Social Network Penetration 2017', Statista, accessed 14 May 2018, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/804995/nigeria-social-network-penetration/>.

⁹⁹ Ifeanyi J Ezema, Christian S Ezeah, and Benedict N Ishiwu, 'Social Networking Services: A New Platform for Participation in Government Programmes and Policies among Nigerian Youths' 25, no. 1 (2015): 40.

¹⁰⁰ Cavazza, 'Social Media Landscape 2017'.

¹⁰¹ Danielle Becker, 'Instagram as a Potential Platform for Alternative Visual Culture in South Africa', in *Africa's Media Image in the 21st Century: From the 'Heart of Darkness' to 'Africa Rising'*, ed. Melanie Bunce, Suzanne Franks, and Chris Paterson, Communication and Society (Routledge (Firm)) (London ; New York: Routledge, 2017).

¹⁰² Shane Barker, 'How To Make Money Off Your Instagram Account', Forbes, accessed 3 April 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2017/11/20/how-to-make-money-off-your-instagram-account/>.

¹⁰³ Barker.

¹⁰⁴ Kasia Kowalczyk, 'Instagram User Demographics in Nigeria – March 2017', *NapoleonCat* (blog), 25 March 2017, accessed 3 April 2018, <https://napoleoncat.com/blog/en/instagram-user-demographics-in-nigeria-march-2017/>.

¹⁰⁵ 'Nigeria Population (2018) - Worldometers', accessed 3 April 2018, <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/nigeria-population/>.

phone, which is 18 million (2017)¹⁰⁶, 20 per cent of the smart phone owning population have an Instagram account. The number of Instagram accounts world-wide is growing, and the amount of smart phone users is too, which means the role of Instagram, and the opportunities connected to it, is also growing.¹⁰⁷

Instagram provides for the ordinary user a personal account on which the photographer can visually document his or her life.¹⁰⁸ For others, like the praised Nigerian photographer Andrew Esiebo his Instagram page has become an online gallery. Some ninety thousand followers see when @andrewesiebo posts a new photo, almost all made by his smart phone. Esiebo's photos have been published on the platform @everydayafrica. This Instagram-based project – with currently over 378 thousand followers – started as a photojournalism project featuring American correspondents documenting daily life in Africa with the cameras on their phones. Peter DiCampo, founder of this project explains: '[N]o matter what the nightly news tells you, there's a lot to assume that's good and shared by every culture.'¹⁰⁹ Now also African photographers contribute to the platform as the goal is to visualise Africa from different viewpoints.¹¹⁰ Others use the platform to promote their own or others products. Instagram allows a blurring of a personal and company profile, which results in subtle advertising via personal pictures or the distribution of their products among social media influencers.¹¹¹ Ultimately, Instagram can appeal to those who do not have positions of power, they can establish authority as an image maker regardless of their identity in the world outside of Instagram.¹¹²

¹⁰⁶ 'Smartphone Users in Nigeria 2014-2019', Statista, accessed 3 April 2018, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/467187/forecast-of-smartphone-users-in-nigeria/>.

¹⁰⁷ 'Smartphone Users in Nigeria 2014-2019'; 'Instagram Monthly Active Users 2017 | Statistic', Statista, accessed 3 April 2018, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/253577/number-of-monthly-active-instagram-users/>.

¹⁰⁸ Becker, 'Instagram as a Potential Platform for Alternative Visual Culture in South Africa', 104.

¹⁰⁹ S. Jacobs, 'Instagramming Africa', *Journal Of African Media Studies* 8, no. 1 (2016): 95–96.

¹¹⁰ Jacobs, 95–96.

¹¹¹ Becker, 'Instagram as a Potential Platform for Alternative Visual Culture in South Africa', 109.

¹¹² Verdina, Zane. 'A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words: Storytelling with Instagram'. Antwerp University, 2013, 24 in: Becker 'Instagram as a potential platform', 110.

Chapter 5: Instagramming Entrepreneurs

This chapter is divided in three ways that our informants make money with via Instagram: providing services, selling products or promoting. The following Instagramming entrepreneurs we interviewed or immersed ourselves in. Their profiles can be found via www.instagram.com.

