

# Global Consumerism! Award goes to Africa! History's First Globalization!

( Rojukurthi Sudhakar Rao )

## Abstract

Africa is the second to none ancient civilization from Hunter-Gatherer to Tribe to Ethnicity to Modernity, gradually evolved into making Kinships and Social Organizations with Economics as Life's Culturally Living System in the African Nations as well as the salient feature of the African Nationalism in the matters of attachment to the materialistic values or possessions fundamentally by the African people.

Africa's political-economic existence with attachment to materialistic values or possessions is the most perfect embodiment of the triumph of consumerism from times immemorial as Africa is the motherland of human race.

This Paper takes the competitive lead ahead of others to establish after peddling through the African Studies & History that the "Global Consumerism Award " goes to Africa for it is the History's First Globalization (sic) by Africa in Consumerism, or historically, the then World's first originating from Africa. Africa's preoccupation with emphasis on consumerism must have been domestically localized and internalized firstly and then must have been got externalized via sea-routes and became global assuming global proportions of the World's overseas-trade off the shores of African waters.

**Keywords:** African-waters, Award, Consumerism, Hunter-Gatherer, Nationalism, Political-economics, Sea-routes.

## Main Contents

1. Introduction.
2. Definition
3. Consumerism globalized by Africa's Historical First
4. The Triumph of African Consumerism
5. Consumerism-African outlook to 2025 in 21st Century  
(Context of Population, Urbanization, Incomes, Technologies & Projections)
6. Conclusion



## 1. Introduction

Let's start with knowing about Origins & Rise of Consumerism in Modern Africa

According to Karen Tranberg Hansen (2009, p.155), since the second half of the 19th century, coastal East Africa has become the regional focus for consumerism and in fact , domesticated the World!

“Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization draws on Jeremy Presholdt’s doctoral research into the history of consumer dynamics in societies along the East African coast. He argues that African consumer desires played an important, but not well understood role in global integration during a period of dramatically increasing regional and transoceanic interaction. In effect, before the onset of full-blown colonialism, demands for imported goods were more often driven by local desires than by manufacturers’ assumptions about consumer needs. East Africa’s deep histories of global connections were shaped by complex economic reciprocities that were unsettled by colonial intervention (Jeremy Presholdt. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008)”



Fig. Map showing Africa as a Continent

## 3. Consumerism globalized by Africa’s Historical First

Domesticating the World is wide-ranging and of the importance of consumption for coastal East Africa’s connections with the wider world during the second half

Also, the international terms of trade for commodities were often in East Africa’s favor during the 19th century. The desire for particular types of printed cloth affected production of textiles both in Salem, Massachusetts and Bombay, India, where manufacturers had to cater to rapidly changing East African tastes. Several kinds of trade goods often had to be refinished or remade in Zanzibar which being the commercial center & seaport for cloves and copra , other coastal cities, inland, or on the caravan trail in order to appeal to local consumers . Goods from foreign places affected Zanzibar at a time when new cosmopolitanisms influenced people’s ways of seeing and understanding their place in a rapidly changing world. By the 1860s, vessels from all over the world stopped in Zanzibar, carrying a wide variety of goods. Most of the imported goods were destined for public display rather than for utilitarian purposes.

## 2. Definition

Called “The Triumph of Consumerism“, attachment of human beings to materialistic values or possessions is the universal definition of Consumerism. Africa’s political-economic existence with attachment to materialistic values or possessions is the most perfect embodiment of the triumph of consumerism from times immemorial as Africa is the motherland of human race. and, with the African-Americans elsewhere proclaiming themselves as the African-American (or, even Afro-American) Society in the 1920s expressing a strong sense of cultural identification as Afro-Americans cultivating-- Afro-centrism.

of the 19th century at a brief historical moment when local demand shaped external reactions. There is no doubt that this is the then stimulating and original form of the ancient African Globalization in trade to beginwith proving the ancient alternative genealogic era of globalization of trade , commerce and business .

Scott and Marshall (2005) argue that global culture is brought about by varieties of social and cultural developments which include the emergence of global Patterns of consumption and consumerism .This implies that the trade , commerce , industry and businesses at any given time cannot be confined to pre-fixed localities or interiors or peoples of one Nation alone and always

within the continents but these surely get dispersed (like seed dispersal by flying birds!) far and wide across the Globe as a matter of sharable and divergent patterns of internal and external consumption and consumerism potentials and hence, global patterns of consumption and consumerism prevail.

