

# An African thunderstorm<sup>1</sup>

 By [Ndeye Diagne](#), issued by [Kantar](#)

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'Africa is changing fast' is a euphemism. The nature of the continent's change is not just fast; it's been deep, at times totally unforeseen and always multi-dimensional. Whether you think large-scale infrastructure projects such as the new Accra airport, or the headways made towards financial inclusion in remote rural areas of Kenya, or marvel at medical care drone-delivery in Rwanda... it is impossible to miss the positive dynamics at play across sub-Saharan Africa. It is even more impossible to not feel thrilled and afire about what's next!



Ndeye Diagne

2020-2030 is set to be another decade of profound transformations. This new decade promises a more powerful iteration of the 'It's time for Africa' momentum. What trends will set you up for success?

## Code: Africa

In 2019, Africa's cultural heritage has been on the frontstage in and out of Africa. The warmth of African homes can now be experienced everywhere around the world, with IKEA's [OVERALLT collection](#). Luxury fashion brand Dior offers the look and feel of Africa from New York to Lagos through their [2020 Cruise Collection](#). African entrepreneurs keep building compelling African success stories. 2019 has meant opportunity both in and outside Africa. 2020 will be no less vibrant.

2020 is the year of 'authenticity' in African terms. As thinkers and experts continue to suggest that Africa's development will only be achieved through its own people, cultural emancipation becomes the single biggest lever for Africa's growth –

Africinity will transpire across everything. African role models will be looked for - and celebrated loudly. Advertising will feature more powerfully than ever local ambiances and local languages. Fashion will explore and convey in compelling styles the diversity of African cultures. Food brands will reformulate or reposition their products, praising 'locally grown' qualities or 'made with traditional local ingredients'. Local and regional tourism will challenge historic Western destinations and will aim at disrupting the travel business in Africa.

In 2020, we will see brands and people magnify the cultural capital of the continent, as it has not been done before. We will experience African flavours and fragrances in unique ways. Africa's cultures will converge to build a centre of gravity for creativity. The culture economy at its best.

## Dark is the new glow

Diversity efforts around the world and within Africa are leading to a better representation and promotion of black people as minorities. Empowerment of local talent is part of the journey. The ongoing battle will go one level up with an expected victory over [colorism](#). As Lupita Nyong'o's book, [Sulwe](#), becomes a best seller and an increasing focus is put against the [discrimination of darker skins](#), there will be a desire and a need to celebrate darker skin characters in advertising for example. A fairer representation of the diversity of 'black' will be an important feature of brand messages as brands strive to deliver their broader ambition to 'do the right thing'.

In 2020, brands will work to improve their brand love scores by sustaining their fights against all forms of discrimination, including the prejudice over dark skin. We also expect a rise of more mainstream and much fairer beauty codes.

#MeFirst

In an era of increasing focus around physical and mental health, borne out of the distresses of modern life and its lot of non-communicable diseases, the tension turns inward. Self-care becomes pop: no longer a big word or a luxury theme for higher social classes.

The pursuit of health and the quest for wellbeing will drive consumers' aspirations across all social classes, with diverse and converging strategies. Whether hunted through (better) food, exercising, digital detox, spiritual vibes or all this together, self-care becomes a powerful marketing currency.

Your brand executions will have to echo at minimum and deliver whenever possible, the ambient self-care desires. In 2020, see how you can promise consumers 'another day in paradise'!

## Double digit-al

Technology will continue to shape the future of the continent and model lifestyles and consumption behaviours. Digital payments are expected to rise steeply in most markets, paving the way for what we could call cashless lifestyles. It is in Nigeria (where mobile money is at its lowest across SSA) that we expect to see the most spectacular moves as regulation is changing. A cashless culture in Africa is still unthinkable in 2020 but solid inroads will be made.

And with digital payments becoming more mainstream, retail enters a new phase. Brands that have not yet set clear e-commerce strategies within their African markets will start getting nervous. And beware, it's not necessarily known formal e-commerce platforms that will generate your online revenue. The clue is social. WhatsApp in particular – let's face it – is set to be the go-to app for everything: to connect, court and close!

## Africa's New Deal

The digital creativity within the continent continues to impress the world. Experts and world opinion leaders increasingly argue that African entrepreneurs are set to [drive the next digital revolution](#), which will massively benefit, in the first place, Africa and its people. It's a good space to be. Entrepreneurship is our African New Deal.

In 2020, we will see a new version of the digital metamorphosis the continent is undergoing. African tech hubs will burgeon across the continent. Kenya's [Silicon Savannah](#) and Nigeria's [Yabacon Valley](#) will see their counterparts in Senegal, Ghana or Congo. More robust digital ecosystems will indisputably pave the way for new products and services, better delivery and maximized customer experiences. We expect to see more "angel investors" supporting tech initiatives, and in doing so, addressing the growing concerns and unease around inequalities within Africa.

For brands, 2020 is another unique opportunity to identify and build disruptive local partnerships which will allow them to deliver faster, better and in more memorable ways to consumers.

Be ready. 2020 is the "time for (more of) Africa". Business in Africa isn't about waiting for the storm to pass. Succeeding here is about how you dance in the rain.

*<sup>1</sup>Inspired by the masterpiece poem from David Rubadiri, "An African Thunderstorm".*

## ABOUT NDEYE DIAGNE

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