Instagram name	Followers	Trade	Real name
@9jafoodie	197,000	Food blogger	Ronke Edoho
@andrewesiebo	88,100	Photographer	Andrew Esiebo
@aqinbespoke	169	Retailer	Aqin
@asukwo	2,064	Cartoonist	Mike Asukwo
@bodmantech	2,488	Retailer	?
@cecilifabrics	1,837	Retailer	?
@christineaparrels	844	Retailer	Christina Ajagba
@digitallucyng	2,043	Social media agent	Habiba Kehinde
@dumkajohnson	2,646	Services	Zerubbabel Dumka Lebari
@fabricbyhilz	1,537	Retailer	Hilda Ozofu Bakare
@girlhubafrica	5,762	NGO	-
@hafymo	26,300	Promoter	Hafsah Mohammed
@harmonyhappydickson	4,183	Retailer	?
@havdaffstores	994	Retailer	Victoria Oluwatayo Fatokun
@jadesubomi	1,929	Photographer	Jaiyeola Adesubomi
@jimgaconcept	1,835	Cartoonist	Jimga Jimoh Ganiyu
@jislof	21,600	Promotor	Oni Bunmi Joshua
@lifeofapriince	3,108	Artist	?
@lushskincare_	1,090	Retailer	Hannah Temitope Adeboga
@mothernatureflowers	23	Retailer	?
@noble_igwe	179,000	Blogger & Promotor	Noble Chibuzor Igwe
@official.anubis	480	Artist	Adewale Samuel
@stylebeatbyzobam	1261	Blogger	Chizobam Zobeashia
@t2pitchy	46,100	Promoter	Grace Chimezie
@tosininfinityandbeyond	13,900	Traveller & Blogger	Tosin
@ugojesse	197,000	Cartoonist	Ugochukwu Jesse

Figure 8: Instagrammers that are interviewed or analysed via Instagram.¹¹³

¹¹³ Numbers from 11 June 2018.

5.1 Services

One of the ways people can earn money via Instagram is using it as a portfolio for their past projects or work and then make themselves available for commissioned work. Therefore, it is mostly the artists that promote their business in such a way. Adewale Samuel (@official.anubis) is one of these artists. He calls himself a videographer, photographer, graphic designer, and he does motion graphics and all round editing. His aim is not to raise awareness or do weddings, but to make art.¹¹⁴ There are other artists that do aim to create awareness. Ugochukwu Jesse (@ugojesse) is one of these artists who spends much of his time raising awareness for different issues such as body image, mental health and male-female relationships. Other posts he does are focussed around a product, such as the post (figure 9).



Figure 9: Example of offering services via Instagram: Cartoon made by @ugojesse

We have noticed that art is one of the ways used by Nigerians to express political viewpoints. As N. Jidenma writes in the introduction of an interview she conducted with Asukwo, ‘Political

¹¹⁴ Samuel, Instagram Chat with @official.anubis.

cartooning can be a dangerous arts. However in countries with authoritarian regimes, they often serve as a voice for the masses, calling attention to ills that might be too incendiary to spell out explicitly in words.¹¹⁵ We mostly see this return in the posts by Jimga Jomoh Ganiyu (@jimgaconcept) and Mike Asukwo (@asukwo). Jimgaconcept uses his art as a tool ‘of counter discourse for socio-political reality’ and calls himself ‘an activist’ who finds ‘it difficult to keep mute in the face of injustices’¹¹⁶ Asukwo is quite similar in this respect as he hopes his cartoons can ‘help people in bringing change, get people thinking enough to react’¹¹⁷ of which figure 8 is an example.



Figure 10: Example of comics to criticize the government: Cartoon by @asukwo

However, there are other forms of working through commission. Jaiyeola Adesubomi (@jadesubomi), a photographer who ‘tells stories and keeps moments and memories’, and also calls himself a storyteller instead of just photographer. He wants to be ‘the most outstanding professionals in the world’¹¹⁸ For @jadesubomi ‘Instagram is the cheapest and most useful social media platform that has the capacity to reach everyone who wish to have access to my page and that is a plus,

¹¹⁵ Nmachi Jidenma, ‘Interview with Nigerian Political Cartoonist, Asukwo, E.B.’, 3 August 2010, www.cp-africa.com/2010/03/08/interview-with-nigerian-political-cartoonist-asukwo-e-b/.

¹¹⁶ Jimga Jimoh Ganiyu, Instagram Chat with @jimgaconcept, 4 June 2018.