#### 4. The Triumph of African Consumerism

Geo-politics is often dismissed as an illegitimate form of knowledge or an imperialist idea or an unscientific subject or war-time propaganda or a psychological pressure. But, the triumph of African consumerism with roots in ancient African times cannot be sidelined and marginalized for the reason of popular cultural

consumption of Film-productions , Televisions, Radios , Internet and electronic or printed Journals and Publications of modern economic and technological period which have found their niche, influence and respect throughout the 21st century's independent and democratic African nations united as Modern African Continent within themselves acquiring the attributes as per the following schematic diagram .

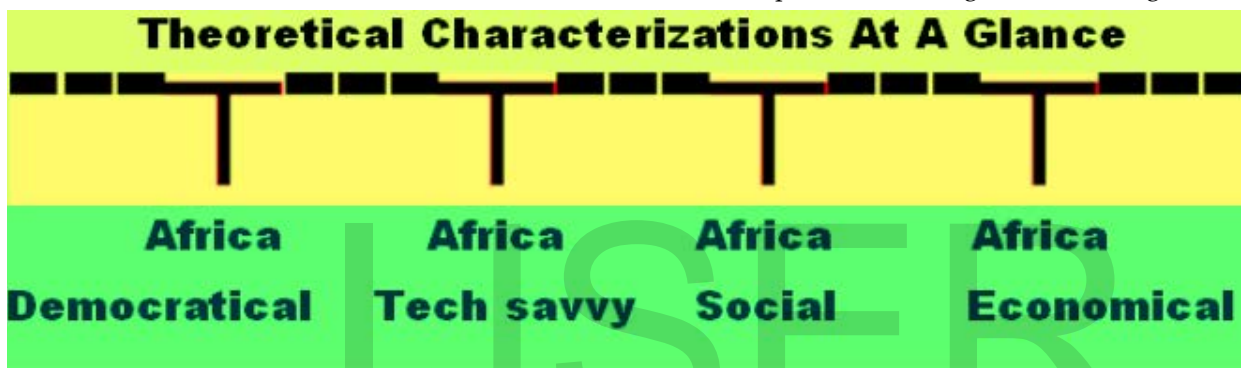


Fig. Schematic Diagram of Modern Africa's attributes

One can witness to his or her heart's content the existence of world satellite information system, the cultivation of cosmopolitan life-styles, the emergence of global sport, the spread of world tourism and global military systems as the triumph of consumerism in Africa in the wake of rise of Africa on the global stage triggering progressive signals for the 21st century emerging as Africa's century.

The liberated and politically broad-minded free African nations also felt that the World is shrinking into a global village with unique global equality. The technological story in terms of computers, the nuclear energy , the solar energy, the wind-mill-electricity , the dynamo-generators , talking-tablets, wireless-printers etc., as the cornerstones of information-technology and information-age have found their home all over Africa due to the abundant availability of the African materials used and African intellectual population's voluntary and participative contribution to the high levels of consumption existed leading to the consumerism's grandeur.

It is no exaggeration to say that the cyber-space driven virtual world economy of the 21st century globalized the African consumerism such that each State in Africa expanded consumer-relationships outside Africa dominating international dynamics and acquired credit to the triumph of consumerism in African yardstick of trend-setters. Many multi-national corporations are now in South Africa and new technologies with expansion of trade and transnational consumer regimes facilitated global movement of African consumer services making markets in Africa open and inclusive for outside consumers in this world of consumerism.

Consumer spending across the continent amounted to \$1.4 trillion in 2015, with three countries—south Africa, Nigeria, and Egypt—contributing more than half of that total. Food and beverages still constitute the largest consumption category, accounting for as much as one-third of Africa's household spending in 2015 (and close to 40 percent of household spending in lower-income countries such as Ghana, Kenya, and Nigeria), but discretionary categories already make up a substantial share of consumption. Spending on nonfood consumer

goods—including clothing, motor vehicles, and household goods—accounts for a further 15 percent of consumption. However, due in part to currency devaluations and a sharp downturn in oil-exporting economies, spending growth has slowed. Out of the 15 largest consumption markets in Africa, which constitute 90 percent of the continent's total consumption, 12 experienced a slowdown in consumption growth between 2014 and 2015—the exceptions being Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Tanzania.

## 5. Consumerism-African outlook to 2025 in 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Consumer spending in Africa is projected to reach \$2.1 trillion by 2025. The following strong structural factors bode well for the continued growth of Africa's consumer sector.

