Population density—the number of people per square kilometer—in sub-Saharan Africa has increased over the last 25 years at a rate almost double any other region of the world. While some countries, namely Mauritius, Rwanda, Burundi, and Comoros, are among the most densely populated globally, even countries in Africa that are less densely populated have seen their densities double since 1990. For example, Niger, which now boasts a low population density of 16 people per square kilometer, experienced an increase of its population density by 150 percent. Burkina Faso, which has had an increase of over 100 percent maintains a population density of 66 people per square kilometer. These changes in population density come also as African countries are transitioning to become more urban, with larger proportions of people living in cities than rural areas than ever before. In smaller countries, like Rwanda, which a population density of over 440 people per square kilometer, this trend means that many cities do not have the room to grow outwardly.


FIGURE 4.3.

GROWTH IN POPULATION DENSITY