¹¹⁷ Jidenma, ‘Interview with Nigerian Political Cartoonist, Asukwo, E.B.’

¹¹⁸ Adesubomi, Questionnaire via email, @jadesubomi.

moreover the marketing and S.E.O [search engine optimisation] feature makes it a great option for most people to get great content across the web'¹¹⁹

Another form of offering services is Zerubbabel Dumka Lebari (@dumkajohnson), who is still building up his page to make it more attractive for people to hire him. His goal is to become a millionaire and for that he wants to start with modelling. On his Instagram page he is now building his portfolio and tagging major modelling agencies, to be spotted. Alongside his attempt at a modelling career, he is also studying to become an engineer at the University of Glasgow. Moving abroad was not his dream, but that of his mother. His own 'five years agenda' would start 'as a model begin to work as an engineer, set up small financial bases to aid my bigger picture of business'¹²⁰

Starting in the arts is not easy in Nigeria, as the resources to become an artists are not readily available. As Nigerians mainly focus on the sciences and view art as a hobby much talent goes to waste, 'great artists are on the streets, musicians working as bankers and actors working as doctors',¹²¹ Which is also why it is @official.anubis's goal is to 'make art be seen as a way of life in Nigeria, not just a hobby.' @Asukwo started by 'sketching in the sand, making kites out of old newspapers and television sets out of corrugated cartons. Then they thought I was going to be an engineer, but I was already an artist.'¹²² @Official.anubis's and @Asukwo's comments reflect what Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research concluded. Schools and parents are not aptly preparing its students for the job market and talents thus go to waste.

But working in the service sector on Instagram is not always as profitable. @Jadesubomi says he is not earning any form of income via Instagram.¹²³ And as @dumkajohnson is still building up his portfolio he is not receiving much income either. @Asukwo works for BusinessDay Nigeria, which provides him with a stable income. @Ugojesse receives around 30 to 40K naira's for his work, but does not keep track of how often he gets commission based work.¹²⁴ @Official.anubis says that it is 'usually enough for me but sometimes I do consultancy jobs and estate surveying'.¹²⁵

5.2 Selling

Hafsah Mohammed is a 24 years old style blogger and fashion designer based in Lagos. She started her business because she couldn't find modest pieces she liked. 'I wanted to make clothes for myself and make them for girls like myself that want to look fashionable and modest at the same time.'¹²⁶ Since she already had an Instagram as blogger, @hafymo, it was easy for her to take her followers to her business page, @eloracollection. On this page she send customers to her online shop:

¹¹⁹ Adesubomi.

¹²⁰ Lebari, Instagram Chat with @dumkajohnson.

¹²¹ Samuel, Instagram Chat with @official.anubis.

¹²² Jidenma, 'Interview with Nigerian Political Cartoonist, Asukwo, E.B.'

¹²³ Jaiyeola Adesubomi, 'Instagram Page @jadesubomi', n.d., www.instagram.com/jadesubomi.

¹²⁴ Ugochukwu Jesse, Instagram Chat with @ugojesse, 4 June 2018.

¹²⁵ Samuel, Instagram Chat with @official.anubis.

¹²⁶ Hafsah Mohammed, Questionnaire via email, @hafymo, 7 June 2018.

www.eloracollection.com. ‘I’ve been able to build the page to an extent where it can now stand on its own. I also do a lot of Instagram ads on Facebook and that helps the growth as well.’¹²⁷ Instagram is the main avenue to reach and sell to her customers, and her customers tend to buy more via Instagram than via Facebook. While the Instagram page of Elora Collection has more than ten thousand followers, the Facebook page has not even 400 followers.

Hafsah’s personal dream for her future is to build a successful global fashion brand and to have a successful fashion blog (www.hafymo.com). Staying in Nigeria or moving somewhere else is still a decision yet to make for Hafsah. She fears that the situation in Nigeria is restricting her for reaching her full potential:

‘Running a business in Nigeria is a long [r]ide. We are deprived of the basic things such as electricity and a working postal service. It’s also very difficult to reach people around the world due to the reputation we have as a country. E-commerce is also at its basic level and everything else runs at a slow pace in Nigeria. Reasons like this frustrate business owners to not only shut down but consider leaving the country as a whole.’¹²⁸

@Hafymo has the advantage of an already thriving Instagram page, which helped her business grow fast. Often micro enterprises (1-9 employees) have to start from scratch, with almost no funding. Aqin of @aqinbespoke, fashion designer of urban bespoke men’s wear, wishes to build and be a brand that will be well known in the continent. The basic prerequisites are funds and the right mentorship. And at the moment he is lacking the funds. Nevertheless it is possible to grow without funding, as @cecilifabrics who sells clothes via Instagram, responded on figure 11: ‘I started my business with Zero capital ... With a smart phone and loads of determination, you can build and grow a good and sustainable business.’