**5.1 A young and growing population:** -- The continent's population is projected to grow by 20 percent over the next eight years, with Africa's youth making up 40 percent of the total. By 2025, almost one-fifth of the world's people will be living in Africa. This population growth is accompanied by falling dependency ratios and an expanding workforce: the size of Africa's working-age population is expected to surpass both India's and China's by 2034.

**5.2 Rapid urbanization** :- By 2025, an additional 190 million people in Africa are expected to be living in urban areas, which means that about 45 percent of the population will be urbanized by then. City dwellers are voracious consumers: per capita consumption spending in large cities in Africa is on average 79 percent higher at the city level than at the national level. Cities in Kenya and Nigeria, for instance, have per capita consumption rates that are more than double the country rates. The top three cities in Ghana and Angola will account for more than 65 percent of national consumption spending in each of these countries.

**5.3 Rising incomes:** -- Since 2005, increases in spending per household have been responsible for

fundamentals are in place to drive the consumer opportunity.

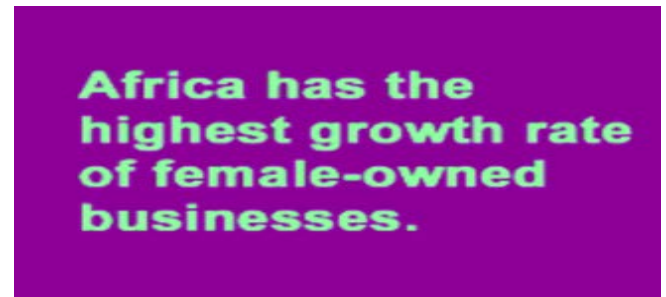


Fig. African women are business-women.

about 40 percent of consumption growth in Africa. By 2025, 65 percent of African households will be in the "discretionary spending" income bracket (earning more than \$5,000). Consequently, the profile of goods and services that Africans purchase will shift, from basic necessities toward more discretionary products.

**5.4 Widespread technology adoption:** -- Technology is opening many new doors for consumers. Mobile money, for instance, is growing five times faster in Africa than in any other region. By 2020, half of Africans—up from 18 percent in 2015—are expected to own a Smartphone, which they can use to buy and sell products and services, pay bills, and make remittances. A study in Kenya found that families with M-Pesa mobile money were able to withstand financial shocks (such as illness) without reducing their consumption, because they could borrow money electronically from friends and family. The success of e-commerce company Jumia—colloquially referred to as "the African Amazon.com"—is partly due to the fact that it accepts mobile payments, allowing even Africans who don't have bank accounts to make purchases. E-commerce and m-commerce offerings are partially leapfrogging formal retail while e-commerce could account for 10 percent of retail sales in Africa's largest economies by 2025.