Figure 11. Cartoon on the need of funding for young entrepreneurs¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Mohammed.

¹²⁸ Mohammed.

¹²⁹ ‘Editorial Cartoon’, The New Times | Rwanda, 9 December 2015, <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/195162>.

Instagram businesses are not always sustaining in one's livelihood. @Cecilifabrics posted the story of her failures and success on her Instagram page. She started seven businesses and only the seventh is very successful now. 'Pls and pls never give up on your Dreams!!! It might take years as mine did but trust the process cos there is a lesson to be learnt along the way and a light at the end of the tunnel.' It takes a lot of time, before an Instagram business is lucrative. This is also the experience of @fabricbyhilz: 'Most of use combine paid employment with side hustles.'¹³⁰ Hilda Ozofu Bakare answers to orders during her breaks at work. She loves what she does in the end, but it is not always easy to combine with her work as customer service representative at a betting firm. She studied International Studies and Diplomacy, but it was impossible for her to find a job in her field, so she ended up working in two e-commerce sites.¹³¹ Likewise, Victoria Oluwatayo Fatokun, who has a store called @havdaffstores via which she sells female fashion items cannot live from the money she makes via her Instagram online store. She has a regular job as a project manager at an IT firm.¹³² Hannah Temitope Adeboga, owner of @lushskincare_, is not able to sustain her livelihood with the products she sells via Instagram, but it is 'definitely enough to get by each passing day. A girl has dreams and alot to accomplish, but sales on [I]nstagram isn't coming in as expected in the last few days with the [I]nstagram algorithm.'¹³³ Hannah has an organic skincare line and produces almost all products herself. Her dream is to be successful in her skincare business.

As the quote above shows, Instagram is not always the most convenient social media to work with, since the algorithm does not always show new posts to followers. 'But on an overall scale, [I]nstagram has been really helpful in reaching out to customers from far and wide and this has helped piece by piece in making a girl's dream come [true],' Hanna Temitope Adeboga writes.¹³⁴ Often, however, Instagram is seen as the best social media to use. Victoria Oluwatayo Fatokun store is called @havdaffstores via which she sells female fashion items. She uses Instagram, because this social medium is used by a wide range of her target audience. Besides that, the platform supports photos, 'which is key considering my line of business.'¹³⁵ 70% of the customers gets @lushskincare_ via Instagram. The online store reaches people from Nigeria and abroad, because 'Instagram reaches far and wide with hashtags.' Hannah of @lushskincare_ is trying to set up a physical shop as well, but having a business page on Instagram first is very convenient at the moment.¹³⁶

Entrepreneurs who show their products via Instagram use different linking technologies. Harmony Dickson Lucky, owner of @harmonyhappydickson, makes unisex shirts and pants. He uses

¹³⁰ Hilda Ozofu Bakare, Instagram Chat with @fabricbyhilz, 15 June 2018.

¹³¹ Ozofu Bakare.

¹³² Oluwatayo Fatokun, Questionnaire via email, @havdaffstores.

¹³³ Hannah Temitope Adeboga, Questionnaire via email, @lushskincare_, 10 June 2018.

¹³⁴ Temitope Adeboga; Temitope Adeboga, Instagram Chat with @lushskincare_.

¹³⁵ Oluwatayo Fatokun, Questionnaire via email, @havdaffstores.

¹³⁶ Temitope Adeboga, Instagram Chat with @lushskincare_; Temitope Adeboga, Questionnaire via email, @lushskincare_.

Instagram as a medium for advertising and selling of his products.¹³⁷ On his Instagram page, he has put his WhatsApp number, the number he can be called on and his email address. One or more linking technologies (as well as Instagram chat) make it easier for customers to contact the shops and buy products. Some Instagram shops scam people, which is why people sometimes still prefer physical shops.¹³⁸ This is one of the reasons why Christina Ajagba of @christineaparrels registered her store with the Corporate Affairs Commission of Nigeria. This proves that her business is no scam, ‘as we have a lot of fake online stores who defraud people.’¹³⁹ Another way to show that your shop can be trusted is posting screenshots of the chats the entrepreneurs have with their customers (see figure 12).



Figure 12: Post with a screenshot of a customer who received @lushskincare_’s products

Positive feedback, patronage and having people sharing their good experiences with your business show people that your shop is no scam and can also work as advertisement. These positive experiences are therefore shared by some of the sales(wo)men. Reposting of happy customers photos with your products or being tagged in these pictures helps to increase people’s confidence in your shop. Offline references are still profitable as @fabricsbyhilz shared with us. Patronage encourages her, ‘referral has helped me too. Most customers buy fabrics and refer me to their families and colleagues. Apart from my inner drive it tells me I’m doing something people appreciate.’¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Harmony Dickson Lucky, WhatsApp Chat with @harmonyluckydickson, 23 May 2018.

¹³⁸ Chizobam Zobeashia, Questionnaire via email, @stylebeatbyzobam, 27 May 2018.

¹³⁹ Christina Ajagba, Instagram Chat with @christineaparrels, 28 May 2018.

¹⁴⁰ Ozofu Bakare, Instagram Chat with @fabricbyhilz.

5.3 Promoting

On 23 November 2016 Noble Igwe (@noble_igwe) walked into a store of Hat Nation in Lagos. He looked around the store and was interested in the many hats they sold. He picked a hat, one of the most expensive hats the store had for sale, N45,000, and convinced the store to give it to him and in exchange he would ‘tag us [the shop] every time he wears it and preach the message of HatNationNigeria’ (Instagram Post Hat Nation Nigeria)¹⁴¹, and so, the hat ended up in Noble’s possession. Not much later, the first images of Noble Igwe started to appear (see figure 13), wearing the hat of HatNationNigeria. Noble Igwe tagged HatNationNigeria in around two of the posts, but afterwards, kept on wearing the expensive hat, but now without tagging the business which gave it to him. When HatNationNigeria contacted Noble Igwe to remind him to keep on tagging him in the hats, they were blocked from commenting.¹⁴² This example of this feud between HatNationNigeria and Noble Igwe is an example of how such promoting businesses works, but how it also shows how it can go wrong.



Figure 13: Post of @HatNationNigeria

Once Instagrammers have reached a number of followers, they can approach, or be approached for promoted content. Instagrammers will then wear or use the brand for free or heavy discounts, and in return get promotions, like Noble Igwe did in the previous example. These

¹⁴¹ Hat Nation Nigeria, ‘Instagram Post Hat Nation Nigeria’, 28 October 2017, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BayWBVpjkl/>.

¹⁴² Hat Nation Nigeria.

Instagrammers are also called influencers. Chizobam Zobeashia (@stylebeatbyzobam) is an example as she sometimes works with brands and reviews events in the city.¹⁴³ Oni Bunmi Joshua (@jislof) is another one of these influencers. When he posts a picture, he will write in the description the name of the brand, and how you could buy their products:

*'Hey guys!! Love my look ?? Thanks to @hypeandsteamNG, a U.K. brand that launched Nigeria on the 4th of June . This shirt is just 6K and you can get it for even less at 20% off when you use the discount code 'MANUP20' at checkout . Go follow @hypeandsteamng for more details and shop this look and other beautiful items !!!'*¹⁴⁴

As seen in this quote, promoters make their posts even more attractive by offering discount codes to those who buy products via their promotion.

Some of the Instagrammers we contacted are both business owners (sellers) and promoters. On their personal Instagram accounts they will reach out to their followers by wearing their own brands and promoting traffic to their businesses. In the previous chapter we have already discussed Hafsah Mohammed (@hafymo), but Grace Chimezie (@t2pitchy) is another good example of this. In the post @t2pitchy made on 9 April 2018 she is wearing the shoes of her brand @gafasandals. The description of this post says 'Can't choose which @gafasandals is my favourite but this one is gradually growing on me (figure 13).'