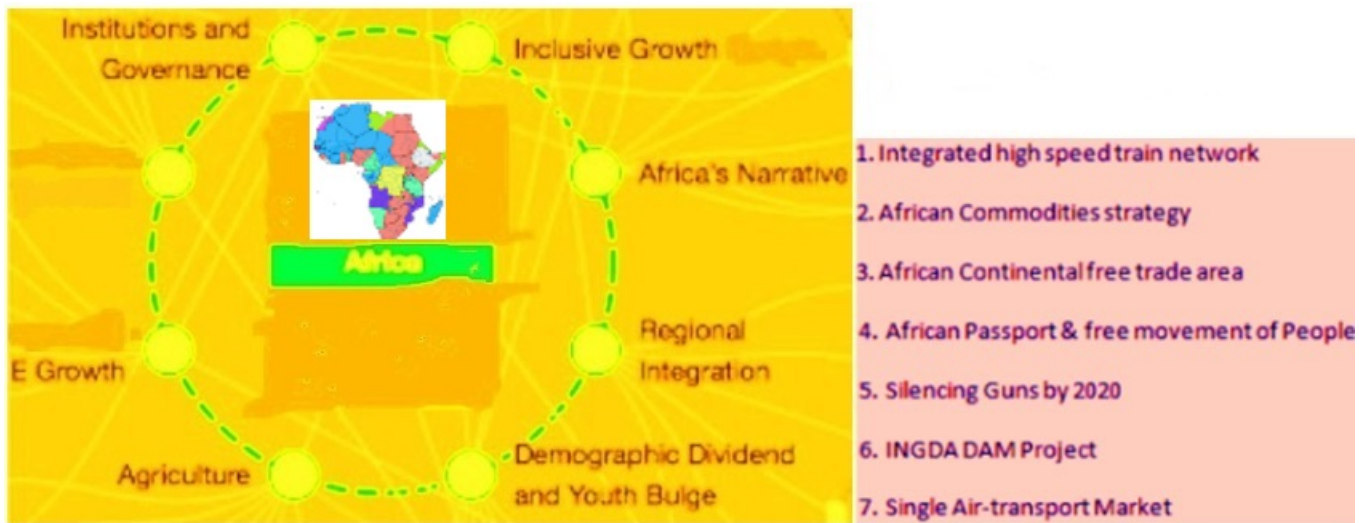


Fig. African civil-social-consumer-e-growth Multi-Consumerism-Projects

**5.5 Africa's Pledge:**--East Africa's share of consumption is projected to rise from 12 percent in 2005 to 15 percent in 2025; Francophone Africa's, from 9 percent to 11 percent. Meanwhile, South Africa's share is projected to decline from 15 percent to 12 percent over the same period, and Nigeria's, from 26 percent to 22 percent. But given that Nigeria will still account for more than a fifth of African consumption, consumer companies can't afford to ignore that market, even amid challenges in the business environment.

## 6. Conclusion

Several factors are shaping the new consuming class Africa's population, the fastest growing and youngest in the world, is concentrated in urban areas. This new class of consumer has a smaller family, is better educated and higher earning, and is digitally savvy. Africans are exceptionally optimistic about their economic future: 84 percent say they will be better off in two years.

These new African consumers resemble their urban counterparts anywhere in the world: they are both brand and quality conscious, seek out the latest trends but watch the budget, and want a modern and attractive shopping environment.

But Africa is a complex, nuanced market of 54 countries and more consumers in the north have preferences very different from those in the sub-Saharan countries and thus, a new consuming class.

Thus, credit goes to Africa for 'Consumerism Globalization' in its historical dispersal all over the World first and foremost which fact ordinarily goes unnoticed except one reads the Africa Area Studies with researching-scope-mindset as facilitated about at the University of Mumbai, Mumbai, Western India with the University Knowledge Resource Centre as well as Departmental Knowledge Resources of the Centre for Africa Area Studies where the Author of this Paper is an enrolled M.Phil Student-Researcher while having been already declared passed in the annual examinations.

## References

[1] Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization (Presholdt)[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277827320\\_Domesticating\\_the\\_World\\_African\\_Consumerism\\_and\\_the\\_Genealogies\\_of\\_Globalization\\_Presholdt](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277827320_Domesticating_the_World_African_Consumerism_and_the_Genealogies_of_Globalization_Presholdt) (accessed 1-1-2019)

[2] Prosperity and Thrift: <African Americans and Consumerism<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/coolhtml/ccpres06.html>>(accessed 23-1-2019)

[3] Afrocentrism - Wikipedia

<[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrocentrism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrocentrism)>(accessed 1-1-2019)

[4]. Urban Dictionary: Afrocentrism

<[www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Afrocentrism](http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Afrocentrism)>(accessed 23Mar2019)

[5]. Afrocentrism | cultural and political movement | Britannica.com

<[www.britannica.com/topic/Afrocentrism](http://www.britannica.com/topic/Afrocentrism)>(accessed 23-3-2019)

[6] Impact of Globalization on the Traditional African Cultures

<<http://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/jesr/article/viewFile/2316/2291>>(accessed 1-4-2019)

[7] Scott, J. & Marshal, G. ed. (2005). Oxford Dictionary of Sociology: University Press  
<[https://www.oxfordreference.com > view > ahref > ahref-9780199533008 >](https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/afref-9780199533008) (accessed 2-2-2019)

[8] <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/the-rise-of-the-african-consumer>(accessed 31-3-2019)

[9] <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/lions-still-on-the-move-growth-in-africas-consumer-sector> (accessed 21-6-2019)

[10] Karen Tranberg Hansen (2009, p.155), *Museum Anthropology Review* 3(2) Fall 2009, <<file:///C:/Users/ADMIN/Downloads/140-Article%20Text-545-1-10-20091015.pdf>>(accessed 18 Feb 2018)

@@

**Author: Rojukurthi Sudhakar Rao, Student-Researcher, Africa Area Studies, M.Phil. Degree Program @ the University of Mumbai, Mumbai, Western India.**

**E-mail :1955sudhakar@gmail.com Dt.20/8/2019: on my Home Computer HP-ProBook .**