¹⁴⁵

But what are the dreams of these promoters? Is this something they would want to do the rest of their lives? Jislof studies medicine and hopes to become a cardiothoracic surgeon. His dream is to become 'a very successful doctor as well as a fashion Icon worldwide'. But if he had to choose, he would prefer fashion.¹⁴⁶ However, combining studies with running a promotion business in Instagram can be time consuming. Jislof's parents were afraid the Instagram would distract him from his medical career', and he had to tell them 'not to worry that I'll do my best in both areas'.¹⁴⁷ How does he manage to balance this? 'I try to manage my time very well, I do most of my readings at night. Then I shoot during the weekends'.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴³ Zobeashia, Questionnaire via email, @stylebeatbyzobam.

¹⁴⁴ Oni Oluwabunmi Joshua, 'Instagram Post Jislof', 9 June 2018, <https://instagram.com/p/Bjy6HK8lV8H/>.

¹⁴⁵ Grace Chimezie, 'Instagram Post Grace', 9 April 2018, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BhXJNV3lCej/>.

¹⁴⁶ Oni Oluwabunmi Joshua, Interview by Pendical with @Jislof, 6 April 2018, <http://www.pendical.com/pendicals-interview-session-with-jislof/>.

¹⁴⁷ Joshua.

¹⁴⁸ Joshua.



Figure 13: Post of Grace Alex (@t2pitchy) promoting shoes

Noble Igwe (@noble_igwe, is a celebrity in Nigeria, and is the only verified account we spoke to as part of this research.¹⁴⁹ When asked if he is living his dream, he says: ‘Yes, I’m living my dream. Living in the heartbeat of Lagos, with my wife and daughter is a dream come true ... and working for myself.’¹⁵⁰ His dream fits well within the Nigerian dream, to be able to provide for the family without having to rely on the government. He uses his platform ‘to hold the government accountable and preach good living to the citizenry’.¹⁵¹ Noble Igwe is one of those who have ‘made it’. He has his own business, 360nobs limited which focuses on media and fashion where he blogs and writes. When he started his business he ‘didn’t have the luxury of having money before I started (...) and neither was there Instagram to help with advertising’¹⁵² To start his dream of running his own

¹⁴⁹ A verified account on Instagram means that ‘Instagram has confirmed the authenticity of the account of the public figure, celebrity or global brand it represents.’ The verification happens because ‘these accounts have higher chances of being impersonated’ ‘What Is a Verified Badge? | Instagram Help Center’, accessed 13 June 2018, <https://help.instagram.com/733907830039577>.

¹⁵⁰ Igwe, Questionnaire by email, @noble_igwe.

¹⁵¹ Igwe.

¹⁵² Igwe.

business he put money aside whilst in paid employment because he did not want to rely on loans from banks.¹⁵³

@T2pitchy's dream is to complete a study in technology and policy at Georgetown (U.S.A.). This is a dream she has been working towards for years now, first having to go through the application process and then getting the funds to study there. Now she is there she says she is 'currently living my dreams and not in a flamboyant way. I have always wanted to do my masters in an interdisciplinary field that allows me [to] explore my varied interest'.¹⁵⁴

Instagram plays a large role in their work as promoters. Noble Igwe says that 'Instagram provides me with the opportunity to reach a specific target market and saves me the cost of advertising. With Instagram, I have been able to [reach] consumers outside of Lagos.'¹⁵⁵ Noble Igwe thus views Instagram as a free advertisement medium which has the ability to reach large groups of people. @T2pitchy views Instagram more as a way to express art: 'my business is sort of an art form and representation of cultural nuances through footwear. Instagram is a visually appealing platform and that helps my brand to be seen and its uniqueness appreciated.'¹⁵⁶ @Stylebeatbyzobam spends most of her time on Instagram because that is where she get her inspiration from.¹⁵⁷

As mentioned earlier, Instagrammers with many followers get approached by or approach businesses. This also means that Instagrammers with fewer followers will not be able to make a living via Instagram. T2pitchy says that her business 'for now does what I need it to do, which is cater for young millennials, provide employment and sponsor a few people through high school.'¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ Igwe Noble. Interview with noble chibuzor igwe (360 nobs), n.d.

<https://www.nigeriagalleria.com/Nigeria/Personality-Profiles/Bloggers/Noble-Chibuzor-Igwe-360nobs.html>.

¹⁵⁴ Grace Chimezie, Questionnaire via email, @t2pitchy, 29 May 2018.

¹⁵⁵ Igwe, Questionnaire by email, @noble_igwe.

¹⁵⁶ Chimezie, Questionnaire via email, @t2pitchy.

¹⁵⁷ Zobeashia, Questionnaire via email, @stylebeatbyzobam.

¹⁵⁸ Chimezie, Questionnaire via email, @t2pitchy.

Conclusion

In this research we have addressed the question: *How is Instagram used as a platform to express and realize the Nigerian Dream of young entrepreneurs?* To answer this question, we have looked at different aspects of this question to prepare us for the research phase. The first aspect being: the Nigerian dream, what it is and how Nigerians can reach it. We found that much of the Nigerian dream revolves around a healthy political climate where Nigerians can grow and enjoy freedoms, which would also make it easier to run their business and make money. As this country-wide Nigerian dream has not been reached, many Nigerians focus on the ability to make money so that they can put the generator on whenever they need to, in other words depend on themselves rather than the government. Other Nigerians prefer moving abroad so that they can pursue their personal dreams elsewhere. Another aspect we researched, which is closely related to the Nigerian dream is the restricted futures of Nigerians. Based on the research of Professor Honwana we have analysed the Nigerian case where the young face unemployment. Many of their actions are a form of protests, criticising the current situation. This also leads to many people helping each other, creating an atmosphere of empowerment amongst the youths of Nigeria. The third aspect we focussed on is the technologies needed to be able to run an online business via Instagram. The key linking technologies in the post-global world are photography, the mobile phone, access to Internet and Social Media and of course Instagram itself. We found that not everyone has access to this technology, which makes that the people we have researched are part of the select group of young Nigerian entrepreneurs of the city-based upper middle class that use Instagram as a tool to do business.

With this research we uncovered three main ways of using Instagram to promote their business and with that reach their dreams. The three ways are by offering services, selling items and promoting. Most people who offer their services are in the art industry. They use Instagram as a portfolio of previous art work. As it is cheap and offers many possibilities for S.E.O. it is a good way to reach people. We have spoken to several cartoonists who use Instagram as a way to protest against the current political society such as @asukwo and @jimgaconcept. Though making a living this way is harder. @Ugojesse and @official.anubis do earn money via Instagram, but for @official.anubis it is not always enough, and @ugojesse indicates that it is not a stable form of income.

The Instagrammers that sell their products via Instagram find that Instagram helps them reach customers that are further away, also with the help of hashtags. Instagram sells more than other social media such as Facebook. But here we can also see that Instagrammers are not always successful the first time around. @Cecilifabrics has tried it six times before she started become more successful with her seventh Instagram account. The key in having a store via Instagram is building trust with the buyers. Sellers build this trust by getting officially certified as @christineaparrels did, or take screenshots of happy customers as @lushskincare_ has done.

Instagrammers who use their pages to promote or influence often already have to be somewhat successful before they can approach or be approached by businesses. We have seen an example of @Noble_Igwe promoting a hat from HatNationNigeria. @Jislof also promotes and the companies provide discounts for the buyers who have found the company through his promotion efforts. Here we see yet again that Instagram has the ability to reach a large audience for low costs.

This does not mean that all Instagrammers we have spoken to only fit in these categories. @T2pitchy and @hafymo both promote their products on their personal Instagram pages and sell the products they promote via the pages of their brand. And recently, cartoonist @ugojesse started to sell a cartoon he had drawn instead of only offering his services to work on commission.

Furthermore, this project have shed light on the appropriation of Instagram by young Nigerians. The social medium is used to criticize and challenge the government in office with cartoons or hashtags as #getyourPVC or #lazynigerianyouth. Nigerians use non-traditional, new media to make their voice heard and use their online influence to protest and initiate change. Instagramming entrepreneurs do this in a more explicit way. They set up their own business, without help from the government, to live their dreams, to make it in life and to empower others. It means working hard, but also, being independent from the government. Instagram is thus used as everyday resistance.

Instagram is a medium that can be used by researches to research an online community from afar. As seen in chapter 1 there are several obstacles to this method of research, such as the lack of personal connection which makes the likelihood of responses slimmer. Additionally, respondents are quite easily 'tired' of the conversation and stop responding after a while. The time to build an Instagram page that instigates trust of the respondents takes time, so this form of research is better suited for long term projects. But nevertheless, Instagram does give researchers an over-time insight into the lives of these Instagrammers. We have seen Instagram pages grow and become more successful over the course of this project and have had many positive responses to our project.

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